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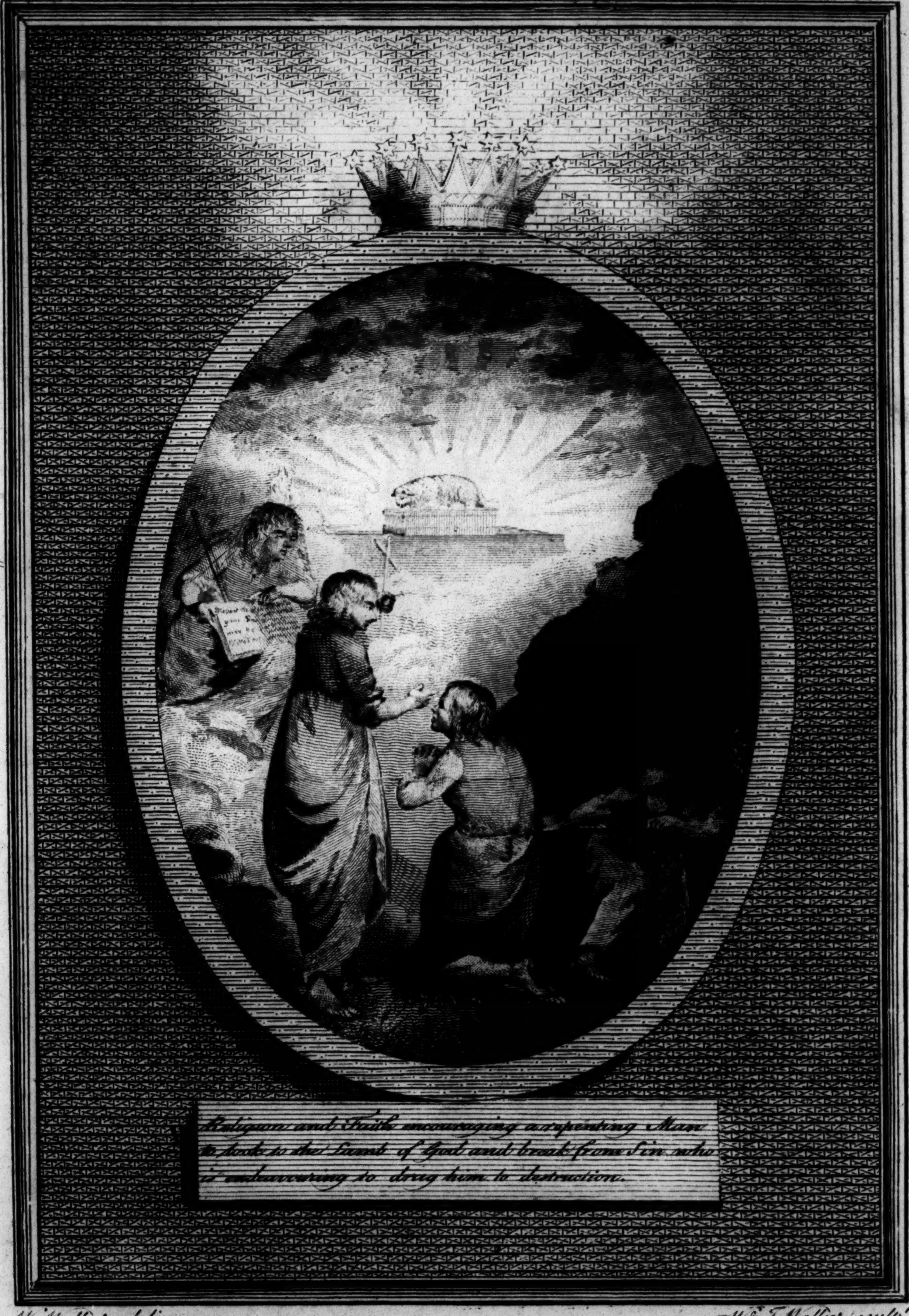

Religion and Faith encouraging a repenting Man to look to the Lamb of God and break from Sin who is endeavouring to drag him to destruction.

W. Walker delin *W. & J. Walker sculp.t*

NEW TESTAMENT.

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THE
HOLY BIBLE,

CONTAINING THE

Old and New Testaments;

WITH

ORIGINAL NOTES,

AND

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SCOTT,

CHAPLAIN OF THE LOCK HOSPITAL, AND AFTERNOON LECTURER OF ST. MILDRED,
AND OF ST. MARGARET MOSES, BREAD-STREET.

VOL. IV.

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M,DCCXCII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

NEW TESTAMENT

OF OUR

LORD and SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST:

TRANSLATED FROM THE

ORIGINAL GREEK,

WITH

ORIGINAL NOTES, AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SCOTT,

MORNING PREACHER AT THE LOCK CHAPEL,
AND AFTERNOON LECTURER OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF ST. MILDRED, AND ST.
MARGARET MOSES, BREAD STREET.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A CONCORDANCE, GENERAL INDEX, AND TABLES.

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M,DCC,XCI.

The Names and Order of all the Books of the New Teſtament.

MATTHEW *hath Chapters*	28	Epheſians	6	The Hebrews	13
Mark	16	Philippians	4	The Epiſtle of James	5
Luke	24	Coloſſians	4	I. Peter	5
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BRITISH MUSEUM

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

THROUGH *the goodneſs of the Lord we have at length arrived at the beginning of that diviſion of the ſacred ſcriptures, which gives the cleareſt, and fulleſt diſcoveries of divine truth to mankind. Here we are favoured with an account of the accompliſhment, which ancient types, and prophecies received, in the perſon, and work of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, and the Son of Man, and of the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity in the world: and whilſt we are inſtructed in all things pertaining to life, and godlineſs; we meet with many further prophecies, which have been fulfilling ever ſince, and will be to the end of time; and which form one grand part of that complex evidence, that is afforded us of the divine original of theſe ſacred records. The church, from the earlieſt antiquity, hath called this part of Scripture "The New Teſtament," or, "The New Covenant;" for the word may be tranſlated either way. Sometimes it ſignifies a ſtipulation between two, or more contracting parties; ſometimes the abſolute appointment of a perſon, in thoſe matters, that are entirely at his own diſpoſal; and ſometimes it denotes a laſt Will, and Teſtament, by which a man appoints his heirs, and the way, in which the inheritance is to be obtained, and enjoyed: and we ſhall find inſtances in the books before us of it's being uſed in each of theſe different meanings. It is called, "The New-Teſtament" in contra-diſtinction from the Old Teſtament; not as if the latter contained only the old covenant of works, and the former the new covenant of grace; for the contrary hath already been abundantly ſhewn: but becauſe the New Teſtament gives an account of the abrogation of the former diſpenſation, under which the Church of God had been held; and of the introduction of a new and better diſpenſation. The Moſaic law, the national covenant made with Iſrael, and the Levitical prieſthood formed, as it were, an edition both of the covenant of works, and of the covenant of grace: but at the coming of Chriſt, it's end was anſwered, and it was antiquated, and abrogated; and the chriſtian diſpenſation, containing clearer light, and greater encouragement, unclogged with burthenſome ceremonies, unclouded by types, and ſhadows, and unreſtricted to any place, or nation, formed a new edition of the covenant of grace; yet ſo that unbelievers continue, as of old, under the miniſtration of death, the covenant of works. This diſpenſation therefore is compendiouſly called, "The New Covenant;" or, "The New Teſtament," with reference to the death of Chriſt the Teſtator. Of this new diſpenſation we ſhall meet with a full account in what follows; and I will not here any further anticipate the ſubject. The former part of the New Teſtament is hiſtorical, and begins with the four Goſpels. This word both in the original, and in our tranſlation ſignifies "good News," or "glad Tidings:" and the writers are therefore called the four Evangeliſts; though that word has in ſome places a different meaning, and rather intends itinerant preachers, as diſtinguiſhed from ſtationary paſtors. The penmen of theſe Goſpels give us four diſtinct views of thoſe things that relate to the birth, life, miracles, diſcourſes, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of our Lord, and Saviour*

Jeſus Chriſt; connected with ſome account of his forerunner John Baptiſt, and of his apoſtles, and primitive diſciples. Their accounts, as might have been previouſly ſuppoſed, vary from each other: each of them recorded more fully thoſe particulars, which moſt ſuited his purpoſe, or which had moſt affected his mind: for the moſt plenary ſuperintending inſpiration doth not ſuperſede the uſe of a man's memory, judgment, and underſtanding, but rather ſerves to aſſiſt, direct, and exalt them. And thus, whilſt theſe variations ſhew, that they did not write in concert; (for in that caſe the appearance of diſagreement would have been avoided;) they tend to corroborate the evidence of the divine authority of their hiſtories: for none of the Evangeliſts wrote till ſome time after the tranſactions, which they recorded; and Mark and Luke ſeem not to have been eye-witneſſes of them. Yet their actual coincidence, and the eaſy manner, in which their apparent variations may be reconciled, form a ſtrong preſumptive proof, that they were under a ſupernatural guidance, and cannot ſatiſfactorily be accounted for in any other way. It is the general opinion, that Matthew, whoſe Goſpel we now proceed to conſider, wrote before the other evangeliſts, about eight years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt. He hath given us an account of his original occupation as a publican, of his converſion, and his appointment to the apoſtleſhip; (c. ix. v. 9—13. c. x. v. 3:) *and we know little more of him with any certainty. Some have contended, that he wrote his Goſpel in Hebrew, and that we have only a Greek tranſlation of it: but learned men have confuted, and exploded that opinion; and it is now generally agreed, that all the Books of the New Teſtament were written in the Greek language, (as then moſt generally uſed, and underſtood;) and that all thoſe manuſcrips, that are found in other languages, have been tranſlations from the Greek, and not the original text. St. Matthew begins his hiſtory with the Genealogy of Chriſt, in the line of Joſeph his ſuppoſed father, and his father-in-law: he proceeds to relate ſome circumſtances of his miraculous conception, his birth, and infancy: He then gives us a brief account of the miniſtry of John Baptiſt; and relates the baptiſm, and temptation of Chriſt, and his entrance on his public miniſtry: and he then proceeds with the narrative of his miracles, diſcourſes, &c, till at length he fully records the manner of his crucifixion, death, and burial; and having born witneſs to his glorious reſurrection, and appearance to his diſciples, he cloſes his hiſtory with ſome moſt important words, which the Lord Jeſus is ſuppoſed to have ſpoken immediately before his aſcenſion into heaven. It would be vain to attempt anticipating the multifarious, and momentous inſtruction, with which this Goſpel is every where pregnant: it is ſufficient to ſay, that we now enter upon that part of Scripture, the ſtudy of which muſt be attended with increaſing ſatiſfaction to every pious mind; becauſe we now ſhall view the ſhadows diſperſe, and the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſing on a benighted world, with ſalvation in his healing beams. And as we proceed with more certainty, and therefore with more confidence, our progreſs will be more pleaſant, and profitable; provided that, whilſt we ſit at Chriſt's own feet to hear his gracious words, we lift up our hearts in conſtant prayer for his promiſed Spirit of truth, and holineſs, to diſpel our mental darkneſs, and to lead us into the faith, experience, and practice of thoſe doctrines, inſtructions, and precepts, that here authoritatively demand our attention.*

CHAP. I.

Contains 1ſt. The genealogy of Chriſt, in the line of Joſeph, from Abraham, and David, 1---17. *2d. His miraculous conception by the Holy Ghoſt, of the Virgin Mary: the doubts of Joſeph, to whom ſhe was eſpouſed, removed by an angel; and directions given him to take her home, and to call the Son, that would be born of her, Jeſus; and this ſhewn to be according to the prediction of Iſaiah,* 18---23. *3d. Joſeph's obedient conduct, and the birth of Jeſus, &c.* 24, 25.

THE book of the generation of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſon of David, the ſon of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Iſaac, and Iſaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren,

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar, and Phares begat Eſrom, and Eſrom begat Aram,

4 And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naaſſon, and Naaſſon begat Salmon,

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, and Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and Obed begat Jeſſe,

6 And Jeſſe begat David the king, and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias.

7 And Solomon begat Roboam, and Roboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Aſa,

8 And Aſa begat Joſaphat, and Joſaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Ozias,

9 And Ozias begat Joatham, and Joatham begat Achaz, and Achaz begat Ezekias,

10 And Ezekias begat Manaſſes, and Manaſſes begat Amon, and Amon begat Joſias,

11 And Joſias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel,

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor,

14 And Azor begat Sadoc, and Sadoc begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud,

15 And Eliud begat Eleazar, and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob,

16 And Jacob begat Joſeph the huſband of Mary, of whom was born Jeſus, who is called Chriſt.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Chriſt *are* fourteen generations.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *The,* &c.] The Old Teſtament begins with the book of Geneſis, or of the original of the world: the New begins with the ſame words in the Greek; but ſignifying *his* original, or generation as man, who as God created all things, and at length appeared in human nature to redeem mankind from their lapſed ſtate of ſin and miſery. This promiſed Saviour had been long foretold, as the ſon of Abraham, and of David: and therefore the inſpired writer, having mentioned his name Jeſus, and his office or appointment, as the Chriſt, the Meſſiah, the anointed of God, proceeded to declare him the Son of Abraham, and of David, as introductory to the ſubſequent genealogy, by which that claim was to be authenticated.

V. 2—17.] Various difficulties have been ſtarted in reſpect of this genealogy: but I ſhall only offer a few general remarks upon it. It is evidently the genealogy of Joſeph, and not of Mary; that Luke gives us, as will be ſhewn hereafter. But Joſeph was ſuppoſed by the Jews to be the father of Jeſus, and he was his father in-law: and therefore it was proper that his deſcent from David ſhould be aſcertained. Probably this genealogy was copied from ſome public regiſters of the nation, that were well known; and this may account for ſome omiſſions, and variations, which are found in it, by comparing it with the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament. The other children of Abraham are not mentioned with Iſaac, nor is Eſau the twin brother of Jacob, and elder than he; for their deſcendants were not intereſted in the covenants of promiſe. But the children of Judah are mentioned, as their poſterity conſtituted the choſen people of God; and Zara, twin brother of Phares, is inſerted; becauſe part of the tribe of Judah deſcended from him. The names of four women are found in it; being all remarkable characters: Thamar, of whom by inceſt with her father in-law, the greateſt part of the tribe of Judah was deſcended. (*Gen.* c. xxxviii.) Rachab, or Rahab, who ſeems to have been the ſame, that had been an harlot, and an inhabitant of Jericho, who through faith was preſerved from the deſtruction of that city, (*Joſhua* c. ii. vi.) for no other of that name is mentioned in ſcripture, to whom the Evangeliſt can be ſuppoſed to refer; Ruth the Moabiteſs; and Bathſheba, who had been the wife of Uriah, with whom David had committed adultery. This might intimate that Chriſt was made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and came to ſave the Gentiles and the vileſt of ſinners. Three kings, the immediate deſcendants of Athaliah, by Joram

18 Now the birth of Jeſus Chriſt was on this wiſe: When as his mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the Holy Ghoſt.

19 Then Joſeph her huſband, being a juſt *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But, while he thought on theſe things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, ſaying, Joſeph, thou ſon of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghoſt.

21 And ſhe ſhall bring forth a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name JESUS: for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might

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the ſon of Jehoſhaphat; viz. Ahaziah, Joaſh, ahd Amaziah, are paſſed over without notice. Perhaps it was found ſo in the genealogies, and they that compiled them, aiming to reduce the number of genealogies from David to the captivity to fourteen, as well as that from Abraham to David, thought theſe deſcendants of that wicked woman, by that unhallowed fatal marriage, who were alſo themſelves of bad character, to be moſt properly omitted. But ſome think that Matthew was directed to leave them out for the ſame reaſons. In ſome manuſcripts it is found "Joſiah begat Jehoiakim, and Jehoiakim Jeconias:" and it is certain that Jeconias was grandſon to Joſiah, and the father of Salathiel: nor does it appear, that he had any brethren; for his uncle Zedekiah ſucceeded him, when he was carried to Babylon. From Jeconiah, who was carried captive, to Joſeph the huſband of Mary, were alſo fourteen generations: and at that time the illuſtrious houſe of David was ſo reduced, that it's rights, in the line of Solomon, centred in a poor carpenter; at leaſt he was that deſcendant, whom the Lord choſe to ſtand in the place of a legal father to the promiſed Meſſiah; that ſo this expected Prophet, Prieſt, and King might ſpring up as a tender plant out of a dry ground.

V. 18, 19.] In the Goſpel according to St. Luke, we ſhall find a variety of circumſtances, which are here omitted; but this was deemed ſufficient to introduce that hiſtory of Chriſt, which was firſt given to the church. His mother Mary, a virgin of the houſe of David, had been contracted or betrothed to Joſeph; but they had not completed the intended marriage, when it was found that ſhe was with child of the Holy Ghoſt. Mary's eſpouſals before the time of her miraculous conception ſheltered her character from injurious ſuſpicions; and a pious, and prudent perſon was thereby engaged to afford her his aſſiſtance in the care of her ſon Jeſus. It does not become us to enquire any further about the miraculous formation of the infant in the Virgin's womb, than merely to obſerve, that, whilſt it was ſo ordered, that Chriſt ſhould truly partake of our nature, and ſtand related to us as our Brother, it was alſo provided, that he ſhould be preſerved pure from the defilement of original ſin, which hath been communicated by natural generation to all the poſterity of fallen Adam: and that thus a clean thing might be brought out of an unclean, by the Almighty agency of the Holy Spirit. When Joſeph, who was now conſidered as the huſband of Mary, found that ſhe was pregnant, and probably heard from her an account of the viſion ſhe had ſeen, &c, (*Luke* c. i. v. 20—38;) and perhaps had heard ſuch circumſtances from Zacharias and Elizabeth, as tended to confirm her account, he was at a loſs how to act on ſo extraordinary occaſion. He might not be able to give full credit to what he had heard; and yet be unwilling to ſuſpect a perſon, whom he ſo much valued, of having been falſe to him, and of forming ſuch a ſtory to cover her guilt. But being a juſt, or conſcientious godly man, he was neither willing in ſuch circumſtances to complete the marriage, nor yet to expoſe her to public diſgrace, and puniſhment; for according to the law, ſhe would have been condemned to be ſtoned as an adultereſs, if ſhe had been proved guilty of incontinency after having been betrothed: and if he had declared his reaſons for putting her away, without proceeding further againſt her, it would at leaſt have expoſed her character to laſting diſgrace. He therefore purpoſed privately (that is before two witneſſes,) to give her a bill of divorcement, and to put her away, without aſſigning his reaſons for ſo doing. Some have thought that reverence of Mary, when he found ſhe was with child by the Holy Ghoſt, deterred him from marrying her: but though this might tend to increaſe his perplexity, it is plain from the angel's anſwer to his objections, that they were of a contrary nature.

V. 20, 21.] Whilſt Joſeph meditated on theſe intereſting and perplexing matters, not knowing how to proceed, he fell aſleep; and in his dream he was favoured with a viſion of an holy angel, who was ſent of God to direct him how to act. The angel addreſſed him as "The Son of David," as one of that illuſtrious family, and probably the legal heir of it's dignities. Perhaps few perſons regarded him in his reduced condition, on that account, and he himſelf might think little of ſuch a neglected diſtinction. He had been afraid of acting contrary to his duty, reputation, intereſt, or peace, if he ſhould proceed to complete his marriage with Mary, though conſidered as his legal wife: but the angel ſhewed him, that theſe fears were unneceſſary; for it would be profitable, and proper for him to take her home to him, as the Lord had ſo ordered matters for wiſe, and important reaſons. The child, with which he knew her to be pregnant, was indeed conceived in her by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghoſt; and it would prove a Son, of which ſhe would in due time be delivered; and then he, as the huſband of Mary, and the ſuppoſed, and legal father, was directed to call him JESUS. It hath been before obſerved, that the word *Jeſus* is the ſame as Joſhua, or Jehoſhua, only framed to the Greek pronunciation, and termination. Joſhua, who brought the tribes of Iſrael into the reſt of Canaan, was originally called Oſhea, be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the prophet, ſaying,

23 Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joſeph being raiſed from ſleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till ſhe had brought forth her firſt-born ſon: and he called his name JESUS.

(*Num.* c. xiii. v. 8;) but it was afterwards changed into Jehoſhua, by an addition of the firſt ſyllable of the divine name "Jehovah;" perhaps intimating, that not Joſhua of himſelf, but Jehovah by him would complete the deliverance of Iſrael. As this name was given to the promiſed Meſſiah, it ſignified, as hath often been proved, "Jehovah the Saviour," or "Jehovah Salvation;" and it was given him, "becauſe he would ſave his people "from their ſins:" he delivers all, that were given to him, all who come to, believe in, and obey him, from the guilt, condemnation, dominion, and polution of all their ſins; and finally he will ſave them from the very exiſtence, and from all the effects, of all ſin, when death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory, and ſorrow in everlaſting felicity.

V. 22, 23.] It is not agreed whether this reference to Iſaiah was made by the angel to Joſeph, or by the Evangeliſt as his comment on the narration: but probably the angel ſhewed Joſeph, that this extraordinary child was He, to whom all the prophets bare witneſs. The prophecy hath already been explained, (Note, &c. *Iſaiah* c. vii. v. 14.) and we need ſay no more upon it, than that it was fulfilled when the Virgin Mary's Son was called Jeſus: for Jehovah Salvation, and Immanuel "God with us" are expreſſions of ſimilar ſignification. If God be with us ſinners, in and by Jeſus Chriſt, he is become our Salvation.

V. 24, 25.] This heavenly viſion fully ſatisfied the mind of Joſeph, and he rendered an implicit obedience to the orders, that he had received. He delayed not to take Mary home to him as his wife; providing thus for her reputation, and comfort in her preſent circumſtances, as far as it was in his power: but he had no conjugal intercourſe with her, "till ſhe had brought forth her firſt-"born Son." Some reference in this expreſſion might be had to Chriſt, as the "firſt-born of every creature," the Heir of all things, and in all having the pre-eminence: but it ſeems rather to relate to the law of Moſes, concerning the firſt-born male being conſecrated to God. (*Exod.* c. xiii. v. 1, 2. 12—15.) Jeſus being called Mary's firſt-born Son does not prove that ſhe had more children afterwards: nor did it ſeem good to the Holy Ghoſt to gratify men's fooliſh curioſity, about the terms, on which Joſeph and Mary afterwards lived together: they, who have contended for, and they who have denied Mary's perpetual virginity, have alike wandered in the pathleſs regions of uncertain conjecture. It is true that ſome of the zealous champions for the affirmative, in this vain enquiry, intended thereby to bolſter up their antichriſtian worſhip of the Virgin Mary, and their antichriſtian admiration of virginity, and celibacy: but we need not have recourſe to any doubtful facts, to prove that God alone ought to be worſhipped, and that marriage is honourable in all men, and in all things.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord proves his people's faith, and patience by long delays; but his promiſes ſtand ſure, and will all be fulfilled in due ſeaſon: nor can we have the leaſt pretence for doubting of any of the reſt, as that grand promiſe of the incarnation of his beloved Son to be our Surety, and atoning Sacrifice, hath been ſo exactly verified. In reviewing the generations of men, that have lived on earth; how vain, tranſitory, and worthleſs do all things here below appear! We paſs as ſhadows over the plain, and move on as a pageant over the ſtage: and except we have a nobler, and more enduring inheritance in heaven, it would have been better for us never to have been born, whatever diſtinctions we may have poſſeſſed on earth. We may alſo profitably obſerve the fluctuations in outward circumſtances, and the diſcordant characters, that appear in the ſame genealogy, as time rolls along: hence we ſhould learn to expect our happineſs from God, and in heaven; and not to flatter our minds with empty hopes concerning our poſterity, of whom we cannot know, whether they will exiſt, or not, or if they do, whether they will be rich, or poor, wiſe or fooliſh, holy or unholy, honourable or diſhonourable, happy or miſerable. When the Son of God was pleaſed to aſſume our nature, he came as near to us, in all the circumſtances of our fallen wretched condition, as conſiſted with his being perfectly free from ſin: and whilſt we read ſuch names in his genealogy, we ſhould not forget how low the Lord of glory ſtooped, to ſave the vileſt of the human race. How abſurd then muſt it be for men to reproach others with the crimes of their anceſtors, or to glory in the virtues, or honours of their own! Let us rather look to the circumſtances, in which the Son of God made his entrance into this lower world, 'till we learn to deſpiſe all the diſtinctions of rank, birth, or affluence, when compared with the real dignity, which piety and holineſs confer. A poor obſcure virgin eſpouſed to a carpenter was choſen to be the honoured mother of him, by whom kings reign, and before whom they muſt all appear in judgment! Doubtleſs he could have aſſumed our nature in an imperial palace, as well as in an obſcure cottage, or rather in an humble ſtable. But his dignity, and honour were of a more exalted, and heavenly nature; and like his kingdom, which is not of this world. Indeed that honour which cometh from God only is ſeldom unattended with humiliating, and diſtreſſing trials. She, whom God pronounced "highly favoured, and bleſſed "among women," was in danger of being ſuſpected, (by him, whoſe opinion, and affection muſt have been more regarded, than thoſe of any other perſon,) of the moſt atrocious crimes; nay of being expoſed to the deepeſt infamy, and terrible puniſhment. Let us not then expect to eſcape calumnies, and ſuſpicions even in thoſe things, wherein we act moſt conſcientiouſly, or from

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. An account of wiſe men from the eaſt, under the guidance of a ſtar arriving at Jeruſalem, to enquire after the new born King of the Jews; the conſternation of Herod, and the Jews; the determination of the prieſts, &c, that the Meſſiah was to be born at Bethlehem; and the ſubtle directions given by Herod, 1---8. *2d. Their finding of Chriſt by the renewed appearance of the ſtar; the honours, and offerings they rendered to him; and their return home another way, by a warning from God,* 9---12. *3d. Joſeph directed by an angel to carry the child, and his mother into Egypt, to elude the murderous rage of Herod; and his immediate obedience,* 13---16. *4th. Herod's cruel orders to murder all the male infants, in and about Bethlehem, carried into execution,* 16---18. *5th. After Herod's death, Joſeph directed to return into the land of Iſrael, and going to reſide at Nazareth in Galilee,* 19---23.

NOW when Jeſus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wiſe men from the eaſt to Jeruſalem,

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have ſeen his ſtar in the eaſt, and are come to worſhip him.

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thoſe perſons, whom we moſt love, and eſteem: but being careful to keep a clear conſcience, let us leave it to the Lord to protect our characters: and if appearances ſhould at any time be againſt us; let us not be over anxious to vindicate ourſelves, but keep on in the path of duty, and wait till the Lord ſhall juſtify us from unmerited reproaches. In this way the Lord will in due ſeaſon appear for us: and if in the mean time we meet with ſevere mortifications; let us remember that we need them, as thorns in the fleſh, to keep down our pride, which would otherwiſe tarniſh all our endowments, and ſervices. In dubious caſes it behoves a godly man to deliberate with great attention; and to chooſe the lenient rather than the ſeverer judgment, or meaſures: and though we ought by no means to connect ourſelves with thoſe, whoſe conduct would be likely to expoſe our characters to diſgrace: yet we ought not to judge by appearances; and we are ſometimes liable to ſcrupulous fears, when our duty, intereſt, credit, and comfort require us to proceed. But he, who deſires to know, that he may do, the will of God, and uſes proper means of inſtruction, ſhall not be left to fall into any fatal error. We cannot now expect immediate revelations, or angelic interpreters of the mind of God, in our more ordinary caſes: but we may diſcover it, as it ſtands revealed in his word, and be thus enabled to proceed with confidence and comfort. But whilſt we make obſervations on the circumſtances of this extraordinary conception, and birth; let us not overlook the end, for which the Son of God was manifeſted in our nature. Men may pervert, and abuſe, or they may object, to the ſacred truths of God's word: but ſurely none can be encouraged to continue in ſin, by a free, and gracious ſalvation *from* ſin! They can have no evidence, that they are the people of Chriſt, who are not now ſaved from the dominion of their ſins, and are not ſeeking continually for deliverance from the remaining power, and pollution of them. Every time, that we name the ſacred name of Jeſus, we ſhould be reminded to rely on, and apply to him for this complete ſalvation, and that we may be delivered from guilt and from ſin, and ſaved in him the Lord our Righteouſneſs with an everlaſting ſalvation. Then may we rejoice that "God is with us," as our reconciled Friend, and Portion in every place, and in all the circumſtances of mortal life. Emmanuël will be our ſtrength, and ſong in all our tribulations, and in the hour of death: we ſhall daily experience the fulfilling of the ſcriptures, and ſhall only have to proceed in the path of unreſerved obedience to the will of God, as it ſhall be made known to us; and all our perplexities and troubles will ſoon iſſue in glory, honour, and immortal felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1, 2.] Herod was an Edomite by deſcent, though outwardly proſelyted to the Jewiſh religion: he obtained the kingdom of Judea by the favour of the Romans, and by means of much war, and bloodſhed. He reigned in conſiderable outward proſperity for about 35 years: but his whole adminiſtration was tarniſhed with the moſt horrible cruelties. Amongſt many others he put to death his wife Mariamne, and two of his own ſons, before the time we ſpeak of. He was now 70 years of age: but he was as full of ambition, and jealouſy, and as prompt to every act of tyranny, and cruelty as ever. At this time came wiſe men from the eaſt to enquire about the birth of Chriſt. The original word is *Magoi*, or the Magians: it is uſed in the New Teſtament in a bad ſenſe, (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 9—11. c. xiii. v. 6—12:) yet there was a ſect of philoſophers, and indeed of religioniſts, who were called by this name; and who ſeem to have come nearer many of the truths of revealed religion, than almoſt any other of the heathens. Probably theſe perſons were men of ſome eminence, and learning, belonging to that ſect. An opinion at that time prevailed throughout all the eaſt, that an extraordinary perſon was about to ariſe in Judea, who would acquire the dominion over the nations; which doubtleſs originated from a partial acquaintance with the writings of the ancient prophets: theſe perſons probably expected that event, and perhaps were favoured with ſome divine intimation of its approach, and were inſtructed to form ſome proper judgment of, and to ſeek direction from God, about it. It is not known of what country they were: ſome contend that they came from ſome diſtrict in Arabia, and ſuppoſe that the prediction of David was fulfilled in this event: (*Pſ:* lxxii. v. 9, 10;) from whence perhaps aroſe the abſurd popiſh legend, that they were kings, and three of them; though we are not told in ſcripture how many they were; but perhaps they came from the more diſtant regions of Meſopotamia, or Perſia. An extraordinary luminous appearance in the heavens, 3 When Herod the king had heard *theſe things*, he was troubled, and all Jeruſalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief prieſts and ſcribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Chriſt ſhould be born.

5 And they ſaid unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, art not the leaſt among the princes of Judah: for out of thee ſhall come a Governor, that ſhall rule my people Iſrael.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wiſe men, enquired of them diligently what time the ſtar appeared.

8 And he ſent them to Bethlehem, and ſaid, Go, and ſearch diligently for the young child; and, when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worſhip him alſo.

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which they noticed, induced them to this journey, as they aſſuredly gathered from it, that One was born to be the King of the Jews. But they could not reaſonably have drawn this concluſion, unleſs the Lord, who by this phenomenon had excited their attention, had alſo in ſome other way explained it to them, perhaps by a ſupernatural dream. Being thus excited, and inſtructed, they heſitated not to take this long, and expenſive journey, in order to pay their early homage, and worſhip to the new-born King of the Jews, who, they underſtood, would in due time reign over the nations. As they probably ſuppoſed, that the people of Jeruſalem were well acquainted with the event, they directed their courſe thither, and openly made enquiry concerning him, that was born to be King of the Jews, (yet perhaps with ſome application to the chief prieſts, and elders of the nation;) declaring both what they had ſeen, and for what purpoſe they were come. This was an early intimation of the calling of the Gentiles into the church of Chriſt, even when the Jews would neglect, and be rejected of him: and it was a call to the nation to conſider Jeſus, as their long-expected promiſed Meſſiah.

V. 3—6.] Though Herod was very old, and had never ſhewn much affection for his family; yet being a ſuſpicious tyrant, he no ſooner heard of a King of the Jews, than he began to be haunted with the dread of a rival. He neither underſtood the ſpiritual nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom, nor yet conſidered, that a new-born infant was not likely to give *him* any diſquietude: and he was therefore greatly troubled at the tidings. The citizens of Jeruſalem alſo, not having formed any proper judgment of the bleſſings to be expected from the Meſſiah, were put into general conſternation: they had witneſſed ſo many of Herod's cruelties, whenever a competitor was ſuſpected, that they ſeem to have expected new ſcenes of confuſion, and bloodſhed: and thus were troubled at that event, which ſhould have given them the higheſt ſatisfaction. Herod however, by a ſtrange medley of regard to, and contempt of, the word of God, ſuppoſing that the ancient prophecies were about to be fulfilled, and yet hoping to defeat them, framed a plan for that purpoſe: and firſt he convened the prieſts, and ſcribes, that he might know aſſuredly from them, at what place the promiſed Meſſiah was to be born; intending to uſe this information to direct the wiſe men, where to find him; and then by their means deviſing to diſcover, and cut him off: and thus by one blow to render abortive all the purpoſes, and prophecies of God, from the beginning.

To this queſtion they returned a very proper anſwer: referring, in confirmation of it, to a prophecy, which we have already conſidered. (Note, *Micah*, c. v. ver. 2.) It is obſervable that the text is here quoted ſomething different, than it ſtands in our verſion of the prophet; eſpecially in that it is here ſaid "thou art *not* the leaſt, "&c." Some propoſe reading the clauſe in Micah interrogatively, "art thou little amongſt the thouſands of "Judah?" However it is plain that the ſenſe, (rather than the exact words of the Old Teſtament prophecies,) is quoted in many places of the New Teſtament; and that, though they are often taken from the Septuagint Greek tranſlation, yet that is not uniformly, or exactly adhered to.

V. 7, 8.] Herod having obtained ſatisfaction, as to the place of Chriſt's birth, proceeded with his abſurd, and impious project: he therefore next conferred with the wiſe men, that he might exactly learn from them the time, when the ſtar firſt appeared, from which he meant to compute the age of his Infant Rival. Having learned this, he diſmiſſed them with directions to go to Bethlehem, exhorting them diligently to ſearch for the young Child in that city, aſſured that under the divine direction they would certainly find him; and then requiring them to inform him of their ſucceſs, that he might render him thoſe honours, which they intended him. Thus far we perceive ſome degree of abſurd ſubtlety; but ſure it was attended with a judicial infatuation! For otherwiſe he would either have ſent meſſengers along with the wiſe men, to conduct them, and ſhew them reſpect; or he would have ordered ſpies to follow them, who, when they had found the Child, might ſuddenly have ſurpriſed, and ſlain him. But to leave the whole ſucceſs of his deſign to theſe ſtrangers, ſo that it muſt miſcarry, if they ſuſpected his ſincerity, or did not chooſe to give him information, was a very feeble meaſure for ſo experienced a politician, who was not uſed to do works of impiety, or cruelty by halves. Nor was it leſs wonderful, that neither piety, nor curioſity, nor any other motive ſhould have induced any of the Jews of any rank or character, to accompany the wiſe men on this pious reſearch, when Bethlehem was not more than ſeven, or eight miles from Jeruſalem! But the dread of Herod's cruel indignation, as well as diſregard to more ſpiritual concerns, ſeem to have thrown them all into a kind of ſtupor on the occaſion.

V. 9—12.] Notwithſtanding the ignorance, and inattention of the Jews, the eaſtern ſages proſecuted the

9 When they had heard the king, they departed: and, lo, the ſtar, which they ſaw in the eaſt, went before them, till it came and ſtood over where the young child was.

10 When they ſaw the ſtar, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the houſe, they ſaw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worſhipped him: and when they had opened their treaſures, they preſented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincenſe, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they ſhould not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joſeph in a dream, ſaying, Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will ſeek the young child to deſtroy him.

14 When he aroſe, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

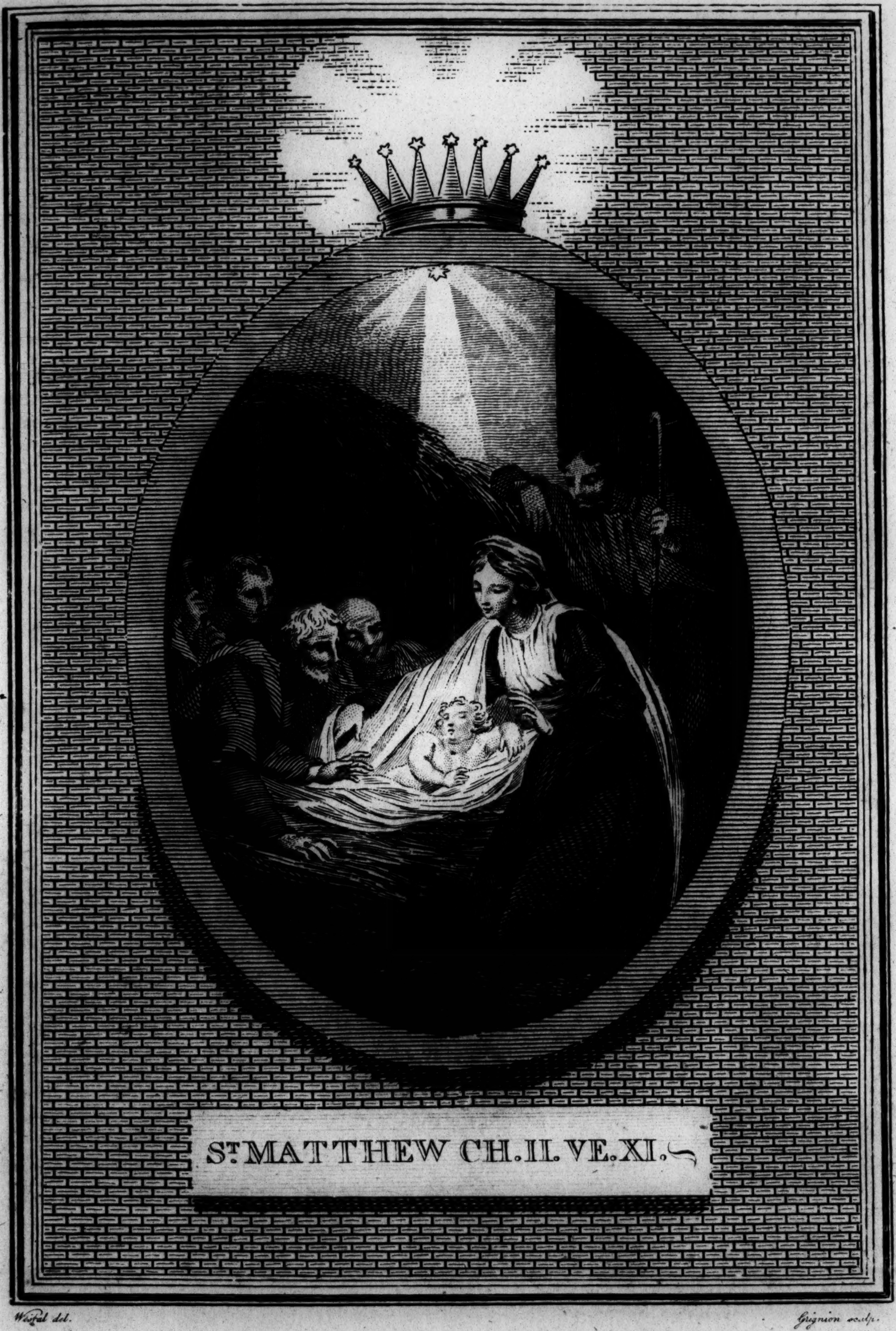
15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the prophet, ſaying, Out of Egypt have I called my ſon.

16 Then Herod, when he ſaw that he was mocked of the wiſe men, was exceeding wroth, and ſent forth, and ſlew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all

deſign of their journey, and directed their ſteps to the city, where the Meſſiah was to be born: and to recompenſe their pious, and believing conſtancy, the ſtar, which they had ſeen in their own country, again appeared to them, and going before them, became ſtationary juſt above the houſe, where Jeſus was. Hence it appears, that it was no ſtar, (properly ſo called,) or planet, or comet, but a luminous meteor in our atmoſphere, which at a diſtance looked like a ſtar, and which was formed of God for that purpoſe, and could deſcend ſo low, as to mark out a ſingle houſe, in the midſt of the city. It is evident, that Joſeph and Mary dwelt with Jeſus at Bethlehem, when theſe wiſe men came in ſearch of him; but it is probable, that it was ſome conſiderable time after his birth. We know not from what diſtance they came, nor when the ſtar firſt appeared to them, whether at the conception, or the birth of Chriſt, (though the latter be more probable;) ſo that we can form no exact calculation: but the age pitched on by Herod, for the ſlaughter of the infants, makes it likely, that Chriſt was at this time about a year old: yet St. Luke ſays, that after the preſentation of Chriſt, Joſeph and Mary returned to Nazareth: but this could not be immediately, but ſome time after; for their journey into Egypt muſt have been ſubſequent to the preſentation, and this was taken from Bethlehem, not from Nazareth, as the very reaſon of it evinces. Probably Joſeph, and Mary thought, that Jeſus was to be brought up at Bethlehem, that his having been born there might be more generally known, in order to his being acknowledged as the Meſſiah: and that they therefore had taken a houſe there, and returned thither, after Chriſt had been preſented in the temple, and continued there, till their departure into Egypt, whence they afterwards retired to Nazareth. But Luke paſſes over all theſe circumſtances in his narrative, being directed to enlarge more on other particulars. However, when the wiſe men ſaw the ſtar, they were aſſured of ſucceſs in their undertaking, and therefore they rejoiced exceedingly: and entering the houſe, (which doubtleſs was a very different abode, than that they had expected for the King of the Jews,) and having ſeen the infant Jeſus with his mother; they were not offended by his mean circumſtances, but acknowledged him as their Lord, and King, proſtrating themſelves before him, and worſhipping him; and opening the treaſures, they had brought with them for that purpoſe, they preſented him with the choiceſt productions of their country, even “gold, frankincenſe, “and myrrh.” Some have ſuppoſed, that the frankincenſe, and myrrh were intended as an acknowledgment of his deity, as the gold was of his royalty. However we may conclude, that the Lord, who directed, and proſpered their journey, gave them alſo ſome meaſure of knowledge of thoſe things, that related to the perſon, and offices of this new-born King; and we may ſuppoſe, that their worſhip was of the ſame nature, with that of other believers, in every age; and that their joy had ariſen from a perſuaſion, that they had found the ſalvation of God for their ſouls, as well as the King of the Jews. (*Luke*, c. ii. v. 30.) Having thus obtained the purpoſe of their journey, they were about to return to Jeruſalem, in their way to their own land; but the Lord warned them, in a dream, not to return to Herod, and ſo they went home another way, and thus defeated his impious project. Probably when they arrived in their own country, they there ſpread the report of what they had ſeen, heard, and learned; and this would be a preparation for the future preaching of the goſpel in thoſe regions.

V. 13—15.] The Lord witneſſed, and eaſily defeated the buſy malice of Herod, who was determined if poſſible to deſtroy his ſuppoſed rival: and therefore an angel again viſited Joſeph in a dream, and ordered him without delay to flee into Egypt, with the young Child, and his mother, and there to wait till he had orders to return. Accordingly Joſeph was obedient to the heavenly viſion, and aroſe immediately, and that very night ſet out on his journey. Thus the King of the Jews was driven as an exile out of the land: he came to his own people, and his own received him not: but he was led to ſeek ſhelter in a country, that had ever been moſt hoſtile

FOR THE REVD. MR. SCOTT's BIBLE.



St. MATTHEW CH. II. VE. XI.

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the coaſts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wiſe men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, becauſe they are not.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joſeph in Egypt,

20 Saying, Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Iſrael: for they are dead which ſought the young child's life.

21 And he aroſe, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Iſrael.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did

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to the people of God. It now appeared how wiſely the Lord had ordered it, in engaging ſo prudent, and pious a perſon as Joſeph, by his eſpouſals to Mary, to afford her his aſſiſtance in theſe difficult circumſtances. And the oblations of the eaſtern ſages would now prove a ſeaſonable ſupply, to enable them to bear the expences of ſo long a journey, and of their maintenance in a foreign country. In this exiled ſtate this holy family remained, till after the death of Herod, which ſeems to have taken place a few months after. The evangeliſt adds, that this was done, "that it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken by the prophet ſaying, "out of Egypt have I called my Son;" (Note, *Hoſea*, c. xi. v. 1:) this and many other prophecies ſeem to have had a double meaning, both reſpecting the church, and Chriſt the head of the church. And there appears to have been a particular intention of providence in Chriſt's going into Egypt; that he might come up at the divine call from the ſame place, that the nation of Iſrael had done; which was alſo a type of the deliverance of his people from the bondage of ſin, and from this preſent evil world.

V. 16—18.] Herod, after waiting for ſome time, found that the wiſe men did not return to bring him any intelligence of their ſucceſs: this he ſuppoſed to ariſe from ſuſpicion, or contempt, and deemed himſelf greatly affronted by it. And thus his jealouſy, diſappointment, and indignation concurred in working him up to a degree of rage, which bordered on madneſs: and determining to make ſure, as he thought, of the deſtruction of his hated competitor, he ſent forth, as is probable, ſome of the ſoldiers, that compoſed his guard, and ſlew all the male children, that were found in Bethlehem, and the dependant villages, which were under two years of age; taking large meaſure enough, but having reſpect to the time, at which the wiſe men informed him, they had firſt ſeen the ſtar. Thus the date of Chriſt's birth was publicly marked, and all others, that could pretend to be the Meſſiah, as born at Bethlehem about the ſame time, were cut off. This event formed another accompliſhment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, which we have already conſidered. (Note, *Jer.* c. xxxi. v. 15—17.) Rachel, who lay buried betwixt Rama, and Bethlehem, might be poetically repreſented on this occaſion to weep inconſolably for the ſlaughter of her children. Doubtleſs many of the deſcendants of Joſeph, and Benjamin were murdered, as well as thoſe of Judah, in this maſſacre. Imagination can better conceive, than the pen can deſcribe, the horrors of ſuch a brutal ſcene, and the anguiſh of the tender mothers over their infant offspring torn from their arms, and butchered before their eyes: it is indeed almoſt impoſſible to conceive of any wickedneſs more completely diabolical. Indeed ſome have objected to the authenticity of the narrative on this ground; but the following account of Herod's laſt purpoſe, and deed, will ſatiſfy the reader that there was nothing too vile for that wretched man to perpetrate. "Knowing the hatred the Jews had for him, he concluded aright, that there would be no lamentations at his death, but rather gladneſs, and rejoicing all the country over. To prevent this he framed a project, and reſolution in his mind, which was one of the horrideſt, and moſt wicked, perchance, that ever entered into the heart of man. For having iſſued out a ſummons to all the principal Jews of his kingdom, commanding their appearance at Jericho (where he then lay,) on pain of death, at a day appointed; on their arrival thither he ſhut them all up in the circus, and then ſending for Salome his ſiſter, and Alexas her huſband, commanded them, that as ſoon as he was dead, they ſhould ſend in the ſoldiers upon them, and put them all to the ſword. For this, ſaid he, will provide mourning for my funeral all over the land, and make the Jews in every family, lament my death, whether they will or no: and when he had adjured them hereto, ſome hours after he died. But they, not being wicked enough to do what they had been ſolemnly made to promiſe, rather choſe to break their obligation, than to make themſelves the executioners of ſo bloody, and horrid a deſign, (Prideaux's Connexion.") Nor need it be wondered, that Joſephus does not record the ſlaughter of the infants; for he evidently choſe to make the beſt of Herod's bad character, though in many things he could not conceal its infamy: and he never without reluctance mentioned any circumſtances, which led him to give his thoughts of chriſtianity. But he could not but know, that Matthew had recorded it as a known matter of fact, and as he never contradicted, or diſputed it, he may be ſaid to have tacitly allowed the truth of it. However as internal, and external evidences ſufficiently demonſtrate the evangeliſt's divine inſpiration, we need no corroborating teſtimony to confirm the facts, which he relates, though we are not utterly deſtitute of them.

V. 19—23.] In a few months after Herod had perpetrated the maſſacre of the infants, he ended his life, and cruelties together, in a manner almoſt too ſhocking to be related: he endured ſuch excruciating, lingring reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithſtanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aſide into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophets, He ſhall be called a Nazarene.

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and loathſome diſeaſes, as rendered him intolerable to himſelf, and others alſo. Juſt before his death, he cauſed Antipater his ſon, and the heir apparent of his kingdom, to be executed, on ſome groundleſs ſuſpicion; who had probably joined with his father, in ſeeking to deſtroy Jeſus. An angel was therefore ſent to Joſeph to admoniſh him to go back with the young child, and his mother, into the land of Iſrael, as *they* were dead, that had ſought the young child's life. Accordingly they returned: but finding that Archelaus the ſon of Herod had obtained of the Romans the government of that part of the country, in which Bethlehem was ſituated; and perhaps learning, that he was of a jealous, cruel diſpoſition, Joſeph feared to ſettle there as he had intended: but being further admoniſhed of God, he went into Galilee, in the northern part of the land, which was under the rule of Philip, who was of a more quiet temper; and fixed his reſidence at Nazareth, where we find from St. Luke he had formerly dwelt. Thus the ſaying of the prophets was fulfilled, “ that he ſhould be called a “ Nazarene.” But we do not read any ſuch prophecy in the Old Teſtament: and indeed it is rather referred to, as the general ſenſe of the prophets, than as the prediction of an individual. Some think it means, that they foretold, that he would be the true Nazarite, or Nazarene, ſeparated, and conſecrated to God in a ſpecial manner. Others underſtand it of the contempt, and indignity, which the Meſſiah was to ſuffer. Certainly Nazareth was a place of bad repute: and Jeſus has been called the Nazarene by the oppoſers, and deſpiſers of his Goſpel in all ages: and he was crucified by Pilate with this accuſation “ Jeſus the Nazarene the King of the “ Jews.”

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It often happens, that they, who live at the greateſt diſtance from the means of grace, are led to uſe double diligence, and thus are found amongſt thoſe, who firſt, and moſt get acquainted with Chriſt, and his Salvation. But no curious arts, no human learning can direct men to him; this muſt be learned by attending to the word of God, as a light that ſhineth in a dark place, and by ſeeking the teaching of the Holy Spirit. They, who follow this ſacred direction in a proper manner, will ſpare no labour, or expence, in enquiring after Jeſus our Prince, and Saviour; they will deſire to render him honour, and ſubmiſſion, and they will devote their talents to his ſervice, and not be reluctant to avow their expectations from him, and obligations to him. But, alas, ſhould eaſtern ſages, or ſtrangers from diſtant nations, come to many of thoſe cities, where chriſtianity is profeſſed, purpoſely to enquire after Chriſt, and his religion; how little ſatisfaction would they find from the profeſſed rulers, and teachers of the church! And how much would they be ſurpriſed at the ignorance, and inattention of thoſe, who have the beſt opportunities of inſtruction, reſpecting the truths, and duties of their holy profeſſion! They would not indeed excite much conſternation or uneaſineſs, either to princes or people: but they would probably occaſion much aſtoniſhment among, and even contempt, and deriſion from thoſe, who never made any ſerious enquiry after Him, whoſe diſciples they pretend to be. Perhaps there are few places, where ſo much regard would be ſhewn them, as that princes, and teachers ſhould aſſemble, in order to conſider their enquiries, and to give them an anſwer: and even, if this ſhould be done, it would perhaps be found rather to ariſe from profane politics, than from a cordial deſire to promote the knowledge of Chriſt, and his Salvation. Yet we muſt obſerve, that here is alſo an example worthy of our imitation. The ſcripture muſt needs be fulfilled; and they are like to find out the right way, and point it out to others, who get acquainted with the bible, and who aſſuredly believe that matters have been, are, and will be, according to the teſtimony of that bleſſed book: and however little they may be in other reſpects, they ſhall be numbered amongſt the princes of God's people, who are related to Chriſt, and ſubmit to him as the Governor, and Shepherd of Iſrael. But let us beware of a dead faith. It is plain from facts, that a man may have a prevailing perſuaſion of many truths, and hate them virulently, becauſe they interfere with his ambition, intereſts, or ſinful indulgence. Such a belief will give him uneaſineſs, and ſtrengthen his reſolution of oppoſing the truth, and cauſe of God: and ſo great is the inconſiſtency of human nature, that a man may deliberately form projects to defeat thoſe purpoſes, which he cannot but perceive are from the Lord: and may vainly hope for ſucceſs in ſuch attempts. Indeed this is the enmity, malignity, and miſery of ſatan from age to age. But he, who ſitteth in heaven will laugh at ſuch puny enemies, yea the Lord will have them in deriſion: yet will he ſpeak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his ſore diſpleaſure. He can eaſily infatuate, counterplot, or cruſh them, when he ſees good: yet they often for a time impoſe upon the unſuſpecting ſimplicity of godly men, and by pretending to join with them in honouring Chriſt, they draw them in to ſubſerve their impious deſigns. But the Lord will guide with his counſel thoſe, who follow the teaching of his word, and wait on him for further light: He can help them in their enquiries after Chriſt, even by ungodly men, who know more than they practiſe; and none ſhall ever ſeek his face in vain. Every indication of obtaining an intereſt in Chriſt will give a ſincere, and very great joy to the humble enquirer after him: He will not be ſtumbled at finding Him, and his diſciples in obſcure cottages, after having in vain ſought them in palaces, and populous cities: he will never fear honouring the Lord of glory too much, or being too devoted to his ſervice. And thus our Father, who knows what his children have need of, uſes ſome of them, as his ſtewards to ſupply the wants of others; and he will provide for them in every emergency, though the ſupply come from the ends of the earth. But

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. An account of John Baptiſt's preaching, manner of life, and baptiſm; of the prophecy fulfilled in him, and the multitudes, that reſorted to him, 1---6. 2d. His bold, and ſolemn addreſs to the Phariſees, and Sadducees, who came to his baptiſm, and his account of Chriſt, and the effects of his goſpel, 7---12. 3d. The baptiſm of Jeſus by John, and what paſſed between them at that time; with the deſcent of the Holy Spirit on Chriſt, and the voice of God declaring him His beloved Son, 13---17.

IN thoſe days came John the Baptiſt, preaching in the wilderneſs of Judea.

2 And ſaying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was ſpoken of by the prophet Eſaias, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight.

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let us remember, that this was an indication of Chriſt's being the Light of the Gentiles, as well as the Glory of Iſrael: and whilſt we are thankful for our mercies, let us recollect, that if we do not come to, honour, and worſhip him, as our Lord and Saviour, who now reigns on his glorious throne; theſe eaſtern ſages will riſe up againſt us too in judgment: for they came from far, to worſhip him as an infant in the arms of his mother.

When we are ſincerely endeavouring to follow the Lord's guidance; He will, by various interpoſitions direct our conduct; and he hath unnumbered methods of defeating the moſt ſubtle, and beſt concerted machinations of his enemies. But it is impoſſible to aſſign any limits to the wickedneſs, of which the human heart is capable, when furious paſſions, and great authority combine: and when ſinners are become callous by habit, and daring by impunity in atrocious crimes. The near approach of death, inſtead of weakening the ambition, malice, or cruelty of ſuch men, ſeems to render them more in haſte to ſeize the fleeting moment of perpetrating their enormities; as if they were afraid of not treaſuring up wrath enough, or as if they would ſet death, and even God himſelf at defiance. No wonder therefore that they are unmoved with compaſſion for bleeding infants, and inconſolable parents, and that they ſeem to take delight in lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, occaſioned by their cruelties. Yet are they more wretched by their own vile paſſions, than they can render others. It is well for the world, that the triumphing of ſuch overgrown monſters in wickedneſs commonly proves ſhort; and ſometimes their miſeries on this ſide the grave give a ſpecimen of the dire effects of thus waging war, as it were, both againſt God, and man. But, after having obſerved the neceſſity of avoiding the beginnings of iniquity, and impiety, if men would be ſecured from ſuch horrid extremes; let us avert our eyes from the hateful proſpect, to contemplate the reception which the Lord of glory met with, when he condeſcended to viſit us with great humility: and in theſe his early perſecutions, and ſufferings, let us be reminded of the treatment, that we muſt expect, if we are the children of God, in this world which lieth in wickedneſs; and at what a price all our hopes and comforts were purchaſed for us by our Surety. As the early honours, that He received, proved the occaſion of his perils, and fatigues: ſo they, that belong to him cannot reaſonably expect to be honoured of God, without meeting with trouble, and contempt from men. Let it ſuffice us to be as our Maſter, expecting to have the promiſes of ſcripture fulfilled to us, as the prophecies were to him. Nor ſhould we look for much ſolid comfort from our worldly connexions: even beloved children are far more frequently the occaſions of care, and deep diſtreſs, than of abiding ſatisfaction: yet our ſorrow ſhould not be without hope, nor ſhould we refuſe to be comforted, when by any means our infant offspring are taken from us. For though they die, as ſinners, according to the righteous ſentence of God; and though they are not in the peculiar circumſtances of theſe infants, who may be conſidered as a kind of martyrs for Chriſt: yet we may comfortably conclude, that when they ceaſe to be with us on earth, they are only gone before us to heaven, through the ſecond Adam, the Lord of life, and ſalvation. Wherever providence allots us the bounds of our habitation, we muſt expect to ſhare the reproach of Chriſt, and to be branded with ſome opprobium for his ſake: yet if this be becauſe we are conſecrated to God through him, and copy his example of truth, and righteouſneſs; we may glory in the diſtinction, aſſured, that if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo be glorified together.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—3.] St. Matthew entirely paſſes over the whole of John's parentage, and birth, and the remarkable circumſtances that attended them. (*Luke*, c. i.) Indeed we are ſcarce informed of any thing relating to the childhood, and youth either of Chriſt, or of his forerunners; though we might have expected to read many curious and intereſting particulars concerning them; as the one was wholly without ſin, and the other filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb. Some think that John entered upon his public miniſtry about his thirtieth year; but others, who aſſign a longer time to his miniſtry, previous to the baptiſm of Chriſt, muſt conclude that he began to preach before that age; as Chriſt, who was only ſix months younger, was baptized when thirty years old: ſo that the expreſſion "in thoſe days" muſt be underſtood with ſome latitude, as being ſeveral years after the events recorded in the foregoing chapters. John had ſpent his youth in retirement, and probably in devotion, contemplation, and ſuch exerciſes of the ſoul, as were ſuited to prepare him for his extraordinary work: and he had attained an uncommon degree of deadneſs to the world, of holy fortitude, zeal, humility, and devotedneſs to God, and of every grace, and gift, which could qualify him for uſefulneſs: and his mortified ſpirit, and conduct were peculiarly ſuited to that ſevere miniſtry of the law, and that work of humiliation, and reformation, by which he was to prepare the Jews, for receiving their expected Meſſiah. As he was a prieſt, 4 And the ſame John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locuſts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jeruſalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confeſſing their ſins.

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the ſon of ſo diſtinguiſhed a perſon as Zachariah; as his birth had been ſo miraculous, and greatly noticed; and as he was himſelf ſo very excellent, and remarkable a perſon; ſo he could not be very obſcure in his retirement. Probably his reputation was conſiderable, before he entered on his public work, which might conduce to the exceeding popularity of his miniſtry. He was called the Baptiſt, or the Baptizer, becauſe he admitted the Jews into the number of his diſciples by that external rite, as a ſign, or profeſſion of that repentance, and converſion to God, which were the preparation for their welcoming the Meſſiah, and ſharing the bleſſings of his kingdom. He did not go up to Jeruſalem to preach, but he opened his miniſtry in the wilderneſs, the moſt open, and leaſt populous part of the country; and thus he was directed to leave it to God to bring the people to him. He came preaching, or as an herald proclaiming the near approach of the Meſſiah, their expected King. The Jews thought that the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom belonged to them of courſe, and excluſively: and as they expected temporal deliverance, victory, proſperity, and pre-eminence, they were diſpoſed to prepare for his coming by levying armies, and making inſurrections, &c. But John's preaching was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of "heaven is at hand;" which doubtleſs he enlarged upon, explained, and applied to his hearers. The kingdom of heaven ſignifies the goſpel diſpenſation; which is ſo called, becauſe the God of heaven then began to ſet up that kingdom, which will at length fill the earth; (*Dan.* c. ii. v. 34, 35. 44.) It is the kingdom of God, and of heaven openly ſet up amongſt men, in oppoſition to the power of the devil, the god, and prince of this world; and in the perſon of Chriſt, the Son of God, who was manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the devil. Into this kingdom ſinners enter by faith in Chriſt, their rebellions are pardoned, they return to their allegiance, become willing ſubjects, and are admitted to enjoy all the immunities, and privileges of the kingdom. Theſe are all of a heavenly nature; they come from, prepare us for, and at length iſſue in the felicity of heaven; which ſometimes alſo is meant by the kingdom of heaven. The legal diſpenſation was but an introduction to this kingdom of heaven on earth, and the heavenly nature of its inſtitutions, as diſtinguiſhed from the carnal ordinances of the law, may be implied; as well as the Jews expectation of an outward kingdom to be ſet up by the Meſſiah. This kingdom of heaven was at hand; the King was about to appear, to collect followers, to finiſh his work, aſcend his throne, abrogate the legal diſpenſation, terminate the Jewiſh national covenant, admit the Gentiles into the church, and introduce the chriſtian diſpenſation. If the Jews then meant to ſhare the bleſſings of it, they muſt prepare for them by repentance: they muſt no longer truſt in outward diſtinctions; but, comparing their tempers, and conduct with the law of God, they muſt judge, and condemn themſelves, be ſorry and humbled for their ſins, and turn from them all, to the love and ſervice of God. The word implies a total revolution in the mind, a change in the judgment, diſpoſitions, and affections; another and better bias to the ſoul. Without this repentance they could not underſtand the nature of the kingdom of heaven, (*John*, c. iii. v. 3:) nor could they welcome Chriſt, become his ſubjects, or deſire his ſalvation. The evangeliſt declared the miniſtry of John to be a fulfilment of a prophecy that we have already conſidered, (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 3—5.) John was "a voice," which conveys the mind of the ſpeaker, and then vaniſhes: he declared the mind of God concerning his Son, and then was ſeen no more; for his miniſtry was of ſhort continuance. He proclaimed Chriſt, as the Son of God, the King of Iſrael, and the Saviour of the world; and thus he prepared the way of the Lord, of Jehovah, for ſo the word is in Iſaiah; and he made his paths ſtraight, as pioneers level the road for a monarch, that is about to march his army through deſerts, mountains, or moraſſes: thus John's preaching, by humbling the proud, detecting the hypocrite, counteracting their prejudices, rectifying their judgments, and raiſing their expectations, tended to prepare the Jews for the reception of Chriſt.

V. 4. *And*, &c.] (2 *Kings*, c. i. v. 8, 9.) We need not be very accurate in determining what John's food, and raiment were. His outward garment was made either of camel's hair woven into coarſe rough cloth; or of camel's ſkin prepared with the hair upon it; and this was girded about him with a piece of undreſſed leather. His food, (that is frequently, as may be ſuppoſed,) conſiſted of locuſts; theſe were allowed as clean by the law, and they are often eaten in thoſe parts at this day. To this was added, the honey, which the bees made in the uncultivated parts of the land, and which uſed to be found in great plenty It is ſufficient to obſerve, that this man, who was great in the ſight of the Lord, was very plain, and homely in his attire, and frugal and temperate in his diet; faring as a poor perſon, deſiring neither abundauce nor delicacies, but taking any thing, which came to hand in his retirement, to ſatisfy his wants; being wholly intent on matters of a more important, and ſpiritual nature. As he could live on ſo little, and was ſo inured to hardſhip, he was the more independant on the rich, and great, and might therefore be the more direct, and plain in his reproofs of them; ſo that this ſeems to have had a conſiderable effect in forming the other parts of his character.

V. 5, 6.] Through the operation of God on men's minds, great numbers were induced to reſort to John in the wilderneſs, from all parts of Judea, and from Jeruſalem; ſo that the whole city, and country, as it were, went out to him: and he was eſpecially attended by the inhabitants of thoſe regions, which lay on each ſide the river Jordan, where, after a time, he commonly exerciſed his miniſtry. He became at length ſo celebrated, that the Jews of all ranks, and parties flocked to him: and

7 But when he ſaw many of the Phariſees and Sadducees come to his baptiſm, he ſaid unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

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when they were brought to acknowledge themſelves deſerving of God's wrath, to confeſs their ſins, and to profeſs repentance, and a purpoſe of ſubmitting to Chriſt, and leading a new life, they were baptized by John, in, or at the river Jordan. The law of Moſes preſcribed divers waſhings, or baptiſms, in which water was uſed, in different ways, as an emblem of the purging of the ſoul from the pollution of ſin, in order that the prieſts, or people might attend on God's ſervice with acceptance. By degrees it became cuſtomary in the Jewiſh church to baptize thoſe, who were proſelyted to their religion from the Gentiles, both male, and female, as well as to circumciſe the males: this denoted, that they deemed them unclean in themſelves, and not meet to join the congregation of the Lord, till they were waſhed from the filthineſs of their gentile ſtate. The prophets alſo ſometimes uſed this emblem of the ſoul's being cleanſed from ſin; (*Ezek.* c. xxxvi. v. 25:) and ſome paſſages of the New Teſtament intimate, that both the cleanſing from guilt by the blood of Chriſt, and from pollution by the Spirit of Chriſt were compriſed under this outward ſign; though the latter be more generally intended, (*John.* c. xiii. v. 8—10. 1 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 11. *Tit:* c. iii. v. 5—7.) But though baptiſms had been before in uſe; yet John was ſingular in baptizing all his diſciples, notwithſtanding that they were Jews, and without diſtinction of ſect, or previous character; thereby intimating, that by nature, and practice they alſo were polluted, and could not be admitted amongſt the true people of God, except they were waſhed from their ſins, in the fountain that Chriſt was about to open. (*Zech.* c. xiii. v. 1.) This doubtleſs was done by divine direction: but though his uſe of baptiſm was introductory to the appointment of that ordinance, to be the initiatory ſacrament, and ſeal of the new diſpenſation, as circumciſion had been of the old diſpenſation: yet we muſt not conſider it as exactly the ſame with chriſtian baptiſm; but rather as an inſtitution for the time being, and an introduction to the change, which was gradually to take place, when the old diſpenſation ſhould be abrogated, and the new one ſubſtituted, and openly eſtabliſhed. Baptiſm, as uſed by John, was not intended to ſuperſede circumciſion; for it does not appear, that he baptized any but circumciſed perſons; except he baptized the women amongſt the Jews, which is no where ſaid, though it be probable. We cannot ſuppoſe, that he baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, or that Jeſus was thus baptized: nay the contrary is manifeſt: (*Acts*, c. xix. v. 2, 3:) and probably Chriſt's diſciples did not uſe that peculiar form of chriſtian baptiſm, till after the aſcenſion of their Lord. It is alſo evident, that ſome *at leaſt*, who had received John's baptiſm, received chriſtian baptiſm alſo, when admitted into the church of Chriſt: for it cannot be ſuppoſed, but that ſome of the multitude, who heard Peter on the day of Pentecoſt, had been John's diſciples; yet he exhorted them all to be baptized in the name of Jeſus, and all the 3000, who gladly received the word were thus baptized. (*Acts*, c. ii. v. 38—41.) They were therefore not exactly the ſame ordinance; and inferences from the one reſpecting the other are inconcluſive. It does not appear, that any but adults were baptized by John: for circumciſion ſtill continued in force, as the initiary ordinance, and ſeal of the covenant; and therefore we never read, that he baptized houſholds, as the apoſtles did. Adult Jews profeſſing repentance, and a diſpoſition to become Meſſiah's ſubjects, were the only perſons, as far as we can find, whom John admitted to baptiſm. Water was the outward ſign; and probably it was commonly adminiſtered by immerſion, though that cannot perhaps be ſo fully proved. The word *baptizo* certainly cannot be exactly ſynonymous to *bapto*, which ſignifies to dip, or plunge; this muſt be evident to thoſe, who impartially conſider the various paſſages, in which the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt is deſcribed, by his being poured upon us, poured forth abundantly, &c; and this ſuppoſition is clogged by other difficulties, that are abſolutely inſuperable, as will appear hereafter. It ſeems to be a word borrowed from the Greek authors, ſignifying to plunge in, or bedew with, water, without any exact diſtinction; (which being a diminutive from *bapto* to dip, it might do according to the analogy of the language:) and it was adopted into the ſtyle of ſcripture in a peculiar ſenſe, to ſignify the uſe of water in this ordinance, and various *ſpiritual* matters, which have a relation to it. The uſe of water is eſſential to the ſign, becauſe that is the univerſal purifier: the quantity, or mode of application ſeem to be merely circumſtances, varying as occaſions might require: the inward, and ſpiritual ſignification is exactly the ſame, as that of circumciſion, which is ſpoken of as the circumciſion of the heart; that is regeneration, and ſanctification by the cleanſing power of the Holy Ghoſt: and the Jews were taught by John's uſe of baptiſm, that their outward advantages would never qualify them to enjoy the bleſſings of Meſſiah's kingdom, except their hearts were waſhed from the love, and pollution of ſin by the power of the Holy Ghoſt; as they were by nature polluted, born in ſin, and the children of wrath, even as the Gentiles. Many things peculiarly relative to chriſtian baptiſm, will hereafter come in our way to be diſcuſſed: but this is the view of John's baptiſm, which the writer hath collected from the ſcriptures, for his own ſatisfaction, on a too much diſputed ſubject: and he hopes that he ſhall be allowed to ſpeak his ſentiments, without giving offence to ſuch of his brethren, as differ in judgment from him; as he would only with candour declare the grounds, on which he, and others of his brethren proceed in their opinion, and practice in this matter, without in the *leaſt* cenſuring thoſe, who differ from them: and as he looks upon various important duties, connected with this ordinance, to have been lamentably overlooked and neglected, amidſt the eagerneſs of diſputation about the mode, and ſubjects of the outward adminiſtration of it.

V. 7—10.] The phariſees were the ſtricteſt ſect of

9 And think not to ſay within yourſelves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I ſay unto you. That God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham.

10 And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and caſt into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear: he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and *with* fire:

12 Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

13 Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to

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the Jews, and made the greateſt profeſſion of godlineſs; and the moſt reputable of their ſcribes, and elders belonged to it, ſome of them ſeem to have been decent formaliſts, of tolerable moral characters, but inflated with ſpiritual pride, and full of contempt of others; they laid the chief ſtreſs on external obſervances, often in minute matters, and according to their own traditions, and inventions; and neglecting the weightier matters of the moral law, and the ſpiritual meaning of their legal ceremonies, they dealt much in oſtentatious auſterities, and mortification of the body. But others of them were the moſt deteſtable hypocrites imaginable, who made their pretences to, and reputation for, extraordinary ſanctity, the cloke of the moſt exorbitant avarice, and the occaſion for the moſt enormous oppreſſion, and iniquity. The Sadducees were the ſcornful infidels of the time: they profeſſed to receive ſome, and reject other parts of the ſacred writings; but they paid no proper regard to any of them. They did not believe the reſurrection of the dead; and as they allowed not the exiſtence of angels, or ſpirits, they could not believe the immortality of the ſoul, or the future ſtate of retribution, nay it is hard to conceive, how they could believe the being of a God. Some of them at leaſt ſeem to have been mere philoſophizing atheiſts, and the reſt downright ſceptics, who treated every thing relating to God, and eternity, as doubtful and diſputable, and conſequently with a contemptuous indifference. Whether ſome tranſient conviction, or a regard to their reputation, brought theſe Phariſees, and Sadducees to deſire John's baptiſm, is not certain: but they evidently came with wrong views, and an improper diſpoſition. The Sadducees were as proud of their ſuperior diſcernment, as the Phariſees of their ſuperior ſanctity, and with as little reaſon: but neither of them were prepared, by repentance, and humiliation before God, to welcome the mercy, and ſpiritual bleſſings of the Meſſiah. Inſtead therefore of complimenting their characters, or courting their favour, John plainly and roughly addreſſed them as "a generarion of vipers:" A race of ſubtle, deſigning men, of poiſonous principles, and practice, dangerous to all around them, the genuine children of the old ſerpent, the moſt hopeleſs, and peſtilent part of the nation. He enquired with aſtoniſhment, "who had warned *them* to flee from the wrath to come?" No doubt they deſerved, and were expoſed to the wrath of God, that was about to come upon their nation in this world, and upon all unbelievers in the future and eternal ſtate: but it could hardly be expected that ſuch hypocrites, and infidels would think of fleeing from it, without ſome extraordinary warning. Was this therefore from God? Or was it only from man? However, if they indeed repented, and deſired to be ſheltered by Chriſt from the wrath to come, they might be admitted to his baptiſm: but then they muſt bring forth fruits meet for repentance, in humility, meekneſs, patience, faith, love, equity, truth, mercy, and every good work; in newneſs of life proceeding from newneſs of heart, or the outward ſign would be of no advantage to them. Nor muſt they take any encouragement, or any longer glory, becauſe they were the deſcendants of faithful Abraham: for, though the promiſes were made to him, and to his ſeed: yet God could raiſe up children to Abraham from the very ſtones before their eyes, or from the poor Gentiles, whom they equally diſregarded: ſeeing all true believers, by virtue of their union with Chriſt, would be acknowledged as the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, and made heirs according to the promiſe. Inſtead therefore of expecting to appropriate the bleſſings of Meſſiah's reign, becauſe of their deſcent from Abraham; they muſt be informed, that all ſuch diſtinctions were about to be aboliſhed: God was about to come into his vineyard, and to lay the ax to the root of every tree, which did not bring forth the good fruits of a ſober, righteous, and godly life, the fruits meet for repentance, in order that it might be cut down, and caſt into the fire, without any regard to their external privileges, except as they tended to aggravate their guilt and condemnation; for peculiar puniſhment was about to overtake the Jewiſh nation, and every individual, who did not repent, believe, and obey the goſpel.

V. 11, 12.] John indeed baptized the people with water, calling them to repentance, and making that ordinance their outward profeſſion of it, and the avowed beginning of a new life. But Jeſus, (who would ſhortly appear amongſt them, and who, though he came after John in order of time, was ſo much ſuperior to him in dignity, authority, and excellency, that John was not worthy to unlooſe, or to carry his ſandals, or to perform the loweſt menial ſervice for him,) would baptize all, that believed in him "with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire:" He would communicate to their ſouls the divine Sanctifyer, as purifying water, to waſh away their internal pollutions; and as refining fire to conſume all their droſs, and the remains of their luſts, to kindle in their hearts the holy flame of divine love, and zeal, to illumine their minds with heavenly wiſdom, and to convert their whole ſouls, in due time, into his own pure, and holy nature. At the ſame time, to uſe another emblem, he would come to his profeſſing church, which conſiſted of a few believers mingled with many hypocrites, and wicked per-

Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me?

15 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, Suffer *it to be ſo* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Then he ſuffered him.

16 And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo, a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

ſons, as the farmer comes to his heap of new threſhed corn, with his fan in his hand: and as the farmer eaſily, and exactly ſeparates between the valuable wheat, and the worthleſs chaff, by winnowing the heap; ſo Chriſt, by his ſearching doctrine, his convincing Spirit, his own omniſcience, and his providential diſpenſations, would exactly ſeparate the believers from the unbelievers: and as the farmer gathers the wheat into his granery, and burns up the worthleſs chaff; ſo would Chriſt take care of believers, and execute vengeance on unbelievers. (*Mal:* c. iv. v. 1.) This immediately related to the reception of the pious Jews into the chriſtian church, and the terrible judgments to be executed on the rejected Jewiſh nation: but it is equally applicable to the conſtant tendency of the goſpel, and to the final condition of the righteous and the wicked. The expreſſion, "unquenchable fire," as fully concludes againſt the wicked ever being releaſed from the place of torment; as *their* worm that never dieth doth againſt their being ever annihilated.

V. 13—15.] After John had been ſome time executing his miniſtry, Jeſus came to him to be baptized of him. Being free from ſin, he could not repent, and he needed no forgiveneſs, regeneration, or newneſs of life: He was not capable of thoſe ends of baptiſm, for which it was adminiſtered to others: but he would honour it, as the ordinance of God; and he would uſe it as a ſolemn introduction to his moſt ſacred work, and offices, of which John's teſtimony, the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, and the voice from heaven were ſo many notifications. John, being aware of his divine dignity, and excellency, heſitated to comply with his propoſal of being admitted to his baptiſm, declaring that he needed to be baptized of Chriſt, with the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, and to be purged by him from his ſins; and he could not but be ſurpriſed, that he ſhould apply to him, who was ſo greatly his inferior, his ſervant, and a poor ſinful man! But Jeſus intimated to him, that for this once it was proper, that he ſhould permit it to be ſo; for ſays he, "It becometh *US* to fulfil all righteouſneſs." We never find, that Jeſus ſpake of himſelf in the plural number; and muſt therefore allow, that he meant John alſo, and all God's ſervants in a ſubordinate ſenſe. It became Chriſt, as our Surety, and our example, perfectly to fulfil all righteouſneſs: it becometh us all to walk in God's commandments, and ordinances without exception; and to attend on every divine inſtitution, according to the meaning and intent of it, as long as it continues in force. Thus far Chriſt's example is obligatory *on us:* but as ohn's baptiſm; not being exactly the ſame as chriſtian Japtiſm, is no longer in force; the example only proves, hat chriſtian baptiſm ſhould be honoured, and attended on, but it does not in the leaſt decide any thing about it. This muſt be learned from other ſcriptures, equally with thoſe things, which relate to the Lord's ſupper. For Chriſt's example doth not bind us to do exactly, as he did in every matter; for he was circumciſed, kept the Paſſover, and obſerved the ſeventh day Sabbath, according to the diſpenſation under which he lived.

V. 16, 17.] Others confeſſed their ſins at their baptiſm; but Chriſt went up ſtraightway out of, or from the water. We learn from St. Luke, (*Luke*, c. iii,) that he was praying, when the heavens were opened, &c. A remarkable, and glorious appearance was ſeen in the heavens above their heads, and Jeſus, and John ſaw the Spirit deſcending in the form, and manner of a dove, the emblem of purity, gentleneſs, peace, and love, and thus reſting upon Chriſt; (*John*, c. i. v. 32—34.) It does not appear, whether any of the people were ſpectators of this ſcene, or not. This deſcent of the Spirit upon Chriſt was a token of his being endued with his ſacred influences without meaſure, to qualify his human nature for every part of his mediatorial work, and to be communicated to his people from him, as the Head of the church. (*Iſaiah*, c. xi. v. 2—5. c. lix. v. 20, 21.) At the ſame time a voice was heard from heaven, God the Father himſelf acknowledging Jeſus as his beloved Son, in whoſe perſon, character, righteouſneſs, mediation, &c, he was well pleaſed, and fully ſatisfied: whereby it was intimated, that they, who would find acceptance with the Father, muſt hear, believe, and obey his beloved Son, and aſk all bleſſings in his name, and for his ſake. Thus at Chriſt's baptiſm, there was a manifeſtation of the three perſons in the ſacred Trinity, acting in their proper relations, according to the economy of our redemption. The Father appointing, and ſealing the Son to be the Mediator; the Son ſolemnly accepting the deſignation, and entering upon his work; and the Holy Spirit deſcending on him, to be through his mediation communicated to his people, to apply his ſalvation to their ſouls.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt eminent, and uſeful ſervants of God often grow up in retired ſituations, and exerciſe their miniſtry in places remote from the buſy ſcenes of life: but wherever they are ſtationed, God will bring thoſe to attend upon them, whom he purpoſes to profit by their labour; and he can as eaſily convene large congregations in the deſert, as in populous cities. The world at large, with all its inhabitants, is the kingdom of the wicked one; except as ſome are tranſlated, by the grace of God, from the power of darkneſs, into the kingdom of his dear Son. All theſe ſubjects of the kingdom of heaven, that God

CHAP IV.

Contains Chriſt 1*ſt. Led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs, faſting* 40 *days, tempted by, and victorious over Satan, and miniſtered unto by angels,* 1---11. 2*d. Preaching in Galilee, according to the prophecy of Iſaiah, and the ſame doctrine that John had preached elſewhere,* 12---17. 3*d. Calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John, to follow him,* 18---22. 4*th. Healing many diſeaſes, followed by great multitudes, and acquiring extenſive renown,* 23---25.

hath mercifully ſet up on earth, will ſoon be received into the realms of felicity, where their King now reigns in his glory: but all, that are ſtrangers, or enemies to this deliverance, continue ſubjects of Satan, and will have their portion with their prince in the region of darkneſs, and deſpair. This kingdom of God, and heaven is come nigh to us; but it will not profit us, except it be ſet up in our hearts: nor can we underſtand the nature, excellency, and glory of it, except we be broken in ſpirit with godly ſorrow, humbled in true repentance, and ſo made to hate ſin, as to long for deliverance both from its puniſhment, and pollution. The preachers of ſalvation therefore muſt preface their meſſage of rich mercy, and plenteous redemption, by the miniſtration of condemnation, and by ſhewing ſinners the nature, and neceſſity of repentance, and works meet for repentance. Thus prophets, and apoſtles, as well as John the Baptiſt, have prepared the ways of the Lord, and led ſinners to welcome his ſalvation, and ſubmit to his authority; and thus even the King of glory, when he humbled himſelf to be a Preacher of righteouſneſs, prepared the way for erecting his ſpiritual kingdom, and for rendering himſelf precious to the hearts of his hearers. No modern deviations then from this good old way will be found to be improvements upon it: and if repentance were more fully, and clearly preached, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the world, would not ſo often be pointed out to ſinners in vain; nor would men ſo much neglect, or abuſe the goſpel, as they do, where this is ſlightly, and ſuperficially attended to. But they, that preach repentance, mortification of worldly luſts, and renunciation of worldly intereſts, and indulgences, will commonly have ſucceſs in ſome meaſure proportioned to the degree, in which they exemplify their own doctrine. And if they ſeem as much alive to the purſuit of wealth, or as deſirous of the pleaſures, and decorations of life, as other men are: their declamations will have little influence, for their hearers will conſider their conduct as a comment on their ſermons. Nor can miniſters generally be ſufficiently independant, in order to be faithful to all men, and in all caſes, unleſs they learn to be content with mean accommodations, and to be frugal and ſimple in all their expences. Indeed it is no diſgrace, but an honour to the ſervant of God, to appear as a poor man, and willing to be poor, in his attire, his table, furniture, and every thing belonging to him. They indeed, who have not ſuperior wiſdom, piety, or holineſs, may need external appendages to preſerve them from neglect, and contempt: but the man of God, who is indeed devoted to him, and furniſhed for every good work, hath a more valuable diſtinction, and needs them not. But what a ſmall portion of thoſe, who attend on the moſt faithful preachers, become the true diſciples of Chriſt? Many are attracted by novelty, or go becauſe others do; and many are under tranſient convictions. They attend upon divine ordinances, make confeſſions of their ſins, and profeſs to be diſciples: but they have not the true repentance, and living faith of real chriſtians, and in time of temptation they often fall away: nor can any faithfulneſs of the miniſter entirely prevent this effect of the deceitfulneſs of the human heart.

The ſervant of God muſt not judge of men according to their outward rank, profeſſion, or reputation; but according to their characters, eſtimated by the rule of God's word. No ſorts of perſons are further from the kingdom of heaven, than formaliſts, who are proud of their own ſuppoſed goodneſs; and infidels, who are elated with an idea of their ſuperiority to vulgar prejudices, and of their ſuperlative knowledge, and ſagacity. Little do ſuch men ſuſpect, that they are more emphatically the children of the wicked one, and ſubſerving his cauſe by poiſoning the ſouls of men, than the vileſt of profligates whom they diſdain; or that they are likely to receive ſtill deeper damnation. Loud will be their clamours of bigotry, uncharitableneſs, and fanaticiſm, when they read ſuch declarations: yet they will find them true, except, (which is not likely,) they take warning, and flee from the wrath to come. But let us remember, that all the miſeries, and multiplied triumphs of death, which are the effects of God's diſpleaſure againſt the ſins of men, are entirely diſtinct from, and not worthy to be compared with “the wrath to come,” and that will for ever be “to come,” from which we warn ſinners to flee to Jeſus to deliver them. Happy are they, that take the alarm, and flee for their lives, without loitering, or turn aſide: for whether they have heretofore been phariſees, ſadducees, publicans, or of any other deſcription of the ungodly, they will not be rejected by the gracious Saviour. Yet let us remember to bring forth fruits meet for repentance: otherwiſe our profeſſion of chriſtianity will no more avail us, than the relation of the unbelieving Jews to Abraham did them. The Lord is able to raiſe up true diſciples to Chriſt, from amongſt thoſe, who have not yet heard of his name; and he will never ſpare any man, on account of his notions, ſect, or denomination, who worketh iniquity, nay who doth not work righteouſneſs: for “ſtill the ax lieth at the root of the tree; and every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit ſhall be hewn down, and caſt into the fire”. But our corrupt hearts cannot be made productive of this good fruit, except the regenerating Spirit of Chriſt graft the good word of God upon them: no outward forms can make us clean: no ordinances, by whomſoever adminiſtered, or after whatever mode, can ſupply the want of the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, and of fire: this alone can produce that purity of heart, and thoſe exalted, and holy affections, which uniformly accompany ſalvation. All, that are found in the viſible church, who are deſtitute of

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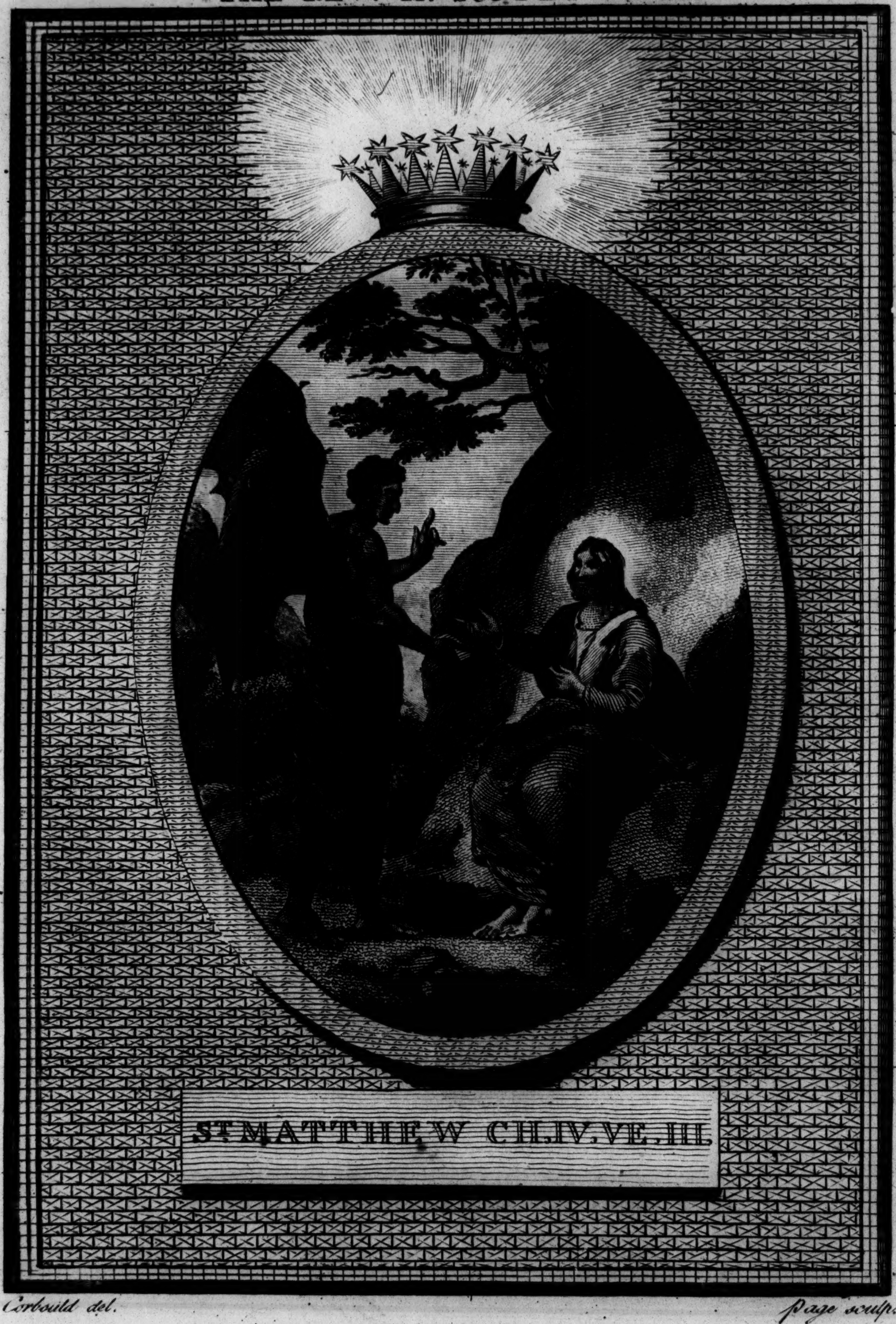

St. MATTHEW CH.IV. VE. III.

Corbould del. *Page sculp.*

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THEN was Jeſus led up of the Spirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had faſted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he

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this *inward* ſeal of the covenant of grace, are but chaff amidſt the Lord's wheat: "his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor:" he employs various methods in this world of ſeparating between true chriſtians, and hypocritical profeſſors; but the grand ſeparation will be in the day of judgment, "when he will gather the wheat into his garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Let us further obſerve, that the moſt eminent ſaints of God, have always been moſt humble; they have had the moſt abaſing thoughts of themſelves, and the moſt exalted apprehenſions of the glory, and excellency of Chriſt; they have felt their need of his atoning blood, and ſanctifying Spirit, more than others; and have deemed the meaneſt place in his ſervice too high, and honourable for them. We need no further proof of this, when we hear him, who was filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb, and who was the greateſt of all, that had been born of woman, declare himſelf unworthy to bear Emmanuel's ſhoes! Let us compare and contraſt his character, and language with thoſe of conceited phariſees, and ſadducees, ancient and modern, and thoſe eſpecially, who ſpend their lives, in derogating from the honours of Chriſt, that they may exalt themſelves: we ſhall then need no aſſiſtance in judging from whence their boaſted light proceeds, and whither it tends. But before honour is humility; yea the Lord honours thoſe, who honour him: and whilſt we admire the ſelf-abaſement of our Surety, in fulfilling all righteouſneſs for our juſtification, even when it made him appear, as if he had been a ſinner; let us learn to copy his example, and to honour God, by worſhipping him in all his inſtitutions, and to ſeek his grace in the uſe of all appointed means. Thus we may wait for the ſupply of the Spirit of Chriſt to our ſouls, to make us fruitful in the works of righteouſneſs, to evince our union with Him, and to be in us the Spirit of adoption, witneſſing with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God, accepted in his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleaſed. But let us remember, that the Spirit of Chriſt reſembles the gentle loving dove, and not any fierce bird of prey: furious conteſts therefore cannot ſpring from his influence, but they baniſh him from our hearts, and aſſemblies; they weaken the evidences of our adoption, and mar our comfort. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance;" and by abounding in theſe we beſt glorify the triune God of our ſalvation, to whoſe ſervice we were devoted, when we were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, to whom be glory for evermore. Amen.

NOTES.

N. B. Good chronologers compute that the preſent date of the year after Chriſt's birth is erroneous, and that he was actually born four years before the time of the Era from which we at preſent calculate; ſo that in fact it is now 1795 years ſince that event. However we here date according to the vulgar Era; and as he was 30 years of age at his baptiſm, we date that event after Chriſt, 26, and proceed upon the ſame reckoning, as near as we can.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1, 2.] After the glorious things recorded in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, we might have expected, that Jeſus would be openly acknowledged as the Meſſiah by the whole Jewiſh nation: but on the contrary a ſcene of another kind opens to our view. Immediately after the deſcent of the Holy Spirit upon Him, "he was led up of the ſame Spirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil." He might be diſpoſed for retirement, in order to pour out his ſoul in prayer, and praiſe, and by faſting and holy exerciſes to prepare for entering upon his moſt arduous work: yet was he eſpecially led forth to the conflict with the devil, the falſe accuſer, the adverſary of God and man: he intended in the wilderneſs to endure his moſt furious, and ſubtle aſſaults, that the ſharp conflict might make way for his moſt glorious victory. Some think, that this was only in ſome deſert near Jordan, and within the promiſed land; but it is more probable, that it was in the wilderneſs of Sinai, where Moſes, and after him Elijah, faſted 40 days, and nights, as types of him. (*Mark.* c. i. v. 12, 13.) Chriſt went forth thither to be tempted: as our Surety, our Champion, our David, He went to meet that great Goliah, that had ſo long defied the armies of the living God, and had never found one able wholly to prevail againſt him: and in his ſucceſs was the fate of all his Iſrael involved. Satan aſſaulted the firſt Adam in Paradiſe, and prevailed with him to eat the forbidden fruit, when he might without offence have regaled his appetite with rich variety: but the ſecond Adam met the enemy in a howling wilderneſs, where he might have his full advantage: and he was pleaſed to ſuſtain by miracle an entire faſt of forty days, and nights, that nothing might interrupt the intereſting conflict. Satan could not but know that this was the Holy One of God, and for what end he came into the world: but from that furious enmity, with which he conſtantly oppoſes the purpoſes of God, though always baffled, he was deſirous of aſſaulting him: perhaps he had ſome preſumptuous expectation of ſucceſs; as he knew that as man Jeſus was like unto us in all things, except ſin; and if he could gain the leaſt advantage over him, the whole plan of redemption would be fruſtrated. As he had therefore put it into the heart of Herod, to attempt murdering Jeſus in his infancy; ſo he now attempted to draw him into ſin: and if he could not do this, yet he ſhould have the helliſh pleaſure of giving him uneaſineſs. For "he ſuffered being tempted:" in proportion to his perfect holineſs, his feelings, (as man,) would be the more diſtreſſing, by the deteſtable ſuggeſtions of the enemy; and that, which preſerved him from defilement, expoſed him to ſuffer from the tempter: but it was ſent in order, that he might have an experimental ſympathy with his people under their temptations, and be able to ſuccour them. We ſuppoſe that ſaid, If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread.

4 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and ſetteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.

6 And ſaith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thyſelf down: for it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.

7 Jeſus ſaid unto him, It is written again, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Satan renewed his temptations, from time to time, during the whole forty days, continually interrupting Chriſt's holy meditations, with his hateful ſuggeſtions, (*Luke*, c. iv. v. 2;) but we are not informed of what paſſed during this ſeaſon. After this long ſuſpenſion, his appetite of hunger again returned, in a place where no ſuſtenance could be procured by any ordinary means: and probably no trial is more acute than that of extreme hunger, without any proſpect of relief. Satan therefore choſe this time for his moſt ſubtle, and vehement aſſault.

V. 3, 4.] Satan ſeems to have before acted as an inviſible tempter, ſuggeſting thoughts to the mind of Chriſt, as he does to thoſe of his people: but now he aſſumed a viſible form, not terrifying, but as a friend, perhaps pretending to be an angel of light. In this aſſumed character, he propoſed to him, that if he were indeed the Son of God, he "ſhould command the "ſtones before him to be made bread." The ſubtlety of the tempter appears in the plauſibility of the temptation. He did not urge him to create a feaſt for indulgence; but merely to change a ſtone into a loaf for his neceſſity, and to ſhew that he was indeed the Son of God: and where was the harm of this, when he was ready to periſh with hunger? Some think, that the temptation was chiefly intended to make him queſtion, whether he were indeed the Son of God: but this is not probable. This ſeems rather to have been aſſumed, as a kind of principle, from which inferences were to be drawn, or about which queries were to be propoſed; in ſomething of the ſame manner, as when Eve was aſſaulted by him. (Note, *Gen.* c. iii. v. 1—5.) He might here addreſs Chriſt, as in a way of ſurpriſe. "What "art thou, the beloved Son of God? And left here to "periſh with hunger? Can it be poſſible? Is this the "love of the Father to thee? Wait no longer on him "for a ſupply, which hath been too long delayed al-"ready, and of which there is no proſpect. The caſe "is urgent: the power inherent in thee, exert thyſelf, "and ſhew thy divinity, by commanding theſe ſtones "to become bread." This ſeems to have been the meaning of the exhortation; but to have wrought a miracle, at the ſuggeſtion of Satan, to ſatisfy the craving of the appetite, would have implied hard thoughts of God, diſtruſt of his providence, and promiſe, and a diſpoſition to leave the direct path of duty, and to uſe improper means of relief; like him, who ſaid, "This evil is of the "Lord, why ſhould we wait for the Lord any longer." We muſt recollect that Chriſt, as man, was bound to obey the whole law; and every thing, which would have been in the leaſt ſinful for us, in ſimilar circumſtances, would have been inconſiſtent with the very end of his coming into the world. It would have been the duty of a prophet in ſuch a ſituation, to have waited on the Lord for ſupport, and not to have attempted working a miracle for his own relief, without ſome immediate intimation from God: and therefore Jeſus would by no means attend to ſuch an inſidious propoſal; but anſwered the tempter, by a pertinent text of ſcripture: (*Deut.* c. viii. v. 3.) The life of man depends on God, and not on his food: though God commonly ſuſtain's life by means of it; yet he can ſuſtain life without food, but food cannot ſuſtain life without his bleſſing. To reſt upon his every word of promiſe, and to obey all his precepts, and thus to commend our lives to his keeping, is our duty; and to ſuffer any extremity, rather than expoſe ourſelves to his wrath by ſin, or queſtion the truth of his word, by which alone our lives and ſouls are ſecured, and on which they muſt live. This therefore repelled the temptation, and the tempter was worſted by the ſword of the Spirit.

V. 5—7.] The devil, finding Chriſt ſo ſtedfaſt in his confidence on the word, love, and providence of God, and deſpairing to prevail againſt him in this way, changed the method of his aſſault. He took him up, and conveyed him, (doubtleſs by his own permiſſion, in whatever way it was effected,) into Jeruſalem, which had long been called the holy city; and there he placed him upon a pinnacle, or battlement of the temple, perhaps on the top of the high porch, or ſteeple, that was at the eaſt end of it: and then he exhorted him, in proof of his being the Son of God, "to caſt himſelf down from thence." This was a public ſituation, and he might thus at once prove himſelf the promiſed Meſſiah; and it would alſo, as the tempter meant to inſinuate, be the higheſt evidence of his confidence in God, for which he was ſo eminent. And as he obſerved, that Chriſt had produced ſcripture to refute his former temptation, he backed this with a quotation from the ſcripture: (*Pſ:* xci. v. 11, 12.) Whether this were underſtood as a promiſe to believers, or a prophecy relating to Chriſt, Satan ſuggeſted, that it equally enſured his ſafety: for if angels are charged with believers, to keep them from ſo much as daſhing their foot againſt a ſtone; much more would the Son of God be born up by them, that he ſhould not be daſhed in pieces by the fall. But he left out the words, "in all "thy ways," knowing that an oſtentatious caſting himſelf from this battlement was none of the ways marked out for Chriſt, (or for any believer,) in which he might depend upon divine protection. Satan could tempt Chriſt to caſt himſelf down, but he could not caſt him down, 8 Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And ſaith unto him, All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.

10 Then ſaith Jeſus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and miniſtered unto him.

12 Now when Jeſus had heard that John was caſt into priſon, he departed into Galilee;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the ſea-coaſt, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying,

15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the ſea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 The people which ſat in darkneſs ſaw great light; and to them, which ſat in the region and ſhadow of death, light is ſprung up.

17 From that time Jeſus began to preach,

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though he had carried him up: for his power was limited. Perhaps he even preſumed, that he ſhould induce Jeſus in this way to terminate his own life: however it would have been a needleſs diſplay of his being under the protection of God, and a requiſition of a needleſs miraculous interpoſition in his behalf. Jeſus therefore anſwered him by another quotation of ſcripture, (*Deut.* c. vi. v. 16;) which plainly forbids men to tempt the Lord God.† Some contend, that the expreſſion denotes diffidence, rather than preſumption, and they produce ſeveral texts to prove it: but the meaning in every place ſeems to be, "putting the power, truth, and love of "God to an unneceſſary trial," refuſing to believe him, without further evidence, than he choſe to give; dictating to him, what he ſhould do; queſtioning whether he could do this, or the other, and reſolving not to be ſatisfied that he could, unleſs he did; neglecting proper means, running into needleſs danger, making improper requiſitions, expecting unwarranted interpoſitions. Thus, had Chriſt caſt himſelf from the temple, it would have been a ſort of refuſal to believe former atteſtations, that he was the Son of God, except it were further proved by his miraculous preſervation. He would have put himſelf without neceſſity into circumſtances of extreme danger, and then have expected a divine interpoſition, for which in ſuch a caſe he could have no warrant: and this would have been "to tempt the Lord," and a violation of the text adduced, in the plain meaning of it. St. Luke mentions this temptation laſt; but Matthew ſeems to have been more obſervant of the order of time, in his narration.

V. 8—11.] The devil ſeems now to have deſpaired of ſucceſs by any covert, plauſible temptation; he therefore reſolved openly to make one bold effort, grounding all his hope of ſucceſs on the vaſtneſs of the recompence, which he meant to propoſe, as the price of the tranſgreſſion. To give the better colour to his artifice, he took the Lord Jeſus to the top of an exceeding high mountain, and thence ſhewed him the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. This muſt have been an illuſion upon the imagination, over which ſatan ſeems to have peculiar influence: for it is naturally impoſſible that all the kingdoms of the world, &c, could be ſeen at once; as by far the greateſt part of them muſt have been beneath the viſible horizon. However they were preſented to the mind of Chriſt, as if he had ſeen them with his eyes: with all the wealth, magnificence, honour, &c, which appear glorious in the eyes of men. And Satan impudently pretended, that all theſe were abſolutely at his diſpoſal, and that he was ſo pleaſed with Jeſus, that he was ready to put him into immediate poſſeſſion of them, provided he would do him homage for them, by one *ſingle* proſtration, and *tranſient* act of worſhip. Doubtleſs ſatan is permited to uſe worldly things as his baits, with which to allure his votaries: but nothing could be more audaciouſly falſe, than to pretend that the Lord had receded from his providential government of the world, that he might abſolutely diſpoſe of them, as he pleaſed; eſpecially as he ſpake to him, by whom kings reign: and nothing could be more arrogant, than to require the incarnate Son of God to worſhip him. Whatever diſguiſe this ambitious ſpirit had before aſſumed, (for we ſuppoſe this to have been the great leader of the whole army of apoſtate angels,) he was now made manifeſt, and his diabolical deſigns alſo: Chriſt therefore addreſſed him by his name, "Satan," the adverſary of God, and man, and bid him depart immediately; for it was written, "thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, "and him only ſhalt thou ſerve:" (*Deut.* c. vi. v. 13. c. x. v. 20:) for Chriſt ſpake as man, to whom it was abſolutely forbidden to worſhip any other, but God only. Thus the great enemy was baffled, and left the Redeemer, ceaſing for a ſeaſon to renew his temptations. And then holy angels came, as it were, to congratulate him on his victory, to do him honour, and to miniſter to his wants.

V. 12—17.] Not long after John had baptized Chriſt, he gave offence to Herod the Tetrarch, (of whom hereafter,) and being caſt into priſon, he terminated his miniſtry, and ſoon after ended his ſhort, but uſeful life. It is evident, that Jeſus had entered upon his miniſtry, and become eminent before John was caſt into priſon. (*John*, c. iii. v. 24.) Yet he at that time began his work more fully, in the northern part of the land. He had perhaps been at Jeruſalem, at ſome of the ſolemn feaſts, when this account was brought to him; and he and to ſay, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 And Jeſus, walking by the ſea of Galilee, ſaw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the ſea: for they were fiſhers.

19 And he ſaith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men.

20 And they ſtraightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he ſaw other two brethren, James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ſhip with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ſhip and their father, and followed him.

23 And Jeſus went about all Galilee, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of ſickneſs and all manner of diſeaſe among the people.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all ſick people that were taken with divers diſeaſes and torments, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed with devils, and thoſe which were lunatic, and thoſe that had the palſy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jeruſalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

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immediately departed for Galilee; and then leaving his habitation at Nazareth, (Joſeph perhaps being dead, as we read no more of him,) he took up his ordinary abode at Capernaum, a city upon the borders of the two lots, aſſigned to the tribes of Zabulon and Nephthalim, upon the coaſt of the ſea of Galilee, or Tiberias. This was done in fulfilment of Iſaiah's prophecy, (*Note*, c. ix. v. 1, 2:) the prophets foretold events, becauſe they were certainly appointed to come to paſs; and Chriſt had an eye to the prophecies in his conduct. Thus in this remote corner of the land, in Galilee of the Gentiles, that is bordering upon them, where the greateſt darkneſs had prevailed; ſo that it was as the region of the ſhadow of death, the glorious light of the goſpel ſprung up, and ſhone forth; when Jeſus began to preach the ſame doctrine, as John had done in the other end of the land. (*Note*, c. iii. ver. 1, 2.)

V. 18—22.] Jeſus had before been acknowledged as the Meſſiah by ſome of theſe perſons; but they had not been called from their ordinary employments to follow him conſtantly, with a view to the miniſtry, and apoſtleſhip. (*John*, c. i. v. 35—42.) They were all fiſhermen. Simon and Andrew were brethren, and partners, and were employed in caſting their net: but he called them to leave it, and to follow him; and he aſſured them, they ſhould be fiſhers of men: they would be employed in bringing men out of the world and its vanities, to Chriſt and ſalvation, by means of the goſpel; even as they had been, in bringing the fiſhes out of the ſea, with their nets; and they would need the ſame addreſs, ſelf-denial, endurance of hardſhips, aſſiduity, regard to times and opportunities, patience, &c, which they had been uſed before to exerciſe. Influenced by his grace they followed him without delay. And going onward he ſaw two other brethren of the ſame occupation, who were mending their nets, (for they were all induſtrious;) and at his call they alſo left all, even their aged father, to follow him, truſting in providence for a precarious ſubſiſtence in this new employment. Zebedee might be a diſciple, though not called to this ſervice, but left to continue in his former occupation.

V. 23—25.] Jeſus, having got theſe attendants, not from the ſchools, or the palaces of Jeruſalem, but from the fiſher-boats of Galilee, went about preaching the goſpel in their ſynagogues, or places of worſhip, ſomething like our pariſh churches, of which we ſhall have an opportunity of ſpeaking hereafter. Wherever he went, he confirmed his divine miſſion by a variety of benevolent miracles, which were emblems of the healing efficacy of his doctrine, and the influences of the Spirit, which accompanied it. So that his fame ſpread abroad into the adjacent region of Syria, as well as into all the parts of the land of Iſrael: multitudes therefore brought their ſick unto him, and he healed them all, at the ſame time inſtructing them in the way of ſalvation. We ſhall have a better opportunity of diſcuſſing many ſubjects, relating to theſe diſeaſes, poſſeſſions, lunatics, &c, when we come to particular inſtances, and will therefore at preſent poſtpone the further conſideration of them: only obſerving, that this beneficent diſplay of his divine power, both marked the gracious deſign of Chriſt's undertaking, and excited the attention of the people to his doctrine.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Retirement, faſting, meditation, and devotion are proper preparatives for, and attendants on the important work of the miniſtry; and they, who are led by the Spirit, to take this office upon them, will ſeek communion with, and a bleſſing from, the Lord, in the uſe of ſuch means. But we need not wonder, if, when we peculiarly ſeek to commune with God, we ſhould be more than ever expoſed to the temptations of the devil. That ſubtle enemy often leaves the negligent, and ſlothful at reſt; but when we ſeek to glorify God, and do good, or to enjoy communion with him; he will be ſure to aſſault us, as far as he is permitted: and the Lord is often pleaſed to permit him, either to counterbalance our comforts, and the honour put upon us, or to prove the reality and power of our graces. Satan alſo knows how to avail himſelf of

CHAP. V.

Begins Chriſt's Sermon on the mount, and contains 1ſt. The beatitudes, or the bleſſedneſs, which he declared to belong to ſuch, as poſſeſſed certain holy diſpoſitions of heart, 1---12. 2d. Exhortations, and warnings to his diſciples, as the ſalt of the earth, and the light of the world, 13---16. 3d. A declaration, that he came to fulfil, and eſtabliſh the honour, and authority of the law: a warning to men not to diſpenſe with obedience to its leaſt commandments, in

our outward circumſtances; and whether we be full or hungry, he can graft his temptations upon them. The Lord could, if he ſaw good, ſuſpend the cravings of our appetites: but as this is not his ordinary method of dealing with us, they are guilty of preſumption, who attempt ſuch degrees of abſtinence, as render their appetites more unruly, and thus expoſe themſelves to temptation: yet the trial of our faith, and love conſiſts in bearing patiently the cravings of nature, rather than remove them by committing any ſin. Satan is too artful to aſſault at firſt the eſtabliſhed believer, in the full exerciſe of faith, and love, with temptations to evident, and groſs iniquities. He is moſt dangerous *to them*, when moſt plauſible; and when his temptations ſeem to be good and friendly hints, tending to ſomething profitable, without evident criminality. We ought not indeed to conclude ourſelves the children of God, without ſcriptural evidence: therefore Satan often tempts men to unbelief in a ſpecious manner; and though they have evidently the Spirit of adoption, and have ſcriptural proof of their converſion; yet they muſt ſtill doubt upon ſome vain, and frivolous pretence. He will ſuggeſt to the poor, or afflicted believer, that if he were indeed the child of God, ſurely he would not be left to ſuch ſufferings, or to experience ſuch ſtraits: he will inſinuate hard thoughts of God, as if he were unkind, or unfaithful to his promiſes: he will affright the mind with gloomy proſpects of ſtill greater difficulties: he will repreſent the way of truſting in the Lord, with ſcrupulous conſcientiouſneſs, as leading to beggary: he will by his emiſſaries perſuade men, that it is a deluſion, that ſome compliances muſt be made, ſome deviations admitted, or elſe they muſt ſtarve: or he will perſuade the chriſtian to venture on ſome convenient, or gainful ſin, becauſe he is a child of God, and there is no danger of his being caſt off for it. In theſe, and numberleſs other ways he tempts believers to impatience, diſtruſt, or ſinful expedients of deliverance from trouble; and, in oppoſition to their principles, to prefer ſin to ſuffering. And having a party within them, they too often liſten to his ſoothing flatteries, and are induced to diſhonour their profeſſion, or at leaſt to honour it leſs, than they ought to do. But the ſword of the Spirit is that warranted weapon, which Satan cannot ſtand againſt; and our wiſdom is to anſwer all the ſuggeſtions of him, and his agents, with "Thus it is written." Let God be true, and every man a liar: our dependance is wholly on the Lord; his word of promiſe is our ſtable ſupport, his precept is our infallible rule. By theſe men live; and whilſt we lean on an expreſs promiſe, and obey the plain precept, we muſt be ſafe, whatever appearances may be againſt us. Our Father knoweth what things we have need of; and ſooner all nature ſhall recede from it's courſe, than any of his promiſes ſhall fail of accompliſhment.

But if Satan ſees men thus ſtaying their hearts on God in ſtedfaſt faith, and adhering to their duty in the midſt of difficulties, determined rather to ſuffer, than to ſeek relief by ſin: he knows how to change his ground, and to tempt them, under colour of honouring the Lord by truſting in him, to neglect proper means, or to thruſt themſelves uncalled into dangers, and difficulties, expecting the Lord to help them out. And if the tempter, or his agents, perceive men to be attached to the word of God, they can plauſibly back their ſuggeſtions by texts, which *ſeem* to give countenance to ſuch unwarranted confidence. The Lord will provide, and therefore the believer need not defraud, or break the ſabbath, in order to a maintenance; but Satan will tempt him further to infer, that he may be negligent, improvident, or extravagant; and that even in that caſe the Lord hath engaged to provide for him! Our God will certainly keep his children from final apoſtacy; and therefore they need not be dejected by the feeling of their own weakneſs, or by the proſpect of ſtrong temptations: but the enemy will ſuggeſt, that they need not watch and pray, that they may venture into perilous ſituations; that they may oſtentatiouſly court difficulty, and thruſt themſelves into danger, and then expect God to preſerve them. Satan, and his inſtruments have a peculiar advantage in ſuch caſes, by partial, or diſtorted quotations of ſcripture, or ſuggeſtions of them to the mind, when the comfort, or privilege is ſeparated from the character or duty annexed. The believer ſhall be preſerved *in all his ways:* by leaving out ſuch a concluding ſentence, chriſtians are often ſeduced *out of their way*, and expect to be preſerved in places, and companies where they have no buſineſs: and many perſons are deluded into a falſe perſuaſion that they are believers, by ſuch half quotations, or ſuggeſtions. But let all men beware of thus mangling ſcripture; and be upon their guard againſt thoſe, who produce part of a text, and leave out ſome emphatical words, which contradict the end for which they quoted it. Godly men may do this in the heat of argument, or through inattention; but they follow a hateful precedent, and it tends to great miſchief, and is a powerful engine in the hands of thoſe who oppoſe the truth. Let us alſo recollect that the tempter has no objection to holy places, as the ſcenes of his aſſaults; nay, he often chooſes them for the ſake of plauſibility: but he delights in high places, to which he would gladly exalt thoſe, of whoſe labours he is afraid, that he might caſt them down with the more fatal fall: and he peculiarly urges men to preſumption, and oſtentation. The abuſe made of ſcripture ſhould not induce us to neglect it, but to reſcue it from perverſions, and by plain texts, uſed in their obvious meaning, to anſwer temptations grounded on miſapplication. We ſhould ever remember, that we truſt to the Lord, when we expect his protection in the path of duty; but tempt him, if we willfully deviate from it, preſuming on his care of us.

The believer need not be diſcouraged by the moſt horrible temptations to infidelity, blaſphemy, ſuicide, or *themſelves, or others; an encouragement to obey it, and teach it to others; and an avowal, that the righteouſneſs of his ſubjects muſt be far ſuperior to that of the Scribes, and Phariſees,* 17---20. *4th. Several commandments of the law vindicated from the corrupt gloſſes of the Jewiſh teachers; ſpiritually expounded; and enforced by prohibitions of divorces, raſh and profane ſwearing, revenge, &c, and by exhortations to ſelf-denial, purity, peace, love of enemies, and univerſal holineſs,* 21---48.

any other dreadful crime: as he ſhould remember that Chriſt himſelf was tempted to ambition, oſtentation, and the worſhip of Satan himſelf. The more ſuch ſuggeſtions pain us, the leſs likely they are to defile us; even as the bad language, which wounds our ears, and grieves our hearts, does not pollute us. Satan's temptations are no further defiling, than as they light upon that which is congenial to them in our hearts: but he hath ſo great a part in us, that they will generally have enough of this effect *in us*, to humble us; but this ſhould not cauſe us to conclude any thing againſt our adoption, whilſt we hate, and reject them, with the prevailing purpoſe of our minds. By experience, long obſervation, and deep penetration, this great enemy knows how powerfully the proſpect of authority, honour, and greatneſs, with ſuch glories, as the kingdoms of the earth contain, attract the minds of men. It was indeed a vain preſumption in him to ſuppoſe, that the holy heart of Chriſt could be thus influenced: or that he could be induced to believe, that any creature had the diſpoſal of theſe things; or that he would commit idolatry for the ſake of them! But we are all by nature prone to ſeize on ſuch ſuppoſed advantages, to forget, that the Lord alone diſpoſes of them; to miſtake theſe phantoms and illuſions of the imagination for ſubſtantial good, and to render Satan any ſervice, that may be required as the price of obtaining them. Alas, we find but few men who can decidedly reject ſuch baits! Yet what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Conſcious therefore of our weakneſs we ſhould be thankful to be kept out of the way of ſuch temptations, and pray that we may be ſo: many a promiſing profeſſor has given up religion for a very ſmall portion of the world; and many a believer has been ſore crippled, by hearkening to ſuch propoſals. Let us then learn to beware of covetouſneſs, and ambition, to ſtore our minds with the precious words of God; and to remember to worſhip the Lord, and ſerve him alone, and not to attempt dividing our heart between him and mammon, which will be as ruinous as more groſs idolatry. Where temptations are ſtrong, and the evil propoſed evident, we muſt not parley for a moment: for the ſoul, that deliberates is already almoſt vanquiſhed.

Whilſt we admire the condeſcenſion, and patience of the incarnate Son of God, in ſuffering himſelf to be thus conveyed from place to place by this foul fiend, that as our Surety he might conquer him: let us learn to copy his example, and to purſue his victories, taking encouragement from the conſideration, that our exalted Redeemer knows what ſore temptations mean, and that he ſuffered being tempted, that he might be able to ſuccour them that are tempted. Let us obſerve the honourable iſſue of his conflict: how angels miniſtered to him, who refuſed Satan's counſel to ſupply his own wants; and how all power in heaven, and earth are given to him, who refuſed the proffer of all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them. If we reject Satan's baits, and keep on our way, the Lord will give his angels charge over us likewiſe: if we reſiſt the devil, ſtedfaſt in the faith, he will flee from us alſo; and if we refuſe honours and preferments purchaſed by ſin, we ſhall obtain a kingdom in heaven that cannot be moved. Let us then fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

Our ſervices, and trials are alike ſhort. When one inſtrument is laid aſide, the Lord will call forth others; and when ſuch as have been uſeful are diſabled, or taken to their reſt, we ſhould redouble our diligence in the cauſe of God. Thoſe places are highly favoured, where the pure Goſpel is preached: then the people, who once ſat in darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, ſee a great light: may all ſuch walk in the light, as the children of the light; and may that bleſſed light be vouchſafed to all the regions of the earth. All the preachers of the Goſpel of the kingdom muſt deliver the ſame meſſage, calling all men to repentance, that they may ſhare the bleſſings, and bring forth the fruits of ſalvation. Next to the duties of religion, honeſt induſtry is moſt valuable: and they are more likely to become uſeful miniſters of Chriſt, who have ſpent their youth in laborious ſelf-denying occupations; than they, who profeſſing to be ſtudents, waſte moſt of their time in worldly pleaſures, and in contracting habits of diſſipation, ſloth, delicacy, and ſelf-indulgence: and even ſhepherds, huſbandmen, or builders may ſtand as fair to take good care of the Lord's flock, huſbandry, or building, as theſe fiſhers to become fiſhers of men; provided he is pleaſed to call them to it. However let none deſpiſe inſtruction, learning, or preparation for the miniſtry: Chriſt himſelf became the tutor of thoſe, whom he ſent forth to preach his goſpel; and having taught them heavenly wiſdom from his own lips, he gave them neceſſary human learning by miracle, that they might be fully qualified for their work. When he ſpeaks to the heart, men leave all, and follow him: and even the demand of parents to our care and attention is ſubordinate to his right to our ſervices, and to be relinquiſhed, if he commands. When miniſters are not employed in caſting their nets, they may be occupied in mending them: and they will find work for all their time, and abundant need of all their patience, and aſſiduity, if they are devoted to the Lord. We do not now experience the Saviour's miraculous healing power to our bodies; but if we are cured by medicine, the praiſe is equally his due: and he is the Phyſician of our ſouls, and if we apply to him, and follow his directions, he will certainly at length perfectly cure all our maladies. We cannot draw others to attend the goſpel, by miracles of love: but if we abound in acts of ordinary charity, we ſhall recommend the truth, and perhaps many may in this way be induced to attend on that word, whereby their ſouls will be healed of their ſpiritual lunacy, and Satan

CHAP. V.

AND ſeeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain: and when he was ſet, his diſciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, ſaying,

3 Bleſſed *are* the poor in ſpirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Bleſſed *are* they that mourn: for they

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diſpoſſeſſed, who now holds them captive at his will; and thus the name of our God and Saviour will be glorified by us, and others have to bleſs him on our behalf.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1, 2.] At the cloſe of the laſt chapter we left the divine Redeemer ſurrounded with multitudes, and healing their diſeaſes: here we find him inſtructing them in the great concerns of their ſouls. He preached to them the goſpel of the kingdom; and repentance was the firſt ſubject, that he inſiſted on: this he fully diſcuſſed in the following practical ſermon, which is the longeſt public diſcourſe of Chriſt, that is written for our inſtruction: and I ſhall endeavour, as we proceed, to ſhew the uſe of every part of it, in connexion with, and ſubſerviency, to thoſe great doctrines of ſalvation, that are in other places more plainly ſtated. He had before, (as he often did afterwards,) preached in their ſynagogues; but probably no building could contain the multitudes, that he now ſaw around him: and therefore he aſcended a mountain, for his preſence rendered, and ſtill doth render, every place holy ground. Being thus elevated above the people, he ſat down, according to the cuſtom of the Jewiſh teachers, and in that poſture he inſtructed them. His diſciples, or they whom he had called to a more conſtant attendance on him, ſat next him, and the multitude around them: but though he expounded that law, or ſeveral parts of it, which had been delivered from Mount Sinai; yet no bounds were fixed about this mountain, nor any terrors to drive men to a diſtance; for he taught the law, as Mediator, and in ſubſerviency to the goſpel of ſalvation. He ſeems to have immediately addreſſed the diſciples, but in the hearing, and with reference to the caſes, of the multitude: and it ſhould be obſerved, that the apoſtles were not yet appointed; ſo that we muſt not reſtrict the exhortations given, to them, and their office. Thus ſeated, the divine Teacher, with the utmoſt gravity, ſolemnity, and deliberation, and ſo as to be heard by all the company, opened his mouth, and taught them as follows.

V. 3. *Bleſſed*, &c.] Expoſitors generally obſerve, that theſe beatitudes, as they are called, were calculated to rectify the miſtaken notions, and expectations of the Jews, reſpecting the kingdom of the Meſſiah: but as all their prejudices originated from thoſe corrupt propenſities, which were common to them with other men; ſo they are equally adapted to remove our falſe notions of excellency, honour, and felicity. All men ſeek happineſs: but none, except thoſe, who are taught by the Spirit of God according to his written word, know wherein it conſiſts, or how it may be obtained, and enjoyed. Theſe may therefore be called the chriſtian paradoxes; as they place happineſs in ſuch diſpoſitions, and circumſtances, as men generally deem incompatible with it. All the declarations of ſcripture to this effect have reference to our ſtate, and character, as ſinners: but ſome point out thoſe privileges, by which we become entitled to happineſs; (*Pſ:* xxxii. v. 1:) others thoſe diſpoſitions, or that conduct, which is conducive to, or connected with the enjoyment of it. Such ſhort aphoriſms muſt want explication; and they commonly admit of ſome limitations, according to other parts of ſcripture. In general it may be obſerved, that theſe do not refer to *natural* diſpoſitions, that may bear ſome reſemblance to thoſe intended; but to holy diſpoſitions, produced by divine grace rectifying the obliquities of fallen nature: and that where one of them really exiſts, all the others do, though perhaps not equally prominent. In the firſt place Chriſt declared the poor in ſpirit happy. This doth not mean the poor in worldly circumſtances excluſively, or thoſe that embrace voluntary poverty, which many have done out of a proud phariſaical ſpirit: nor does it mean the mean-ſpirited, the abject, and grovelling: but ſuch as are humble. and lowly in the frame of their minds. We are all poor in reſpect of God, and heavenly things; deſtitute of righteouſneſs, holineſs, ſtrength, and wiſdom; deep in debt without any thing to pay; under condemnation, fooliſh, ignorant, enſlaved, helpleſs, polluted, and vile. Yet few know this to be the caſe with them; amidſt all this deep poverty, they are of a haughty, ſelf-ſufficient, and independant ſpirit, and this precludes them from obtaining relief, and being made partakers of the unſearchable riches of Chriſt. Happy then is that man who knows, and is willing to know, how poor he is; who feels his indigence, dependance, and unworthineſs; who is abaſed, humbled, and aſhamed before God, as a mean, guilty, polluted, weak, fooliſh, worthleſs ſinner, that cannot claim or purchaſe ſalvation, but muſt be a beggar, and a debtor to grace for it, and all, that pertains to it. If this man be rich, learned, or noble, his heart will be weaned from dependance on ſuch diſtinctions, and rendered lowly, courteous, and affable: if he be poor he will be patient, contented, and thankful. He is prepared for exerciſing repentance, and faith in Chriſt, and will gladly welcome his ſalvation, and give up every thing, that he may enter the kingdom of heaven. He has the temper of the kingdom, and is prepared for the obedience, and privileges of it; and all the bleſſings of it are his, certainly, excluſively, and eternally; they are provided for, and appropriated to ſuch perſons, and none but they are prepared to value, ſeek, accept of, or enjoy them. They are therefore happy in the earneſt, and hope of heaven; and their humble, and lowly frame of mind tends to a peaceful enjoyment of life, and to confidence in, and communion with God, and the participation of the conſolations of his holy Spirit.

V. 4. *Mourn*, &c.] The next bleſſing is by the Lord Jeſus declared to belong to thoſe, that mourn; not thoſe, who *have mourned*, but thoſe who *are mourning*. The world deems the gay, the diſſipated, the jovial, and the proſperous happy; and men turn aſide from religion as a miſery, becauſe of the mourning connected with it; and the Jews expected nothing but feſtivity, and carnal re-ſhall be comforted.

5 Bleſſed *are* the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth.

6 Bleſſed *are* they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled.

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joicing, under the reign of the Meſſiah: but when he came he pronounced the mourners happy. All kinds of mourning cannot be intended, "for the ſorrow of the world "worketh death:" many are afflicted, and grow hardened under it; many "ſorrow as men without hope," and ſpend their lives in rebellious murmurs, and die of very vexation, or become their own executioners. The mourning, that ſprings from poverty of ſpirit, brokenneſs of heart, and tenderneſs of conſcience, is eſpecially intended. A ſerious conſiderate diſpoſition, a readineſs to recollect, confeſs, and be ſorry for ſin, with that godly ſorrow, that worketh true repentance: an habitual watchfulneſs over the preſent temper, and conduct, as well as a frequent humble recollection of paſt offences, producing remorſe of conſcience, and ſelf-diſplacency, and a continual dependance on God's mercy in Chriſt Jeſus for acceptance, and an application for his ſanctifying Spirit to cleanſe away the remaining evil, that is mourned over, ſeem primarily intended. But afflictions, and frequent mourning under the Lord's correcting rod, as being far more ſalutary than proſperity; as pledges of his love, and means of humiliation, and ſanctification, are included: and when they are properly ſubmitted to, and improved, they tend to bleſſedneſs. And finally a diſpoſition to ſympathize in the ſorrows, and troubles of our fellow chriſtians, and fellow ſinners may alſo be meant. Such mourners as theſe are happy: their very tears, and ſighs have pleaſure mixed with them, and prepare them for conſolation: they ſhall be comforted with a ſenſe of God's pardoning mercy, and with peace, hope, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; and thus they ſhall anticipate the everlaſting conſolation prepared for them, when God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

V. 5. *Meek*, &c.] (*Pſ:* xxxvii. v. 11.) Humiliation before God, indifference about the world, ſorrow for ſin, and a ſucceſſion of trials, and afflictions, ſoften the heart, and render it meek, i. e. gentle, forbearing, forgiving, pliant, teachable, and ſubmiſſive; which ſeems to be the diſpoſition intended in this beatitude. There is a natural quietneſs of ſpirit, ſpringing from love of eaſe, defect of ſenſibility, and firmneſs, and the predominancy of other paſſions, which muſt not be miſtaken for evangelical meekneſs. It is of a timid nature, is eaſily deterred from good, and perſuaded to evil; it leads to criminality in one extreme, as impetuoſity of ſpirit does in another; it is often found in ungodly men; and ſometimes forms the grand defect in the character of pious perſons, as in the caſe of Eli, and Jehoſhaphat. Divine grace operates in rendering ſuch men more firm, reſolute, and vigorous, as it doth in rendering men of an oppoſite temper, more pliant, and quiet. The meekneſs to which the bleſſing is annexed, is not conſtitutional, but gracious; and men of the moſt vehement, impetuous, irraſcible, and implacable diſpoſitions, by looking to Jeſus through the grace of God, learn to curb their anger, to ceaſe from reſentment, to avoid giving offence, by injurious words and actions; ready to make conceſſions, or to forgive injuries; they become gradually more teachable, guidable, patient of counſel, and contradiction, and calm in their ſpirit, and conduct, from a principle of conſcience, and in the exerciſe of faith, and prayer. Whatever a man's previous diſpoſition may have been, this meekneſs, which has regard both to the authority of the law, and to the grace of the goſpel, entitles him to the bleſſing. The temper itſelf is that of happineſs: ſubmiſſion, acquieſcence, peace, and love are its eſſence; contention, murmurs, and a thouſand miſchiefs and miſeries are avoided by it: and it is ſaid that the meek ſhall inherit the earth. This is ſpoken with reference to the promiſed land, the type of heaven, of which this meekneſs proves the poſſeſſor an Heir, and for which it forms an eſſential qualification. But it is alſo true, and implied, that the meek, however poor in the world, have more actual comfort in it, than any other perſons, as if the whole of it were their inheritance: they are more beloved, and reſpected in their families and connexions; and are commonly left more undiſturbed by their neighbours; they have more peace of conſcience, tranquillity of mind, communion with God, and conſolation from his Spirit, than other men: and facts in general contradict the declamations of thoſe, who pretend that ſuch a temper and conduct will expoſe a man to intolerable injuries and evils in the world.

V. 6. *Hunger*, &c.] The appetites of hunger and thirſt are univerſally felt to be moſt craving, and uneaſy, when not ſatisfied: they cannot be amuſed, bribed, or put off with any other object, than meat, and drink; and this muſt be had, if poſſible, at any price, and by any hardſhip or peril. The deſire of riches, honours, pleaſures, knowledge, &c, when very vehement, are often deſcribed by ſuch metephors; which denote both men's eagerneſs in ſeeking, and pleaſure in obtaining the deſired object. But they, who hunger, and thirſt after theſe things, or ſuch like, can only obtain a temporary gratification, and are liable to eternal diſſatisfaction. They only are happy, who hunger, and thirſt after righteouſneſs: that is after God, and his favour, image, and the holy felicity to be enjoyed in his ſervice; who know the nature, excellency, and value of ſuch bleſſings; who chooſe, and ſeek them in the firſt place; who ſubordinate all other intereſts, and pleaſures to them; who will not put up with any thing ſhort of them; who value everything in proportion as it tends to them; and are diſſatisfied with every attainment hitherto made, and are more grieved, that they are no more holy, than becauſe they are poor, ſick, or neglected; and who long above all things for perfect holineſs and happineſs in the favour, and ſervice of God. The new covenant is ſo conſtituted, that ſuch perſons cannot fail to ſeek, and find the righteouſneſs they hunger, and thirſt after; for the Spirit that excited this holy appetite will lead them to Chriſt, that it may be ſatisfied: they will accept of his ſalvation, and receive from his fulneſs of grace; they will obtain ſome of their deſired felicity on earth; and when all other

7 Bleſſed *are* the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy.

8 Bleſſed *are* the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God.

9 Bleſſed *are* the peace-makers: for they ſhall be called the children of God.

10 Bleſſed *are* they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Bleſſed are ye, when *men* ſhall revile

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perſons will be torn from the objects of their choice, they "will be filled," and be as firmly eſtabliſhed in the enjoyment of the divine love, and as entirely perfected in the participation of his holineſs, as they can deſire; and this ſhall continue for ever.

V. 7. *Merciful*, &c.] Connected with the preceding gracious diſpoſitions is that of mercy, or compaſſion, tenderneſs, and love: an averſion to every thing harſh, cruel, oppreſſive, or injurious; a propenſity to pity, alleviate, or remove the miſeries of mankind; an unwillingneſs to increaſe perſonal emolument, or indulgence, by rendering others uneaſy; a willingneſs to forego perſonal eaſe, intereſt, or gratification, to make them eaſy and happy: this ſeems the general meaning of the word merciful, in this uſe of it. There is a natural propenſity of this kind, which ſhould be carefully diſtinguiſhed from the gracious diſpoſition: it is not expanſive, habitual, general: it is profuſe to ſome, and cruel to others: it does not ſpring from proper motives, is not directed to proper ends, and is not governed by a reſpect to the right rule of God's law: it often is joined with impiety, injuſtice, exceſſive indulgence, and even tyranny, in other parts of a man's conduct: and in ſhort, it is a ſort of inſtinct, which is ſtronger in ſome men, than others, and has no connexion with true godlineſs. But the mercy, to which the bleſſing is annexed, has reſpect to the authority, law, and glory of God, and to the grace of the goſpel: it is learned by looking to the croſs of Chriſt, and the mercy of God exerciſed to ſinners through him: it is uniform in its exerciſe, and ſeeks the good both of men's bodies, and ſouls, and extends to the vile, the injurious, the mean, and obſcure, and to every one of the human ſpecies however diſtinguiſhed, as far as they fall under its ſphere of action. It is connected with humility, faith, ſelf-denial, equity, piety, and univerſal conſcientiouſneſs; and it induces a man, from love to God, and hope in his mercy, to love, compaſſionate, and do good to all men, as he hath time, and opportunity; not allowing himſelf to injure any, and wiſhing well to, and praying for the happineſs of thoſe, whom he cannot reach, or help. Such men are happy, for they ſhall obtain mercy. All are ſinners, and need mercy: theſe are penitent, believing ſinners, and are intereſted in the mercy, and grace of the covenant: the Lord will compaſſionate, and be kind to them, according to their conduct towards their brethren: they ſhall be born with, pardoned, ſupported, and comforted through life, and in death, and then ſhall enjoy the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life: but on the contrary "they ſhall have judgment without mercy, who have ſhewed no mercy". And even here the exerciſe of mercy and beneficence conſtitutes one of the moſt delightful employments, of which our nature is capable.

V. 8. *Pure*, &c.] Men are apt to think thoſe happy, who have it in their power to gratify every ambitious, avaritious, or ſenſual inclination, without reſtraint, or limitation: and probably the carnal Jews expected ſuch indulgences in abundance, under the reign of their Meſſiah. But on the contrary he pronounced thoſe happy, who are pure in heart; in whoſe hearts all carnal, ſenſual, and ſinful deſires are ſo mortified, and ſubdued, that they do not ſeek their gratification; who are inwardly replenished with holy inclinations and affections, and influenced by the fear, and love of God in their habitual conduct. The believer's underſtanding is in part purified from darkneſs, his judgment from error, his will from rebellion, his affections from enmity, avarice, pride, ſenſuality, &c; his memory and imagination from the depraved thoughts, and recollections, which once occupied them; his conſcience from guilt and ſtupidity: and his leading aim is to glorify God, obey his will, enjoy his favour, and do good. This is indeed imperfect in this world; but the remainder of ſin, and pollution forms his burden, and grief, which is one effect, and evidence of purity of heart. In proportion as he is purified by faith, he is prepared for, and favoured with diſcoveries of God to his ſoul on earth: and, when he ſhall be perfected in holineſs, he ſhall with open face behold the manifeſted glory of God, and adore, admire, and be unſpeakably happy in the beatific viſion to all eternity.

V. 9. *Peace-makers*, &c.] The Jews expected a Meſſiah, who would lead them forth to war, revenge, victory, and dominion: and mighty warriors and conquerors have always been admired as honourable, and happy; though their mad ambition has rendered the earth a ſcene of miſery, diſcord, and confuſion. But our great Peace-maker pronounced the peace-makers happy. Such as are peaceable in their own conduct, and labour to promote peace in families, and communities: ſuch as uſe their influence to prevent, or terminate wars, law-ſuits, feuds, domeſtic broils, religious controverſies, &c: Such as do all in their power to promote the reconciliation of ſinners unto God, and to induce them to be reconciled to, and live in harmony, and peace, with one another. Theſe are happy perſons, though they will receive little thanks from the furious diſputers either of the world, or of the church. They bear the image, and copy the example of God; they are evidently reconciled, regenerated, and adopted: he owns them as his children, and will before the whole world avow their relation to him: many will call them the children of God here, and all will know them to be ſo at laſt. They ſhall have much comfort in their loving endeavours on earth, and eternal felicity in heaven. All this goes upon the ſuppoſition, that they act from a regard to the authority, example, and glory of God, and to his reconciling love in Chriſt Jeſus.

V. 10—12.] The carnal Jews expected to be honoured, and paid court to, under the reign of their Meſſiah; and we all naturally annex the idea of happineſs to honour, reſpect, and favour; and are apt to fancy, that a you, and perſecute *you*, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely, for my ſake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great *is* your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 Ye are the ſalt of the earth: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the houſe.

16 Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

conſcientious conduct will certainly enſure them to us. But Chriſt declared thoſe to be the happy perſons, "who "are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake." If men ſuffer, under a profeſſion of religion, for their crimes, or follies, or for their obſtinate attachment to unſcriptural, or anti-ſcriptural tenets, or practices; whilſt they remain ſtrangers to Chriſt, and true righteouſneſs; they cannot be included in this bleſſing. But if men, who fear God, and rely on his mercy through Chriſt, ſuffer for conſcience ſake, even though they may err in the matter, for which they ſuffer, they muſt not be excluded; for they act from a proper motive, and under a covenant of mercy. Yet the more evidently men ſuffer for adhering to the plain truths, and precepts of the ſcripture, the more clearly are they intereſted in the bleſſing. It is here taken for granted, that believers muſt meet with injurious treatment in this world, which is at enmity with God. The wicked will hate his holy image, and them who bear it; his holy truth, and them who profeſs and preach it; his holy law, and them that obey, and ſtand up for its obligation, and authority; and his holy ordinances, and them who attend on them. They will accuſe true chriſtians of bigotry, ſpiritual pride, fanaticiſm, hypocriſy, miſanthropy; they will invent all kind of calumnies of, and faſten opprobrious names upon, them: and if we adhere to the truth, precepts and ordinances of Chriſt, and refuſe to comply with any thing contrary to our conſciences; we muſt prepare to endure deriſion, reproach, ſlander, or more ſevere treatment from ungodly men. But the kingdom of grace and glory belongs to thoſe, who on ſuch accounts, meet with, and patiently endure perſecution: they ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt, and righteouſneſs; and all manner of evil is ſpoken of them *falſely*, becauſe they belong to the Lord. Inſtead therefore of dejection, and complaints, they ſhould count themſelves happy, that God's enemies ſee and hate his image in them: yea they ſhould rejoice, and exult for joy, in the proſpect of the great and glorious recompence, that is prepared for them; remembering, that they are in this conformed to God's moſt approved, and honoured ſervants, in every age of the church, and in every part of the world. Nor can any eminency in all thoſe holy diſpoſitions before deſcribed, (which combine to form the chriſtian character, are the fruits of the Spirit, and conſtitute the image of Chriſt,) preſerve any man from this hatred of the world, nay they will expoſe him to it, ſo long as it is the kingdom of ſatan: for even Chriſt himſelf, the only perfect character, that ever appeared on earth, was uſed with the greateſt contempt and enmity by the world. But theſe holy tempers will teach a man to bear up under ſuch trials, to overcome evil with good, to paſs comfortably through them, and to derive good from them all.

V. 13. *Ye*, &c.] Salt is the grand preſervative from corruption, in the material world, and it gives a ſeaſoning to all our viands: but if it loſe its ſaltneſs, and become inſipid, it is the moſt worthleſs of all ſubſtances; being unfit for the dunghill, as it is rather conducive to the ſterility, than to the fruitfulneſs of the earth. The diſciples, and miniſters of Chriſt are ſcattered about, as ſalt, in different parts of the world; that their doctrine, converſation, examples, labours, and prayers may ſtop the progreſs of ſin, and impiety, and be inſtrumental in ſeaſoning men's minds with grace, and holineſs: but if they be unſound in their doctrine, unholy in their lives, or vain, and carnal in their converſation; they diſgrace their profeſſion, are a ſcandal to their Maſter, prejudice the minds of men againſt the truth, or ſeduce them into error; and ſo they become the moſt worthleſs, and wretched of mankind. Every approach to this renders a chriſtian, or miniſter, leſs fit to be the ſalt of the earth, and deducts from his value, and uſefulneſs. This was peculiarly applicable to the primitive profeſſors, and teachers of chriſtianity; as they were ſent forth to ſeaſon the whole world, as it were, with their holy doctrine, lives, and labours.

V. 14—16.] The ſame inſtructions are here conveyed under another image. Chriſt is the true Light of the world: but his diſciples, and miniſters, ſhining by the light of knowledge and holineſs, which they derive from him, are in a ſubordinate ſenſe the light of the world alſo, and diffuſe his truth, and ſalvation around them, where otherwiſe darkneſs, and wickedneſs muſt reign undiſturbed. Their profeſſion, character, doctrine, &c, render them conſpicuous, as a city ſet upon a hill: they "cannot be hid;" men will look at them, and make their obſervations on all their words, and actions, in order to form their judgment of religion from what they ſee. Indeed God intends that they ſhould be thus conſpicuous, and obſerved, that they may communicate their light around: as men do not light a candle to conceal it, but that it may be placed conveniently to lighten the room. Their buſineſs therefore is, ſo to recommend the truth, by their pious and edifying converſation, and behaviour, that men may ſee their good works, which flow from faith and love, and thus be induced to glorify

17 Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I ſay unto you, Till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do and teach *them*, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I ſay unto you, That except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed *the righteouſneſs* of the ſcribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.

their God and Father. For ſuch holy examples, and abundant good works ſoften men's prejudices, and win upon them to attend to the truth, and are inſtrumental to their converſion, whereby they glorify God, and become his worſhippers, and ſervants. This ſhould be the aim and effect of our general conduct; though we muſt not do any particular action, "to be ſeen of men;" or ſeek our own glory in any thing we do. The diſciples of Chriſt, who were intended for the apoſtleſhip, might primarily be meant: but every chriſtian, and miniſter, in his narrower ſphere, is intended for a light to others, and ſhould let his light thus ſhine before them.

V. 17, 18.] Various opinions ſeem to have prevailed about the changes, that would take place, under the Meſſiah; and many who ſuppoſed Jeſus to be He, and had heard ſome parts of his doctrine, might conclude that he meant wholly to ſet aſide the ancient religion, and to eſtabliſh an entirely new one in its place; which might tend to miſlead ſome, and prejudice others. But he aſſured them, that He did not come to deſtroy the law, or the prophets; or to teach any thing inconſiſtent with the true meaning of their ſacred writings, which would ſtill continue in force, as a part of divine revelation. His deſign was not to deſtroy, but to fulfil. It was evident from Moſes, and the prophets themſelves, that the ritual law was a ſhadow of good things to come; and he was come to fulfil the intent of it, and to hold forth the truths, and bleſſings typified by it, in a plainer manner. The moral law he came to fulfil by perfectly obeying it as the Surety of his people; and by his life, ſufferings, death, and doctrine, to eſtabliſh it in its fulleſt honour, and authority, and to make the moſt effectual proviſion for men's loving, and obeying it. So that, as long as the world endured, not the leaſt word, or letter of the whole law ſhould by any means loſe its authority, or fail of anſwering the end, for which it was given: and the moral law would to the end of time continue the ſtandard of ſin, and holineſs to all men, and the believer's rule of duty: for he came to accompliſh the deſign of the introductory diſpenſation, and not to counteract, or ſubvert it.

V. 19 *Whoſoever*, &c.] The Scribes and Phariſees made many nice diſtinctions between great, and ſmall commandments, (as the papiſts do between mortal, and venial ſins:) but all the law is enacted by the ſame divine authority, and no part of it can in that ſenſe be of ſmall obligation; though ſome parts may reſpect more important matters than others. But if a man pretending to be Chriſt's diſciple, by any miſconſtruction of his doctrine, ſhould encourage himſelf in allowed diſobedience to the holy law of God, though in a matter of the leaſt importance; and by any falſe doctrine, or aſſumed authority, ſhould teach others to do the ſame: whatever his ſtation in the church or reputation amongſt men might be, he ſhould be called of Chriſt the leaſt in his kingdom, either no true diſciple at all, or one of the moſt inconſiſtent, and mean of the whole company. On the other hand, he, whoſe practice and doctrine tend to lead men to keep God's commandments from proper principles, and for evangelical purpoſes, will be accounted great and honourable in the kingdom of heaven, however men may diſeſteem him; and the King will approve, employ and prefer him. This moſt concluſively ſhews, that all views of goſpel truth, which verge in the ſmalleſt degree to antinomianiſm, are utterly inconſiſtent with the true doctrine of Chriſt. They are indeed as antichriſtian, as popiſh diſpenſations, and indulgences, &c: they lead to the ſame place by another road; and tend to relax man's obligation to obey God; and diſhonour that law, which Chriſt came into the world, and died on the croſs, to magnify, and make honourable.

V. 20. *For*, &c.] The Scribes were the doctors, and teachers of the law, and the traditions among the Jews, and they were generally of the ſect of the Phariſees. Their learning chiefly related to thoſe external matters, of which the phariſaical righteouſneſs conſiſted: and the Scribes, and Phariſees made the higheſt profeſſion of religion in our Lord's time. But in ſetting up his kingdom, he intended to be ſo far from making more allowances to man's ſinful paſſions, than they had done; that he would not acknowledge any one as his ſubject, whoſe righteouſneſs did not exceed their's. Some attempt to explain this of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, as imputed to us for juſtification; and doubtleſs this is requiſite to every one, who enters either the kingdom of grace, or that of glory: but the new creation of the heart to holineſs is equally neceſſary; and the effect of that change upon a man's temper, and ſubſequent conduct conſtitutes a righteouſneſs of heart and life far more excellent, than that of the Scribes, and Phariſees, even as much as heaven is higher than the earth. Without repentance and faith we cannot enter Chriſt's kingdom; theſe produce hatred of ſin, and love of God, and man; thus the believer is taught by the grace of God to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this world; and without this he cannot enter into the kingdom of heavenly glory. Nay, how late in life ſoever a man is converted, and becomes a true believer, he actually poſſeſſes a far better perſonal righteouſneſs, before he enters heaven, than that of any formaliſt in the world.

V. 21, 22.] To illuſtrate his meaning the divine Teacher proceeded to vindicate ſeveral of the command-

21 Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill ſhall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe ſhall be in danger of the judgment: and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother, Raca, ſhall be in danger of the council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembereſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adverſary quickly, whilſt thou art in the way with him; leſt at any time the adverſary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be caſt into priſon.

ments of the moral law from the corrupt, and partial interpretation put upon them by the Scribes; which tended to ſhew, that their rule of righteouſneſs itſelf was beneath even the actual attainments of his diſciples. (*Notes*, &c. *Exod*: c. xx.) It had been ſaid *by*, or *to*, them of old time, "Thou ſhalt not kill." God had of old given this law; the tradition of the elders had gloſſed upon it; "and whoſoever ſhall kill ſhall be in danger of the judgment:" by this it was implied, that nothing except actual murder was prohibited, and that this was to be avoided mainly out of fear of the puniſhment of death, to be inflicted by the magiſtrate. Thus they explained away the extenſive ſpiritual import of the command; and led the people to overlook the awful curſe of God denounced upon the tranſgreſſors. But Chriſt the great Lawgiver, and Judge, ſpeaking with leſs terror, but not leſs authority, than when he delivered the commandments from Mount Sinai, declared that "whoſoever was angry with his brother without cauſe would be in danger of the judgment." All exceſſive anger muſt be in proportion without cauſe; or all that ſettles into revenge, or vents itſelf in words, and actions contrary to the law of loving our neighbour as ourſelves. We ought to be angry at ſin in ourſelves, and others, and to ſhew our diſapprobation of it, according to our relation to the offender: we ſhould ſeek his humiliation, and reformation by proper means; but not his hurt at all, at leaſt in our private capacity. Inferiors, ſervants, juniors are all brethren in this ſenſe: and he that is angry at another without cauſe, or above cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment: it is a ſin deſerving of a puniſhment more terrible, than that inflicted by the ordinary courts of juſtice on the murderer; and conſequently it calls for repentance, and needs the mercy, and forgiveneſs of the new covenant. Moreover, whoſoever ſhould uſe contemptuous, or opprobious language in the heat of his paſſion, calling his brother "an empty worthleſs fellow," or "a wicked, and abandoned profligate," and ſuch like, would be in danger of puniſhment proportionably more ſevere, according to the degree of virulence, or malignity contained in ſuch revilings. The different courts of juſtice, and the different kinds of puniſhments in uſe among the Jews, are ſuppoſed to be referred to in theſe expreſſions. By one court, it is ſaid, the criminal was condemned to be beheaded, by another ſtoned, and by another burned in the valley of the ſon of Hinnon, which was conſidered as a ſort of type, or emblem of the fire of hell. Of this puniſhment ſuch conduct was deſerving, and to this the criminal would be expoſed, according to the degree of his crime, unleſs repentance, and forgiveneſs intervened. So that this ſhewed both the need they all had of the goſpel; and the ſtrictneſs of the believer's rule of duty.

V. 23, 24.] Attention to expenſive externals in religion were often uſed as a compenſation, or diſpenſation for injuſtice; and this the ſelfiſh prieſts encouraged, as it tended to their profit. But if any of Chriſt's diſciples, whilſt the Jewiſh ritual continued in force, ſhould bring an oblation to the altar of God; and even after he was arrived there, ſhould recollect, that his brother had any juſt cauſe of complaint againſt him; he muſt not preſume to offer his ſacrifice, till he had gone, without delay, and made reſtitution for the injury done, or acknowledgment of the offence committed; and by all proper means, and reaſonable conceſſions, ſought forgiveneſs from, and reconciliation to him. Nor muſt he, on this account omit, or long poſtpone his intended ſacrifice; but he muſt leave it before the altar, and return as ſoon as this previous matter was ſettled, and then offer it, in confidence of acceptance with God. This is ſpoken of, in the language of the diſpenſation then in force: but it is equally applicable to chriſtian ordinances, eſpecially to the Lord's ſupper. Reſtitution to the injured, (where practicable,) and conceſſions to thoſe whom we have offended, as well as forgiveneſs of injuries, are requiſite preparatives to the profitable, and comfortable attendance on that ſacred ordinance: but to neglect ſuch attendance, for want of this preparation, is excuſing diſobedience to God, by injuſtice, and malice towards man. The rule is "firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come, and offer thy gift."

V. 25, 26.] (*Luke*: c. xii. v. 58, 59.) The rule of the preceding verſes naturally ſuggeſted the caſe of thoſe, who were expoſed to law ſuits, by injuring their neighbours. In ſuch circumſtances a man's prudence, and duty would be quickly to compromiſe the matter with his legal opponent, though the terms might appear rigorous, and to ſettle the buſineſs ere it came before the magiſtrate, leſt being found culpable, he ſhould be caſt into priſon for coſts, and damages, and continue there till the laſt farthing were paid. But under this prudential counſel a far more important inſtruction is couched. Our injurious conduct towards men, as well (as our other ſins,) renders us liable to the wrath of God, who is our

26 Verily I ſay unto thee, Thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing.

27 Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery:

28 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt *it* from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not *that* thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not *that* thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.

31 It hath been ſaid, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement;

32 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adul-

adverſary at law. We are on the way to his judgment ſeat, and our time may be ſhort: a way of reconciliation is revealed, and our wiſdom is to avail ourſelves of it immediately, and with all earneſtneſs. If this be neglected, the controverſy will come to a trial, the ſinner will be condemned by the Judge, delivered to the executioners of vengeance, and caſt into the priſon of hell: and as he can never make full ſatisfaction to offended juſtice, or pay all his debt, (eſpecially as new crimes will continually enhance the ſcore,) ſo he can never expect to be enlarged any more for ever. The preſent therefore is the only time for terminating the important controverſy.

V. 27, 28.] The Phariſees interpreted the ſeventh commandment merely of groſs actual unchaſtity: but Chriſt ſhewed, that it reached to the thoughts, and deſires of the heart. For inſtance, if a man ſhould allow himſelf to gaze at a woman, till he excited thoughts, and deſires of a criminal intercourſe with her, he would be deemed an adulterer in his heart, and accounted deſerving of the puniſhment denounced againſt ſuch tranſgreſſors of the law: and his guilt would be ſtill more aggravated, if he continued to indulge the licentious imagination, and actually purpoſed, and deviſed means for gratifying his deſires, though he ſhould be prevented from it. We cannot ſuppoſe that this prohibits a man from looking at a woman, whom he may lawfully marry, with ſuch predilection, as to deſire to poſſeſs her in marriage. The inclination for that, which is not ſinful, can only become ſinful by being inordinate; but it may often be attended with ſuch things as are polluting and criminal.

V. 29, 30.] This exact ſubjection of the carnal inclinations; this victory over the moſt potent deſires of the heart, eſpecially when habit, and conſtitution have concurred to enſlave men to them, muſt be attended with painful exertions, and the ſacrifice of what hath been held very dear. But if it be as painful, and as ſenſible a loſs, as the plucking out of a right eye, or the cutting off of the right hand, it muſt be done. Every thing is freely beſtowed to ſave us *from* our ſins, but not *in* them. The fleſh with the affections, and luſts muſt be crucified; the ſtrongeſt corruption conquered, and every appetite, and inclination governed according to the law, and in ſubjection to the authority of God, in ſubſerviency to his glory, the welfare of ſociety, and the good of a man's own ſoul. If then the eye, or hand, or other part of the body could be ſo neceſſary an occaſion of ſin, that the temptation could by no other means be overcome, and that would certainly effect it; it would be a man's duty, and wiſdom, to part with it, whatever anguiſh he endured, or how much ſo ever the loſs were felt; as it would be advantageous for him to loſe one of his limbs, or organs of ſenſe, rather than be caſt with them all into hell. But though the members of the body are the inſtruments of ſin, yet it proceeds from the luſts of the heart: if theſe be mortified, and every idolized object renounced, there will be no need to injure the body, and without this, it would be of no uſe. This mortification of the luſts of the heart may be exceſſively painful: but if men conſent to loſe their limbs by excruciating operations, to ſave their lives; what ought they to ſhrink from, when it becomes requiſite to the ſalvation of their ſouls? It muſt alſo be added, that the moſt watchful, and ſelf-denying government of every ſenſe, and appetite is implied in this admonition. It is worthy of obſervation, that Jeſus always took it for granted, that there is a future ſtate, a reſurrection of the body, and a hell, into which the wicked will be caſt: and that he continually realized theſe things to men's minds, and called their attention to them. (*Mark*. c. ix. v. 43—56.)

V. 31, 32.] (Note, *Deut:* c. xxiv. v. 1—4.) It hath been ſhewn how the Jews miſtook, and abuſed the *judicial* law, which regulated divorces, and was intended to render them leſs frequent, and injurious; ſo that, at the time, when Chriſt appeared, they were exceeding common, upon the moſt frivolous pretences. But the matter had reference to the moral law, which he came to magnify, and it behoved him to reſtore things to their original ſtate: having therefore mentioned the ſeventh commandment, he took the occaſion to determine with authority the matter of divorces. He, therefore declared, that whoſoever ſhould put away his wife, except for fornication committed before marriage, (but concealed till afterwards,) or adultery after, (for the general word is ſuppoſed to imply both,) would expoſe her to a ſtrong temptation to commit adultery by marrying another man tery: and whoſoever ſhall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thyſelf, but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footſtool: neither by Jeruſalem; for it is the city of the great King:

36 Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid,

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and he would be anſwerable for her ſin; and the man, who ſhould marry her, who was put away, would commit adultery; as her former huſband was living: and he would be deemed an acceſſary to his crime alſo. It ſeems evident that divorces for adultery, (I apprehend on either ſide,) ſhould be allowed to the injured party, if required, and without that tedious, and expenſive proceſs, which is now requiſite. Some contend that the adulterous divorced perſon ought not to be allowed to marry again: but though this perhaps would be conſiſtent with juſtice; yet it can ſcarce be expected, that they who violate conjugal fidelity, will be very ſcrupulous in a ſingle ſtate: and therefore more harm than good would probably reſult from ſuch a regulation, which is not found in ſcripture. It may likewiſe be obſerved, that the allowance for divorcing the adultereſs ſeems to imply, that the law for putting ſuch criminals to death was not to be conſidered as of divine authority, and indiſpenſable, under the chriſtian diſpenſation.

V. 33—37.] The Scribes explained the third commandment, according to the tradition of the elders, as merely prohibiting groſs perjury, eſpecially the breach of promiſſory oaths, or vows to the Lord: and they allowed common ſwearing, except the names of God were expreſſly mentioned. But Chriſt commanded his diſciples not to ſwear at all. Examples in the New Teſtament prove, that ſwearing on ſolemn, and important occaſions is not unlawful, (2 *Cor.* c. i. v. 23. 1 *Theſ.* c. ii. v. 5:) and there ſeems no reaſon to conclude, that oaths in a court of juſtice, or on any other occaſion, which fairly requires them, are wrong; provided they be taken with reverence of God's majeſty, omniſcience, and juſtice, and if they be exactly conſiſtent with truth, and equity. Yet the multiplication of oaths in our juriſprudence, and the irreverent manner in which they are adminiſtered, occaſion immenſe guilt, and are an enormous evil. Yet a godly man, though he diſapproves of the manner, in which oaths are adminiſtered, need not diſquiet himſelf, when he is called upon to take them, if he can otherwiſe do it, with a clear conſcience; for he is only anſwerable for his own conduct. But all oaths taken without neceſſity, on trivial occaſions, or in common converſation, muſt be inconſiſtent with this prohibition: as well as all the expreſſions, which are in common uſe to anſwer the purpoſe, and as it were evade the guilt, of ſwearing. The Jews, who ſcrupled to ſwear on ſuch occaſions by the Lord, would ſwear by heaven, or by the earth, or by Jeruſalem, or by their own heads, &c. But all theſe implied an appeal to God, becauſe of their relation to him; heaven is his throne, where he reveals his glory, as the Ruler of the world; and the earth is, as it were, the footſtool of that throne; Jeruſalem was the holy city, where the temple, the earthly palace of the great King was erected: even their heads were more the Lord's than their own; for whilſt the continuance of life, underſtanding and ſenſes depended wholly on him; they could not change the colour of one ſingle hair, by their own exertion. The whole creation is the Lord's, and therefore to ſwear by any part of it, implies an appeal to the great Creator, and Judge. Thus when men ſwear by their lives, their ſouls, their faith, or by all that's good, they virtually ſwear by the Lord, and appeal to him, to confirm their teſtimony. Such expreſſions ſhould not be uſed; much leſs ſhould converſation be intermingled with the ſacred names of God, Lord, or Chriſt, &c, uſed as mere expletives, or notes of admiration; or with bad wiſhes; or even good wiſhes, or prayers, "as God bleſs us," "Lord have mercy on us," and ſuch like; when there is no ſeriouſneſs, or ſolemnity upon the mind, and they are words without meaning, but not without profaneneſs. It is remarkable, that even the writings of ſome of the moſt admired Pagan authors, are interlarded with oaths, "by Jupiter, by Hercules:" &c. And ſome profeſſed chriſtians affect to uſe ſuch Pagan language: but if an oath be a ſolemn act of worſhip, and if the devil were worſhipped under theſe Pagan idols; then ſuch expreſſions in fact imply an act of worſhip to Satan, though they who uſe them may mean no ſuch thing. It ought to ſuffice a chriſtian ſeriouſly to affirm, or deny, and with repetition if neceſſary; all that is more than this, in ordinary caſes, and converſation, cometh of evil, of the evil one, or of the evil of our corrupt nature: men are ſo deceitful, that they fear truſting each other, without the ſecurity of oaths; they have ſuſpicions of each other; or the ſpeaker is of a ſuſpicious character, and fears leſt his bare word ſhould not be taken; or he ſwears to conceal his bad deſigns. But chriſtians ſhould endeavour ſo to ſpeak, and act, that their word may be deemed as ſatisfactory as another man's oath. And indeed though the whole neceſſity for oaths ariſes from the ſelfiſhneſs, and deceitfulneſs of man: yet the worſe men become, the leſs they are bound by them; and the better they are the leſs need there is for them. It may alſo be obſerved, that if Chriſt be underſtood to mean that oaths in all caſes are morally evil in themſelves, it muſt follow that the law in ſome caſes required what was evil; and that the apoſtle did what was evil, when writing by inſpiration: which demonſtrates, that this was not his meaning; though the need, and common uſe of oaths come from evil.

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I ſay unto you, That ye reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other alſo.

40 And if any man will ſue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak alſo.

41 And whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that aſketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.

46 For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the ſame?

47 And if ye ſalute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the publicans ſo?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

V. 38—42] (*Exod.* c. xxi. v. 24, 25. *Lev.* c. xxiv. v. 19, 20.) This hath been ſhewn to have been the magiſtrate's rule, in deciding cauſes, declaring the utmoſt puniſhment he might inflict, when nothing leſs would ſatisfy the offended party: yet the Scribes explained it, as if it had authorized private revenge, and even required people to demand or exact this ſevere retaliation. But Chriſt declared the moral law, when properly explained, to require the reverſe of this vindictive ſpirit, and conduct. His diſciples are not allowed to reſiſt evil, either by violent oppoſition, or injurious retorts, or by litigious law ſuits. In the preſent ſtate of human nature, there is little need to enumerate exceptions, and limitations to ſuch general rules: ſelf-love will ſuffice for that purpoſe. The preſervation of life, or liberty, or important property will authorize, and in ſome caſes require, a man to ſtand in his own defence, at the peril of the illegal aſſailant: but in ordinary caſes it is better to give way, and yield to inſults, and injuries, than to repel them by force, or legal proceſs: and it ſeems not to accord with the ſpirit of chriſtianity, to put the life, and ſoul of a mere pilferer, in competition with a ſum of money, when there is no reaſon to fear further violence. However in leſſer matters the caſe is clear: if a man give a diſciple of Chriſt a contemptuous, or painful blow on the cheek; it is his duty, and wiſdom to imitate his maſter, and take it patiently; nay rather to turn the other, and expoſe himſelf to further inſult, than to begin a furious conteſt, by returning the blow, ſending a challenge, or commencing a law ſuit: even though a man ſhould be ridiculed, and deſpiſed for his want of ſpirit, and courage, through his obedience to his Lord. If a man be ſued at law, and injuriouſly deprived of his coat, or outer garment, which, though of ſmall value, he could ill ſpare; yet he had better ſuffer himſelf to be defrauded of his cloak alſo, than be involved in the temptations, and evils of ſeeking legal redreſs: (1 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 1—8.) Indeed, in caſes of great importance other duties may require him to avail himſelf of the protection of the law; juſtice to his creditors, and to the public, and even to his family, may engage him to defend his eſtate from ſuch injury, and to give a check to the exorbitancy of unreaſonable men; and a chriſtian may proſecute a criminal out of love to public juſtice, though he may not out of private revenge. Yet there will always be men of the world enough to deal with ſuch depredators; and a diſciple of Chriſt will ſeldom have occaſion to waſte his time, or loſe his temper about them: and when whole communities ſhall become real chriſtians, all ſuch conteſts will be done with. Under various pretences alſo unreaſonable men might require Chriſt's diſciples to attend them about buſineſs public, or private: but if they ſhould inſiſt upon a man's going a mile out of his way to ſerve them, it would be better to go two, than quarrel about it: and it would be expedient rather to give, or lend to thoſe, who injuriouſly required it, than to refuſe with harſhneſs, or apparent ſelfiſhneſs; and much more to give, or lend, where there was need, and a proſpect of doing good. It is ſelf-evident, that many, and great limitations, and exceptions muſt be admitted in the laſt inſtance; for no man could go on giving and lending to every man, that ſhould aſk him; but he muſt conſider his own ability, and the nature of the caſe, and act accordingly: and therefore we muſt ſuppoſe that limitations, and exceptions are implied in the other admonitions, which are to be judged of, according to the general law of loving our neighbour as ourſelves. The grand, and obvious inſtruction is this, "ſuffer any tolerable in-" jury for the ſake of peace, and commit your intereſts, " and concerns to the Lord's keeping."

V. 43—48] The Scribes explained the great law of loving their neighbours, with reſtriction to their own nation, ſect, family, or friends; nay they added, (in the form of a precept), "and hate thine enemy:" and it is remarkable that the beſt heathen moraliſts made large conceſſions in this matter to the malignity of the human heart. But the true ſpirit, and intent of the law reaches to enemies, and perſecutors, on which the example of Chriſt forms the beſt comment. He therefore authoritatively commanded his diſciples to love their enemies,

CHAP VI.

Contains 1ſt. Admonitions againſt hypocriſy, and oſtentation, in alms giving, prayer, and faſting; compriſing inſtructions concerning thoſe duties, and encouragements to them, the Lord's prayer, and a caution to forgive others, as we expect God to for-

to regard them with compaſſion, and benevolence; to return good words, and kind wiſhes to their revilings and imprecations, and beneficent actions to their injuries; and to pray for their converſion, and beſt good, even when oppreſſed, perſecuted and tortured by them. Thus they would evidence themſelves to be the children of God, by bearing his image, and copying his example, who ſends the ordinary bleſſings of his providence upon the evil, as well as on the good, though their crimes are direct enmity and rebellion againſt him. However as there are various favours, which the Lord beſtows only upon his people; ſo our peculiar friendſhip, kindneſs, and complacency, may, and ought to be, reſtricted to the righteous: yet gratitude to benefactors, and predilection for ſpecial friends conſiſt very well with this general good will, and good conduct towards enemies, and perſecutors. Even publicans, and the moſt ungodly men knew how to behave with civil reſpect, and kindneſs to their friends, and relations: but chriſtians, conſidering their ſuperior knowledge, obligations, encouragements, aſſiſtances, and motives, muſt do more than others: they have a better rule, and example, a brighter hope, and a new nature, and they profeſs more religion than others; and therefore more may be expected from them. If then they do no more than others, in theſe matters, what has grace done for them? What evidence have they of their converſion? What recompence can they expect from their Lord for that, of which wicked men from carnal principles are capable? They cannot indeed attain to perfection, but it is their duty to aim at it: the perfect law is their rule, and ſtandard; the perfect holineſs, and love of God their copy; and then they ſhould aim high, and ſeek to be perfect even as their Father, which is in heaven is perfect. (*Luke* c. vi. v. 27—36. 1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 15, 16.) Theſe concluding verſes evidently prove, that Chriſt's ſpiritual expoſition of the law was not only intended to ſhew the people their need of his righteouſneſs and atonement for their juſtification; but to teach his diſciples, and all juſtified believers the ſtrict rule of their duty: and all that, in which they come ſhort of, or deviate from it, is ſin, and needs deep repentance, continual forgiveneſs, through the redemption of his blood, and ſupplies of grace to enable them to more exact obedience.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The great end of preaching is, that men may hear, and be made wiſe unto ſalvation, when multitudes are willing to hear, it is ſeaſonable for the miniſter to preach, and time, and place are not very material circumſtances: a church or chapel may be moſt convenient; and the Lord's day to be preferred, in general: but a mountain or a field, will be conſecrated ground, or any day holy time, if the Lord vouchſafe his preſence, and bleſſing. Chriſt hath made the preaching of the word a moſt honourable employment, by his own condeſcending example; happy are they, who enter upon it, at his call, act in it from the ſame principles, and preach the ſame doctrines, as he did. But it behoves us to ſpeak with great ſeriouſneſs, and a deep ſenſe of the weight, and difficulty of the work, and in a ſimple dependance on the Lord for aſſiſtance, acceptance, and a bleſſing. The true goſpel of Chriſt is exceeding practical, far more ſo, than any other doctrine whatſoever: and many profeſſors ſo miſtake this matter, that they would certainly condemn Chriſt himſelf as low, and legal, if they could hear his ſermons, without being informed who the preacher was. The tendency of truth and grace to make men happy is ſo entire; that none will be happy in this world, or the next by any other means, or fail of happineſs who ſeek it from Chriſt, by the rule of his word. But how different are the character, and circumſtances of the bleſſed of the Lord, than the carnal mind would have imagined! None, who have not faith, and experience, will be perſuaded, that the poor in ſpirit, the mourners, the meek, they who long earneſtly for righteouſneſs, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the perſecuted, are the only happy perſons in the world! Let us learn to conſider this as a complex deſcription of a healthy conſtitution of mind, and a ſafe, and happy condition in this life; and to conſider the oppoſite diſpoſitions, and paſſions as diſtempers marring all true enjoyment, and by no means counterbalanced by the friendſhip of the world. Let us not ſuppoſe, that ſome men poſſeſs one, ſome another, of theſe holy diſpoſitions; but remember, that they all combine to form the image of Chriſt, and the temper of a true chriſtian; and that where any one is abſolutely wanting, all the reſt are mere counterfeits. Let us alſo examine, whether we are brought to be of theſe chriſtian diſpoſitions; let us ſeek them, and the increaſe of them from the Giver of every good gift; let us take the annexed promiſes as encouragements to aſpire after higher degrees of them, aſſured of proportionate happineſs, as the ſubjects, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven; and as the children of God, till we ſhall be admitted into his preſence, where is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures at his right hand for evermore. Let us not then envy the ambitious, the high-ſpirited, the gay, the injurious, or vindictive, the avaritious, ſenſual or unmerciful, the ſcourges of the earth, who take away peace from it, or any other of the ſons of madneſs, and miſchief; let us not covet their tranſient applauſe, and proſperity in this evil world: let us not be diſquieted with the contempt, reviling, and perſecution we meet with whilſt we do all the good we can to all, and no evil to any. Happy will it be for us to ſuffer for Chriſt's ſake, and in that cauſe for which he ſhed his precious blood; for great will be our reward in heaven. But let us be careful to give no juſt cauſe to the revilings of the ungodly, and to avoid all oſtentation or bitterneſs under the croſs: let us conſider what prophets and apoſtles endured, and how they behaved under it: eſpecially let us look unto Jeſus, leſt we be weary, and faint in our minds, and yield to impatience and recriminations under our leſſer trials.

And let us carefully conſider the importance of the chriſtian character: we ſhould ever recollect, that we are the ſalt of the earth, and the light of the world: many *give us,* 1---18. *2d. Exhortations to beware of a worldly judgment, and diſpoſition, and of attempting to ſerve God and Mammon; with various arguments againſt anxious cares, and to encourage confidence in God's providence, when ſeeking firſt his kingdom, and righteouſneſs,* 19---34.

eyes will be upon us; many will derive good, or harm from their obſervations on our conduct. We ſhould then endeavour to ſtem the torrent of impiety, and wickedneſs, to diffuſe the ſavour, and light of divine truth, and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, by letting our light ſhine before men; that our good works as living ſermons may convince our fellow ſinners of the excellency of our religion, and ſo tend to the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind. Nor is this to be reſtricted to apoſtles, and eminent miniſters: every profeſſor of the goſpel becomes as a city built upon a hill, that cannot be hid: his profeſſion makes him conſpicuous in his own little circle, and the doctrines he maintains will be deemed of good or bad tendency by his relations, and neighbours, according to the holy, or unholy life that he leads. But the higher men are placed, the more conſpicuous they are, and the more good, or evil effects are produced by their example, and influence. However this ſhould not induce any man to conceal his ſentiments, or to refuſe making a profeſſion of the goſpel: for God doth not enlighten the minds of his people, that they ſhould put the light under a buſhel, but that they ſhould hold it forth for the benefit of others: we ſhould therefore ſeek to ſhine, by profeſſing, and adorning the goſpel, in our circle, whether large or ſmall, that we may anſwer the end, for which God hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.

But let no man perverſely, and abſurdly ſuppoſe that Chriſt allows his people to trifle with any of the commands of God's holy law. Whilſt he fulfilled the types and prophecies of the Old Teſtament; whilſt he honoured the moral law, and the exhortations of the prophets by his obedience to death upon the croſs, how impious muſt it be to ſuppoſe, that he did it to purchaſe men the licence to indulge their ungodly luſts with impunity? No, till the conſummation of all things, not one word ſhall paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled. No ſinner partakes of Chriſt's juſtifying righteouſneſs, till he condemn himſelf as a tranſgreſſor of the law of God, and repent of thoſe his evil deeds: the goodneſs, and mercy revealed in the goſpel lead the believer to ſtill deeper repentance, and ſelf-abhorrence: all unbelievers will be condemned for their tranſgreſſions of this law; it is the chriſtian's rule of duty, nay it is written in his heart, and he delights in, and longs to obey it. Let us then beware equally of Antinomian licentiouſneſs, and of Phariſaical ſelf-righteouſneſs: theſe are our Scylla, and Charybdis, our two moſt fatal rocks; moſt men in ſhunning the one ſplit upon the other, and we need the Lord the Spirit to pilot us between them. And it is further obſervable, that they are nearly allied: the ſelf-juſtifying Phariſee is a bitter enemy to the ſpiritual import of the holy law, and ſo far an antinomian; and the antinomian reſts in his notions, and hates the ſanctifying grace of the goſpel, and the *honour put upon God's law by* the death of Chriſt; and in this reſpect is a rank Phariſee: and the explications, and cloſe application of the holy, and excellent law to the conſcience is the bane of both ſyſtems. However men, who go upon more ſoothing principles may be extolled as free grace preachers; if they are at all within the kingdom, they are certainly the leaſt of thoſe, that belong to it: and they who enforce obedience by example and doctrine, ſhall be called great in the kingdom of God; nor will any enter heaven, who have not been made more holy in heart and life, (from the time of their converſion,) than ſcribes and phariſees ever were. Let us alſo carefully remark of what importance the Lord Jeſus judged the right underſtanding of the ſpiritual meaning of the moral law. And what fatal conſequences follow, from looſe, ſuperficial, or erroneous views of it; for it hath been ſhewn in part, and might eaſily be more fully proved, that the moſt oppoſite errors ariſe from ignorance of, and miſtakes about it. Whilſt we therefore view the ſtrictneſs, ſpirituality, extent, reaſonableneſs, and ſolemn ſanctions annexed to, the precepts, that we have been reading, as expounded by our divine Teacher; let us impartially compare our paſt and preſent lives, our tempers, affections, intentions, thoughts, words, and actions, and our whole conduct towards God and man, with this perfect rule: then we ſhall find every ſelf confident hope expire, and plainly perceive, "that by the works of the law no fleſh ſhall be juſtified in the ſight of God:" then will Chriſt in the whole of his ſalvation become precious to our ſouls, and we ſhall learn to underſtand and value the new covenant of mercy, and grace, and the way of juſtification by faith alone. Whether we look to our conduct towards thoſe, who have injured us, or thoſe whom we have offended; towards our ſuperiors, or inferiors, relatives, friends, or ſervants; the ſtate of our heart, or the government of our appetites, and paſſions; to what we have, or what we have not done; we ſhall ſee cauſe for humiliation, and need of forgiveneſs: and when we conſider that we muſt be made holy according to the ſtandard of this holy law, in order to the enjoyment of God, and heaven, we ſhall as evidently perceive our need of the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, and ſhall learn to value the ordinances of God, as means, through which that ſacred aſſiſtance may be obtained. When again we duly weigh the importance of the caſe, and the ſhortneſs, and uncertainty of our lives; we ſhall ſee the propriety of making our peace with God without delay, and ſhall learn to value, and copy our bleſſed Peace-maker, who will ſhortly appear as the Judge, and Avenger of all the impenitent workers of iniquity. Theſe conſiderations will alſo reconcile us to that ſelf-denying, and painful mortification of our luſts, which we are indiſpenſably called to; we ſhall ſee tender mercy couched under the apparent harſhneſs of the requirement; that our ſafety, profit, and felicity, are conſulted; and that the grace and conſolations of the Spirit will render it practicable, and even comfortable. Would we be preſerved from groſs iniquities, our hearts muſt be kept with all diligence, and our eyes, and all our ſenſes and faculties forbidden to

TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be ſeen of them; otherwiſe ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore when thou doeſt *thine* alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the ſynagogues, and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I ſay unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doeſt alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.

rove after, or be employed about thoſe things, which lead to tranſgreſſion. Theſe ſtrict rules of meekneſs, forgiveneſs, acknowledgement of our faults, conceſſions for the ſake of peace, inward purity and chaſtity, regard to every relation of life, reverence of the holy name of God, government of our tongues, &c; as well as all the commands to endure evil with patience, acquieſcence, love of enemies, yielding to the injurious, doing good to perſecutors, &c, though contrary to corrupt nature, and the maxims of an evil world, have an evident excellency in them, and are calculated to form a man's character to a real dignity, and to be a ſtrong expreſſion of the divine purity, patience, beneficence, and mercy: and doubtleſs they, who act upon ſuch principles, will both have moſt peace and comfort themſelves, and be the greateſt bleſſings to their families, neighbours, and the community. Were theſe precepts univerſally obeyed, the greateſt part of the evils in the world would be annihilated: wars, maſſacres, law-ſuits, domeſtic diſcords, frauds, rapines, oppreſſions would ceaſe: unavoidable evils would be mitigated, and rendered more ſupportable; equity, truth, purity, peace, and love, would, as it were, deſcend from heaven to dwell on earth, and drive their hateful oppoſites down to hell, from whence they came. Thus it would be, if all men were chriſtians, and well underſtood, and practiſed their holy religion.

Indeed our motives, encouragements, helps, examples, &c, ſuffice for conſiderable attainments in all theſe things. More may be expected from thoſe, who are redeemed to God by the blood of Chriſt, than from other men; more will be found in them, than in others, notwithſtanding inward, and outward impediments; and whenever we ſuffer ourſelves to be out-done, or even equalled, in what is good, and commendable, by thoſe, who are ſtrangers, or enemies to the goſpel, we forget our principles, and degrade our character. Let us then beg of God to enable us to prove ourſelves his children, by copying his example of goodneſs, and mercy even to the vile, and injurious; not being overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good: let us learn to reverence an oath, as well as to pay the Lord our vows: let us aim to eſtabliſh ſuch a reputation for truth, and integrity, that we may be readily believed, when our communication is yea, yea, nay, nay, that we may not be tempted to any of that language, which cometh of evil. In ſhort let us be followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, even as Chriſt loved us, and gave himſelf a ſacrifice for our ſins: and following after higher degrees of holineſs, let us expect, as our gracious, and glorious reward, to be at length made perfect, even as our Father, which is in heaven is perfect. But if any reader be ſenſible, that his religion hath hitherto been a form; his attendance on divine ordinances leavened by malice, or vile affections indulged in his heart, or injuſtice committed in his life: let him recollect, that God is the terrible Adverſary of the unrighteous, and ungodly; and let him without delay ſeek to make his peace with him, while he is in the way, and before the Judge caſts him into the dark dungeon of hopeleſs miſery. Finally let us all remember, that conſcientious juſtice to man, as well as humiliation before God, are neceſſary to our comfortable acceſs to the throne of grace, or to the Lord's table: we ſhould therefore continually recollect whether our brother have not ſome cauſe of complaint againſt us; that we may remove this impediment to our peace and communion with God. Thus we may hope gradually to make progreſs in the way; and daily exerciſing repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to walk in all the ordinances, and commandments of the Lord blameleſs.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—4.] The Phariſee's religion was as inconſiſtent with that of Chriſt, in it's motives, and principles, as in it's rule, and ſtandard. Having therefore vindicated the holy law from their perverſions, and ſuperficial comments; our Lord next proceeded to warn his diſciples againſt hypocriſy, and oſtentation in their external duties. He began by admoniſhing them, not to perform "*their righteouſneſs*," or *good works* to be ſeen of men. Thus ſome approved verſions read it, as a general word, including the ſeveral particulars that follow. Chriſtians ſhould "let their light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee their good works," and glorify their Father; yet they muſt "not do their works to be ſeen of men:" the general tenor of their conduct ſhould be ſo exemplary, as to conſtrain men to ſee an excellency in their religion: but all their actions ſhould ſpring from humility, the fear and love of God, and regard to his acceptance, and glory; and not from a deſire of being noticed, and commended by others: otherwiſe no reward can be expected from their heavenly Father, as they are ſeeking to pleaſe men, and not to pleaſe and honour him. (*Note*, c. v. ver. 14—16. c. xxiii. v. 5.) This general rule our Lord illuſtrated by mentioning ſome of thoſe particular duties, in which hypocrites are moſt prone to oſtentation, and vain glory, and in which chriſtians ſhould moſt conſult ſecrecy, as far as conſiſtent with their other principles. He addreſſed himſelf therefore to his diſciples, (as if he would caution every one of them ſeparately,) counſelling them, when they gave alms, or beſtowed money to any charitable, or pious purpoſe, to ſhun notoriety, as much as poſſible; for the hypocrites of that time, beſtowed as much pains to publiſh their liberality, in the ſynagogues, public aſſemblies, and even the ſtreets, as if they had cauſed it to be made known by

5 And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites *are:* for they love to pray ſtanding in the ſynagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men. Verily I ſay unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and, when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, uſe not vain repeti-

ſound of trumpet, that all men might hear, and take notice; for they only coveted the applauſe of men, and to be accounted very excellent perſons: this was the reward they principally ſought, and they obtained it, and were to expect no other. Not but they made a merit before God of their oſtentatious works, and expected to compenſate for their ſins, and purchaſe heaven with them: but had not the praiſe of men been the grand object, they would not have been ſo earneſt in proclaiming them; and therefore this was to be their ſole reward. But the chriſtian, when he gave alms, is "not to let his left "hand know, what his right hand did:" he is commanded to do it as ſecretly as the caſe will admit; not to think much of it himſelf, or indulge complacency in it; he muſt not wiſh that it ſhould be known, nor ſpeak of it to others; but rather to deſire that it ſhould be concealed, in order that it may be evident, that he acted out of regard to the will, and favour of his heavenly Father, who ſeeth in ſecret, and not from deſire of wordly applauſe: and in this caſe, his Father, ſeeing both the action, and motive to be good, will graciouſly accept, and publicly recompenſe them, eſpecially at the day of judgment. Circumſtances vary, and require variations in men's outward conduct: there are many charities, which can ſcarce be promoted, without ſome degree of public notoriety; and ſometimes a leading perſon may be called to excite thoſe, that are backward, by an uſeful example. Yet no part of our duty is more liable to be made an occaſion for ambition, and vain glory than this: many deſigns very *uſeful* to others are ſupported by liberality, that almoſt entirely ſprings from theſe and ſimilar principles. The heart is deceitful; and when men love to have their names inſerted amongſt the ſubſcribers to public charities, but are not equally liberal in private; when they love to ſpeak, and hear of their own beneficence, and are not willing to do much without the credit of it; it is too plain how the caſe ſtands with them. In general private charities, if not more uſeful, are more unequivocal; and the leſs reward of this kind we receive from man, the more we may expect from our gracious God, provided we act from evangelical principles. It is alſo to be obſerved, that Chriſt takes it for granted, that his diſciples will be diſpoſed to give alms, more or leſs, according to their ability: and that every good work done from proper motives will be rewarded by our God, and Father: this therefore is not to be thought inconſiſtent with the doctrine of free grace, and juſtification by faith alone, as taught by him, and ſtill more explicitly by his diſciples.

V. 5, 6.] The hypocrites in the time of Chriſt were alſo very oſtentatious in their devotions: not content with frequenting the ſynagogues, &c, to join in public worſhip, they reſorted thither to offer thoſe prayers, which ought to have been made in ſecret, and there ſtood and prayed in the view and hearing of all the people: nay, they would ſtop in the corners of the public ſtreets to perform their devotions, pretending perhaps that it was their ſtated time, and they muſt not omit the duty on any account. But they contrived the matter on purpoſe to be ſeen of men, that every body might know how devout they were, and applaud, and confide in them accordingly: and indeed they acquired this reputation, but they might depend on it, that they would have no other reward. Chriſt alone uſed this word "Verily," (or "Amen," as in the original,) in this manner: He is the Amen, the true, and faithful Witneſs: He always uſed it to confirm matters of great importance, which men are very backward to believe; it is an exceeding ſtrong affirmation, eſpecially when doubled, and perhaps not very different from the expreſſion in the Old Teſtament, "As I live, ſaith the Lord." The chriſtian, when he prayeth alone, (for private is to be diſtinguiſhed from public, and ſocial worſhip,) muſt be as retired as poſſible: he muſt go into his cloſet, or chamber, or any ſecret place, according to his conveniency, and ſhut the door, that he may not be over heard, or diſturbed; and there pour out his heart before God, as into the boſom of his loving Father, only deſiring to be noticed, and accepted of him, who ſeeth the ſecret receſſes of the heart, as well as the moſt retired corner of the houſe. Such prayer God will accept, anſwer, and reward: yea it ſhall be openly declared before men and angels, as an evidence of a man's humility, faith, and unfeigned piety, and graciouſly recompenſed accordingly. Here alſo circumſtances may demand a different conduct: Daniel ſaw it right to be very open in his devotions, as not afraid, or aſhamed, in moſt perilous times, of being known to pray to his God: and in ſome caſes this may expoſe a man to contempt, and the croſs, which it may be his duty to bear for the Lord's ſake. They, who are conſtant in their private devotions, cannot entirely conceal it from their families, and generally ſhould not ſtudiouſly deſire to do it. A field, a garden, or a mountain may be as retired as a cloſet, and they are conſecrated by Chriſt's own conduct: and wherever our heart can be lifted up to God, without men's obſerving it, we may properly offer our prayers to him. Yet oſtentation ſhould carefully be avoided; and our ſweeteſt communion with God will commonly be that, in which we are moſt retired.

V. 7, 8.] We do not violate this rule, by uſing repetitions from the fulneſs of our hearts, when earneſtly craving ſome ſpecial mercy, we know not how to give over, or proceed to another ſubject, till we have ſome good hope that it will be granted. Theſe are not vain repetitions, but like thoſe which Chriſt himſelf made in tions, as the heathen *do:* for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye aſk him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

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the garden. (c. xxvi. v. 39. 42. 44.) Such repetitions are meant as Baal's prieſts uſed for hours together, for which Elijah even derided them. (1 *Kings*, c. xviii. v. 26—29.) Theſe were common among the Pagans, and ſeem to have been borrowed by the church of Rome, in their numerous Pater-Noſters, and Ave-Maria's, which the people are taught to uſe, without either meaning or devotion. Somewhat of the ſame kind often creeps into our prayers, both ſecret, and ſocial, whether we uſe a form, or pray extempore. It is not uncommon for us to employ moſt words, when we have leaſt meaning; and to ſpend the time in vain repetitions, to quiet conſcience, even when the affections, and perhaps the very thoughts, are otherwiſe employed. This is an imitation of the heathen, who thought to excite their deities to attend to, and help them, by the multiplicity of their words. But chriſtians ſhould have more honourable thoughts of their omnipreſent, omniſcient, omnipotent, and merciful Father, who knoweth what they need, and deſire, before they begin to aſk him, and is propenſe of himſelf to give them all they want. He only requires us to pray, that we may more ſenſibly feel, and acknowledge our indigence, and dependance; that our deſires, and expectations may be excited; and that we may thus be brought into a proper frame of mind to receive the bleſſiug, and render him the praiſe. But all copiouſneſs in prayer muſt no more be condemned, than all repetitions; for Chriſt continued whole nights in prayer: and there are ſo many things to be aſked for ourſelves, and others, that if our hearts be in a ſpiritual frame, we may pray for a long time together without formality, or unmeaning repetition: but where theſe begin devotion ends.

V. 9. *After*, &c.] We now enter on the conſideration of that prayer, which Chriſt repeatedly taught his diſciples; and which perhaps contains more important meaning, and inſtruction, than can any where elſe be found in ſo few words. Some expoſitors indeed argue, that it was only intended for the uſe of the diſciples, previous to the introduction of the chriſtian diſpenſation. But neither Matthew, nor Luke, who both recorded it after that diſpenſation was more fully opened, give us any ſuch intimation; and it ſeems moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe that it was intended for the uſe of the church in every future age. We are not indeed directed by it, to preſent all our prayers in the name of Chriſt, and through his merits, and interceſſion; for it was not deemed proper explicitly to declare this, at that time. No doubt the form of words has been greatly miſuſed by *unmeaning* repetitions, to the excluſion of real prayer; and it is often repeated by Proteſtants with very little underſtanding of its import, and not without ſome degree of ſuperſtition. But perceiving theſe miſtakes, ſome pious perſons ſeem to have run into the oppoſite extreme, and to have improperly objected to the uſe of it, and even in part to have overlooked the abundant inſtruction contained in it. We ſhall ſee, as we proceed, that ſome objections made to it are grounded upon a partial interpretation. In this place Chriſt introduced the prayer by ſaying: “In this manner pray ye:” in St. Luke's goſpel we read, “when ye pray, ſay.” It may often be proper to uſe theſe very words, but it is not always neceſſary; for we do not find that the apoſtles thus uſed it, and it might lead to formality: but we ought always to pray, after the manner of it; that is with that reverence, humility, ſeriouſneſs, confidence in God, zeal for his glory, love to mankind, ſubmiſſion, and moderation in temporal, and earneſtneſs about ſpiritual things, which it exemplifies; avoiding vain repetitions, and uſing grave, and comprehenſive expreſſions. Nor can we offer one petition for ourſelves, or others all over the earth, which is warranted by the word of God, but it is virtually compriſed in theſe few ſentences. Chriſt had been ſpeaking, as to a ſingle diſciple, about ſecret prayer: but he afterwards changed the number, and uſed the plural, “when *ye* pray, &c;” yet the expreſſion “Our Father,” may imply, that even in ſecret God ſhould be addreſſed as the Father of the whole family, and in behalf of them all, our brethren both by nature, and grace. Chriſt immediately inſtructed his diſciples, (though in the hearing of the multitude;) and he had before frequently ſpoken to them of God, as *their* Father in heaven, whom they were to glorify, from whom they were to expect their reward, and who knew what things they had need of. Under this endearing character he here teaches us to addreſs him in prayer. He is the Father of all living creatures, being the author, and preſerver of their exiſtence; of all rational creatures, as the Father of ſpirits; and eſpecially of men, whom he continues to provide for, and do good to, notwithſtanding their tranſgreſſions. But though he hath always been as a Father to us, we have rebelled againſt him, and by joining ourſelves to, and becoming like the arch-apoſtate, we are in ſtate and character, the children of that wicked one. Yet being under a diſpenſation of mercy, through the divine Mediator, our God is ſtill revealed to us as a Father, who is willing to receive, and be reconciled to his rebellious offspring, whenever they are made willing to return to his worſhip and ſervice. True chriſtians, being regenerated, and adopted into his family, receive the Spirit of adoption, and whilſt they are led to reverence, love, confide in, ſubmit to, and call on God as their Father, they have the aſſurance in proportion, that they are acknowledged as his children. As ſoon as the ſinner begins to deſire to return to God, by faith, and prayer, he is taught to approach him as a kind Father, and not as an inexorable Judge, and Avenger; that he may come before him with encouragement. Thus this endearing appellation teaches us to pray with hope, and confidence, as well as to regard the glory of our Father, in all our ſupplications, and to ſeek for all the diſpoſitions of dutiful children. The expreſſion “which art in heaven,” reminds us of the ſovereign, and univerſal authority, power, and majeſty of God, and of his juſtice, 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive

holineſs, greatneſs, and felicity: for heaven is the high, holy, and happy place, the throne of God, and the region of pure delight. This then inſtructs us to come before God, with a humble conſciouſneſs of our meanneſs and unworthineſs, and with adoring reverence of his Majeſty, and condeſcenſion; with an abſtraction of mind from external objects, and carnal imaginations; with ſpiritual deſires, and large expectations, and aſpiring to the purity, and felicity of his heavenly worſhippers. The firſt petition is "Hallowed be thy name," or let thy name be ſanctified, and had in honour. The name of God ſignifies his being, and perfections, as well the appellations, by which he is known amongſt man. We are taught to pray *in the firſt place*, that this name of God may be known, adored, worſhipped, and glorified. We deſire in this petition for ourſelves, that happineſs, which is to be enjoyed in the knowledge, ſervice, and favour of God, and that we may ſo behold his glory, as to love, adore, and honour him; and that he may be glorified in, and by us for ever. We are alſo taught to pray that the Lord would in the ſame manner make himſelf known to others around us, until all nations know and worſhip him in ſpirit, and truth, as the God of ſalvation, and as revealed to us in his word. So that this is a prayer, that all atheiſm, infidelity, idolatry, impiety, ſuperſtition, ignorance, deluſion, and falſe religion may be baniſhed from the earth: that God would make himſelf known, in his myſterious ſubſiſtence, and incomprehenſible glory, and grace to all nations: that He, and He alone, as one God in three perſons, may be worſhipped, and honoured, ſpiritually, and acceptably, all over the whole earth, and by every one of the human ſpecies. (*Pſ.* lxvii. v. 2, 3.)

V. 10. *Thy*, &c.] The next petition hath given riſe to the opinion, that this prayer was only ſuited to the firſt opening of the chriſtian diſpenſation, which is frequently called the Kingdom of God, and of heaven, But the reaſon of that term hath been aſſigned, (*Note.* c. iii. v. 2:) and ſo long as any part of the earth remains under the power of ſin and ſatan, this petition muſt be proper to be uſed; nay till the whole kingdom of grace ſhall be ſwallowed up, as it were, in the kingdom of glory. In order, that God's name may be hallowed, the kingdom of the Meſſiah muſt come, and be eſtabliſhed on earth, in it's energy, and efficacy. This petition therefore implies firſt an earneſt deſire, that this kingdom of God may be ſet up in our hearts, reducing all within us into entire ſubjection to Chriſt our King: then, that it may be ſet up in the hearts of our children, relatives, ſervants, friends, neighbours: that all, who call themſelves chriſtians may be led into the way of truth, and holineſs: that the true goſpel may be every where preached, with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven to render it efficacious; and that all kings may fall down before the Redeemer, that all nations may do him ſervice: and in ſhort, that in due time, ſin, and ſatan, and all his party may be baniſhed out of the world, and ſhut up in hell, never more to defile or diſturb the creation, or kingdom of God. Every thing relative to the ſending forth, the qualifying, and ſucceſs of miniſters, the converſion of ſinners, the peace and purity of the church, the ſubverſion of antichriſtian powers, and the bringing of Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, &c, into the church, is contained in this petition. To this is annexed. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." The will of God may be conſidered either with reſpect to his commandments, or his providence: ſtrictly ſpeaking his providential will is done in earth equally as in heaven; yet that ſubmiſſion, acquieſcence, and ſatisfaction in it, which angels feel, and expreſs, may be intended, eſpecially with reference to our own caſe. At the ſame time it may be obſerved, that the uſe commonly made of this clauſe, as if it only meant ſuch reſignation to the will of God, greatly limits, and enervates its weighty, and extenſive import. All the inhabitants of heaven do the will of God, univerſally, chearfully, conſtantly, perfectly, harmoniouſly, without wearineſs, and with ineffable delight: and we are taught to pray, that all the inhabitants of the earth may imitate, and emulate their example: that all men, being become the diſciples, and ſubjects of Chriſt, may renounce all kinds of ſin, and wickedneſs, and obey all God's commandments, with conſtancy, harmony, and alacrity, as angels in heaven do: that an end may be put to all injuſtice, oppreſſion, fraud, violence, bloodſhed, intemperance, licentiouſneſs, ungodlineſs, ſelfiſhneſs, malice, contention, &c; and that righteouſneſs, truth, goodneſs, mercy, purity, love of God, and each other, with all it's bleſſed fruits, may fill the earth, even as they fill heaven. And what a change would this be! What an extenſive petition is this! At the ſame time we are taught to pray, that all men may rejoice in God's ſovereignty, authority, and glory, and be contented, and ſatisfied with his appointments, reſpecting them, without envy, coveting, jealouſy, ambition of ſuperiority, &c; rejoicing to ſee others honoured, proſpered, and happy, even as the inhabitants of heaven do. And whilſt we aſk ſuch, and ſo many bleſſings for others, we are no doubt taught to aſk for this obedient ſubmiſſive frame of mind for ourſelves, and to ſeek for, and aim at it in our whole conduct.

V. 11. *Give*, &c.] Having *in the firſt place* ſought thoſe things, which pertain to the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and prayed for the diſplay of his glory, and the beſt good of men, all over the earth, we are next directed to aſk of God thoſe things, that pertain to our bodies, and this preſent life. I would not indeed exclude thoſe things, that are needful for our ſouls, and ſpiritual lives, which we need day by day, and which being all compriſed in Chriſt, and his purchaſed bleſſings, are often ſpoken of as, "the bread of life;" yet I apprehend that the petition mainly relates to our temporal ſubſiſtance, and welfare. Bread is one principal part of the things, which are needful for the body, and is often put for the whole of them: by the uſe of this word we are taught to aſk only things, that are neceſſary, without our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

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craving ſuperfluities; and to refer it to our heavenly Father to determine what things are neceſſary, according to our ſtation in life, our families, &c. All chriſtians are inſtructed to aſk this proviſion from God, whether they be rich or poor; for all depend upon him for it, ſhould receive it as his gift, give him thanks for it, and uſe it to his glory, whether it come from their eſtates, commerce, huſbandry, profeſſions, labour, or ſkill. We are taught to aſk it for the day, and not for the morrow, (perhaps with reference to the manna, which Iſrael received freſh every day:) this inſtructs us to beware of covetouſneſs, to be moderate, contented with ſcanty proviſion, without any thing before hand, and to truſt God from day to day. We are taught to aſk for "*our* bread." which may intimate to us, that we muſt expect it in the way of honeſty, and induſtry: for all, that is got by fraud, or any iniquitous, oppreſſive, licentious, or ungodly method, is the wages of unrighteouſneſs, and the maintenance given, (ſo to ſpeak,) by Satan to his ſervants. Whilſt we ſeek our daily bread from God, we muſt diligently uſe all lawful means of obtaining it, and be provident, induſtrious, and frugal; but we muſt reject with abhorrence all that might be gotten by means inconſiſtent with piety, equity, truth, and charity; and never expect to be ſupported in ſloth, or extravagance. (Note, *Prov:* c. xxx. v. 7—9.)

V. 12. *And,* &c.] Whilſt we are ſeeking from our heavenly Father ſo many and great bleſſings, we cannot forget, (if we be chriſtians,) that we have forfeited our claim to them by our ſins, and are deſerving of his heavy indignation. But our encouragement is, that there is forgiveneſs with him: and therefore we are taught to pray for forgiveneſs, as often as for daily bread; and not only of our former ſins, but of our renewed offences in thought, word, and deed, in heart, and life, of omiſſion, and commiſſion, in our conduct towards God, and man. By theſe we run in debt continually: we receive our being, and all our powers and poſſeſſions from God, to whom they all ought to be devoted in perfect love; by our failure in this we contract a debt, which we cannot pay, but which needs continual remiſſion. By being taught to aſk forgiveneſs every time we pray, we are reminded to exerciſe conſtant watchfulneſs, ſelf-examination, humiliation, faith and hope in God's mercy through Chriſt, patience, and forgiveneſs of others: for we are taught to, add, "as we forgive our debtors." We ought to forgive others, as we expect forgiveneſs from God: their failure of their duty to us is a ſmall debt contracted, like our great one, in failing of our duty to God. (*Matt.* c. xviii. v. 23—35.) True repentance, and faith always produce a diſpoſition to forgive others: habitual malice, and revenge are proofs of impenitence, and that a man's ſins againſt God are not pardoned: if a believer be betrayed into ſo unchriſtian a ſpirit, he muſt not expect the comfort of forgiveneſs, or communion with God; but frowns, fears, rebukes, and corrections, till he be reduced to a better temper. We are therefore by this reminded frequently to examine ourſelves in this reſpect, leſt in praying for the pardon of our ſins, we ſhould in fact call for wrath, inſtead of mercy to our ſouls: at the ſame time we are reminded to pray for the humble, gentle, forgiving ſpirit, that is required of us. The uſe of the word "*debts*" is not to be underſtood of pecuniary debts, which the debtor is not able to pay, and the creditor cannot well afford to loſe: yet where our debtors ſtand in the ſame predicament reſpecting us, as we do in reſpect of God; that is, when they have it not in their power to pay us, and would be ruined, or greatly diſtreſſed, if we rigorouſly inſiſted on it; then we muſt remit the debt as we hope for God to remit our's.

V. 13. *And lead,* &c.] We are next inſtructed to pray that the Lord would "not lead us into temptation." (Note, *Gen:* c. xxii. v. 1.) He never puts evil into our hearts, or ſtirs it up there by any poſitive influence: in the former reſpect "a man is tempted by his own luſt, "and enticed," (*James,* c, i. v. 13;) in the latter by Satan, or wicked men. But the providence of God leads us into ſuch circumſtances, as have a tendency to give our inward corruptions, and the temptations of Satan, and his agents advantage againſt us. This he does to prove the reality, or power of our grace, the ſincerity or hypocriſy of our profeſſion, or the remaining prevalency of ſin. But the believer, conſcious of his own weakneſs, and depravity, fearing to offend God, diſhonour his profeſſion, grieve his brethren, ſtumble others, or wound his own conſcience, is taught to pray, "not to be led "into temptation;" to beſeech God to mortify his ſinful propenſities, to reſtrain the malice and power of the tempter, to keep him out of difficult, and trying circumſtances, to proportion his ſtrength to his day, and never to permit him to be tempted above what he is able. Thus we are inſtructed to hate, and dread ſin, whilſt we hope for mercy; to diſtruſt ourſelves; to rely on the providence, as well as grace of God, to keep us from it; to ſhun temptation as much as we can, to watch over our own hearts, to be habitually prepared to repel the aſſaults of the tempter, and to take care not to become tempters to others. Great damage often comes to us, by overlooking this needful requeſt. The concluding petition is "but deliver us from evil." Some expoſitors render it "from the evil one:" but why ſhould we confine the interpretation? We are taught to pray for deliverance from all kinds, degrees, and occaſions of evil; from the malice, power, and ſubtlety of all the powers of darkneſs; from this evil world, and all its allurements, ſnares, tempters, and deceivers; from the evil of our own hearts, that it may be reſtrained, ſubdued, weakened, and finally extirpated; from the evil of ſuffering, from the final wrath of God, from terrible, or injurious temporal calamities, from the terror, and ſting of death, from the power of death by a glorious reſurrection; from all evil natural, and moral; from ſin and all its conſequences, by the complete reſtoration of both body and ſoul to holineſs, and happineſs, glory and immortality, in the enjoyment of God's complete favour; and in the beatific viſion for evermore. It is a prayer, that whatever temp-

14 For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.

16 Moreover when ye faſt, be not, as the hypocrites, of a ſad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily I ſay unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy face:

18 That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret: and thy Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.

19 Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal:

20 But lay up for yourſelves treaſures in

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tation, perſecution, or affliction may overtake us, we may be preſerved through them all from forſaking, and diſhonouring God, and finally be completely delivered from them, and obtain eternal life and felicity, by the mercy and grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt. To this is added a concluding doxology, "for thine is the kingdom, "the power, and the glory for ever. Amen" That kingdom, for the coming of which we pray is the Lord's, all power, and authority are his, and he is able to ſet it up in our hearts, and in the world, in defiance of all oppoſition, and his will be the glory to all eternity; ſo that this may be conſidered as a plea, that we uſe, why our prayers ſhould be anſwered, and an encouragement to our hearts to expect that they will. Or it may be conſidered, as an expreſſion of our cordial joy, and ſatisfaction in the kingdom, power, and glory being the Lord's for ever, as becomes the children of our Father in heaven; and our deſire and purpoſe to give him all honour, worſhip, love, praiſe, thankſgiving, and obedience for evermore, and our ardent wiſh, that all others might do the ſame. To all this we are taught to ſet our confirming, and entire aſſent, and conſent, by the word, "Amen" ſo be it: let all this be ſo eſtabliſhed, and completed to the glory of God, and we deſire no more. Theſe laſt words are not found in St. Luke's goſpel, and are wanting in ſome few manuſcripts of St. Matthew's: but they breathe the very ſpirit of the preceding prayer, and there can be little doubt, but they are genuine; though ſome few tranſcribers choſe to omit them becauſe not found in Luke. What now is there in this prayer, that is not purely evangelical, and ſuited to the caſe, and wants of every chriſtian, and every congregation? What can be more ſpiritual, comprehenſive, or energetic? What is wanting, or what redundant? What more fraught with glowing zeal for the honour of God, expanſive love to mankind, and fervent thirſtings after all the bleſſings of ſalvation? What can be more replete with important inſtruction? It only wants to be better underſtood, and uſed with correſpondent affections, to conſtitute ſuch devotion, as almoſt would emulate the worſhip of heaven.

V. 13, 14.] Chriſt added this by way of caution. We muſt not however ſuppoſe, that our forgiveneſs of our brethren can in any degree merit the forgiveneſs, that we aſk of God: or that he will pardon the impenitent, and unbelieving, becauſe out of a natural facility of temper, they forgive others, without any proper regard to his authority, and glory. The perſons addreſſed are profeſſed diſciples: when their hearts do not in this reſpect condemn them, they may have confidence towards God, though conſcious of much unworthineſs; but if their hearts condemn them, their confidence will be abated: (1 *John*, c. iii. v. 18—23:) and if they utterly fail in this, their ſincerity may be queſtioned.

V. 16—18.] Our bleſſed Lord, having given theſe copious inſtructions concerning prayer, returns again to caution his diſciples againſt oſtentation in another religious duty. The Phariſees faſted often, in an hypocritical, and ſelf-righteous manner: but, even in their private faſts, they were uſed to appear abroad with gloomy countenances, and with ſuch ſordid and ſlovenly neglect of their perſons, as gave every body to underſtand, how they were employed. This they did to keep up their credit with the people, and to gain their applauſe for their extraordinary ſanctity; and this would be their poor reward, for God would not accept ſuch vain-glorious ſervices. But Chriſt's diſciple, (who is ſuppoſed on ſome occaſions to faſt, as well as to give alms, and pray,) was to avoid all oſtentation, when thus humbling himſelf before God; and in his family, or when called from home, to be as chearful, and decent in his attire, as at other times: that he might not appear to men to faſt, but be ſatisfied with the notice, and acceptance of God his Father, who is in the ſecret chambers of his worſhippers, as well as in their public aſſemblies; and who will graciouſly and openly reward ſuch unfeigned expreſſions of humiliation for ſin, mortification of the fleſh, deſires after holineſs, and abſtraction from worldly pleaſures, for the ſake of communion with him.

V. 19—22.] The Phariſees not only ſought to be ſeen of men, in order to obtain applauſe, and reputation, but to ſubſerve their covetouſneſs: and thus a worldly mind, which commonly leads men to neglect religion, ſometimes induces them to take up an hypocritical profeſſion of it. Againſt this bane of all piety Chriſt next warned his diſciples. As a chriſtian is a pilgrim on earth, and a citizen of heaven; he here only wants ſubſiſtence, and travelling expences, but he needs a treaſure in heaven. He ought not therefore to lay up *for himſelf* a treaſure on earth; for that muſt ſhortly be left to others: and all things here below, however idolized, or valued, are liable to decay, and waſte. Moths eat and ſpoil the garments of thoſe, who have rich ward-robes, nay even metals conſume, and are corroded by ruſt; and thieves are tempted to break into the houſes of the rich to ſeize their treaſures, and often to attempt their lives. However wealth be ſecured it is uncertain, and far more conſtant-heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor ſteal:

21 For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.

22 The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great *is* that darkneſs?

24 No man can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

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ly a ſource of vexation, and diſappointment, than of ſolid comfort. Such things ought not to be the chriſtian's treaſure: the acquiſition of them ſhould not be his object: he ſhould be content without them; and if they are entruſted to him, he ſhould neither lay them up for himſelf, nor ſpend them on himſelf, but lay them out in doing good. Heavenly things are his treaſure: theſe he ſhould prize, and ſeek in the diligence of faith, and prayer, and in the improvement of his talents. They are not liable to decay, or uncertainty, nor can he be plundered, or deprived of them. This is a matter of the greateſt importance: for if a man's treaſure be laid up on earth, his heart will be earthly, and all his thoughts, affections, projects, conduct, and converſation will be of the ſame ſtamp. But if heavenly things be choſen, and ſought for, as a man's moſt valued treaſure, his heart will be heavenly, he will continually be thinking about ſpiritual matters; his very ſoul will be, as it were, in heaven, and this will give a heavenly ſavour to all his diſcourſe, and the whole tenor of his actions; and preſerve him from, or ſtrengthen him againſt thoſe temptations, which ruin worldly men, and quicken him in every part of his duty.

V. 22, 23.] The preceding truths are here illuſtrated by an apt ſimilitude. The actions of the whole body are directed according to the light received by the eye: when that organ is ſingle or clear, and perceives objects as they really are, the whole body will have light, and the man will move with ſafety, and propriety. But if the eye be evil, and ſee things confuſedly, and without diſtinction, the man will blunder as in the dark, and be continually liable to loſe his way, ſtumble, or run into danger. Thus, an enlightened underſtanding perceiving objects according to their real nature, and value, will enable a man to form a proper judgment, to make a wiſe choice; and to conduct himſelf aright reſpecting them. But a darkened mind, leading to a miſtaken eſtimate of things, produces an erroneous choice: and then the more earneſtly a man proceeds, the further he wanders from the way, and the more egregiouſly he blunders. If then, that, which is ſuppoſed by any one to be his chief, wiſdom, be indeed folly; if his firſt principle, which he deems undoubted truth, be an error; the light that is in him, is darkneſs, and how intenſe, and fatal muſt that darkneſs be? This immediately relates to men's practical judgment of earthly and heavenly things. The worldly man is miſtaken in his firſt principle; and therefore all his reaſonings, and calculations muſt be erroneous, and the further he goes, the more fatally is he bewildered. But it is equally applicable to falſe religion: when that, which a man deems extraordinary humiliation is a mere deluſion, his very light is thick darkneſs from the bottomleſs pit: all his inferences, and proceedings lead him further from God, from truth, and holineſs, and plunge him deeper into error, prejudice, ſpiritual pride, and other ſnares of the prince of darkneſs. This is an awful, and a common caſe, how very careful then ſhould we examine our leading principles, by the word of God, and with earneſt prayer for the teaching of his Spirit.

V. 24, *No*, &c.] A man may do ſome ſervice to two maſters, but he can devote himſelf to the ſervice of no more, than one; and God requires the whole man, and will not ſhare the heart with the world. When the two maſters, and their intereſts are in full oppoſition to each other, the impoſſibility of ſerving both of them is ſtill more evident. This is the caſe in reſpect of God, and the world; they are two oppoſites; he who loves, and holds to the world as his maſter, will be an enemy and deſpiſer of God; and he who loves and cleaves to the ſervice of God, will renounce the friendſhip, and deſpiſe the frown of the world. So that we cannot ſerve God, and Mammon. This is the Syriac word for riches, and it is uſed as the name of an idol: the covetous man is an idolater, and therefore no true ſervant, or worſhipper of God, who is jealous, and will endure no rivals. By a proper arrangement of our worldly concerns, in ſubordination, and ſubſerviency to religion, we may render them a part of God's ſervice; as worldly men make their religion a part of the ſervice of Mammon: but the two oppoſite ſervices cannot be attended to.

V. 25—32.] The anxious fear of want, and care about future proviſion often as much enſnares the poor, as the love of their wealth does the rich. Therefore Chriſt expreſsly enjoined his diſciples to "take no thought for their lives, "&c." There is a carefulneſs about temporal things, which is a duty; according to a man's ſtation in the world. He ſhould mind diligently, and with prudent contrivance, his proper buſineſs; he ſhould provide for

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his ſtature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Conſider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin:

29 And yet I ſay unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like noe of theſe.

30 Wherefore, If God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven, *ſhall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat? or, What ſhall we drink? or, Wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?

32 (For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things.

33 But ſeek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs; and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of itſelf, Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

himſelf, and family, as far as honeſt induſtry will go; he ſhould calculate, and contrive to live within the bounds of his income, that he may not be embarraſſed with debts, if he can help it; he ſhould take care, that none of God's bounty be waſted, or laviſhed; he ſhould provide as he can for thoſe demands, that will be hereafter made on him; he ſhould ſpare needleſs expence, that he may not want, nor be conſtrained to beg, in ſickneſs, infirmity, or old age; and he even may, and in ſome caſes ought, to make ſome moderate proviſion for his family, if he can do it conſiſtent with juſtice, piety, and charity. We muſt however be *careful* that we do not carry theſe lawful cares to an extreme. But when a man is attending to his duty *at the preſent*, he ought not to be careful about the event of things, or anxious how he ſhall be provided for *in future*. This is the Lord's part; and when we take it upon ourſelves, we diſtruſt and diſhonour Him, and become our own tormentors, and are often tempted to ſinful methods of making proviſion for ourſelves, or families. This is the care, or ſolicitude, that is prohibited. The chriſtian, truſting in God, and attending to his duty, muſt not indulge anxiety about the continuance, or ſupport of his life; he muſt neither be much concerned about the meaſure of his ſupplies, nor the manner in which they are to be obtained. The Author of his life, and the Former of his body, having done greater things for him, ſhould be depended on for the leſſer; and food and raiment ſhould be ſought, and expected from him. This great Houſholder, (ſo to ſpeak,) of the univerſe, openeth his hand and filleth all his creatures with his bounty: the birds of the air, that are ſo gay, and chearful, are provided for by his care, without any of their own; for they are not able to uſe any means for their own ſuſtenance. And ſurely the reconciled believer is far more valuable in the ſight of his heavenly Father, both as a rational creature, and as a ſpiritual worſhipper, than the birds of the air! And ſuch cares are altogether vain; as no man could add a cubit, to the height of his ſtature, if he were ever ſo ſolicitous about it, and therefore no man thinks of it: ſo in fact none of our anxious care can add to the length of our lives, or to our health, comfort, or proſperity; when we have done our duty, nothing more is in our power. It is equally abſurd to be anxious about raiment; even the lilies of the field, which are incapable of adorning themſelves, are far more beautifully decorated, than Solomon, or any earthly monarch, in his royal robes. And hath the Lord with ſuch profuſion adorned the very vegetables, that will ſo ſoon be cut down, withered, dried up, or burned? And will he not ſuitably clothe the chriſtian? Or ſhould he be deſirous of ſuch vain adornings, as are out-done by the flowers of the field? This muſt ariſe from weakneſs of faith, reſpecting the truths, and promiſes of God, which will expoſe a man to juſt rebukes. Such ſolicitous, diſtruſtful enquiries about temporal things may conſiſt with the character of thoſe, that know not God; who conſequently muſt count the world their portion, and rely on their own foreſight for obtaining the good things of it: but chriſtians have a nobler Portion, and a better Provider. Their Father knoweth what they want; and he hath power, truth, goodneſs, and love enough to them, to ſend them what is beſt for them: their anxiety is then inconſiſtent, and ſuperfluous; they have only to attend to what he commands, and expect what he promiſes.

V. 33, 34.] The bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom, the righteouſneſs whereby his ſubjects are juſtified, the grace by which they are ſanctified, and the good works, in which they are to walk, are intended by the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs. We are to ſeek admiſſion into this kingdom by repentance, and faith, and in the uſe of every means of grace; we are to preſs forward to the full participation of its privileges, and to greater conformity to the law, and example of our righteous King; and we ought alſo to ſeek the purity, peace, proſperity, and enlargement of the kingdom, the honour of our Prince, and the good of all our fellow ſubjects. Theſe we are commanded to ſeek "in the firſt place," as our firſt object, with the firſt of our affections, and time; beginning our years, months, weeks, and days with this buſineſs, and ordering all things in ſubſerviency thereto. In this caſe our bountiful Father will add to us all thoſe things, which pertain to our preſent life, without our anxious carefulneſs: but they, who reverſe this order, go the way to ruin themſelves in reſpect of this world, and that which is to come. We ſhould then not ſo much as be careful about the next day: for it may never arrive *to us:* and if it doth it will bring its ſupports, and ſupplies with it, and thus

CHAP. VII.

Contains 1ſt. Cautions againſt raſh judgments, and directions concerning cenſures, and rebukes, 1---6. *2d. Encouragements to prayer; the rule of doing to others, as we would be done by; and exhortations to earneſtneſs in entering upon, and proceeding in a religious life, enforced by the awful fact, that moſt men are going the broad road to deſtruction, and but few in the narrow way to life,* 7---14. *3d. Warnings againſt falſe teachers, with rules for diſtinguiſhing them,* 15---20. *4th. A concluding declaration, that Chriſt the Judge will reject many at the laſt day, who have profeſſed the goſpel, propheſied, and wrought miracles, &c, becauſe they were workers of iniquity; with a repreſentation of the wiſdom, and ſafety of him, who ſhews his faith by his obedience, and the folly and ruin of him, who doth not,* 21---27. *5th. An account of the impreſſion, which this diſcourſe made upon the audience,* 28, 29.

as it were take thought for itſelf. And this ſhould be conſidered as a merciful appointment of our heavenly Father. He knows, that every day brings us more trouble and ſuffering than we can well bear; and he therefore allows, and commands us to caſt all our care about the future on him. And if we will be ſo abſurd as to load ourſelves with a heavy burden, which does not belong to us, and then groan under our ſelf-impoſed ſorrows, we torment ourſelves, as well as diſhonour God by our folly and unbelief. We may alſo add, that when we are at preſent, watching, praying, and attending to our duty, we are equally authorized to truſt the Lord for grace ſufficient for future trials, and temptations, as for food ſufficient for our future temporal wants: and in both caſes "ſufficient for the day is the evil "thereof."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In what various ways doth the evil of our hearts lead us aſide from that ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, which are accepted of the Lord. Hypocrites corrupt their duties by carnal motives; profligates, and infidels excuſe their own neglect of religion on that account: but chriſtians muſt attend on every good work, and means of grace from other principles, and with a better intention. The leſs they ſeek reward and honour from men, and the more conſcious they are, that they do not deſerve them from God, the more confidently may they expect them from Him. What diſcoveries will be made at the laſt day! Many an admired character will then be detected as a mere vain-glorious hypocrite, in his charities, devotions, and auſterities: and it would be the height of arrogance for men to expect a recompence from God, for actions directed by ambition, and avarice, and of which they have already received their poor reward. But at that ſolemn ſeaſon, the ſecret charities, and fervent prayers of true believers, earneſtly ſeeking the good even of their bittereſt enemies, and all their ſecret ſelf-denial, and mortification of their ſinful propenſities, out of love to God, and holineſs, will be openly proclaimed and rewarded. Whilſt the moſt ſpecious part of an ungodly man's character is held forth to view, and his crimes, and corrupt motives are ſtudiouſly concealed; and whilſt the infirmities of a godly man are noticed, and his good works, and holy diſpoſitions veiled with the mantle of humility; the real difference may be but feebly diſcerned: but when the whole ſhall be known, all the world will ſee the one to be meet for heaven, and the other juſtly deſerving of his awful doom. Let us then remember in every thing to act as before our Father, who ſeeth in ſecret, and as deſiring no reward, but that, which he will graciouſly beſtow on his beloved children, for all their works and labour of love. Let us well ſtudy what hath been ſtated of that frame of mind, in which our prayers and ſupplications ſhould be offered; and learn daily from Chriſt how to pray, with acceptance, and confidence of ſucceſs. If our hearts deſire his glory, and favour, and deliverance from guilt, temptation, and ſin, above all other things, we may be ſure that he will anſwer our prayers for theſe bleſſings. If he have taught us to forgive our brethren for his ſake; we may be aſſured of his ready forgiveneſs of our ſins, though many: if we deſire to have him for our Father in Chriſt Jeſus, and to poſſeſs the ſpirit, and act in the character of his children; we may come near, and call upon, and confide in him as our Father: and all that refuſe to do thus muſt ſhortly be dragged before him as their awful Judge. But let all men beware of malice, and revenge; for whatever a man profeſs, if he forgive not others, God hath not forgiven him; and will not forgive him, if he continue of this rancorous diſpoſition. A ſour, and gloomy countenance is no part of, nor ornament to, religion; and often covers a proud hypocritical heart: but real humility, ſorrow for ſin, and deadneſs to the world ſhould be accompanied by a decent, and unaffected cheerfulneſs in the ſight of men.

Let us alſo beware of covetouſneſs: treaſures on earth can little profit us dying creatures: and yet we are in danger of loſing them before we die, and they are only in certain caſes, ſnares, and vexations. But there is an inheritance, that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for true believers: for this let us labour with all diligence; that we may ſecure, and increaſe our portion in it, whatever be neglected, or renounced for the ſake of it. (*Luke*, c. xvi.) Anxiety about the world cannot conſiſt with a heavenly mind: for where the treaſure is, there will the heart be alſo. Yet multitudes fatally err in this matter: they ſee all things through a vitiated eye, in which phantoms appear realities, and realities phantoms: thus they wander on in darkneſs, and know not at what they ſtumble. So that, after all the warnings Chriſt hath given us, they perſiſt in a vain attempt to ſerve God, and Mammon. May the Lord preſerve us from ſuch falſe principles, and fatal miſtakes. Whilſt we are careful to chooſe the good part, to find the right way, to know the ſtate of our ſouls, and to attend to our preſent duty; we ſhould not be anxious about future conſequences. Let us rely on our heavenly Father to ſupport the lives, and nouriſh the bodies, which he hath given us; and not be anxious whether our proviſion be plenteous, or mean and ſcanty. Our lives are more than meat, and our bodies than raiment; what then are our ſouls, which the divine Saviour hath re-

CHAP. VII.

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged: and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.

3 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye: and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

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deemed with his precious blood? Whilſt we feaſt on his ſpiritual proviſions, and are adorned with the robes of righteouſneſs, and ſalvation; we cannot ſurely doubt his truth and love, which are engaged to feed, and clothe us! Will he provide for the fowls, and adorn the fading flowers, and yet ſtarve his beloved children? How unreaſonable, and ſhameful is our unbelief? We need his merciful rebuke, and to pray continually to him to increaſe our faith. However let us be thankful, that even little faith is a great, and precious mercy; and let us leave it to gentiles, and unbelievers to perplex themſelves about ſuch matters. Let us ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, aſſured, that all things elſe ſhall be added to us; as our Father knows what things we want. Thus we ſhall be encouraged for every duty, and relieved from our fruitleſs anxieties. We ſhall indeed find, that ſufficient for the day is the evil of it; and that we have no need to anticipate future poſſible pain, and ſorrows: but we ſhall alſo find, that the day will bring its own comforts and ſupports with it. And all theſe rules, and precepts of our gracious Lord will be known by experience to conduce to our preſent comfort, as well as to our future benefit; when we ſhall have done with temptation, be delivered from evil, and employed in praiſing him, whoſe is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1, 2.] We cannot ſuppoſe, that Chriſt here meant to forbid his diſciples to form a judgment of men's ſtate, and character, according to their avowed principles, and conduct; for he directs us to judge by this rule; (v. 15—20;) and many of our duties to thoſe around us, abſolutely require us to form ſome judgment of them, both in reſpect of their ſtate, and their actions in different circumſtances. But we ought not to be officious, raſh, or ſevere in forming our judgment, nor haſty in declaring it. We are not bound to believe an infidel, or a profligate to be a true chriſtian: but we ſhould judge as favourably as we can, where the fundamentals of chriſtianity are profeſſed, and not diſgraced by an inconſiſtent conduct. We ought to put the beſt conſtruction on doubtful actions, and never aſcribe good ones to bad motives without full proof: we ought to avoid curious enquiries into men's conduct, and injurious ſuſpicions: we ſhould be backward at giving our opinion of any man to his diſadvantage, without ſome other duty require it of us: we ſhould not cenſure, or anathematize thoſe, who differ from us; or condemn whole ſects, and ſocieties of men, except as the ſcripture evidently condemns them. We ſhould, as far as we can, ſhun every thing that ſavours of malevolence, or ſpiritual pride: for the opinion that a chriſtian muſt hold of the ſtate of the world around him, will give ſufficient offence; and this ſhould not be increaſed by raſh, and harſh judgments in particular caſes. He, who is habitually propenſe to this ſelf-ſufficient, preſumptuous, and cenſorious proceeding againſt others, gives too great ground of ſuſpicion, that he is devoid of true grace, and expoſed to judgment without mercy from God. If a chriſtian give into ſo evil a ſpirit and practice, he may expect ſharper corrections than others experience; and both the world, and the church will commonly judge of men, according to their method of judging others; and thus in every ſenſe it is verified, that with what meaſure we mete, it will be meaſured to us again. (*Luke*, c. vi. v. 37, 38.)

V. 3—5.] Theſe verſes ſhew, that though Chriſt addreſſed his diſciples, according to their profeſſion, as the children of God; yet he meant to warn them, upon the ſuppoſition, that there might be hypocrites amongſt them. (c. vi. v. 14, 15.) Proud ſelf-preference, and ſelf-admiration, commonly connect with the ſpirit of raſh, and harſh judging. This, Chriſt proceeded to expoſe by an illuſtration, which ſeems to refer to proverbial expreſſions then in uſe. If a man, whoſe eye was cloſed, with ſome entire obſtruction, or diſeaſe, (which like a beam was evident to all, and could not be ſeen through,) ſhould pretend curiouſly to ſpy out ſome little particle in another man's eye, and officiouſly offer to remove it; he would render himſelf ridiculous, and every one would enquire why he attempted ſuch a ſervice, for which he was utterly diſqualified? His attention ought to be directed to the diſordered ſtate of his own eye, and his endeavours uſed to remedy that, before he examined his brother's eye, or offered his aſſiſtance to him. In like manner, chriſtians indeed ſhould watch over one another, to diſcern, point out, and remedy even ſmall miſtakes in each other's principles, and practice: but the man who preſumes to reprove little defects in conſcientious chriſtians, whilſt his own principles, ſpirit, and conduct are notoriouſly wrong, only proves his own pride, officiouſneſs, and hypocriſy. He, that would become a wiſe, and a faithful reprover, or miniſter, muſt begin at home, and firſt take heed to himſelf, and to his doctrine, temper, and conduct: when theſe are become unexceptionable, he may with propriety, authority, and hope of ſucceſs, offer his help to his brethren, in rectifying their judgments and promoting their ſanctification: but he will do it with humility, prudence, tenderneſs, and candour. And it is obſervable, that, *in ſpiritual optics*, a beam in a man's eye always renders him extremely clear ſighted in diſcerning other men's faults, and only blind to his own. (*Luke*, c. vi. v. 39—42.)

V. 6. *Give*, &c.] As not every man is qualified, or authorized to be a reprover, ſo every offender is not the

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

7 Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that aſketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his ſon aſk bread, will he give him a ſtone?

10 Or if he aſk a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that aſk him?

12 Therefore all things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye

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proper ſubject of reproof. (*Prov.* c. ix. v. 7, 8. c. xxv. ver. 12.) To give reproof, counſel, or ſalutary inſtruction to ſome men, would be as improper, as to throw the holy things, that were the food of the prieſts, unto unclean dogs, or to caſt pearls before ſwine. The emblems here uſed, when compared with other ſcriptures, (*Iſaiah*, c. lvi. v. 11. *Phil.* c. iii. v. 2.—2 *Pet:* c. ii. v. 22,) may be ſuppoſed to denote hardened ſcorners, licentious or covetous profeſſors, fierce, and untractable oppoſers, or manifeſt apoſtates. Doubtleſs perſons of evident, and incorrigible impiety, and wickedneſs are meant. Many truths, and experiences that are very excellent in themſelves, and precious to the humble, and teachable, are not proper to be communicated to ſuch ſcoffers, or abuſers of ſacred things: they will only be emboldened, or exaſperated by them to proceed to greater ungodlineſs, and to ſhew more impious rage, and contempt. They will trample under foot with diſdain, all that can be ſaid of experimental religion, or communion with God, as ſwine would tread pearls in the mire, regardleſs of their value: and they will be ſo enraged at holy warnings, reproofs, and counſels; that like fierce dogs, they will be ready to turn again, and tear their friendly reprover: ſo that it is commonly prudent to hold our peace, and let them alone. (*Iſaiah*, c. xxxvi. v. 21.)

V. 7—11.] (*Luke*, c. xi. v. 1—13.) Many extenſive, important, and arduous duties had been inculcated, and great wiſdom and grace would be requiſite for the practice of them, without being turned aſide, or driven into extremes on the right hand, or on the left: Chriſt therefore next directed and encouraged his auditors, to ſeek all their help, and counſel, and every other bleſſing, in earneſt prayer, and the uſe of other means of grace; aſſuring them that every one, who thus aſked, ſought, and knocked at mercy's gate, would be ſucceſsful. But is there then no ſuch things as aſking, and not receiving, &c? undoubtedly there is; but not in the ſenſe here evidently intended. A man may aſk in vain, when he addreſſes himſelf to his idol, or tutelary ſaint, inſtead of the living God: he may aſk for what the Lord hath never promiſed, or without feeling any need or deſire of the mercy that he craves: he may be a ſham beggar, and offer proud hypocritical prayers; or he may earneſtly crave exemption from puniſhment, whilſt he wilfully cleaves to his ſins; or he may aſk for temporal, and ſpiritual bleſſings, without uſing other proper means of obtaining them; or he may come in his own name, in contempt of the appointed Mediator. A man may reverſe God's order, and ſeek the world *firſt*, and then ſeek to be ſaved as far as conſiſts with his worldly intereſts, and purſuits: he may ſeek ſalvation in a way of his own deviſing; or in a more ſmooth, or flattering method, than that of the goſpel; or he may begin to ſeek, when the Maſter of the houſe hath riſen up and ſhut to the door: and a man may knock at mercy's gate, when he is in a fright, and give over when his fears are vaniſhed. But he, who comes as a ſinner to a merciful God, through the divine Advocate, for all the bleſſings of ſalvation, in ſincerity, and with earneſt prayer, waiting and perſevering as having hope in this way, and none in any other: he who ſeeks ſpiritual bleſſings in the firſt place, without delay, and in the uſe of all appointed means; and he, who knocks, and waits at mercy's gate, as reſolved to find admiſſion, or to periſh knocking, will be ſure to ſpeed. The promiſe is abſolute, and expreſs; “every one, that aſketh receiveth, &c;” often ſuch perſons receive, and find admiſſion without delay: always in due time. Nor has this reference to their previous characters: he who opened the way of acceſs, hath taught them to come in it, and he giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Indeed, (as our Lord hath added,) it would be moſt diſhonourable to God to ſuppoſe the contrary, after all the diſplays, that he hath given of his fatherly compaſſion to ſinners. For what man would put off his hungry child, when importunately aſking food of him, with an uſeleſs ſtone inſtead of a loaf, or a noxious ſerpent inſtead of a fiſh? He would not deſerve the name of a father, or even of a man, that could act in ſuch a manner. If therefore men, who are all of them corrupt, and ſelfiſh, and who cannot give to their children without leſſening their own ſtore, and often ſtraitening themſelves, are yet inſtructed by an inſtinctive natural affection to give ſalutary, and uſeful gifts to their children; how much more ſhall our heavenly Father, whoſe goodneſs, and riches are infinite, give good things, even all things that pertain, and conduce to ſalvation, to all them, who humbly aſk them of him. Chriſt ſays not “to his children,” leſt the trembling ſupplicant ſhould be diſconcerted by the apprehenſion, that he was not one of them; but “to them, that aſk him,” that the very act of aſking might give the aſſurance of being heard, and of receiving the deſired mercy. It is obſervable, that our Lord, addreſſing his diſciples, aſſumed it as the principle from which he argued, that they were *evil*; the very word, that in ſome places is uſed for the wicked one: and that he all along addreſſed himſelf to the feelings, and even ſo to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Becauſe ſtrait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few

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conſciences of his hearers, and did not ſpeak in that general declamatory manner, that many affect.

V. 12. *Therefore,* &c.] The example of the truth and mercy of God, the encouragement thereby afforded, and his readineſs to pardon aſſiſt and accept us, (as well as his authority,) form the arguments, with which this rule of conduct is enforced, and conſtitute its connexion with the preceding verſes. It is not only enacted as a ſtrict, and holy law, which to tranſgreſſors is but another name for righteous condemnation, when ſeparated from promiſes of mercy, and aſſiſtance; but it is propoſed to believers, as their rule of duty, with abundant motives, and encouragements, that by obſerving it, they may glorify God, and ſhew their gratitude for his mercy: and it is worthy our conſideration, that moral precepts, thus enforced, are very different from the ſame rules of action, when preſcribed by human moraliſts, without authority, ſanction, efficacious motive, promiſe, &c. This precept hath generally been admired, and called the golden rule: and indeed it is equivalent to that of loving our neighbours as ourſelves, and contains the ſubſtance of the ſecond table of the law, and of all the exhortations, and inſtructions of the prophets *upon that ſubject*; (for it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe that Chriſt meant, that it contained all that was written concerning the love of God with all the heart; or all the types, and prophecies of him, and his ſalvation.) It doth not mean, that we are to do to others, whatſoever we might *unreaſonably* deſire them to do, if we were in their caſe: for thus the murderer might deſire the judge to acquit him, and the beggar might deſire the prince to change places with him, &c. But, judging according to the rule of duty, in all its latitude, and the feelings of our own minds, we ſhould ſuppoſe ourſelves to be in the exact ſituation of our neighbour; and then impartially enquire, how we might *reaſonably* expect him to behave towards us, if he were exactly in our ſituation. Every man, at firſt ſight, muſt perceive, that this would preclude all fraud, oppreſſion, ſlander, ſarcaſms, uncandid judging, &c; and that it would lead to univerſal juſtice, truth, goodneſs, gentleneſs, compaſſion, beneficence, forgiveneſs, candour, &c. If we honeſtly proceeded in this way, we ſhould ſeldom need a caſuiſt, to teach us how we ought to act towards our neighbours, in any poſſible relation, or circumſtance. But alas, even moſt profeſſors of the goſpel content them with doing to others as they *are* done by; inſtead of doing thoſe things to others, which they *would* have others do to them.

V. 13, 14.] Chriſt's audience conſiſted of uneſtabliſhed diſciples, and of the multitude; and both needed to be excited to greater earneſtneſs in the concerns of their ſouls; for which purpoſe, he next gave them this important exhortation, and ſolemn warning. Our paſſage through life, is repreſented as a journey to the eternal world; and as there are two places, to which men remove at death, ſo there are two roads, by which they paſs through life: the one leads to deſtruction, the other to heavenly happineſs. In reſpect of the former, the gate, at which men enter into it, is very wide, even as wide as the whole fallen race of Adam: for we enter at it, when we are born ſinners into a ſinful world, and proceed on that road, as long as we live in an unconverted ſtate. As it is broad, it hath in it various paths, ſuited to men's different humours, and inclinations. The covetous, and the ſpendthrift; the infidel, the profligate, and the hypocrite; the Antinomian, and the Phariſee; the ſons, and daughters of levity, and giddy diſſipation; grave deſigning politicians, and proud philoſophers; decent moraliſts, and infamous debauchees, have all their ſeveral paths, and their ſelect companies: they mutually deſpiſe, and condemn each other, yet they all keep one another in countenance by agreeing to oppoſe the holy ways of the Lord. In this way, men walk without trouble, contrivance, or even intention; whilſt they are pleaſing, or forgetting themſelves, they make progreſs in it, and even when they are lazy, and waſting their time in ſleep, or loitering. As it is thronged by the many, and eſpecially by the rich, wiſe, noble, and honourable of the world, it muſt be faſhionable and creditable to walk in moſt of it's paths: and thus moſt men paſs through life, without ſuſpecting their danger, till they ſink into that deſtruction, to which it leads. But when a man hears, and believes the voice of Chriſt ſpeaking by his word, and his miniſters, he diſcovers whither this way tends, and he feels the neceſſity of getting out of it: he makes a ſtand, and determines to proceed no further; and he learns that by repentance, faith in Chriſt, and converſion to God and holineſs, he may get into another way, that leads to life. But the gate is ſtrait: ſinful pleaſures, proſpects, intereſts, and connexions muſt be relinquiſhed: a man muſt lay aſide his incumbrances, his pride, falſe confidence, and darling luſts; he muſt be humbled, ſtripped, and emptied; he muſt break looſe from thoſe that would retain him, and force his way through thoſe, that would impede his courſe: he muſt deny himſelf, take up his croſs, reſiſt temptation, mortify the fleſh, endure reproach, earneſtly uſe all the means of grace, and cordially accept of Chriſt in all his characters, and offices, or he cannot get in at this ſtrait gate. After he hath entered "the way is narrow;" or afflicted as it were beſet with thorns, it is afflicted, becauſe it is narrow. It is the direct way of implicit faith, and obedience: a chriſtian cannot pick, and chooſe his path, as men do in the broad road; but muſt go ſtraight forward, turning neither to the right or the left; if he do, he will be ſcourged back again into the narrow path. When he meets an enemy, he muſt face and overcome him: when he comes to a mountainous difficulty, he muſt climb over it; if the road be rough, he muſt ſtill keep in it; and no perſecution, or tribulation muſt divert him from it: therefore there be few that find this way to life. Moſt men either neglect religion entirely, there be that find it.

15 Beware of falſe prophets, which come to you in ſheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye ſhall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles?

17 Even ſo every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and caſt into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them.

21 Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

or reſt in ſome forms or notions, or are deluded into ſome of thoſe more ſoothing, flattering, and faſhionable ſpecies of religion, which ſatan, tranſformed into an angel of light, takes care to propoſe to them, when uneaſy about their ſouls. They are deterred by the difficulties to be encountered, by entering in at the ſtrait gate, and treading the narrow way, and by the dread of being thought ſingular and preciſe; and they hope to get to heaven at a cheaper rate; as they know not that this way has its peculiar joys, and conſolations, which abundantly compenſate for its difficulties and trials; for theſe a ſtranger intermeddleth not with. Therefore Chriſt warned his hearers, and all men, to enter in at the ſtrait gate, at all adventures, without delay, with all earneſtneſs, and fearing nothing ſo much as being left without: for though the entrance be difficult, and found only by few; yet it may be obtained by all, who reſolutely attempt it; and it leadeth to eternal life, whilſt all other ways lead to deſtruction. It is ſurpriſing how much this plain declaration of Chriſt hath been overlooked by his profeſſed diſciples! And how much pains have been taken to ſoften the apparent aſperity of it, and to explain away its evident meaning! It cannot be inconſiſtent with the rule of not judging others, to ſuppoſe that moſt men are in the way to deſtruction, and to warn, and exhort them to enter in at the ſtrait gate, when ſuch words are repeatedly found in the ſcripture; (*Luke*, c. xiii. v 23—30;) and too plainly commented upon by the worldly, and ungodly lives of the multitudes around us. In all ages hitherto the real diſciple of Chriſt hath been a ſingular, and unfaſhionable character; and all, that have ſided with the majority, have gone on in the broad road to deſtruction. (*Ephes:* c. ii. v. 1—3.)

V. 15—20.] Falſe prophets were the moſt dangerous enemies to true religion under the Jewiſh diſpenſation; and falſe teachers have been the ſame in all ages, and places, where chriſtianity hath been profeſſed. (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 1—3.) Nothing ſo much prevents men from entering in at the ſtrait gate, and becoming true chriſtians, as the carnal, ſoothing, and flattering doctrine of thoſe, that oppoſe the truth. Therefore Chriſt warned the people to beware of falſe prophets. Theſe would come in ſheep's clothing, i. e. with great appearances of ſanctity, harmleſſneſs, and love to men's ſouls: but inwardly they would be as greedy, fierce, and implacable, as ravening wolves; they would teach things, which they ought not for filthy lucre's ſake, and be ready to devour all, that ſhould venture to oppoſe their pernicious ſyſtems. They might therefore be known by their fruits, that is, by the nature, tendency, and effects of their doctrine, eſpecially as exemplified in their own ſpirit, and conduct: for they would certainly betray themſelves by their ſelfiſhneſs, or ſelf-ſufficiency, their arrogance and ambition, their eagerneſs for diſputation, or perſecution; their vehement anger, or embittered malice, and reſentment; or by ſome part of their habitual temper, and conduct being evidently contrary to the mind of Chriſt, and the diſintereſted humility, meekneſs, gentleneſs, and love of his true diſciples, and miniſters. When theſe things are diſcerned; the man, who regards Chriſt's words, muſt no more expect real good from following ſuch unchriſtian teachers, than he would attempt to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thiſtles; for in fact they commonly infect all, over whom they acquire influence, with their own corrupt principles, their ſpiritual pride, their ſelfiſhneſs, their wrath, and malignity. For a good tree may indeed be expected to yield good fruit; but a corrupt tree in the nature of things muſt bring forth evil fruit. The habitual conduct of a real godly man muſt be good, and the tendency of his example, converſe, and inſtructions muſt be beneficial; but the habitual tenor of an unconverted man's actions muſt be evil, and the effects of his example, and doctrine pernicious, however it may be diſguiſed. And as the judge will ſhortly decide upon the characters of profeſſed chriſtians by this rule; and every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit ſhall be hewn down, and caſt into the fire, (c. iii. v. 10;) ſo we ought to judge, as well as we are able, by the ſame rule at preſent: "by their fruits we muſt know them," and not by their fair ſpeeches; nor can they be ſuppoſed to be really leading others in the way to heaven, who are apparently themſelves treading the contrary road.

V. 21—23.] Chriſt here ſpake, not only avowedly as the King of Iſrael, the promiſed Meſſiah; but with the dignity, and authority of the Judge of the world, and

24 Therefore whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe man, which built his houſe upon a rock:

25 And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh man, which built his houſe upon the ſand:

27 And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

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the Arbiter of every man's eternal ſtate, from whoſe deciſion there could be no appeal: and when we compare this language of conſcious majeſty and power with his lowly appearance and external circumſtances, and with the neglect and contempt, with which he was treated, the contraſt is very ſtriking. It is here implied, that they, who do not acknowledge him as their Lord, and Maſter, are not even profeſſedly in the way to heaven: and it is declared, that of his profeſſed diſciples, and ſubjects, who acknowledge him as their Ruler, and Teacher, as well as their Saviour, and openly avow their relation to him; ſome will be excluded from the kingdom of heavenly glory, as not having been true ſubjects of his kingdom of grace: and that they only will be finally ſaved, who do the will of his heavenly Father. The God, and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewn it to be his will, that we ſhould repent of, forſake, and hate all ſin; believe in, ſubmit to, love, and obey his only-begotten Son; love one another, and walk in all his ordinances, and commandments with an upright heart. Theſe things are ſincerely attempted and habitually performed in the general tenor of the true chriſtian's life, from the time, that he comes as a ſinner to accept of Chriſt's ſalvation. In this ſenſe he does the will of God; though he is far from being able to do his will, as the abſolute Governor of the world, in ſuch a manner, as to be juſtified by the works of the law. But hypocrites do not ſincerely attend to the will of God, in any of theſe particulars; and therefore they ſhall never enter heaven. Nay the Lord declares, that many "in that day," the ſolemn day of final account, and retribution, even of ſuch as have preached the goſpel, wrought miracles, caſt out devils, &c, will be rejected by him, becauſe they were workers of iniquity. Not only a ſingle Balaam, who propheſied, or a ſingle Judas an apoſtle, will be thus condemned; but many ſuch perſons will plead in vain their profeſſion, gifts, and ſervices, and the miracles they have wrought in the name of Jeſus Chriſt; having exerciſed even their ſupernatural powers from ſelfiſh motives. He will then diſavow all knowledge of, or acquaintance with them, as his diſciples or ſervants; he knew them as hypocrites, but he never *approved,* nor *accepted of* them; he *never knew* them; for they were not apoſtates, who had fallen from a ſtate of grace, (as ſome ſpeak,) but they were all along hypocrites, and ſecret workers of iniquity, in the midſt of all their profeſſion, &c. And therefore they muſt depart from the Holy Saviour, (whoſe name they had uſed, and profaned,) with other workers of iniquity, to their own place, under the moſt aggravated condemnation; (c. xxv. ver. 41. 46;) for in departing from Chriſt, the Light and Life of men, they muſt ſink into darkneſs, and deſpair. (*Luke,* c. vi. v. 46.)

V. 24—27.] To impreſs the more deeply the preceding ſolemn declaration, our Lord cloſed his diſcourſe, with a moſt affecting compariſon. Doubtleſs He is the Rock, the only ſure, and tried Foundation, on which the church, and every believer's ſoul, and hope is built: other foundation can no man lay. This is taken for granted, or rather is not the immediate ſubject in this place: for not the falſe foundation of the infidel, or phariſee, but that of the hypocritical profeſſor of the goſpel is detected. The perſons, of whom Chriſt ſpake, are not hearers of Plato, or Seneca, of ancient philoſophers, Jewiſh Rabbis or modern deiſts: but they hear his goſpel, and call him, Lord, Lord; and with this profeſſion they begin to build for eternity, an houſe, or refuge, in which they may be ſafe in every approaching ſeaſon of diſmay, or danger. All, who do not thus much, are further from the true foundation: than even the falſe profeſſor. One of the characters, here intended, is repreſented by a wiſe man, that digs deep, beſtows pains, removes the rubbiſh, avoids quickſands, finds the rock, and on it ſurely lays the foundation of his houſe: having done this, he proceeds to raiſe the ſuperſtructure with good materials, and ſound workmanſhip, until it be completed, and prove a well-founded, ſtrong, and convenient habitation. In this he takes up his abode: and ſoon after, ſtorms ariſe, the winds blow, the rains deſcend, the floods ſwell, the houſe is beat upon on every ſide; but it ſtands ſecure amidſt the fury of the tempeſt, becauſe it is founded upon a rock. This wiſe builder is the true chriſtian: he comes to Chriſt, hears his words, and believes them: according to the Saviour's inſtruction as his Prophet, he truſts in his merits as his Prieſt, he comes to the Father in his name, as his prevailing Advocate, and uſes all the means of grace appointed by him. He ſubmits alſo to him as his Lord and Maſter, and obeys his commandments from love to his name: he conſults him as his Phyſician, and follows his directions, to obtain the health, and ſanctification of his ſoul. In ſhort, he ſays "Lord, what would'ſt thou have me to do?" and aims to render unreſerved obedience, and is humbled daily, that he cannot obey ſo entirely as he deſires to do. Thus he builds upon the rock, in faith working by love, and producing obedience: his ſoul is upheld by the power, and grace of the Divine Redeemer; his everlaſting arms ſupport him amidſt the temptations, tribulations, and perſecutions of life, and in the hour of death; and he will be ſafe as in a caſtle, amidſt the convulſions of expiring nature, and all the ſolemnities of the day of judgment. But there is another builder, a fooliſh man, who pretends to build on the ſame rock, but for want of care and pains, he lays his foundation beſide it, upon a quickſand: on this he erects a ſpecious edifice, which greatly re-

28 And it came to paſs, when Jeſus had ended theſe ſayings, the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine;

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the ſcribes.

ſembles the others well founded habitation, and which the ſuperficial obſerver would conclude to be of equal ſtability: but when it comes to be aſſailed by ſtorms, and floods, it falls with a terrible ruin, and the diſappointed builder periſhes in his ill-founded habitation. This is the deluded profeſſor of the goſpel, who hears, and aſſents to it's doctrines, and learns to ſpeak of, and diſpute about them; who aſſociates with chriſtians, adopts their creed, perhaps poſſeſſes gifts, joins with them in the moſt ſacred ordinances, and ſeems to be one of them. But his knowledge puffeth up, his faith is dead, and therefore he is not obedient. What he does externally according to the commands of Chriſt, is done from corrupt, ſelfiſh motives, and not from willing ſubjection to his authority; and therefore he diſobeys, where his intereſt, inclination, or reputation require it: his hope is therefore a deluſion, he is a worker of iniquity; and inſtead of building on Chriſt, he builds on his own inefficacious doctrinal notions. This is a common, unſuſpected, but fatal deluſion: there are, it is to be feared, many ſuch goſpel profeſſors, who hear Chriſt's ſayings, and do them not: their profeſſion may perhaps ſtand the leſſer guſts of temptation, in times of outward peace, and proſperity: but the tempeſts of fierce perſecution would make dreadful havock amongſt ſuch ill-founded, ſpecious edifices; and the ſtorms of death, and judgment will ſweep them away; ſeparate them from thoſe of God's people, and leave thoſe, who take refuge in them, in the deepeſt ruin, contempt, and miſery: (*Iſaiah*, c. xxviii. v. 14—20. *Luke*, c. vi. v. 47—49.) With this ſolemn warning Chriſt concluded this moſt important ſermon; on which I have taken the liberty to be more copious, than I intend to be on other parts of the goſpels; becauſe I apprehend, that many evangelical profeſſors do not ſo fully underſtand it, in conſiſtency with their other principles, as it were to be deſired, that they ſhould; and becauſe many others pervert it into an engine, with which to oppoſe the doctrines of grace; when indeed they not only conſiſt with it, but reſult from it, if it be properly underſtood.

V. 28, 29.] The multitudes, who heard this intereſting diſcourſe, were aſtoniſhed at the wiſdom, weight, and energy of Chriſt's doctrine, and the majeſty and authority, with which he enforced it. They perceived, that his important inſtructions had a commanding influence upon their underſtandings, conſciences, and affections, which forced their conviction, and approbation: and that he ſpake in a very different manner from their ſcribes, who only inculcated ceremonial obſervances, external duties, and their own traditions, in a dry unintereſting manner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we are careful not to call evil good, or darkneſs light, in complaiſance to the world around us; let us alſo be upon our guard againſt a cenſorious intermeddling ſpirit. If we give way to this diſpoſition, the offſpring of pride, and petulance, we ſhall only prepare bitterneſs for ourſelves, and may expect ſharp rebukes from God, and harſh cenſures from man, and to be taught more gentleneſs, as with thorns, and briers of the wilderneſs. But wherefore ſhould we, who have ſo much to be humbled for, and to rectify in our own conduct, unneceſſarily buſy ourſelves, in ſeeking out, and expoſing our brother's faults, which perhaps are far leſs heinous, than our own? Rather let us ſeek for more ſelf-knowledge, a ſounder judgment, more humility, and to walk more circumſpectly; that if we ſhould have opportunity, we may have ability, influence, and tenderneſs, to counſel caution, and reprove our brethren, with propriety, and efficacy. How unfit then muſt unconverted men be for the work of the miniſtry? Yet how many ſuch enter into that arduous office, and pretend to take motes out of the eyes of others, without conſidering the beam, that is in their own eye? As the miniſter of Chriſt is a reprover by office; and muſt "rebuke with all authori-"ty;" it is peculiarly needful for all who aſpire after that office, to begin by caſting the beam "out of their own "eye, that they may ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out "of their brother's eye." And all, that are engaged in the work, ſhould be very careful not to expoſe themſelves to the retort, "thou hypocrite firſt caſt out the beam out "of thine own eye." However it ſhould alſo be obſerved, that a diſcernable *mote* in a man's eye does not diſqualify him from caſting out a *beam* from another man's eye: yet many harden themſelves in groſs ſins againſt the reproofs of their miniſters, becauſe they ſee, that they alſo are liable to imperfections. But prudence and fortitude, as well as a good cauſe, and a good intention, are requiſite for the performance of the office of a reprover: we muſt expect to meet with unreaſonable men, who will ſcoff at the moſt precious truths, and rage againſt the moſt juſt, and friendly warnings: we muſt therefore prepare to endure contempt, and perſecution, with meekneſs, and firmneſs; and we ſhall often be conſtrained to let the proud, and impious ſcorner alone, leſt we ſhould drive him to further extremities of madneſs, and blaſphemy. But if holy counſels, and warnings, are not to be thrown away on ſuch hardened offenders; how deplorable is it, when the moſt ſacred ordinances, and offices of the church are left open to their profanation, if they chooſe to do it, for filthy lucre's ſake! Surely this is in the worſt ſenſe to give that which is holy to the dogs, and to caſt pearls before ſwine! Amidſt all the evils, that we witneſs, and all the wants, weakneſs, and folly that we experience, let us give ourſelves unto prayer. Thus let the ſinner ſeek all, that he wants, in order for his reconciliation to God, and the believer all that he wants for his honourable, and comfortable walk with him: but let us ſeek and pray with earneſtneſs, importunity, and perſeverance, and with a believing expectation of ſucceſs. For the promiſe is expreſs, that every one, that aſketh receiveth: if therefore men ſay, that they do aſk, ſeek, and knock, and yet evidently do not obtain, but remain enſlaved to their ſins; we muſt conclude, that they either deceive them-

CHAP. VIII.

Contains Chriſt 1ſt. Deſcending from the mount, and cleanſing a leper, 1---4. 2d. Healing the Centurion's ſervant, commending his faith, and predicting the calling of the Gentiles, and the deſtruction of the unbelieving Jews, 5---13. 3d. Healing Peter's wife's mother of a fever, and many others of their maladies, and thus fulfilling the prophecy of Iſaiah, 14---17. 4th. Giving orders for croſſing the lake; returning anſwers to two perſons, who expreſſed their intentions of following him; and calming a tempeſt by his word, to the aſtoniſhment of the diſciples, 18---27. 5th. Diſpoſſeſſing two demoniacs; giving the unclean ſpirits leave to enter into a herd of ſwine, and to deſtroy them; and deſired by the Gergeſenes to depart out of their coaſts, 28---34.

ſelves, or mean to deceive others. Let God be true, but every man a liar; and if men have not, it is becauſe they aſk not; or becauſe they aſk amiſs, and from ſome carnal, and corrupt motive. Let us then ſeek, wiſdom, knowledge, grace, ſtrength, and every good thing in this authoriſed way; without regarding objectors or deſpiſers. Let us begin, and go on to the end reſting on theſe promiſes, and they will carry us ſafe through, as they have many, that are now in glory. Let us never ſuppoſe, that our heavenly Father would erect a throne of grace, appoint a Mediator, bid us pray, and incline our hearts to do ſo; and then at laſt refuſe to hear, or give us what would be uſeleſs, or pernicious, inſtead of the bread of life, and the bleſſings of ſalvation! Far be it from us to liſten to ſuch ſuggeſtions of the enemy, or ſuſpect our merciful God of ſuch a conduct, as would be a diſgrace to one of the ſinful race of men! Aſſured therefore of his willingneſs to give good things to all that aſk him, let us copy the example of his equity, truth, and goodneſs; and whatſoever we would, that men ſhould do unto us, let us ſtudy to do the ſame to them; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but doing good againſt evil, and overcoming evil with good. Let us ever keep in mind the awful truth, that wide is the gate, and broad the way, that leadeth to deſtruction, and that there be many who go in thereat. If we would ſerve God, we muſt be ſingular, and unfaſhionable, as well as reſolute in our religion. We muſt be born again, or we cannot ſee the kingdom of God; we muſt believe in Chriſt, and be in him new creatures, and thenceforth lead ſober, righteous, and godly lives, or we cannot be ſaved: and facts demonſtrate that ſo ſtrait is this gate, and narrow this way, that few there be that find them. Yet none need be diſcouraged: every one, that ſeeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh the gate ſhall be opened; and though the way have its difficulties, and be often painful to the fleſh, yet it hath it's comforts, which a ſtranger intermeddleth not with. The entrance is commonly more arduous, than the further progreſs, to thoſe, who ſet out reſolutely; and the hope of heaven, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt combine to render it the way of pleaſantneſs, and the path of peace. But let all, who would need this narrow way, beware of thoſe, who propheſy ſmooth things, who invent eaſier and more fleſh-pleaſing ways to heaven: ſuch are miniſters of ſatan transformed into miniſters of righteouſneſs, (2 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 13—15:) theſe beguile unſtable ſouls, and prejudice them againſt the pure religion of Chriſt, and thoſe that teach it. Whatever ſpecious appearances they may aſſume, they are actuated by ambition, vain-glory, avarice, or ſome corrupt principle, and are wolves in ſheep's clothing. The diſciple of Chriſt, who keeps his Maſter's character, and precepts in view, as the ſtandard of his judgment, will generally ſee through them: he will perceive them to be aſſuming, arrogant, dogmatical, impatient of contradiction, eager for diſputation, liberal of invective, and full of virulence, and malignity againſt ſuch as differ from them: and commonly he will ſee them thirſting for applauſe, or even greedy of filthy lucre, amidſt all their pretences to ſuperior zeal, and ſanctity. By ſuch fruits he will know them from the faithful ſervants of his Lord, and will not expect to gather wholeſome grapes, or figs, from ſuch peſtilent thorns, or thiſtles, which are the bane of the Lord's vineyard, wherever they take root. He will know, that a good tree cannot habitually bring forth ſuch evil fruit, any more than a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit; and looking forward to the time, when every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit ſhall be hewn down, and caſt into the fire; he will keep at a diſtance from, leſt he ſhould be deceived by, them. But alas, moſt men eſtabliſh other rules of judgment: and a confident tone, a voluble tongue, a zeal for ſome parts of religion in oppoſition to others, or new notions plauſibly dreſſed up, and defended, go much further, than a chriſtian ſpirit, and converſation, and the plain faithful preaching of the whole doctrine of the goſpel: ſo that many follow the pernicious ways of ſuch deceivers, by reaſon of whom the way of truth is evil ſpoken of. But let us ceaſe from man, and hear the deciſion of our future Judge: he aſſures us, that not every one, that calls him Lord, Lord, ſhall enter the kingdom of heaven, "but he only that doeth the will of his heavenly Father." Let us remember that real grace is far more valuable, than the moſt ſplendid accompliſhments, and even than the gift of prophecy, and of working miracles. If the moſt admired, and uſeful miniſter on earth had no better evidence of his converſion, than his abilities, and ſucceſs as a preacher, he would preach to others, and be himſelf a caſt-away; whilſt the meaneſt believer in his audience would be received into the manſions of felicity. But how far do many, who profeſs, and preach ſomewhat of the goſpel, fall ſhort even of thoſe, who will fall ſhort of heaven! Let us then take warning by our Lord's ſolemn admonitions, and examine ourſelves, whether we be indeed in the faith, and whether we have that love, without which all other attainments are nothing. (1 *Cor.* c. xiii.) Let us not only beware of infidelity, profligacy, and ſelf-righteous phariſaiſm; but of a dead faith, a formal profeſſion, an abuſe of the goſpel. Let no man imagine that he builds on the one tried foundation, who hears the words of Chriſt, but doth not obey them: alas, he builds upon the ſand, as fatally as the open enemy of goſpel truth, but ſomething more ſpeciouſly: his edifice may riſe fair, and mag-

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 And, behold, there came a leper and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.

3 And Jeſus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leproſy was cleanſed.

4 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer the gift that Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.

5 And when Jeſus was entered into Ca-

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nificent; but it will fall, when he moſt wants it: then his folly will be manifeſt, and his ruin moſt tremendous. May the Lord make us wiſe builders for eternity; may we come to Chriſt, hear, and believe his word, and ſhew our faith by our works of conſcientious, unreſerved obedience. Then we may be ſure, that nothing ſhall ever ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt; and we may look forward with joyful expectation of ſmiling in the agonies of death, and triumphing when the world ſhall be one common conflagration. And finally may the Lord ſend forth many preachers, who may declare the ſame great truths, and precepts, which Chriſt did, and with ſome meaſure of his energy, influence, and authority: may the lives, and examples of all preachers of the goſpel give a ſanction to their doctrine, for the conviction of their hearers: and may ſuch, whoſe word "is as fire, "and as the hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces," every where ſupplant thoſe, who ſtill continue to teach after the manner of the Scribes, and Phariſees of old.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—4.] (*Mark.* c. i. v. 40—45. *Luke*, c. v. ver. 12—15.) In thoſe miracles, parables, or diſcourſes, which are recorded by more than one of the evangeliſts, I purpoſe to be more copious where they firſt occur, and only to reſerve the additional circumſtances, and variations to be conſidered in the other goſpels except in ſome few inſtances, where the latter Evangeliſts record matters much more particularly than the former: in which caſe the more copious expoſition will be reſerved for the more particular narration. The adjuſting of the harmony of the evangeliſts has given immenſe trouble to many expoſitors; and yet many things remain in great uncertainty: as it is therefore a matter of far more difficulty, than importance to us; for we are more concerned to know what Chriſt ſaid, and did, than at what time, or in what order he ſaid, and did them, I ſhall not perplex the reader with conjectures about it. They, who deſire it will know where to have recourſe for the ſolution of their difficulties, as far as that can be obtained: I ſhall therefore content myſelf with giving a few intimations on the ſubject, where the matter is clear, and tends to elucidate the facts under conſideration. In general St. Matthew is ſuppoſed to pay more regard to the order of time, in his narration, than St. Mark, or St. Luke; though it is evident, that in many inſtances he diſregarded it: and we may be ſure from this circumſtance, that the Holy Spirit did not deem it a matter of ſo great importance, as many learned men ſeem to do. St. John perhaps was more obſervant of the regular ſucceſſion, in his hiſtory, than any of the other evangeliſts: but he chiefly recorded thoſe things, which had not been mentioned by them. St. Matthew ſeems to fix the date of this miracle to the time immediately following the ſermon upon the mount, and whilſt Chriſt was yet ſurrounded by the multitudes. We have before conſidered the caſe of the lepers, and the remarkable laws, that were given concerning them. (*Lev.* c. xiii, xiv.) The leproſy ſeems to have been a diſeaſe commonly inflicted by the immediate hand of God, and not curable by medicine: it excluded a man from the public ordinances of God, and from moſt of the employments and comforts of ſociety: and it was an emblem of the guilt, and dominion of ſin, which exclude a man from communion with God, and his people; and unleſs removed, muſt exclude him from heaven. A certain man, who was afflicted with this diſtreſſing, and diſgraceful calamity, and doubtleſs longed for its removal, heard of Jeſus, and was enabled to believe that he could, and to expect that he would, make him clean. Probably he was convinced, by the report of his miracles, and doctrine, that he was the Meſſiah, of whom he had read in the books of the prophets: he therefore applied to him in the moſt humble, and reverential manner, falling down before him, and worſhipping him. Holy men, and holy angels uſed to decline ſuch worſhip, as an honour by no means to be paid to them. (*Acts*, c. x. v. 25, 26. *Rev.* c. xxii. v. 8, 9;) But Chriſt never intimated his diſapprobation of any one, who rendered it to him on the contrary, he approved of it in the moſt deciſive manner: and this is a proof, that he was conſcious that all honour and worſhip were due to him. The man joined his worſhip with a declaration of his full and firm belief, that if Jeſus pleaſed, he was able to make him clean, though his leproſy ſeems to have been inveterate. To cleanſe him of this diſeaſe implied a total change in the whole maſs of the blood, &c, inſtantaneouſly produced by a word: but Jeſus immediately anſwered his believing expectation, touching him, and ſaying, "I will be then "clean." The touch would have rendered another man ceremonially unclean: but Chriſt acted as a prieſt, and more than a prieſt; and whilſt he by his touch, and his command cleanſed the man's leproſy, he could not contract defilement from it. Thus he cleanſes all thoſe from ſin, that apply to him in faith, and this miracle is replete with practical inſtruction. When it was evident that the man was cured, he ordered him not to inform any man of what had been done: (for it is probable he took him aſide from the multitude to cleanſe him.) This was done in order to avoid all appearance of oſtentation in his miracles, which could not but be known ſufficiently for the ends propoſed by them: and perhaps he would not needleſſly exaſperate his enemies, and excite them to haſten their deſigns againſt his life, before the appointed time. But that the cure might be authenticated, and as pernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beſeeching him,

6 And ſaying, Lord, my ſervant lieth at home ſick of the palſy, grievouſly tormented.

7 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion anſwered and ſaid, Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof: but ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having ſoldiers under me: and I ſay to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10 When Jeſus heard *it*, he marvelled, and ſaid to them that followed, Verily I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael.

11 And I ſay unto you, That many ſhall come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

13 And Jeſus ſaid unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou haſt believed, *ſo* be it done unto thee. And his ſervant was healed in the ſelf-ſame hour.

it were, regiſtered, as well as that honour might be put upon the ordinances of the Moſaic law, which was ſtill in force; Chriſt ordered the man to go, and ſhew himſelf to the prieſt, and offer the appointed ſacrifices; which would bring the prieſts acquainted with the miraculous cures wrought by him, and might be a teſtimony to them, that he was the promiſed Meſſiah.

V. 5—13.] (*Luke*, c. vii. v. 1—10.) A centurion was the captain of an hundred men in the Roman legions: theſe were not compoſed of the very loweſt of the people, but of reputable citizens, &c; and therefore a centurion was conſiderably higher in rank, than a captain in our armies. Probably this man was of good family, and fortune; he was a ſoldier, educated a heathen, and a Roman. In all theſe reſpects he might have been expected to have entertained the ſtrongeſt prejudices againſt, and the greateſt contempt of, the Jews, and their religion. Yet his lot being caſt by providence in that part of the Roman empire, probably without any choice of his own; his prejudices had been obviated, he had got acquainted with the ſcriptures, and was evidently become a humble, and ſpiritual worſhipper of the God of Iſrael, though not a proſelyte to the Moſaic law. He had alſo conceived the higheſt eſteem, and liberal affection for the people of God; and by his continued good conduct he had even overcome the prejudices of the Jews againſt him, as a gentile. We cannot ſuppoſe, but that this attachment to the religion of the Jews muſt have expoſed him to many reproaches, and much contempt, amongſt his fellow ſoldiers; but he ſeems to have been for ſome time a conſcientious man, before he on this occaſion applied to Chriſt: and his tender concern about his ſervant, when ſick, ſhould be conſidered as the effect of his religion, by which he probably had won over his domeſtics alſo, or ſome of them, to the worſhip of God. (*Acts*, c. x. v. 1, 2. 7, 8.) He had no doubt before this heard of the miracles, and doctrine of Chriſt, and perhaps of a ſimilar miracle wrought on the nobleman's ſon, (*John*, c. iv. v. 46—54:) and he had conceived the moſt exalted ideas of his dignity and excellency, as the promiſed Meſſiah, and the King of Iſrael. But this affliction in his family was the occaſion of his becoming perſonally acquainted with him. His ſervant, whom he much valued, was ſeized with a palſy, which not only diſabled him from his buſineſs, but filled him with extreme pain, and there was no proſpect of his recovery by ordinary means: yet he entertained hopes of his cure by the miraculous power of Chriſt, and applied to him for that purpoſe. We learn from St. Luke, that he did not come himſelf, at leaſt not at the firſt, but that he humbly ſent the elders of the Jews, and afterwards his friends: yet it is thought, that at laſt he came alſo himſelf. However nothing is more common, than for men to be ſaid to do thoſe things, which others do at their inſtance, and in their ſtead. He therefore, by the elders of the Jews, addreſſed Chriſt in the moſt reſpectful terms, and ſtated his affliction to him: to which our Lord replied, that he would come to his houſe, and heal his ſervant immediately; and he ſet forwards without delay. Thus he ſhewed his readineſs to help the afflicted, and gave occaſion for what followed. For the centurion, in the humbleſt ſenſe of his own ſinfulneſs, and with the moſt honourable thoughts of Chriſt, deemed himſelf unworthy to receive a viſit from him; and conſidered his houſe, the reſidence of a gentile, an improper place for him to enter into. When we reflect that Chriſt appeared in all reſpects as a poor Jew, who had not where to lay his head; and that this man was a Roman, to whom the Jews were ſubject, and one that lived in affluence; we ſhall perceive that his humble reverence of Chriſt was in every reſpect very remarkable. He further added, that it was in no wiſe neceſſary for him thus to trouble, and demean himſelf, by coming to his polluted habitation; for he firmly believed, that he could remove the diſeaſe by his word ſpoken at a diſtance. This he illuſtrated by his own caſe: he was only an inferior officer, ſubject to the authority of his tribune, and general, &c: yet having a company of ſoldiers under his command, he always found them prompt to obey his orders, whether delivered upon the ſpot, or ſent to them, when at a diſtance; and in like manner his ſervant was uſed implicitly to obey his word: much more then, it was implied, would diſeaſes obey the command of him, who was the King of glory, and the Lord of all. We can hardly conceive of an higher expreſſion of con-

14 And when Jeſus was come into Peter's houſe, he ſaw his wife's mother laid, and ſick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and ſhe aroſe, and miniſtered unto them.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were poſſeſſed with devils: and he caſt out the ſpirits with *his* word, and healed all that were ſick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, Himſelf took our infirmities, and bare *our* ſickneſſes.

18 Now when Jeſus ſaw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other ſide.

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fidence in the power of Chriſt, as the Son of God, and as poſſeſſed of unlimited authority, than this was. When Jeſus heard of this ſaying, he expreſſed his ſurpriſe, as man, at that faith, which by his Spirit he had wrought in the heart of this gentile, who was before ſo unlikely a perſon, thus to confeſs him to be the Son of God. He might have commended many things in the centurion's character; but he only expreſſed his entire approbation of that ſtrong faith, which ſo honoured him: by which he plainly inſtructed the people, that he beſt approved of thoſe, who formed the moſt exalted apprehenſions of him, and expected the moſt from him; and that they could not honour him more, than was right, and due to him. He declared, that he had not found ſuch ſtrong faith, even amongſt the people of Iſrael, where it might have been moſt expected; no, not ſo much as amongſt his own diſciples: and hence he took occaſion to declare, that numbers of the benighted gentiles, from the diſtant parts of the earth, would by faith in him become fellow heirs with Abraham, &c, of that heavenly felicity, to the enjoyment of which they had attained: whilſt the Jews, the children of the kingdom, that had ſo long enjoyed the peculiar privileges of God's people, to whom the goſpel was firſt to be preached, and who ſuppoſed themſelves to have the excluſive right to all the bleſſings of Meſſiah's kingdom, would as a nation be excluded from the church, and left in a dark and wretched condition; and that numbers of them, and of others, that have enjoyed the higheſt privileges, would be ſhut out of heaven, and left to final wickedneſs, miſery, and deſpair: where they would in vain weep, and gnaſh their teeth in rage and anguiſh, recollecting what happineſs they had loſt, and what ruin they had incurred, by their own unbelief and folly. After this, he ſaid to the centurion, (who probably by this time had joined the company,) "Go thy way, and as thou haſt believed, ſo "be it done unto thee." And accordingly it was found, that the ſervant was perfectly cured, at the time when he ſpake theſe words. His diſeaſe was an apt emblem of the enfeebled wretched ſtate of a poor ſinner's ſoul, from which Chriſt recovers it by his word, and Spirit; and thus communicates the ability of ſerving God with acceptance, and delight.

V. 14, 15.] (*Mark* c. i. v. 29—31. *Luke* c. iv. ver. 38, 39.) We find elſewhere that this cure was wrought on the ſabbath day. Probably Peter had a houſe at Capernaum, and his wife's mother lived in his family; and Chriſt ſeems to have reſided there, when in that city. But whilſt he had been abſent, ſhe had been ſeized with a violent fever, that confined her to her bed; when therefore he returned thither, and was come from the ſynagogue to Peter's houſe, he went to her, and rebuked the fever, (as a man would do his ſervant, that was going beyond his orders,) and it immediately obeyed his word and left her: and ſhe was able without delay to ariſe, and wait upon him, and his diſciples, being perfectly reſtored to health and ſtrength.

V. 16—17.] (*Mark*, c. i. v. 32—34. *Luke*, c. iv. v. 40, 41.) The Jews began their ſabbaths in the evening at ſun-ſet, and ended them at the ſame time the next day. Probably the people were reſtrained by their regard to the ſabbath from bringing their ſick, and demoniacs, till that was over: but the miracles which Chriſt had wrought being noiſed abroad, might induce them thus to throng to him in the evening; and Jeſus, not complaining of wearineſs from the labours of the day, or of the unſeaſonableneſs of the hour, reſtored all the demoniacs to the perfect uſe of their faculties, and to mental compoſure, as well as healed all their ſick perſons. Thus the prophecy of *Iſaiah*, (c. liii. v. 4,) was fulfilled: for though the prophet more directly predicted his ſufferings on the croſs for our ſins; yet all the labours, fatigues, and ſorrows of his whole life were willingly ſubmitted to, out of compaſſion to ſinners, and formed a part of his humiliation as our Surety: and ſickneſs, and the power of the devil, are effects of ſin; and he ſuffered to deliver us from ſin, and all its conſequences. So that, in thus denying himſelf, that he might relieve demoniacs, and ſick perſons, for the confirmation of his goſpel, he might truly be ſaid, "to take our infirmities, and "bear our ſickneſſes;" that is to endure pain and uneaſineſs himſelf, for the relief of others from them.

V. 18. *Now*, &c.] By comparing this with the parallel paſſages above referred to, we find, that Chriſt aroſe very early the morning after this, to go into a ſolitary place to pray; and both Mark, and Luke relate the ſubſequent tranſactions in another connexion: therefore what we now enter upon muſt be allowed to have taken place ſome time afterwards. However at a time, when great multitudes were gathered about Jeſus, and we ſhould have ſuppoſed, that he would have ſtayed with them to inſtruct them; he either perceived that they were indiſpoſed to profit; or he knew that he had taught them as much as they could at that time receive, and digeſt; or he meant to put their ſincerity to the trial, and to procure leiſure for neceſſary relaxation for himſelf, and his diſciples: and therefore he gave orders for a veſſel to be procured, that they might croſs the ſea of Tiberias.

V. 19, 20.] (*Luke*, c. ix. v. 57—62.) Perhaps this took place as Jeſus was going towards the ſhip. A ſcribe, (or interpreter of the law, and the traditions to the people,) came to him, and addreſſed him as "the

19 And a certain ſcribe came, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.

20 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* neſts; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21 And another of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father.

22 But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

23 And when he was entered into a ſhip, his diſciples followed him.

24 And, behold, there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves: but he was aſleep.

25 And his diſciples came to *him*, and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave us: we periſh.

26 And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe, and rebuked the winds and the ſea; and there was a great calm.

27 But the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſea obey him!

28 And when he was come to the other ſide into the country of the Gergeſenes, there

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“ Teacher,” offering to become his conſtant follower, that he might be employed in promoting his cauſe, as he ſuppoſed his other diſciples would be. The man ſeems to have been in a meaſure convinced, that Jeſus was the promiſed Meſſiah; and having imbibed ſome confuſed carnal ideas of his future dignity, and authority, he probably built his hopes of future preferment, and conſequence, on this proffer of joining him at ſo early a period; perhaps expecting that Chriſt would have gladly acceded to his propoſal, ſeeing he was as yet only followed by unlearned fiſhermen, &c. But our Lord ſaw that he was actuated by pride, ambition, and carnal motives, and that he had not counted his coſt: he therefore diſcouraged his propoſal, intimating, that it would not anſwer his expectations: for though even the meaneſt of the wild beaſts, and the birds of the air, had their abode, to which they might retire for repoſe, and ſafety; yet he, the Son of man, the promiſed Meſſiah, during his preſent ſtate of humiliation in human nature, had not where to lay his head, even when wearied with labour, and needing the refreſhment of ſleep: his diſciples therefore muſt expect to be equally deſtitute, and to endure hardſhip with him, and to be recompenſed only by ſpiritual advantages, for which he knew him to have no juſt value. Probably this ſufficed, and induced the man to abandon his project.

V. 21, 22.] At the ſame time, another perſon, who had occaſionally followed Chriſt as his diſciple, was called to a more conſtant attendance on him, that he might after a time be ſent forth to preach his goſpel: but for the preſent he deſired to excuſe himſelf, requeſting leave to go and attend on the funeral of his father, who was juſt deceaſed; (for Chriſt's anſwer ſeems to imply, that this was his requeſt; and not that he might ſtay with an aged parent till his death, as ſome explain it.) But our Lord, perceived that there was ſome remaining reluctancy in him, to the ſelf-denying ſervice appointed for him, which might have been increaſed by going to bury his father; and at the ſame time purpoſed to ſhew, that all perſonal, and relative concerns muſt give place to his command, and our attachment to him, and his cauſe: He therefore would not grant his requeſt, but ordered him to leave that matter to his unconverted relatives, who were dead in ſin, and incapable of ſpiritual ſervices, but were proper perſons to take care of the burial of the dead, and would give due attention to it; whilſt he had more important work to mind, in following him, and preparing for the ſacred miniſtry of the goſpel; and he muſt therefore make no further delay or excuſe.

V. 23—27.] (*Mark*, c. iv. v. 35—41. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 22—25.) Chriſt having entered the ſhip, or boat, which the diſciples had provided, and being attended by them, put to ſea, accompanied by ſome other ſmall veſſels: but inſtead of the fair voyage, that they probably expected, they were overtaken with a terrible ſtorm. This was permitted for the trial of their faith, and to give Jeſus the opportunity of diſplaying, in another manner, his glorious power, and authority. In a little time the tempeſt ran ſo high, that the ſhip was covered with the waves, and apparently ready to ſink: yet amidſt all the confuſion, and diſtreſs of the diſciples, Jeſus lay faſt aſleep. His human nature, like to our's in every thing but ſin, was wearied with inceſſant fatigue; and he willingly yielded to ſleep, foreſeeing the ſtorm, that his power might thus be more noticed. In the mean time the diſciples, fearing every moment being ſwallowed up by the waves, and having no reſource but in his power, yet not conceiving that he could exert it when aſleep, came and awoke him; ſaying “ Lord, ſave us, we periſh.” They believed, that he was able to do this: yet, conſidering all that they had heard, and ſeen of his power, and what they might have learned of his divinity, this was only weak faith in their circumſtances; and their fears were evidences of great remaining unbelief. It was impoſſible, that the veſſel, which carried Him could ſink; and in his divine nature he was as able to reſtrain the winds and waves, when his human nature lay aſleep, as to cure the paralytic by a word ſpoken at a diſtance. Having therefore firſt rebuked them, as men of little faith; he next, with the authority of the Lord, and Governor of the creation, rebuked the winds and waves, (as a maſter would rebuke a company of unruly ſervants;) and at his omnipotent word, the winds ſuddenly ceaſed to blow, the tempeſtuous ſea, (contrary to its nature,) immediately became ſmooth, and a great calm ſucceeded. This filled the diſciples with the greateſt aſtoniſhment;

met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way.

29 And, behold, they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many ſwine, feeding.

31 So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the herd of ſwine.

32 And he ſaid unto them, Go, and when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine: and, behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters.

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils.

34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jeſus: and when they ſaw him, they beſought *him* that he would depart out of their coaſts.

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and they ſaid to each other, “what manner of Perſon “is this? No doubt he is more than man; for with divine authority, he commands even the winds, and “waves, and they obey him!” Thus the tempeſt, which threatened their deſtruction, was over-ruled to the increaſe of their faith, and admiration of the majeſty, and power of their Lord. (*Pſ:* lxv. v. 7. cvii. v. 28, 29.)

V. 28—34.] The country of the Gergeſenes included in it the region of Gadara. (*Mark*, c. v. ver. 1—20. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 26—39.) It ſeems to have been inhabited by Jews, but ſurrounded by Gentiles, who mixed much with the inhabitants. When Chriſt landed there, two demoniacs met him: and doubtleſs he came over on purpoſe to relieve them. The other evangeliſts mention but one; probably becauſe one was more remarkable than the other, both before and after his cure: but they do not ſay that there was no more than one, and therefore this is no real diſagreement. The circumſtances of this narration, (like thoſe of ſeveral others,) plainly prove the reality of the poſſeſſion of theſe perſons by evil ſpirits, and expoſe the hypotheſis of their being merely lunatics in a ridiculous light; for ſuch things were ſaid, and done by them, and in conſequence of their cure, as one would think no man could ſuppoſe to be the effects of inſanity, who was not *in that particular* inſane himſelf. But a main point of modern Sadduceiſm conſiſts in denying the exiſtence, and agency of apoſtate ſpirits: and they love beſt to work in the dark, and thus maintain their empire by promoting this kind of infidelity; as it is the intereſt of pick-pockets, that the company ſhould be perſuaded that there are none preſent. It cannot be thought, that Satan, and his angels want power or malice to diſtract men's minds, and torment their bodies, as well as to tempt them to ſin, if the Lord be pleaſed to permit them. It cannot be aſcertained how far, at this day, they have influence in cauſing, or increaſing diſeaſes, which affect both body and mind: but if they do not immediately cauſe lunacies, &c, in any inſtance; it cannot be denied upon ſcripture principles, that they may take the advantage of the diſordered ſtate of the body, to diſturb, and terrify the mind, and to augment the effects of the malady. But when Chriſt was manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the devil, there was a peculiar propriety, and wiſdom, in leaving that great enemy of God and man at greater liberty; that he might ſhew his power, and malice, and the tendency of his efforts to render mankind miſerable, and to deſtroy them; and that Chriſt might have the fuller opportunity to ſhew his ſuperior power, and authority, to give concluſive evidence of the exiſtence of theſe ſpirits in oppoſition to the infidelity of the Sadducees, and to evince the beneficent intention of his goſpel. We ſhall have an opportunity of conſidering ſeveral particulars of this tranſaction in another place: however theſe two demoniacs were rendered ſo fierce, and powerful by the influence of evil ſpirits, that they could not be confined, but wandered in the tombs, or ſolitary places without the cities, and villages, and were the terror of the country, ſo that “no man could paſs by that “way.” But when they ſaw Chriſt, the evil ſpirits knew and dreaded him, as their hated enemy, whom they could not reſiſt, or eſcape; and, uſing the men's organs of ſpeech, (as Satan of old ſpake by the ſerpent,) they cried out aloud, “what have we to do with thee, Jeſus, “thou Son of God?” They expected no benefit from him, they declined all conteſt with him, they wanted to have nothing to do with him, acknowledging him to be the Saviour of ſinners, the Son of the living God, (*Notes*, c. iv. ver. 1—11.) And they enquired whether he had come into that remote part of the country “to torment them before the time:” they owned that their doom was paſſed, and that He both could, and would at length ſend them to the place of torment, and confine them in it; but they apprehended that the appointed time was not yet arrived, and they hoped, and intreated for a little longer reſpite, and liberty to do miſchief. Moreover it ſo happened, that at ſome diſtance there was a very large herd of ſwine feeding: for though theſe animals were unclean by the Moſaic law, and the very touch of them defiled a man, yet the Gadarenes fed them, in great numbers, to ſell to their gentile neighbours. The evil ſpirits therefore, ſuppoſing that they ſhould be deprived of the power of any longer tormenting the men, and being reluctant to quit a region, where their influence had been ſo entire, formed a ſubtle plan of prejudicing the inhabitants againſt Jeſus, that they might be induced to reject his inſtructions. Aware of their avarice, and the value they put upon the ſwine, becauſe of their gains by them, they requeſted, that if he caſt them out, they might be permit-

CHAP. IX.

Contains Jeſus, 1ſt. Returning to Capernaum, 1. *2d. Healing a paralytic,* 2---8. *3d. Calling Matthew; entertained by him; cenſured for eating with publicans and ſinners, and declaring that he came to call ſuch to repentance,* 9---13. *4th. Shewing the reaſons, why his diſciples did not faſt ſo often, as the Phariſees, &c,* 14---17. *5th. Curing a*

ted to take poſſeſſion of the ſwine; (for they could not do this without his allowance:) and he to puniſh the avarice of the Gadarenes; to give a deciſive proof of the reality of ſuch poſſeſſions; and to ſhew the deſtructive rage and power of evil ſpirits, as well as the limits aſſigned to their influence, gave them permiſſion. Immediately therefore they impelled the animals by their power to ſuch a degree of fury, that the whole herd ruſhed headlong from a precipice into the ſea, and was drowned: and thus they certainly would have deſtroyed the demoniacs, if they had not been reſtrained. The keepers of the ſwine, terrified at this ſtrange event, fled into the city Gadara, and related the whole tranſaction to the inhabitants; who hearing theſe things, came forth with one conſent to Jeſus, not to receive his inſtruction, or to crave his miraculous aſſiſtance, but to beſeech him to depart from their coaſts: for they were ſo diſpleaſed at the loſs of the ſwine, and terrified leſt He ſhould inflict further judgments upon them, of which their conſciences teſtified them to be deſerving; that they expected no good from him. And therefore, though they could not but know that he was an extraordinary Perſon, and dared not treat him with neglect, contempt, or violence; yet they had no requeſt to make to him; but that he would leave them to themſelves: which was in fact to ſay, “what have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God?” and proved them to be under the power of Satan, as much as the demoniacs, but in another, and more criminal ſenſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The various maladies of our bodies, which entered by ſin, and end in death, are faint emblems of the diſtempers of our ſouls, which muſt iſſue in final miſery, unleſs cured by the heavenly Phyſician. But men feel, and deſire deliverance from their bodily diſeaſes; and they will incur expence, and uſe unpleaſant means to obtain it: whilſt few are ſenſible of the miſery of a diſordered ſoul, or will beſtow proper pains to obtain a cure! Were the divine Saviour to return to the earth, and renew his beneficent miracles; he would again be ſurrounded with thoſe, that ſought deliverance from pain, ſickneſs, and death by his healing power: but he is ever preſent with us, ready to deliver us from the dominion of Satan, and of ſin; and to make us holy, and happy: yet alas, few feel their need of his help, or are willing to come to him for it; though he cure without money, or price; though he never refuſe his aid to any perſon that aſks it; and though he effectually heal all who wait upon him. Thoſe are bleſſed afflictions, that bring us acquainted with Chriſt, and cauſe us to ſeek help, and ſalvation from him. If we have diſcovered that we are polluted with ſpiritual leproſy, and are humbled and troubled on that account; we need not fear to apply to Chriſt to cleanſe us, however inveterate our maladies have become. He did not take our nature upon him on purpoſe to cleanſe leprous bodies, but leprous ſouls; we need not then ſay “if thou wilt, thou canſt make even me clean,” from the guilt and pollution of my ſins: for we may as fully rely on his willingneſs, as on his power. Let us then wait on him with our humble ſupplications, confeſſing how vile, and miſerable we are, and adoring his power, and grace: in due time he will ſpeak the word, “I will, be thou clean,” and the effect will as ſurely follow, as when he ſaid, “Let there be light, and there was light.” Nor ſhould we *now* conceal our obligations to his cleanſing power; but rather proclaim them to his glory, that other lepers may hear, and apply to him alſo. We ſhould rather copy the example of his humility, and learn to do good to the mean, and to the wretched, without oſtentation. But if men would honour, and obey their Benefactor, they muſt attend on all the ordinances of God: and when, in the judgment of his faithful miniſters, they are indeed cleanſed from the guilt, and dominion of their ſins, they ſhould at the Lord's table offer their ſpiritual ſacrifice of praiſe, and thankſgiving, and join themſelves to his people: and this will turn to a teſtimony, for the inſtruction of their neighbours alſo.

But whilſt the privileges of many turn to a teſtimony againſt them; we ſometimes meet with real, and eminent piety, where we ſhould have leaſt expected it: and when prieſts, and profeſſors turn their backs on Chriſt; ſoldiers, and ſuch whoſe education, and mode of life caſt them at an apparent diſtance from the goſpel, embrace, and adorn it! In this the ſovereignty of grace is diſplayed: and often thoſe removals, to which men are moſt reluctant, or which have been moſt caſual, or from ſecular motives, are over-ruled by Providence to bring them acquainted with the word, miniſters, and people of God. Wherever true religion governs the heart, it will regulate the life, and render men exemplary in relative duties: and thus it ſubſerves their domeſtic comfort, whilſt it glorifies God, and is beneficial to men. Pious, faithful, and affectionate ſervants are great, and important bleſſings, which the Lord often beſtows on thoſe, who love him; and they ought to be very dear to us: and ſurely, if we have the benefit of their ſervice, when in health, we ſhould not deſert them in their ſickneſs, or neglect to procure for them all the relief, and ſolace, that are in our power. True piety always connects with deep humility: the more we know of God, and his law, and truth; the more we examine our hearts, and lives, according to this rule; and the more we commune with God, and are ſenſible of our obligations to him; the deeper will be our ſelf-abaſement, and the more unreſervedly ſhall we ſit down in the loweſt place, and ſubſcribe even to thoſe degrading opinions, which others have formed of us, perhaps out of prejudice, and miſtake. But if we proportionably know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall not be diſcouraged: for we ſhall perceive that he is ever ready to help the moſt unworthy. He is “the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever:” he *woman, who had an iſſue of blood, and raiſing Jairus's daughter from the dead,* 18---26. *6th. Giving ſight to two blind men, and diſpoſſeſſing a dumb demoniac; with the malignant conſtruction put upon it by the Phariſees,* 27---34. *7th. Preaching to the multitudes, and compaſſionately ordering the diſciples to pray, that labourers might be ſent forth into the Lord's harveſt,* 35---38.

is ſtill ready to hear the petitions, which are offered to him: and though we be unworthy, that he ſhould come under our roof, or to dwell in our hearts; yet he will come at our deſire, and bring his full ſalvation with him. At his potent word, the ſtrongeſt evil habits, or propenſities are ſubdued, as palſies, and fevers were of old; and then ſtrength, victory, peace and holineſs ſucceed. The more we honour his power, and grace, by our believing expectations from him; the greater tokens of his approbation, and favour ſhall we receive: and the anſwer of our prayers will generally bear proportion to the degree of our genuine faith. What cauſe have we, in theſe diſtant weſtern regions, to rejoice, that we are called by his goſpel, to enter into his family, to walk with him, and ere long to ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven! But let us alſo remember, that we now are the children of the kingdom; let us take warning by the example of the benighted, wretched Jews; let us not be high-minded, but fear, leſt any of us ſhould fall from our height of privilege, through unbelief, and be caſt into that outer darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth; whilſt the Lord ſhall repleniſh his church from amongſt the Pagan Indians, or the moſt abject ſinners in our communities. In ſhort, it will be done to each of us, according to our faith, or unbelief; and the healing of our ſouls is at once the effect, and the evidence of our intereſt in the blood of Chriſt.

They, who are confined from public ordinances by ſickneſs, or other real hindrance, and to whom it is an affliction, may expect the Saviour's gracious preſence with them in their retirement, and that he will ſooth their ſorrows, and abate their pains. When our maladies are cured, even by ordinary methods, we ſhould ariſe and miniſter to Chriſt, and his people; giving him praiſe as our Healer, and dedicating our health, and ſtrength to his ſervice: and when he rebukes, and removes the fever of our ſinful paſſions, we ſhall delight in doing his will. He never deems any hour unſeaſonable, at which we apply to him for deliverance from temptation, or trouble: nor ſhould we excuſe ourſelves from helping others, becauſe it is late, or we are fatigued; when the caſe is urgent, and the opportunity favourable. Whilſt we rejoice in the comforts of Chriſt's ſalvation; let us remember the pain, labour, and ſuffering, which he endured, when "himſelf took our infirmities, and bare "our ſickneſſes," and ſins; that we may not grudge labour, trouble, and expence in doing good to others. But let us contraſt the divine majeſty, and glory of our Redeemer, with the external poverty, and deſtitute condition, to which he voluntarily ſubmitted. Was he weary, and without a place, where he might recline his ſacred head? Was he even more deſtitute than the foxes, or the birds of the air? And ſhall we abſurdly aim to render his religion ſubſervient to our ſecular intereſts, and preferments; and to preach or profeſs the goſpel, in order to grow rich, or great? Shall we deem honour, excellence, or happineſs to be connected with affluence, ſplendour, and indulgence? Shall we pay court to the wealthy, *becauſe of their wealth*; or deſpiſe the poor, *on account of their poverty?* Shall we ſeek great things for ourſelves, or be diſcontented with mean accommodations, though far better than our Saviour's? God forbid! His diſciples muſt not only profeſs a readineſs to follow him, whitherſoever he goeth; but they muſt be ready to accompany him, by ſea, and land, through ſtorms, and tempeſts, through poverty, hardſhip, reproach, and perſecution; or they will never hold out to the end. If he require our ſervice; even the moſt endeared relative affections, and ſuch things, as would otherwiſe have been our duty, muſt give place. Enough will be found to attend on other employments, and to take care of the ordinary affairs of families, and communities: but he, who is called to follow Chriſt, and preach his goſpel, muſt leave the dead to bury their dead, and not let ſecular concerns take him off from his high, and important work. Even when we are following Chriſt in the path of duty, we may expect to meet with tribulations, nay to be menaced with impending deſtruction. At ſuch ſeaſons ſatan will be glad to obſtruct our courſe, or diſmay our ſouls, by raiſing ſome tremendous ſtorm: and the Lord may ſee good to permit him, for our humiliation, and the trial of our faith. But though the Saviour ſeem to ſleep, and diſregard his church, or the believer, when conflicting with the winds and waves of temptation, or perſecution, and apparently ready to be overwhelmed: yet his preſence infallibly ſecures their ſafety; and he only means to excite their more earneſt prayers for deliverance, and their more ſimple, and entire dependance on him for it. Even weak faith will keep us from ſinking, by leading us to cry to Jeſus, "Lord, ſave us, we periſh:" but our terrors in the hour of danger often prove our faith to be little, which at other times hath ſeemed to be very ſtrong: nay Chriſt often accounts that little faith, of which we had a higher opinion. He will not leave the weak believer to periſh: but he will rebuke him for his unbelieving fears; and ſhew his diſapprobation of his conduct, when he diſhonours him, by diſtruſting his truth, and power: and he leads men into perilous circumſtances, both to detect the weakneſs of their faith, and the greatneſs of his power, whom winds, and waves, and all creatures implicitly obey.

Indeed the power of apoſtate angels might juſtly excite our apprehenſions, were it not for our acquaintance with the ſuperior power, and grace of our Redeemer. We bar our doors with great carefulneſs againſt a few ruffians of our own ſpecies: but we ſeldom reflect that there are legions of devils, that have conſtant acceſs to us, againſt whoſe aſſaults, we have no method of defence; and whilſt they are able, if permitted to diſtract our minds, diſorder, torment, or kill our bodies, or deſtroy our poſſeſſions; their only delight is in miſery, and deſtruction. In what an awful ſituation then are they, who by daily

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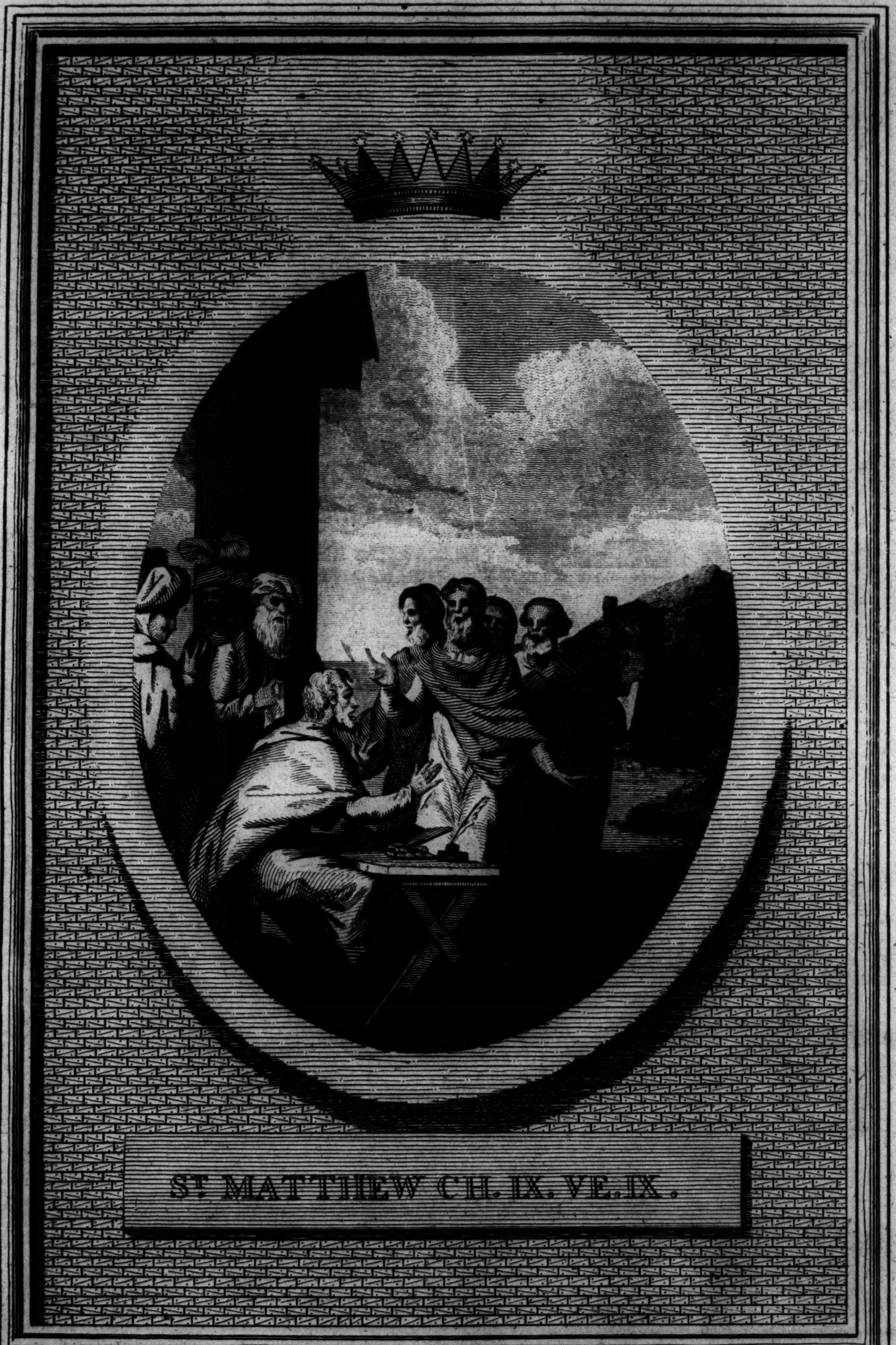

St. MATTHEW CH. IX. VE. IX.

Dayes del. *Goldar Sc.*

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AND he entered into a ſhip, and paſſed over, and came into his own city.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man ſick of the palſy, lying on a bed: and Jeſus ſeeing their faith ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy; Son, be of good cheer; thy ſins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, certain of the ſcribes ſaid within themſelves, This *man* blaſphemeth.

4 And Jeſus knowing their thoughts ſaid, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For whether is eaſier, to ſay, *Thy* ſins be forgiven thee; or to ſay, Ariſe, and walk?

6 But that ye may know, that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (then ſaith he to the ſick of the palſy,) Ariſe, take up thy bed, and go unto thine houſe.

7 And he aroſe, and departed to his houſe.

8 But when the multitude ſaw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given ſuch power unto men.

9 And as Jeſus paſſed forth from thence, he ſaw a man named Matthew, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: and he ſaith unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe, and followed him.

10 And it came to paſs, as Jeſus ſat at meat in the houſe, behold, many publicans and ſinners came and ſat down with him and his diſciples.

11 And when the Phariſees ſaw *it*, they

liſtening to Satan's temptations, provoke God to give them up to his power, and malice! And what cauſe have we for gratitude for being preſerved, during the unconverted part of our lives! But the believer in the path of duty need not fear theſe roaring lions, and wolves, being ſafe under the watchful care of the Almighty Shepherd. They cannot break his hedge of protection, which is placed about his people; nay they cannot enter a ſwine without his leave. And though they tempt ſinners to deſtroy themſelves, yet they have no power to deſtroy them. But their ſpiritual poſſeſſions are the moſt to be dreaded: their influence tends to make men miſerable, and miſchievous; the burden of their families, and the nuiſance or terror of ſociety. Under their faſcinating deluſions, the poor ſinner fancies, that religion can only make him uneaſy: and if he have got ſome notions of the truth, and ſuppoſe Jeſus to be the Son of God; nay if he have ſome terror of future torment; he yet will have nothing to do with the Saviour, but ſhuns the goſpel, "leſt it ſhould torment him before the time." But He gives deliverance to ſuch wretched ſlaves, in his own time, and makes them willing to be his ſervants; notwithſtanding all the oppoſition of the powers of darkneſs. Even devils believe, and tremble; nay they can become ſupplicants to Chriſt, to be exempted from torments, or permitted to do miſchief: let none then truſt in notions, dead faith, or ſelfiſh prayers; or in any thing ſhort of "faith that worketh by love." There is nothing ſo baſe, and filthy, that men will not do for money; and nothing more prejudices the mind againſt the goſpel, than its interference with men's purſuit of riches, by unlawful means. Many evidence, that they are poſſeſſed by Satan, and enemies to Chriſt, equally with the moſt abandoned depredators, or debauchees, by refuſing to have any thing to do with his goſpel. Nay perhaps confirmed avarice is more rarely cured, than any other diſtemper, or poſſeſſion of the ſoul. All that ſuch men hear of the power, and grace of Chriſt only excites the fears, and anxiety about their ungodly gain: they want to rid the country of him and his miniſters, that they may poſſeſs and increaſe their wealth, without fear of conſequences; and they copy the example of the Gadarenes, who loved their ſwine, better than the Saviour, or their own ſouls. From ſuch a poſſeſſion, and inſanity, good Lord deliver us.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *And*, &c.] (*Mark*, c. v. ver. 21. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 40.) This verſe ſhould have been joined to the end of the foregoing chapter: for it ſeems evident that the ſubſequent miracle was wrought ſome time before Chriſt's voyage to Gadara.

V. 2—8.] (*Mark*, c. ii. v. 1—12. *Luke*, c. v. ver. 18—26.) St. Mark expreſsly fixes the voyage to Gadara to the evening of the day, on which Chriſt ſpake the parable of the ſower, &c; but what follows ſeems to have occurred ſome time before. As this cure is much more fully recorded in the other evangeliſts, than in this place; the particular conſideration of it is poſtponed, and nothing more will be here adduced, than a few practical obſervations on it. We may however note, that as St. Mark records ſeveral of theſe miracles much more circumſtantially, than St. Matthew does; it is evident that he did not extract his goſpel from St. Matthew, as ſome have ſuppoſed. And alſo, that the evangeliſt here ſeems to throw many miracles, wrought at different times, into one continued narration; as in other places he relates the parables, that Chriſt ſpake, without mentioning any of the miracles, that he wrought at the ſame time.

V. 9—13.] (*Mark*, c. ii. v. 13—17. *Luke*, c. v. ver. 27—32.) St. Matthew here gives an account of his own being called to follow Chriſt, which is very ſimilar to what the other evangeliſts have ſaid on that ſubject. He was alſo called Levi; it being common for men to be known by more names than one. He was originally a publican, or a collector of the public taxes, and cuſtoms. Theſe were generally farmed out to the beſt bidder, by public ſale; and when any one had bargained for the revenues of a large diſtrict, he was uſed to let them out in ſubdiviſions to inferior publicans, who were aſſiſted by the Roman ſoldiery in collecting them. The Jews were very averſe to the Roman government, out of miſtaken principles of conſcience, as well as from love to independance; and they generally deemed it very criminal for any of their countrymen to be of this employment: and indeed nothing but the love of gain could induce them to ſaid unto his diſciples, Why eateth your Maſter with publicans and ſinners?

12 But when Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid unto them, They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick.

13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

14 Then came to him the diſciples of John, ſaying, Why do we and the Phariſees faſt oft, but thy diſciples faſt not?

15 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long

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engage in it. They were therefore probably in general men of little religion, and bad moral characters; and many of them increaſed the odium, under which they lay, by exacting more than their due, and enforcing their demands by military violence; (*Luke*, c. iii. v. 12, 13.) So that the office of a publican rendered a man infamous; though we may conclude, that they were not all ſo avaritious, and iniquitous, as the opprobium caſt upon them ſeemed to imply. Matthew was of this enſnaring, and diſgraceful occupation; and was ſitting in his office, receiving the taxes, and cuſtoms that were impoſed on goods, that were landed, and embarked, when Jeſus looked upon, and ſpoke to, him. His hands were full of buſineſs, perhaps his head was full of calculations, and his heart of covetouſneſs: for it is not certain, whether he had previouſly paid any regard to the doctrine of Chriſt, or not: but when He commanded him to follow him, ſuch a power accompanied the word, as influenced him to renounce immediately his lucrative employment, and to join himſelf to Chriſt, as his conſtant follower, probably knowing that it was in order to his being made a preacher of the goſpel. He therefore aroſe without delay, and leaving his buſineſs to his partners, or aſſiſtants, he went after Jeſus, and never returned to his former occupation. But after ſome time, probably when all his affairs were ſettled, and he had done with ſuch ſecular concerns; he made an entertainment at his houſe, to which he invited Jeſus, and his diſciples, and a number of his former acquaintance the publicans, and others of bad character; this he ſeems to have done, in hopes that they too might derive benefit from our Lord's diſcourſe. Accordingly Chriſt made no ſcruple of coming, but with great condeſcenſion ſet down to table with the company, that was met together. This was noticed by the proud Phariſees, who enquired of his diſciples, wherefore their Maſter, who ſeemed to advance pretences to the character of an extraordinary Prophet, acted ſo inconſiſtently, as to ſit at meat with men of ſuch vile characters, as if he delighted in their company? For they, and their diſciples would have ſhunned them as a pollution, and diſgrace. When this was brought to the hearing of Chriſt; he explained his conduct to them by an apt alluſion, which tended at the ſame time to declare his own character, and to expoſe their pride, and hypocriſy. Perſons in health have no occaſion of a phyſician, they deſire not his company, and his attendance on them would be a waſte of his time: but the ſick know his value, are glad of his advice, and willing to follow his preſcriptions; and it is his buſineſs, and the proper exerciſe of his compaſſion to go amongſt them, though their diſeaſes may render their company unpleaſant to him. Thus none but humbled ſinners know how to value a Saviour, or profit by his proffered help. They, who ſuppoſe their ſouls to be in health, will not welcome the ſpiritual Phyſician; his attendance would be thrown away on them, and be irkſome to them. This was the caſe of the Phariſees: they deſpiſed Chriſt, becauſe they were whole in their own eſtimation; but the poor publicans, and ſinners evidently wanted inſtruction, and amendment; and therefore, though he loved not their crimes or their company, yet compaſſion led him to go amongſt them as a phyſician, to bring health, and cure to their ſouls. As for the Phariſees, they ought to go, and learn the meaning of the paſſage in their ſcriptures, (*Hoſea*, c. vi. v. 6,) which taught them, that God preferred acts of mercy to their brethren even to the external worſhip preſcribed in the law; and therefore they ſurely were preferable to a proud ſupercilious attachment to men's own traditions. But indeed he did not come into the world, to call the righteous to ſhare the privileges of his kingdom: if any had been righteous of themſelves, they would not have wanted his ſalvation; and they, who proudly thought themſelves to be ſo, would not accept of it. But he came on purpoſe to call ſinners to participate the bleſſings of his kingdom; not by encouraging them to continue in their ſins, but by exhorting, inſtructing, inclining, and enabling them to repent, and forſake them; and by freely forgiving them through his own precious atonement. And as this was his proper work, it was abſurd to blame him for attending to it.

V. 14, 15.] (*Mark*, c. ii. v. 18—22. *Luke*, c. v. ver. 33—39.) John was at this time in priſon, and his afflicted circumſtances, as well as his mortified character, and the nature of his introductory diſpenſation, led thoſe, who were peculiarly attached to him, and not willing to become Chriſt's diſciples, to keep frequent, and ſtrict faſts. When therefore they ſaw Jeſus, and his followers, occaſionally go to feaſts, (though they ſeem in general to have lived in a very ſpare, and frugal manner,) they concluded that they never faſted; and they thought themſelves, and the Phariſees better on that account, than they. They therefore enquired of Jeſus, why his diſciples were allowed to neglect this neceſſary part of ſtrict religion, as they ſuppoſed it to be. But he referring them to John's teſtimony of him, as the bridegroom of the church, (*John*, c. iii. v. 29,) who was about in unſpeakable mercy to eſpouſe believing ſinners to himſelf, for their everlaſting honour and felicity, reminded them, that ſuch auſterities would be unſuitable to the preſent circumſtances. It would be unſeaſonable for the companions of the bridegroom to faſt, during the time allotted for the nuptials, and which were uſed to be ſpent in feſtivity with him: but if any calamity tore him from them, their joy would be turned into mourning, and their feaſt into faſting. In like manner, it would be as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt.

16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worſe.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: elſe the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles periſh: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preſerved.

18 While he ſpake theſe things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worſhipped him, ſaying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and ſhe ſhall live.

19 And Jeſus aroſe, and followed him, and *ſo did* his diſciples.

20 And, behold, a woman which was diſeaſed with an iſſue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For ſhe ſaid within herſelf, If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole.

22 But Jeſus turned him about, and when he ſaw her, he ſaid, Daughter be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 And when Jeſus came into the ruler's houſe, and ſaw the minſtrels and the people making a noiſe,

24 He ſaid unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but ſleepeth. And they laughed him to ſcorn.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid aroſe.

26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27 And when Jeſus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and ſaying, *Thou* ſon of David, have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the houſe, the blind men came to him: and Jeſus ſaith

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improper for his diſciples to faſt, whilſt they had the comfort of his preſence: but he ſhould ſoon be taken from them, by his crucifixion, and afterwards by his aſcenſion; and then they would meet with various hardſhips, and trials, that would render faſting ſeaſonable, and they would not fail to join it with their other religious exerciſes.

V. 16, 17.] Our Lord further referred them to ſome common rules of prudence in uſe amongſt men. It was not uſual for people to take a piece of woollen cloth, that had never been ſcoured, or prepared, to join to an old garment: becauſe its rough, and unpliant ſides would not connect with the ſoft old cloth; but would rather tear it further, and make the rent worſe. Nor was it uſual for men to put new wine into old leathern bottles, which were going to decay; for in this caſe the bottles would be liable to burſt through the fermenting of the wine, and ſo both would be waſted: whereas by putting the new wine into ſtrong new bottles, both might be preſerved. Thus, in thoſe occaſional duties, which are not eſſential to the being of religion, but rather helps to things more excellent, diſcretion is to be uſed, and a proportion obſerved between the degree of a man's knowledge, experience, and ſtability, and the ſelf-denial required of him: otherwiſe they may tend to diſcouragement, or to fatal miſtakes. Hopeful perſons might be driven away, by premature impoſitions of this kind; or led to reſt in them, and make a phariſaical ſelf-righteouſneſs of them, and thus become more fatally deluded than ever. So that great caution, prudence, and tenderneſs are requiſite, in dealing with young converts about ſuch matters, which, though uſeful, are not of indiſpenſable neceſſity; that their former habits, and ſentiments may not be too violently, and haſtily croſſed; and that they may not receive gloomy and forbidding ideas of the ſervice of our gracious Lord: but opportunities are to be waited for, and ſuch duties gradually inculcated, as they are able to bear them.

V. 18—26.] (*Mark*, c. v. ver. 22—43. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 41—56.) We ſhall omit the full conſideration of theſe miracles, till we come to the more circumſtantial account of them.

V. 27—31.] The diſplays of the power of Chriſt were varied in almoſt every conceivable way of beneficence; but he wrought no miracles of vengeance: even the deſtruction of the ſwine *by his permiſſion*, was doubtleſs intended in mercy, and conducive to much good. All his miracles were alſo emblems of the ſalutary efficacy of his truth, and grace upon the ſouls of men: and nothing is more emphatically deſcriptive of the ſtate, to which ſin hath reduced us, than "blindneſs." The mind being enveloped in ignorance, or error, through the ſubtlety of Satan, and the influence of men's luſts, and prejudices, continues impenitent, unbelieving, ungodly, and unholy: but when this ſpiritual blindneſs is removed, and the eyes of our underſtandings are enlightened to ſee things, as they really are; we can no longer be held in bondage to ſin, and Satan, but repent, return to God, and gladly accept of his ſalvation. Chriſt therefore, as had been foretold, (*Iſaiah*, c. xxxv. v. 5,) frequently wrought this miracle of giving ſight to the blind; of which we have here an inſtance, the circumſtances of which require ſome conſideration. When he was returning as is probable from the houſe of Jairus, where he had magnified his power, and mercy, in raiſing his daughter from the unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They ſaid unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, ſaying, According to your ſaith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened: and Jeſus ſtraitly charged them, ſaying, See *that* no man know *it*.

31 But they, when they were departed, ſpread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man poſſeſſed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was caſt out, the dumb ſpake: and the multitudes marvelled, ſaying, It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael.

34 But the Phariſees ſaid, He caſteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

35 And Jeſus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing every ſickneſs and every diſeaſe among the people.

36 But when he ſaw the multitudes, he was moved with compaſſion on them, becauſe

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dead, he was followed by two blind men; it is not certain whether they were blind from their birth, or no. They were doubtleſs earneſtly deſirous of the bleſſing of ſight, and had no hope of it from any other quarter: but having heard of our Lord's miracles, and being perhaps acquainted with the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, they believed that this was He, and confeſſed him, as the Son of David, the promiſed King of Iſrael. So that, though they were outwardly blind, they yet were more ſpiritually enlightened, than the rulers, and teachers of the people. With great earneſtneſs therefore, and expectation of relief, they followed Chriſt, ſupplicating him to have mercy on them: yet he did not ſee good to attend to them, 'till he had entered an houſe. But when they had come thither to him; he enquired of them, whether they really did believe, that he was able to reſtore their ſight, immediately, by his word; as it was an effect, which no power of mere man could poſſibly produce? This tended to induce them to a fuller confeſſion of their faith in his divine power, as well as to raiſe their expectations: and without heſitation they anſwered in the affirmative. Jeſus then touched their eyes, ſaying, "according to your faith, be it unto you." He knew that they had faith; and this tended to ſhew the ſincerity of their former profeſſion, and to put honour on that faith which ſo honoured him. Immediately therefore their eyes were opened; and Jeſus, to avoid all appearance of oſtentation, gave them a ſtrict charge not to make known to any one, by what means their ſight had been reſtored; but their joy, and gratitude were ſo great, that they could not refrain themſelves; and ſo they ſpread abroad his renown all over that neighbourhood. We need not exactly decide, whether in this they did well, or no: their motive, and intention were good; but they were doubtleſs in ſome meaſure faulty, in diſregarding Chriſt's injunctions.

V. 32—34.] Our Lord was next requeſted to exert his power, in relieving a poor man, who was dumb, not from any natural defect, but by the malignant influence of an evil ſpirit: and therefore when Chriſt had conſtrained the ſpirit to quit poſſeſſion of him, he was immediately able to ſpeak, and reſtored to the uſe of all his faculties. And the crouds, that were ſpectators of theſe multiplied, and ſtupendous miracles, were ſo aſtoniſhed, that they declared the like had never been ſeen even in Iſrael, where prophets had ſo often wrought many miracles, in confirmation of their teſtimony. (*Iſaiah*, c. xxxv. v. 6.) But the Phariſees, not able to deny the reality, or the greatneſs of the miracle, and fearing leſt the people ſhould thence conclude that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, contrary to their ſentiments, inclinations, and reputation; allowed that indeed he caſt out devils, yet declared that it was not by a divine power, but by that of the prince of the devils: for being in league with that arch-apoſtate, whom all the other fallen angels obeyed as their leader, he uſed his authority in caſting out evil ſpirits, to give a ſanction to his falſe doctrine. What anſwer Chriſt at this time made to this moſt abſurd, and malignant accuſation, we know not; but on another occaſion he very fully confuted, and expoſed it. (c. xii. v. 22—37.)

V. 35. *Synagogues*, &c.] The temple was the centre of the Jewiſh worſhip, and ſacrifices were not allowed to be offered elſewhere: but in proceſs of time, it was found neceſſary to have other places ſet apart for public prayer, and for the inſtruction of the people. For theſe purpoſes ſynagogues came at length to be built; and ſome time after the captivity, they became general in all the cities, and villages throughout the land, and probably they were proportionably much more numerous than churches, and chapels are with us. The name denotes a convention, or a place in which men aſſemble together. Learned men think, that there were forms of worſhip, that were ſtatedly uſed in them, on certain days in the week, as well as on the ſabbath days. And the ſcriptures, being divided into portions, were conſtantly read in them: ſo that they were very uſeful in keeping the people from idolatry. The Prieſts, Levites, and Scribes might commonly officiate in them, but it was not reſtricted to them: and though they had their ſtated rulers, and officers; yet they had no regular paſtors, or teachers; but able perſons occaſionally gave exhortations in them, as they were diſpoſed, or deſired to do it: and the caſe was the ſame in other nations, where the Jews reſided. Chriſt therefore went round the country teaching in the ſynagogues, and no one attempted to interrupt, or hinder him.

V. 36—38.] Great multitudes reſorted from diſtant places to hear Chriſt's doctrine; and they not only appeared to be languiſhing in their ſouls for want of ſome better inſtructions, than thoſe of their formal teachers;

they fainted, and were ſcattered abroad, as ſheep having no ſhepherd.

37 Then ſaith he unto his diſciples, The harveſt truly is plenteous, but the labourers *are* few:

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he will ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

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but they were ready to faint with hunger, and fatigue, by continuing long at a diſtance from their habitations. In both ſenſes, they were ſcattered as ſheep, not having a ſhepherd. There were Prieſts, Levites, and Scribes in abundance all over the land; but they were idol ſhepherds, (Note, *Zech:* c. xi. v. 17:) therefore Chriſt had compaſſion on them as periſhing for lack of knowledge. He moreover repreſented their caſe under another apt ſimilitude: the multitudes, that were deſirous of ſpiritual inſtruction, and that would ſoon be gathered into the church, formed, as it were, a plenteous harveſt, growing in the field, which would require many active, and induſtrious labourers to ſecure it, without any of it being loſt; but there were very few who deſerved that character. It therefore was at that time eſpecially the duty of the diſciples, (for which there was abundant encouragement,) to beſeech the Lord of the harveſt to ſend forth a proportionable number of able, faithful miniſters, to preach the goſpel, all over the land, and in all places, where ſinners were to be converted: and that men might receive inſtruction near to their own homes; and not be forced to wander for it, till they be fainted with want, and wearineſs. Chriſt himſelf is the Lord of the harveſt, and we ſhall find him in the next chapter ſending forth labourers into it: but probably the diſciples did not underſtand him, as ſpeaking of himſelf, on this occaſion. The expreſſion tranſlated, "ſend forth," literally ſignifies, "to thruſt forth," and implies the powerful impulſe of God upon the heart, which would be neceſſary to overcome the diffidence, and reluctance, of able miniſters to enter on that important work; eſpecially when it would expoſe them to ſo many perils, and hardſhips.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our gracious Lord will not continue his preſence, or ordinances with thoſe, that deſpiſe, and are weary of them; for in every place he finds abundant opportunities of ſhewing mercy. They that feel themſelves miſerable through ſin, and its effects, and who believe that He, and He only can deliver them, will ſubmit to any inconveniences in applying to him: and as they will be glad of direction and aſſiſtance from their ſtronger brethren, theſe ſhould be ready to afford them, as they have ability and opportunity. Chriſt can ſee faith in the heart; yet he loves to point it out in thoſe effects, by which it becomes manifeſt to us alſo: and when the moſt ſinful, and afflicted of the human race are earneſtly preſſing through difficulties, that they may apply to him for deliverance from ſin, and its effects, they ſhould be of good chear; for Chriſt in his word addreſſes them, as his children, whoſe ſins are forgiven them. It would be far better to have the pardon of our ſins, and to be left to languiſh under incurable diſeaſe, till death releaſed us; than to be cured of our ſickneſs, and left under the guilt, and power of our ſins, to treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath, yet if the former bleſſing be vouchſafed, deliverance from pain and ſorrow will in due time follow, and conſolation will mean while be afforded us. Even Jeſus could not do good ſo unexceptionably, but proud ſcribes would cenſure, and accuſe him of blaſphemy: let us then never expect to eſcape calumny, or be deterred from our duty by the fear of it. The Lord Jeſus, who knoweth men's hearts, often heareth them ſay ſuch things within themſelves, concerning him, and his goſpel, and ſervice, as they would be afraid, or aſhamed to avow: but he will as certainly call them to a ſtrict account for their evil ſurmiſes, as for their wicked words, and works. When the paralytic, at Chriſt's command, was enabled to ariſe, and carry home that bed, on which he had been brought a helpleſs cripple; the authority of Chriſt to pardon ſin, and his own actual forgiveneſs were at once demonſtrated: and when ſinners are enabled, at his word, to renounce their cuſtomary iniquities, and to delight in obeying God's commandments; they too know that their crimes are all blotted out. Thus men come to Chriſt, burthened and enſlaved by their ſins; but when he heals them, and enables them to walk at liberty in newneſs of life; they who witneſs the ſurpriſing change, are led to adore his power, and grace, and to glorify God on their account. But as Jeſus in his humiliation had power *on earth*, to forgive ſins, (which was an act of divine authority;) ſo, now that he reigns in glory, his mediatorial commiſſion reaches no further; and they who leave the earth unpardoned, muſt ſink under condemnation for ever.

Many eminent ſervants of God have been called, not only from low occupations, but from ſuch ſcenes of vice, as rendered it moſt improbable, that they would ever be thus employed. The word of Chriſt appears as powerful in overcoming the avarice or pride of men's hearts, as in rebuking the winds and waves, or in caſting out legions of devils. They, who have experienced the power of his grace, will feel, and hope for, their former companions in ſin, and will deviſe means, and willingly incur expence, to bring them into the way of inſtruction. We muſt not aſſociate with ungodly men, out of love to their vain converſation; but we may from love to their ſouls; as far as we are able to ſpeak, and act conſiſtent with our character, as the diſciples, or miniſters of Chriſt, but no further. However we ſhould remember that our good Phyſician had the power of healing inherent in him, and was in no danger of taking any infection; but it is not ſo with us: we ſhould therefore conſider our own conſtitution, and not needleſſly go into unwholeſome air, leſt in attempting to do good to others, we get injury to ourſelves. Let us rather enquire, whether we have diſcovered our ſickneſs, and have learned to value, and follow the directions of, our Phyſician? For there are yet many ſtout-hearted Phariſees, that are whole in their own eſtimation, and are more diſpoſed to carp at his words, and works, than to wait on him for the healing of their ſouls. But if we be humbled as ſinners, and deſire his ſalvation, let us remember that he delights in mercy, and that he

CHAP. X.

Contains Jeſus, 1ſt. Appointing, commiſſioning, and enduing with miraculous powers, the twelve apoſtles, with their names, &c. 1---4. *2d. Inſtructing them whither to go, what to preach, and how to behave, both towards thoſe, that received, and thoſe who rejected them,* 5---15. *3d. Shewing the dangers, and perſecutions they muſt meet with, and from whom, and how they were to find ſupports, and to conduct themſelves under them,* 16---23.

came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance: and let us learn to copy his mercy, and uſe means to bring even the vileſt of ſinners to repentance, and to Him. How prone is the human heart to ſelf-preference, and cenſoriouſneſs! Let us beware of this leaven, which corrupts thoſe things, that are good in themſelves, and turns even an act of devotion into an abomination. Whilſt therefore we judge for ourſelves, as in the ſight of God, at what ſeaſons the preſence, and conſolations of the heavenly Bridegroom call us to thankful joy, and praiſe; and when his abſence, through our ſins, or for our humiliation, requires us to join faſting with our confeſſions, and ſupplications: let us not preſume to judge, or preſcribe to, others, or prefer ourſelves to them, on ſuch accounts. There are indeed matters in religion ſo indiſpenſable, that ſinners muſt be urged to them without delay, or reſerve: but there are others, which in due time, and manner may be inculcated; but which hopeful perſons cannot receive at preſent, and which are not needful, and might prove injurious to them: and much miſchief has been done, both in reſpect of doctrines, external obſervances, and auſterities, by “ putting new “ wine into old bottles:” but wiſdom is profitable to direct.

Rulers, and ſuperior perſons are ſometimes brought to Chriſt by thoſe afflictions, which admit of no remedy from their ſecular diſtinctions: and when the greateſt feel their need of Chriſt, and know his power, and dignity, they will abaſe themſelves as much before him, as the meaneſt. Even amiable, and dutiful children are often the ſource of much care, and ſorrow to their parents: but the beſt remedy, in reſpect both of their temporal lives, and their ſouls, is to apply to Chriſt in their behalf; as life, and death, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal are entirely at his diſpoſal. But how various are the diſtreſſes, and humiliating diſeaſes, to which ſin hath ſubjected our ſpecies! And in how many ways doth true faith operate, amidſt the fears, diffidence, ſhame, and remaining ignorance, and infirmity of thoſe, that are made partakers of it? Yet if we do but touch, as it were, the hem of Chriſt's garment, by living faith, our moſt inveterate maladies will be healed; but there is no other cure: nor need we fear his knowing thoſe things concerning us, which are our grief, and burden, and which we ſhould not wiſh to diſcloſe to any earthly friend. Yet we muſt not deſire to conceal our obligations to his power, and grace: our comfort and his glory are concerned in their being made known: and when he ſees the humble believer ready to ſink with ſhame, and terror, he will, by ſome encouraging token, ſhew his acceptance, and ſpecial love. But he often delays to bring *intended* relief, till matters ſeem to come to an extremity: thus he proves our faith and patience, and renders the mercy doubly welcome; and our gratitude and admiration more abundant. They, who treat his words with contempt, and expect nothing from his power, are not meet perſons to witneſs his glory. Even death, to thoſe whom he loves, is only a ſleep; and they will ſhortly awake at his word: and as our deceaſed chriſtian friends will ſhare with us this joyful reſurrection, we ſhould not ſorrow as men without hope, though we expect not their return to us in this world. And if this ſingle inſtance of Chriſt's raiſing one, that was newly dead, ſo increaſed his fame; what will be his glory, “ when all that are in “ the graves, ſhall hear his voice, and come forth, they “ that have done good to the reſurrection of life, and “ they, that have done evil, to the reſurrection of damnation?”

Still we are aſtoniſhed with the luſtre of the Redeemer's power, and love! Let ſinners then copy the example of theſe blind men: let them ſtand before the Son of David; though they cannot behold him; and let them beſeech him to have mercy upon them, and open their eyes, to ſee his glory, and preciouſneſs, his truth, and will: and let them perſiſt in following him with their intreaties, and in due time he will notice, and help them. In this, and in every other reſpect we need to cry unto him daily to increaſe our faith; that we may believe aſſuredly, that he is both able, and willing, to do every thing for us, that pertains to our ſalvation. If faith be not wanting in us, love, and power will not be wanting in him; but he will ſay, “ according to your faith be it unto “ you,” and we ſhall be ſent forth, as it were, to proclaim his praiſes, who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. Whilſt ſinners remain under the power of Satan, they are deprived of the beſt uſe of the gift of ſpeech; and can neither ſpeak to, of, or for, the Lord, to any good purpoſe: but when Chriſt delivers them, their mouths are opened to ſhew forth his praiſe. We ſhould therefore bring thoſe to him, that are not willing to come of themſelves; and intreat him for thoſe, whom Satan ſo poſſeſſes, that they will not pray for themſelves. Nothing can convince thoſe, that are under the power of pride, and malice of the humbling truths of God's word: they will believe any abſurdity, rather than the divinely authenticated Scriptures; and the injurious reflections, which they caſt on ſuch, as are diligently employed in doing good to their fellow creatures, only ſhew the enmity of their hearts againſt a holy God. We ſhould therefore go on in our work, without regarding them: and as to this day vaſt multitudes are as ſheep not having a ſhepherd, we ſhould compaſſionate, and do all, that we can to help them. The harveſt, that is yet to be reaped, is very plentiful, the real labourers are few: we ſhould therefore pray earneſtly to the Lord of the harveſt, to raiſe up, and ſend forth many, who will labour in the word, and doctrine, and in bringing ſouls to Chriſt; and not labour to advance, enrich, and indulge themſelves. This is a duty too much neglected: but when God ſhall ſtir up the hearts of

4th. Animating them by his example not to fear their enemies; warning and encouraging them by many important conſiderations; and declaring the rewards to be beſtowed on his faithful ſervants, and thoſe, that behaved well to them; and the puniſhments to be inflicted on thoſe, who denied him, and evil intreated them, 24---42.

AND when he had called unto *him* his twelve diſciples, he gave them power *againſt* unclean ſpirits, to caſt them out, and to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe.

2 Now the names of the twelve apoſtles are theſe; the firſt Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whoſe ſurname was Thaddeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iſcariot, who alſo betrayed him.

5 Theſe twelve Jeſus ſent forth, and commanded them, ſaying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.

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chriſtians every where to attend to it, we may expect the dawning of thoſe happy days, when the goſpel ſhall be known, and believed all over the earth.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—4.] (*Mark*, c. iii. v. 13—19. *Luke*, c. vi. v. 12—16.) The perſons here mentioned ſeem to have been called to a conſtant attendance on Chriſt, a conſiderable time before this; and they were previouſly known, or ſome of them at leaſt, as the perſons for whom he intended this important office. At length they were ſolemnly nominated, and appointed to it, and endued by their Lord with the power of caſting out unclean ſpirits, and healing diſeaſes in his name, to confirm their doctrine: and at length they were ſent forth by two, and two, into different parts of the land, to prepare the people to receive Him. The word apoſtle ſignifies a meſſenger, and as ſuch it is given to Chriſt himſelf. (*Heb*: c. iii. v. 1.) The apoſtles were his meſſengers, ſent forth to proclaim his kingdom; and after his reſurrection, they were particularly appointed to be witneſſes of that event. They were twelve in number, probably with reference to the twelve tribes of Iſrael. We have here a catalogue of their names, in which ſome few things require conſideration. Simon is firſt mentioned, both in this and other places: Chriſt called him Cephas, or Peter, from the word, which ſignifies a rock, or a ſtone, denoting that he would prove a firm, and ſtedfaſt man, and ſtable in profeſſing, and ſupporting the truth of the goſpel, (c. xvi. v. 16. *John*, c. i. v. 42:) he is firſt mentioned, not as having any authority over the other apoſtles, which ſome vainly pretend; but becauſe he was the elder of the firſt two brothers, who were called to a conſtant attendance on Chriſt; and becauſe his abilities, zeal, and diſpoſition combined in rendering him a principal and conſpicuous character amongſt them: his brother Andrew was ſent out along with him. James, whom Herod ſlew, (*Acts*, c. xii. v. 1, 2,) and John the Evangeliſt his brother were ſent forth together: they were the ſecond pair, who were called to follow Chriſt. Philip, and Bartholomew, of whom we know leſs, were ſorted together. Thomas, who is commonly called Didymus, or the twin, was joined with Matthew, the converted publican. James, the ſon of Alpheus, who wrote the epiſtle, was joined with Lebbeus, or Thaddeus, the ſame perſon who is elſewhere called Jude, or Judas: the names here given him are ſuppoſed to ſignify *hearty*, or *cordial*, to diſtinguiſh him from the other Judas, who was a hypocrite. The latter was joined with Simon the Canaanite, or the man of Cana, as ſome explain it; though others ſuppoſe the word to be equivalent to Zelotes, or the zealous, by which he is elſewhere diſtinguiſhed, (*Acts*, c. i. v. 13.) This Judas is always called Iſcariot, which is generally ſuppoſed to mean "the man of Carioth;" but ſome think, that it is derived from a word ſignifying "ſuſpenſion," and that it refers to the manner of his death. He profeſſed himſelf Chriſt's diſciple, and his apparent conduct did not contradict that profeſſion: the Lord was therefore pleaſed to call him to be his conſtant attendant, and at length to make him one of his apoſtles, though he knew his hypocriſy; that thus the ſcripture might be fulfilled, by his treachery, and apoſtacy; for he "*alſo*, or *even* betrayed him."

V. 5, 6.] It is probable that the apoſtles had conſtantly followed Chriſt for a conſiderable time, to hear his inſtructions, and witneſs his miracles, and conduct, before they were ſent forth to preach. If therefore the preſent Era of the birth of Chriſt be allowed to be erroneous; and yet, according to that, he was crucified *Anno Domini*, 33, as is commonly computed; it ſeems more reaſonable to conclude, that ſome time intervened between his baptiſm, and his death, which cannot ſatisfactorily be made out; than to deviate from St. Luke's declaration, that he was about 30 years old, when he was baptized, as many at leaſt ſeem to do. This is the ſuppoſition, that is here formed, and according to it the events are *conjecturally* dated. The matter indeed is more difficult, than important; but it ſeemed needful to explain the reaſon of the deviation from the general computations in this matter. When Chriſt ſent forth the apoſtles, he gave them a charge, or various warnings, and inſtructions, many of which had reference to all their future miniſtry; and indeed to the caſe of others ſent forth in different ages, about the ſame ſervice. The other evangeliſts place the ſending out of the apoſtles at ſome diſtance from their firſt appointment; (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 7—13. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 1—6;) and probably it

7 And as ye go, preach, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe the dead, caſt out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9 Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs in your purſes,

10 Nor ſcrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 And into whatſoever city or town ye ſhall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into an houſe, ſalute it.

13 And if the houſe be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that houſe or city, ſhake off the duſt of your feet.

15 Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

16 Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.

17 But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will ſcourge you in their ſynagogues:

18 And ye ſhall be brought before governors and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye ſhall ſpeak: for it

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took place ſome time after. In their inſtructions, our Lord forbade them at that time to go among the Gentiles, or to any place that bordered on them, or into any city of the Samaritans: he had indeed once preached with great ſucceſs in a city of Samaria, (*John*, c. iv,) yet his perſonal miniſtry, and that of his apoſtles previous to his aſcenſion, were chiefly to be confined to the Jews; that they might not be prejudiced by a contrary conduct, or have any pretence for rejecting the goſpel: for the change, that was intended, was to be effected gradually, and their refuſal of Chriſt was to be the occaſion of the calling of the Gentiles. They were therefore "rather "to go to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael," which intimated that the Iſraelites in general were wandered from God, deſtitute of faithful ſhepherds, and in danger of periſhing; even as the Gentiles, and Samaritans were, (c xviii. v. 12, 13. 1 *Pet:* c. ii. v. 25.)

V. 7, 8.] (*Note*, c. iii. v. 2.) The apoſtles were ordered in every place to preach the ſame grand doctrine, that John Baptiſt had done, and that Chriſt himſelf firſt began to preach; for their miniſtry was at this time introductory to the open eſtabliſhment of the Meſſiah's kingdom. In confirmation of their miſſion, they were empowered, and commanded to work miracles, and even to raiſe the dead: they might do theſe, during the continuance of Chriſt on earth, though it be not recorded; however they certainly raiſed the dead to life after his aſcenſion. They were expreſſly prohibited to make any perſonal advantage of theſe miraculous powers, as if they would ſell the gift of God for money, (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 20;) but they were to confer the benefit freely, as they had received it. Doubtleſs Judas preached, and wrought miracles, as well as the other apoſtles; and probably for his credit's ſake, he reſiſted the temptation of making any gain of his powers, at leaſt he was not ſuſpected by the other apoſtles. (*Note*, c. vii. v. 22, 23.)

V. 9, 10.] Though the apoſtles were to ſhew themſelves ſuperior to the love of filthy lucre; yet they were to go forth, entirely relying on God for their ſupport, even in thoſe places where they were ſtrangers. They were not to get together any money, to defray their expences; nor yet to carry any proviſions with them in a ſcrip, or bag, ſuch as were in uſe for that purpoſe; nor to carry any more clothes, or any other ſhoes, than thoſe they uſually wore; nor a ſuperfluous ſtaff, in caſe any thing happened to that, with which they walked: for the Lord engaged to provide for their wants, by diſpoſing thoſe, to whom they went to ſupply them: this they might conſcientiouſly take, as the labourer is worthy of his maintenance; and more they were not to covet.

V. 11—15.] On the apoſtles, arrival in any city, or town, they were ordered to enquire, what perſons reſided there, of good repute for piety, and probity; and they were to go to them with their firſt propoſal of the goſpel; and in caſe they received, and entertained them, they were to abide with them, (if convenient,) till they left the place; that they might not appear to be of a capricious turn of mind, diſſatisfied with their accommodations, or deſirous of going from houſe to houſe, to partake of their entertainment. When they entered any houſe, they were bid to ſalute thoſe, who reſided in it, in the cuſtomary manner, wiſhing that the peace, and bleſſing of God might reſt upon them, and propoſing to them the goſpel of peace, and ſalvation. And if the family, or any in it, were indeed godly perſons, diſpoſed to regard the divine meſſage, and to welcome the goſpel; let them further pray for, and inſtruct them; but if they rejected the meſſage of God; they were to leave them to themſelves; (c. vii. v. 6;) and their peace, their good wiſhes, prayers, and endeavours, would not be loſt, but return in bleſſings upon themſelves. But when they came to any city, or houſe, where the inhabitants abſolutely refuſed to entertain them, or to regard their teſtimony; when they departed, they were "to ſhake off the duſt of their feet." We are told, that when the Jews returned from idolatrous na-ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak.

20 For it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Spirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you.

21 And the brother ſhall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and cauſe them to be put to death.

22 And ye ſhall be hated of all *men* for my name's ſake: but he that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved.

23 But when they perſecute you in this city,

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tions into their own country, they uſed thus to ſhake off the duſt from their feet; as if afraid of bringing any thing into the holy land, that might pollute it, and as rejecting with abhorrence all connexion with thoſe, that were out of covenant with God. This action of the apoſtles therefore would declare, that they looked upon the conduct of thoſe Jews, that rejected Chriſt, to be as criminal, and their ſtate as dangerous, as that of idolaters; and that they would have nothing to do with them, or their property, which were about to be devoted to deſtruction. To this injunction, Chriſt added, that it would be more tolerable, not only for idolaters in general, but for the inhabitants of Sodom, and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for thoſe of ſuch a city: their impenitence, and obſtinate unbelief amidſt ſuch abundant opportunities of inſtruction, and conviction, would evince a more determined enmity againſt God, than all the groſs abominations of Sodom, for which it had been viſited with ſuch tremendous vengeance: and though they might eſcape puniſhment in this world; yet in the day of judgment, and final retribution, their doom would be ſtill more intolerable. (*Luke*. c. x. v. 1—16.)

V. 16—20.] Our Lord next reminded the apoſtles to prepare for perſecution: they were ſent forth as harmleſs, defenceleſs ſheep, into the midſt of rapacious, and cruel wolves, who would neither want will nor power to devour them, except as they were divinely protected. It would therefore behove them to unite the prudence, circumſpection, and ſagacity, of which ſerpents have ever been the emblem, with the ſimple, inoffenſive, gentle, pure, and loving temper of the dove; that they might avoid every thing, which could needleſſly exaſperate, or give an handle, or advantage to their enemies; that they might avoid all intermeddling with ſecular matters, not belonging to them; all raſhneſs, violence, the appearance of evil, or ſelfiſhneſs; as well as all underhand, and improper methods of preſerving themſelves. They were indeed by no means to fear men; but it would be incumbent on them to beware of them, as of enemies, far more fierce, and implacable, than wolves, and lions, and at the ſame time crafty, undermining, and treacherous. They ought therefore to be upon their guard againſt them, and not to rely on their promiſes and engagements, or expect any thing but injury from them: for they would certainly apprehend, and deliver them up as criminals, to the public councils of the nation, and condemn them to be ſcourged in the ſynagogues, where their conſiſtories about eccleſiaſtical affairs uſed to be held; nay they would be brought before the Roman governors, and the kings of the nations, for their attachment to the name, and cauſe of Chriſt; thus they would have the opportunity to declare his goſpel before them, which being neglected would turn to a teſtimony againſt them. And though they were poor, and unlearned men, not uſed to ſpeak before public aſſemblies, or earthly potentates; and might fear leſt they ſhould diſhonour the cauſe, by their impropriety of conduct, and language: yet they need not be ſolicitous on that account; for, as they were not to plead their own cauſe, but that of their Lord, ſo he would immediately ſuggeſt to them what they ſhould ſpeak; inſomuch that their anſwers would not ſo much be their own thoughts, or words, as thoſe of the Holy Spirit, from God their heavenly Father, ſpeaking in, and by them. (*Mark*, c. xiii. v. 9—13. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 11, 12. c. xxi. v. 12—19.) We muſt not ſuppoſe that this is a general rule to us, in ordinary caſes, according to the literal import: yet we may go about our work without anxiety, uſing proper means, and truſting in the Lord for wiſdom, knowledge, and utterance proportioned to every ſervice, about which he employs us. We do not find that the apoſtles met with ſuch perſecutions, till after Chriſt's aſcenſion; and then theſe predictions, and promiſes were repeatedly fulfilled

V. 21, 22.] The apoſtles might imagine, that their harmleſs, holy, and prudent conduct, their beneficent miracles, and their glad tidings of the Meſſiah's advent would conciliate them favour from all ſorts of perſons: but, on the contrary, Chriſt aſſured them, that they would experience the moſt rancorous enmity, even from their neareſt relations: for, as the goſpel would contradict men's prejudices, affront their pride, interfere with their luſts and intereſts, and excite the rage of thoſe evil ſpirits, that work in the children of diſobedience; ſo it would certainly excite vehement convulſions even in cities, and nations, and the jealouſy of rulers; it would throw men into different parties, and produce violent controverſies, and in time furious perſecutions. Then the enemies of godlineſs would forget the ties of conſanguinity, or affinity; brethren would apprehend, and accuſe one another, and procure each other's death; parents regardleſs of natural affection, would proſecute their own children to death; and even children, in violation of all their duties, and obligations, would riſe up againſt their own parents, as furious enemies, to procure their execution: nay the preachers, and profeſſors of chriſtianity would be hated by men of all nations, ſects, and characters, for the ſake of Chriſt; yea by all men, except thoſe, who were won over to embrace the goſpel: and this would expoſe them to ſuch dangers, hardſhips, and ſufferings, as would violently tempt them to apoſtatize. Yet they, who continued to cleave to the Lord amidſt them, and held out to the end, would be preſerved from all real damage, and recompenſed with everlaſting felicity; whilſt apoſtates would be finally ruined, and loſt. (c. xxiv. v. 13. *Rev*: c. ii. v. 10.)

V. 23. *But*, &c.] The open manner, in which Chriſt flee ye into another: for verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not have gone over the cities of Iſrael, till the Son of man be come.

24 The diſciple is not above *his* maſter, nor the ſervant above his lord.

25 It is enough for the diſciple that he be as his maſter, and the ſervant as his lord. If they have called the Maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more *ſhall they call* them of his houſhold?

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed; and hid, that ſhall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkneſs, *that* ſpeak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the houſe-tops.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him, which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.

29 Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many ſparrows.

32 Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me

told his apoſtles of the perſecutions, that awaited them, powerfully evinced his conſciouſneſs of his authority, of his influence over their hearts, and of his power to ſupport, and recompenſe them. They were inſtructed, in no wiſe to conceal, or palliate their meſſage, to avoid perſecution: yet they were not raſhly to expoſe themſelves to its effects, or to ruſh into danger; but when perſecuted in one city, they were ordered to flee to another. Yet they were not there to lie by, or to conceal their meſſage, for fear of ſimilar oppoſition; but wherever they were driven, there they were openly to preach the goſpel. And Chriſt aſſured them, that, though this might often force them from apparent ſcenes of uſefulneſs; yet it would be no injury to the common cauſe: for they would not have gone over all the cities of Iſrael, "'till the Son of Man ſhould come." As the perſecution did not begin, 'till after Chriſt's aſcenſion, we cannot interpret this expreſſion, of his coming to the cities where they had been preaching; or even of the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt, on the day of Pentecoſt; nor can it have any reference to his future coming to judge the world: it rather refers to the time, when Chriſt came to ſet up his kingdom, as diſtinct from the Jewiſh church, by the open preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles; and to his coming to take vengeance on the unbelieving Jews, in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the ruin of their church, and ſtate. The apoſtles would not have time, and opportunity, to preach the goſpel fully in all the cities of Iſrael, before theſe events would take place, and finally prevent them from doing it.

V. 24—28.] (*Mark*, c. iii. v. 2. *John*, c. xv. ver. 18—20.) In the ordinary courſe of things, the diſciple is not a perſon of greater dignity, or excellency, than his teacher; or the ſervant, than his maſter; nor ought they to expect to be treated with greater reſpect, and deference: but never were diſciples, or ſervants ſo inferior to their Lord, and Maſter, as Chriſt's were. If therefore they met with injurious uſage, and opprobrious language, in the courſe of their miniſtry, they ſhould remember, that the great Maſter of the family, notwithſtanding his divine excellency, wiſdom, holineſs, and beneficence, had been called Beelzebub, as if he were the prince of the devils, or in league with him; and it ought to ſatisfy them, his domeſtics, to be as their Lord, and treated in the ſame manner, conſidering their own immenſe inferiority, and their manifold infirmities, and great unworthineſs. They were therefore exhorted not to fear thoſe, who might load them with reproachful names, or falſe accuſations, or charge them with baſe motives, or deſigns: for a time would ſoon come, when all ſecrets would be diſcloſed; and then their characters, principles, motives, and intentions would be made known, and fully juſtified; and the malignity, and wickedneſs of their accuſers detected, and put to ſhame: nor could they be cut off, till they had finiſhed their teſtimony, and made public to the world the truths, that Chriſt had privately delivered to them. Whatever therefore he told them in ſecret retirement, or by explaining to them his dark ſayings, they were ordered to proclaim in the moſt public, and perſpicuous manner; and even to declare from the houſe tops, what he had whiſpered to them. It ſeems that the Jews uſed to publiſh any thing, that they wanted to make known, from the flat roofs of their houſes, which were generally built low. (*Luke*, c. viii. v. 16—18. 1 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 5.) This would expoſe the apoſtles to much enmity, and even to the peril of their lives: but if their perſecutors ſhould be permitted to proceed as far, as poſſible; they could only kill the mortal body, a little before the time, when it would otherwiſe die of diſeaſe, or natural decay; and they could by no means deſtroy the immortal ſoul, either by terminating it's exiſtence, or preventing its immediate, and final felicity: and though the tortures, that they might inflict, would be dreadful to nature; yet they would not be comparable to the miſery, that God was able to inflict, in the deſtruction of both body, and ſoul in hell. They ought not therefore to fear the impotent malice of man, but the omnipotent, everlaſting, and righteous indignation of God; which they would incur, if they apoſtatized from the goſpel for fear of perſecution. (*Luke*, c. xii. v. 4.) It is obſervable that this argument is twice uſed with immediate application to Chriſt's diſciples; for they need to have their fear of man overpowered by the fear of God, as well as their worldly hopes overborne by the hopes of heaven.

V. 29—31.] Theſe verſes contain another argument before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 Think not that I am come to ſend peace on earth: I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword.

35 For I am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law.

36 And a man's foes *ſhall be* they of his own houſhold.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth ſon or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

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againſt the fear of man. The apoſtles might indeed expect, that their enemies would at laſt prevail to kill their bodies; but this could not poſſibly be effected, without the permiſſion of their Almighty Father: his univerſal providence ſo watches over his creatures; that the ſparrows, that are of ſo little value, that two of them are ſold for a farthing, cannot fall to the ground, and die, either by a natural, or violent death, except by his immediate interpoſition. Even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered, and regiſtered: every thing is deemed important, that relates to the beloved children of God; and eſpecially to thoſe, that are employed to ſpread his goſpel. In every way therefore the apoſtles were unſpeakably more valuable than many ſparrows; and it could not be ſuppoſed, that their Father would permit their enemies to do them any real harm; and they need not fear, for they could not touch them, except the Lord ſaw it to be for their good. (*Luke*, c. xii. v. 6, 7. c. xxi. v. 18.)

V. 32, 33.] For the further encouragement of the apoſtles, and others, that would be expoſed to perſecution for Chriſt's ſake, he declared, that every one, who ſhould boldly acknowledge his relation to him, and profeſs his truth in the face of danger, and oppoſition, without turning aſide from his obedience to him, out of fear or ſhame, ſhould be abundantly recompenſed; for he will confeſs, and own him as a diſciple, a friend, a brother, in the preſence of his Father; eſpecially in the day of judgment, and final ſeparation betwixt his people, and his enemies. But at the ſame time, whoſoever ſhall be induced by carnal motives, to deny Chriſt, or renounce his ſervice, will be denied by him, before his Father, and left to periſh with his enemies; notwithſtanding his former profeſſion, gifts, or ſtation in the church. Every denial of Chriſt cannot be here intended: for Peter denied him, yet repented, and was pardoned. That only can be meant, which is perſiſted in: in like manner every confeſſion of Chriſt cannot be entitled to the bleſſed recompence here promiſed; but that only, which is the genuine, and the conſtant language of faith, and love. (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 38. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 26. c. xii. v. 8, 9. *Rom:* c. x. v. 9, 10.)

V. 34—36.] The tendency of the goſpel, without doubt is to make peace with God, with our brethren, and with all men; and if all were conſiſtent chriſtians, peace muſt be univerſal. But as the world lieth in wickedneſs, and under the wicked one; and as chriſtians muſt profeſs the truths of their Maſter in oppoſition to all error, and obey his commands, in oppoſition to all the maxims, cuſtoms, faſhions, and vices of the world; as the end of Chriſt's coming was to ſet up an heavenly kingdom in the midſt of ſatan's empire, in direct oppoſition to it, built upon it's ruins, and conſiſting of his ſubjects, reſcued from his oppreſſion; ſo this muſt produce conteſts in all places, where the end is anſwered. Where no true religion is found, men may avoid theological diſputes, whatever elſe they quarrel about: for they are eſſentially all of one party, and their notions, and obſervances admit of what ſome call an *intercommunity:* but where the ſtandard of the croſs is erected, and ſinners liſt under the Redeemer's banner, they are no longer of the world, but of another kingdom, whoſe laws, maxims, motives, and intereſts are diametrically oppoſite to thoſe of the god, and prince of this world. This muſt needs give offence to ſatan, and his ſervants; and the moſt inoffenſive diſciples, and miniſters of Chriſt, muſt be reproached, caluminated, oppoſed, and perſecuted, in ſome manner, and meaſure: and when the enemy can prevail to excite the princes of this world to oppoſe the goſpel, the ſword of religious wars, of maſſacres, and of perſecution will be ſent forth. Thus the wolves will devour the inoffenſive ſheep, and then throw the blame on them as the authors of the quarrel. When men, *called chriſtians*, have perſecuted others; it aroſe from their not being *real chriſtians*, or from their not underſtanding their religion: for patient, and meek endurance of perſecution, and courageous profeſſion and obedience in the midſt of it, are the characteriſtics of true chriſtianity. However in the preſent ſtate of human nature, it muſt be expected, and our Lord foretold, that the goſpel would give occaſion to furious, and bloody conteſts, contrary to its genuine tendency; ſo that even families would be divided into parties, and men would treat their neareſt relatives as their worſt enemies: and this hath in fact been the caſe, in every nation, city, town, or village, where the true goſpel of Chriſt has been ſucceſsfully preached. (*Micah*, c. vii. v. 6. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 51—53.)

V. 37—39.] When matters are come to this extremity, that a man muſt loſe the comfort, and favour, and incur the enmity of his neareſt relations, or elſe renounce, or diſobey Chriſt, to pacify and pleaſe them; he that is found to love father, or mother, ſon, or daughter, more than Chriſt, will in every ſenſe be deemed unworthy of, and unfit, for the privileges of his kingdom. Nay, he that refuſes to carry his croſs, (as malefactors uſed to do, 39 He that findeth his life ſhall loſe it: and he that loſeth his life for my ſake ſhall find it.

40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that ſent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet ſhall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man ſhall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, He ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.

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when they were led away to be crucified,) and to ſuffer death, rather than renounce Chriſt, and the goſpel, will be judged unworthy to be called a diſciple of ſuch a Maſter; ſeeing he would not follow his example of patient ſuffering for the cauſe of God, and truth. He therefore, that ſaveth his life from imminent peril, by ſuch a conduct; whilſt he deems himſelf a gainer by finding the life of his body, will loſe all the true comfort, and uſefulneſs even of that life, and will loſe the life of his precious ſoul: but he that loſes his temporal life for Chriſt's ſake, will find it amply made up to him by everlaſting life in heaven. (c. xvi. v. 24—26. *Mark*, c. viii. v. 34—37. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 23—25.)

V. 40—42. Chriſt here concludes his moſt ſolemn, and intereſting addreſs, by aſſuring the apoſtles, that he ſhould conſider himſelf immediately concerned in the reception, which they met with: inſomuch that they who ſhould entertain them, out of love to their meſſage, and a diſpoſition to obey it, would be recompenced in the ſame manner, as if they had welcomed him to their houſes, and to their hearts: and they, who thus received him as their Saviour, in fact received the Father himſelf to be their God, and Portion. Indeed, at any time, he that ſhould entertain a prophet, or a holy meſſenger of God, as ſuch, and for the ſake of him that ſent him, would be recompenſed, in anſwer to the benedictions and prayers of the prophet, with a reward fit to be conferred even upon the prophet himſelf: and in like manner, he that ſhould thus receive a righteous man, a true diſciple of Chriſt, out of love to his character, and his maſter, would receive a reward meet to be beſtowed on a righteous man. Yea, if any man ſhould give to one of the leaſt of Chriſt's diſciples, even to the moſt obſcure, deſpiſed, and lowly perſon amongſt them, a cup of water to drink, becauſe he was regarded as a diſciple; and having no other means in his power, whereby to teſtify his love: our Lord ſolemnly declared, that even this inconſiderable ſervice ſhould by no means paſs unnoticed, or without a gracious recompence. (c. xxv. v. 34—40. *Mark*, c. ix. v. 41. *Luke*, c. x. v. 1—16. *John*, c. xiii. v. 20.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord never bids us pray for any thing, except as he is ready to beſtow it in anſwer to our prayers. From his fulneſs miniſters in every age receive their more ordinary qualifications, as well as the apoſtles their miraculous powers: he is our Head of authority and influence, the fountain of honour, wiſdom, power, and holineſs; and all true miniſters have their commiſſion, and inſtruction from Him, by whatever means they obtain their outward deſignation to their office. Though they cannot miraculouſly cure men's bodies; yet, under Chriſt, and *by His power*, they are healers of their ſouls, and deliverers from the bondage and poſſeſſion of the devil. Whatever a vain world may think, theſe names of Chriſt's apoſtles are far more juſtly honourable, than thoſe of the moſt powerful monarchs, the moſt illuſtrious conquerors, or the moſt celebrated philoſophers, which are renowned in the records of mankind. Yet even amongſt them, one traitor was found, whoſe infamy is as indelible, as the reputation of the others is durable: otherwiſe it would in no wiſe have deducted from their true honour, that ſome of them had been fiſhermen, and that one had even been a publican; that they were all ſinners, ſaved by grace alone, loving their Saviour, and longing above all things to recommend him to their fellow ſinners on every ſide. This is the grand peculiarity of that miniſter, who is indeed moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take the office upon him: but many have the outward appointment, who are ſtrangers and enemies to this inward determination, and deſire; and they therefore ſeek the praiſe of men, or worldly preferment, or a life of eaſe, ſtudy, diſſipation, or ſenſuality, according to the predominant propenſity of their carnal hearts; and deſpiſe thoſe, who ſeek only the honour of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of ſouls. They, whom Chriſt ſends, muſt receive their inſtructions from him, and adhere to them, without endeavouring to pleaſe men. But at preſent his providence muſt direct us where we are to exerciſe our miniſtry; for every reſtriction is now taken off, and we are authorized to preach the goſpel to every creature. There are loſt ſheep in every land, as well as of the houſe of Iſrael; and we muſt ſeek them out, wherever they are ſcattered abroad in this wicked world, that they may be brought home to the Shepherd, and Biſhop of our ſouls. We muſt therefore ſtill preach repentance towards God, as well as faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for the kingdom of God is not ſet up, nor ever can be, in a proud, carnal, and impenitent heart.

In proclaiming the goſpel of free grace, for the healing, and ſaving of men's ſouls, we muſt above all things avoid all appearance of a mercenary diſpoſition. Many high pretenders, who profeſs to do great things in various ways, with ſome ambiguous reference to the power of Chriſt, and faith in his name, may be ſufficiently detected by every cautious enquirer, from this ſingle mark; "they make their pretenſions a very lucrative trade, and turn what they would have believed to be the gift of God, into ready money." But of all employments, by which men grow rich, live in ſplendour, or luxury, or aggrandize their families, none is more infamous than that of a hireling miniſter: and it is peculiarly honourable, when they, who have other means of

CHAP. XI.

Contains, Jeſus 1ſt. Continuing to preach, after the apoſtles were ſent forth, 1. 2d. Anſwering John Baptiſt's meſſengers, and ſhewing them the evidences of his being the Meſſiah, 2---6. 3d. Diſcourſing with the multitudes concerning John, as the Elias that was to come, and concerning the kingdom of heaven; and ſhewing them the perverſeneſs, and abſurdity of their conduct, 7---19. 4th. Denouncing woes on thoſe places, which had not profited by his miniſtry, and miracles, 20--24. 5th. Adoring the divine ſovereignty of the Father, in the diſcoveries of his truth; declaring his own perſonal, and mediatorial power, and majeſty; inviting the labouring, &c, to come to him, and recommending to them his eaſy yoke, &c. 25---30.

decent ſubſiſtence, preach the goſpel to the poor, as freely as they have received it. Yet they, who are not in circumſtances to do this, may very lawfully, and honourably receive a maintenance for their ſervices; for the labourer is worthy of his meat: and if they be ſent to ſuch places, where they have but little proſpect of ſupport; they ſhould go on in their work with ſimplicity, and diligence, caſting all their care upon the Lord. He will no doubt provide what is really needful; and they will generally ſee his hand in the way, by which they are ſupplied, and taſte his love in their temporal proviſion, even more than they do, who have greater abundance, nor need they ſcruple to receive, what is thus conferred, as it will not deduct from the independance, and true dignity of their miniſterial character.

The ſervant of Chriſt is the ambaſſador of peace, in all places, to which he is ſent, and his commiſſion reaches to the vileſt of ſinners: yet it behoves him to find out, and aſſociate with the moſt pious, and conſcientious perſons, in every place. And, though a proud ſelf-righteous morality or religion, indiſpoſe men to receive the goſpel; yet the fear of God poſſeſſing the heart is a real preparation for the embracing of it. Miniſters ſhould aſpire to a ſteadineſs, and conſiſtency in their conduct, to an evident indifference about outward accommodation, and to moderation in all things. Their demeanour ſhould be expreſſive of benevolence; and their friendly language, fervent prayers, and pious diſcourſe ſhould be ſubſtituted in the ſtead of thoſe hollow compliments, and fulſome flatteries, by which ungodly men hide the ſelfiſhneſs of their hearts: and they ſhould propoſe the goſpel ſalvation to all, that hear them. Nor will any of their labours and prayers be loſt, even when ineffectual as to thoſe, on whom they were beſtowed; for they will return in bleſſings upon themſelves. But their good will muſt by no means degenerate into timidity: the whole counſel of God muſt be declared; and they, who will not attend to the gracious meſſage, muſt be ſhewn in the moſt deciſive manner, by words, and deeds, that their conduct is abhorred, and their ſtate conſidered to be moſt dangerous, and deplorable. This will generally be done to better effect, by ſeparating from, than by continuing to aſſociate with, them; and by ſhewing a determination to have no fellowſhip with them, in their periſhing ſinful pleaſures, and purſuits. The goſpel indeed is not now confirmed with miracles wrought by the preachers of it: but it is ſo authenticated by external, and internal evidence, and, when faithfully declared, it ſo manifeſts it's divine authority to every man's conſcience; that all who reject it, hate the light, becauſe their deeds are evil. If then the behaviour of thoſe enemies of the truth be outwardly free from great enormities; yet their doom will be more dreadful in a future ſtate, than even that of the abominable inhabitants of Sodom: as their conduct will then be proved to have proceeded from a more determined rebellion, and enmity againſt God, through pride of heart, and love of ſin. This ſhould be ſeriouſly laid to heart by all, that hear the goſpel, leſt their privileges ſhould only ſerve to increaſe their future condemnation, and miſery. (c. xi. v. 20—24.)

The ſervants of Chriſt ſhould alſo advert to their character, and ſituation, and count their coſt: they are ſent forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves; let them then reremember to be harmleſs, and gentle as lambs, and doves, not reſiſting evil, nor retorting the reproaches, and injuries they meet with; let them ſtudy to temper their zeal, and boldneſs with prudence, and diſcretion, and ſo to act, that their enemies may find no plauſible pretext for their malignity. But their wiſdom muſt come from above, and be ſought by earneſt prayer; (*James*, c. i. v. 5. c. iii. v. 13—18;) or it will degenerate into a time-ſerving caution, and prevent their faithfulneſs, and uſefulneſs. Yet could they perfectly unite the wiſdom of the ſerpent, and the harmleſſneſs of the dove, they could not eſcape the hatred, and contempt of men. They, that decidedly take the Lord's part againſt an ungodly world, will be oppoſed, reviled, enſnared, and evil intreated by mankind in general. The moſt excellent ſervants of Chriſt, in all ages hitherto, have been apprehended, impriſoned, ſcourged, and put to death, as malefactors; and they have been brought before kings, and rulers for no other crime, than bearing the name, and preaching the goſpel of Chriſt. In this way the Lord often brings his truths to the hearing of thoſe, who would otherwiſe have continued ſtrangers to them: yet alas, this teſtimony commonly turns *againſt* them. In our ordinary circumſtances, we muſt not neglect ſtudy, or preparation for the work of the miniſtry: yet ſhould the upright ſervant of Chriſt be ſuddenly called to declare his meſſage, or bear teſtimony to the truth, before the princes of the earth; he need not be anxious how, or what he ſhould ſpeak, but confide aſſuredly on Him, who hath promiſed to give his people a mouth, and wiſdom, which all their enemies ſhall not be able to gainſay, or reſiſt.

But how dreadful muſt be the enmity of the human heart againſt God, when the bleſſed goſpel of grace, and peace becomes ſo conſtantly the occaſion of the moſt rancorous and inveterate contentions, diſſolving the bonds of union betwixt near relations, and diſpoſing them to murder each other! And when they, who are the moſt excellent, and kind of the human race, AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had made an end of commanding his twelve diſciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 Now when John had heard in the priſon the works of Chriſt, he ſent two of his diſciples,

3 And ſaid unto him, Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?

4 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Go and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee:

5 The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the goſpel preached to them.

6 And bleſſed is *he*, whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.

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moſt deſerving to be univerſally revered, and beloved, are for that very reaſon the objects of univerſal contempt, and deteſtation! Yet this is found to be the caſe, and to this day a believer's foes are often thoſe of his own houſhold. But let us remember, that we are of the ſame evil nature; and if we now love the truth, holineſs, cauſe, and people of Chriſt, the praiſe is due to him alone, who hath made us to differ. This ſhould teach us patiently and humbly to bear our croſs, and to pity, and pray for our deluded adverſaries. The promiſes of preſerving grace ſhould alſo encourage us to perſeverance, in the midſt of temptations, and hardſhips; keeping ever in view the glorious recompence, that is promiſed to them only, that continue to the end. Opportunities of doing good may be expected in every place: we are not therefore required to ſtay amongſt outrageous perſecutors; but nothing muſt cauſe us to neglect our work, or conceal our relation, and obligations to Chriſt. If then we be ready to faint or murmur, on account of the difficulties, that we meet with, we ſhould look to our Lord, and Maſter: for ſurely it ought to be enough for us redeemed ſinners, to experience the ſame treatment from the world, as the divine Saviour did! And yet we none of us are reviled, inſulted, or made to ſuffer as he was. Let us then pray for deliverance from the fear of man: and if we are falſely accuſed; let us wait for the Lord's coming, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſel of all hearts, and then ſhall every faithful ſervant have praiſe of God. Let us boldly profeſs, and plainly declare his truth, without regard to conſequences, for which we are not anſwerable. And even if we ſhould any of us be called to ſeal our teſtimony with our blood; we ſhould fear apoſtacy far more, than the moſt agonizing tortures: for man can only kill the body, and cannot hurt the ſoul; but the Lord is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell, and if any man draw back, he will have no pleaſure in him. Moreover he is able to ſupport, and comfort us under the ſharpeſt ſufferings, and to protect us in the extremeſt perils; and without Him, the believer's Father, and Friend, who hath loved him with an everlaſting love, the moſt trivial event cannot take place. Let us then boldly confeſs Chriſt, and ſimply obey him before men; aſſured that he will own us poor ſinners as his brethren, before his Father's throne. But woe be to them, that are aſhamed of Him, and his words amongſt their fellow creatures, or deny Him before his enemies: for Chriſt will deny them, at that ſolemn ſeaſon, when eternal happineſs, or miſery will be awarded by his omnipotent word. And can father or mother, ſon or daughter do us that ſervice at that awful period, which He can? Have they done ſo much to deſerve our love? Or are they ſo worthy of it? Surely our own hearts will *then* declare us unworthy of Him, if we *now* prefer any earthly object to him! We ought to be willing even to bear our croſs, and be crucified for him as He was for our ſins: how then can we expect to be counted worthy of his friendſhip, if we refuſe to bear our leſſer tribulations for his ſake? And doubtleſs he is able to compenſate all our loſſes for his cauſe; inſomuch that if we loſe our lives by cleaving to him, we ſhall never periſh, but have eternal life, and felicity as his moſt gracious recompence. Let us then abide in him, and ſhew our love to him, by kindneſs to his people, and miniſters, welcoming their meſſage, and eſteeming them very highly in love for their works ſake; aſſured that nothing, which we do from ſuch principles, to the leaſt of his diſciples ſhall fail of a proportionable, and moſt liberal reward. (*Heb:* c. vi. v. 10.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1. *And*, &c.] This verſe ſhould have been annexed to the cloſe of the preceding chapter, as it relates to the ſame ſubject; for the events afterwards recorded ſeem to have happen'd at a different time. When the apoſtles were gone forth, our Lord did not remit his labour, but continued to go from place to place, to inſtruct the people.

V. 2—6.] (*Luke*, c. vii. v. 19—23.) John had lain a conſiderable time in priſon: and ſome think that his faith in Jeſus as the Meſſiah was ſomething ſtaggered, ſeeing he took no notice of him, and uſed no means to deliver him, and indeed did not ſo much as openly avow himſelf to be the Meſſiah. But this is not likely: yet he might think his confinement tedious; and deſire to bear further teſtimony to Chriſt, and even to receive ſome token of favour from him. However it is evident that John's diſciples were not in general ſo fully ſatisfied concerning Jeſus: they were jealous for their maſter's honours; (*John*, c. iii. v. 26—36;) they did not clearly apprehend the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom; they objected to the unreſerved, and ſocial manner, in which Chriſt, and his diſciples lived; and they had many difficulties about acknowledging him. John ſeems therefore to have intended to procure them ſome deciſive teſtimony from Chriſt himſelf, which might terminate their heſitation: hearing the report of his miracles, he took occaſion to ſend two of his diſciples to him, for the benefit of the whole company; and he bid them en-

7 And as they departed, Jeſus began to ſay unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind?

8 But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they that wear ſoft *clothing* are in kings houſes.

9 But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? yea, I ſay unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I ſay unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt: notwithſtand-

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quire expreſsly of our Lord, whether he were the Meſſiah, or not? This was the purport of the queſtion: the words tranſlated, "He, that ſhould come," literally mean, "He that cometh," or "is coming," by which the Meſſiah was evidently intended. The queſtion therefore ſhews, that they were decided in the opinion, that the Meſſiah was at hand; and that if Jeſus were not He, another was immediately to be expected: yet almoſt 1800 years have now elapſed, and no other is come, the Jews themſelves being judges; how then can they evade the inference, that Jeſus of Nazareth was indeed their promiſed Meſſiah? To their queſtion our Lord anſwered, rather by actions than by words: for being ſurrounded with numbers, that were come to him, to be healed of their maladies, he wrought many miracles in the preſence of John's meſſengers; and ordered them to report to him the wonders, which they had witneſſed, as well as thoſe of which they had heard; and eſpecially to ſhow him that the poor and lowly had the goſpel preached to them, and received it, whilſt the rich, learned and powerful rejected it. Comparing theſe things with the ancient prophecies of the Meſſiah, their Maſter would readily ſhew them what concluſion they ſhould draw. (*Iſaiah,* c. xxxv. ver. 5, 6. c. lxi. v. 1.) John had wrought no miracle; and this rendered Chriſt's miracles the more deciſive evidence in this enquiry, eſpecially as they were predicted by that very prophet, who alſo foretold John's preparatory miniſtry; and the contempt, oppoſition, and ill uſage, that the Meſſiah would meet with, and his humiliation, ſufferings, and death. All theſe conſiderations tend to ſhew the wiſdom, and propriety of our Lord's anſwer; to which he added, that "bleſſed would that man be, who ſhould not be offended "in him:" the prejudices of the people againſt a poor, afflicted, and ſuffering Meſſiah were ſo ſtrong; and his doctrine, and manner of life were ſo contrary to thoſe of the Scribes, and Phariſees; that moſt of them would be ſtumbled by what they ſaw, and heard, and be induced to reject him; notwithſtanding John's teſtimony, ancient prophecies, his own miracles, and the abundant evidence, that he gave of his divine authority: yet they only would be happy, who ſhould overcome all theſe prejudices, and receive him as the Meſſiah.

V. 7—11.] (*Luke,* c. vii. v. 24—30) John came as Chriſt's fore-runner, and vaſt multitudes attended his miniſtry, and received his baptiſm: yet very few of them gave due attention to the grand object of his preaching, by truſting in Chriſt for ſalvation. (*John,* c. i. v. 29.) His teſtimony was of vaſt importance in arguing with thoſe, who regarded him as a prophet: Chriſt therefore enquired of the multitude, what had induced them to go forth into the wilderneſs? They did not go merely to ſee the reeds, and ruſhes ſhaken by the wind; or to hear a man preach, who was as eaſily ſhaken as they, by every guſt of rumour, or prejudice, or every change of outward circumſtances. John was a man of a very different ſpirit: he had acknowledged Jeſus as the Meſſiah, and he ſtill perſiſted in his teſtimony; why then did they not regard him? They ſeemed indeed to have gone forth, to behold ſome entertaining ſight, as men throng to gaze on a royal proceſſion: but ſurely they did not expect to ſee in the deſert, a man clothed in ſoft, or delicate, and ſumptuous raiment! ſuch perſons are rather to be found in king's palaces; and they knew John to be a plain rough man, meanly clad, and mortified to all ſuch vanities. This therefore could not be their object. What then did they go to ſee? They would be ready to anſwer, that they went out to ſee, and hear a prophet ſent from God to inſtruct, and reform them; and ſo far they were in the right; for John was a prophet, and more than a prophet, being the very perſon of whom Malachi had propheſied, (c. iii. v. 1.) In the paſſage referred to, the Lord, ſpeaking *of* the coming of Chriſt, ſays, "*my* face," and "before *me*:" but it is here quoted, as the language of the Father *to* the Son, and he therefore ſays, "before *thy* "face," and, "*thy* way before *thee*:" ſo that to prepare the way of Chriſt, was to prepare the way of the Lord, as He and the Father are One. Our Lord added, that of all that had been born of women, there had not ariſen a greater, and more excellent perſon, than John Baptiſt; (that is of all mere men;) not one more holy, zealous, faithful, and humble; not one, that was employed in a more high, and honourable ſervice; not one that had been favoured with clearer views of evangelical truth; not one who had been thus diſtinguiſhed by being himſelf the ſubject of prophecy. And yet the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven was greater than He. The leaſt of the apoſtles, who were called to eſtabliſh the Meſſiah's kingdom, would be further enlightened in the knowledge of his perſon, obedience, atonement, and mediation, and be employed in a more diſtinguiſhed ſervice, than John had been. If we extend the paſſage to all faithful miniſters of the goſpel, or to all true believers, as many do, and as the words ſeem to imply; it can only relate to the ſuperior excellency of the new Teſtament diſpenſation, and the more diſtinct views of the nature, and glory of the goſpel, with which we are favoured: for in reſpect of perſonal excellence, and uſefulneſs, few believers, or miniſters have been found greater than John.

ing, he that is leaſt in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 And from the days of John the Baptiſt until now, the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For all the prophets and the law propheſied until John.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias which was for to come.

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

16 But whereunto ſhall I liken this generation? It is like unto children ſitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they ſay, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners: but wiſdom is juſtified of her children.

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not:

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethſaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes.

22 But I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down to

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V. 12—15.] (*Luke*, c. xvi. v. 16, 17.) With the miniſtry of John, the New Teſtament diſpenſation began to be gradually introduced, and the kingdom of heaven to be preached: and whilſt the careleſs, the formal, the moral, and the learned diſregarded it; perſons of the vileſt characters, (who might previouſly have rather been expected violently to plunder men's houſes,) with great earneſtneſs ſought admiſſion into the Meſſiah's kingdom: ſo that it ſeemed to ſuffer violence, and the violent ſeized it by force, and got almoſt an excluſive poſſeſſion of its privileges. (c. xxi. v. 23—32.) For all the prophets, and Moſes in the law, both by types, and expreſs predictions, foretold the coming of the Meſſiah as a future event; but John declared Him to be at hand, and even pointed him out as already come. And if the people would receive, and believe this open declaration, John was indeed the very perſon, who had been predicted under the name of Elijah, that was to prepare the way for the Meſſiah, (*Mal.* c. iv. ver. 3. *Luke*, c. i. v. 17:) and as this information highly concerned them all, it behoved them to give extraordinary attention to it; and every one, who was capable of hearing, was bound to liſten to it, as a truth immediately connected with his duty, and happineſs. (c. xvii. v. 10—13.)

V. 16—19.] (*Luke*, c. vii. v. 31—35.) Our Lord next expoſed the perverſeneſs, and folly of the Jewiſh nation by an apt ſimilitude, which he ſo introduced, as to imply, that ſcarce any thing could properly illuſtrate the ſubject. But they moſt reſembled ſullen children, who, being out of temper without reaſon, quarrel with all the attempts of their fellows to pleaſe them, or induce them to join in thoſe diverſions, for which they uſed to meet in the market places. Their companions might aim to engage them, by piping ſome chearful tune; but they peeviſhly refuſed to dance to it: and if they ſhould repreſent a more doleful ſcene, and imitate the mournful ſtrains, which were uſed at the houſes of the dead, they would refuſe to lament. Such a capricious, and ſullen diſpoſition is often obſervable in children, who for the time are actuated by a ſpirit of contradiction, and are determined to be diſpleaſed with every thing: yet in a matter of infinite importance, the people of that generation copied it. The Lord employed different means to bring them to repentance, and to prepare them for the bleſſings of the goſpel; but they oppoſed, and objected to them all. John Baptiſt came to them, in a very abſtemious, and auſtere manner, as a mortified and recluſe man, who would not come to their tables, or join in any of their feaſts; and they ſaid, that he was melancholy, lunatic, and poſſeſſed with a devil, and therefore ſhunned ſociety: thus they excuſed their neglect of his counſel. The Son of Man, (the Meſſiah, the moſt honourable of the ſons of men, whoſe loweſt title this was, in his ſtate of humiliation, being alſo the Son of God,) came in a more free, and ſocial manner; he ate, and drank ſuch things as were ſet before him, without an affected, or oſtentatious auſterity; and he partook of their entertainments, as circumſtances required: yet inſtead of being better pleaſed by his condeſcending, courteous, and ſocial demeanour; with a mixture of malevolence, and abſurdity, they called him a glutton, and a wine-bibber: and becauſe he went among publicans, and other notorious ſinners, in order to reform them, they accuſed him of loving their characters, and company. But the divine wiſdom, diſplayed in theſe appointments, and in all others, would be perceived, approved, and adored by all the children of wiſdom; that is by all, who are born, and taught of God, and thus made wiſe unto eternal ſalvation.

V. 20—24.] Our Lord, having expoſed the perverſeneſs of the Jews in general, who refuſed to profit either by John's teſtimony, or his own conduct and miniſtry, proceeded next to upbraid in particular ſome, of thoſe cities, in which he had wrought moſt of his miracles; becauſe their inhabitants continued ſtill impenitent, and unbelieving. After having denounced a woe hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I ſay unto you, That it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes.

26 Even ſo, Father: for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, ſave the Son, and *he* to whomſoever the Son will reveal *him*.

28 Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.

30 For my yoke *is* eaſy, and my burden is light.

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on Chorazin, and Bethſaida, two cities in Galilee, to which he had frequently reſorted; he declared, that if ſuch miracles, as they had witneſſed, had been wrought in Tyre and Zidon, thoſe wealthy, luxurious, commercial cities, whoſe deſtruction the prophets had repeatedly denounced, (*Ezek*: c xxvi. xxvii, xxviii;) they would long before have ſhewn the moſt expreſſive ſigns of deep repentance and humiliation. We are not competent to ſolve various difficulties, that may here be ſtarted, or fully to underſtand the whole of this intricate ſubject: it ſuffices, that Chriſt knew, that the hearts of the impenitent Jews, of whom he ſpake, were more hardened in rebellion, and enmity, and leſs ſuſceptible of ſuitable impreſſions from his doctrine, and miracles, than thoſe of the inhabitants of Tyre, and Zidon would have been; and therefore their final condemnation would be proportionably more intolerable. And as to Capernaum, which was a proſperous city, where he had chiefly reſided after his entrance upon his public work; it had been, as it were, exalted to heaven by extraordinary privileges, of which the inhabitants probably were proud; but they would only tend to ſink them the deeper into hell; for if the mighty works, there performed, had been wrought in Sodom, that city might have ſtood in its proſperity even to that day; and therefore the people of Capernaum, muſt expect a heavier doom, at the day of judgment, than even the polluted Sodomites.

V. 25—27.] The ſovereignty of God, in vouchſafing more abundant means of inſtruction to one city, or country, than to another, which in ſome reſpects was better diſpoſed to attend to them, might excite objections in the minds of the hearers; to which perhaps Jeſus anſwered, when he took the opportunity of adoring, and exulting in, the divine conduct, in another ſimilar concern. He addreſſed himſelf to the Father, as the Proprietor, and Governor of the univerſe, who has an unreſtricted right to do whatſoever pleaſeth him in heaven, and earth: and he thanked him, or profeſſed before him his entire acquieſcence in his wiſdom, equity, and goodneſs, which were worthy of all adoration, and praiſe; in that he was pleaſed to conceal the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven from learned ſcribes, and the wiſe men of the nation, and at the ſame time to reveal them to the poor, and unlearned; to men of weak capacities, and mean education; to thoſe, who were deſpiſed for their ignorance, and inexperience, as mere infants, but who were alſo ſimple, humble, and teachable as children. This he had done, becauſe it ſeemed good in his ſight, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf, and which he was not pleaſed to diſcloſe to captious objectors. The Lord did not uſe any poſitive influence to hide the proofs of Chriſt's miſſion from the wiſe and prudent of the Jews: they had the ſcriptures in their hands, they ſaw or heard of, his miracles, and heard or might have heard his doctrine: but they were blinded by their pride, and carnal prejudices; and he was pleaſed to give them up to be judicially blinded, among other reaſons perhaps, in order that the ſucceſs of the goſpel might evidently appear to be the effect of divine power, and not of human wiſdom, and ſagacity. But there was a poſitive influence employed, in making known the truth to the minds of the poor apoſtles, and diſciples. To this our Lord ſubjoined a very remarkable declaration of his own mediatorial, and perſonal dignity. The Father had delivered all things into his hands, even all power, authority, and judgment over all creatures: none knew him, as the Son of God, but the eternal Father; even as none knew the Father, but the Son: a perfect mutual knowledge of each other's ſubſiſtence, perfections, and deſigns was peculiar to themſelves; nor could any man truly know the Father at all, except as the Son ſhould reveal his nature, and glory to him; for this was entirely committed to him as Mediator, in reſpect of the ſinful race of men. This repreſents the Son as co-equal with, and incomprehenſible as, the Father; and it demonſtrates, that they, who reject the teaching of the Lord Jeſus, as the Son of God, and do not apply to him to reveal the Father to them, cannot know any thing aright of that One true, and living God, whom they profeſs to worſhip.

V. 28—30.] The divine Saviour, having thus declared his own power and authority, invited all thoſe, that laboured, and were heavy laden to come to him. In other places the invitations are made in general to all men; but none *will* come, till they do labour, and are heavy laden. Yet in ſome ſenſes this includes all men: for worldly men labour like ſlaves, and burden themſelves with fruitleſs cares, and diſquietudes, about increaſing their wealth, or acquiring honour or pre-emi

CHAP. XII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Vindicating his diſciples from the charge of breaking the ſabbath, by the example of David, and of the prieſts; by the preference of mercy to ſacrifice; and by his own preſence, and authority, 1---8. *2d. Healing a man's withered hand, and ſhewing it to be lawful to do good on the ſabbath day,* 9---13. *3d. Withdrawing himſelf from the malice of the Phariſees; continuing to work miracles; and fulfilling the prophecy of Iſaiah concerning him,* 14---21. *4th. Caſting out a devil from a dumb, and blind man; anſwering the charge of the Phariſees,*

nence: the diſſipated and ſenſual, labour as hard, and are as heavy laden in purſuing their pleaſures, and diverſions: the ſlave of ſatan, and his own luſts, and paſſions is the verieſt drudge on earth; and if he attempt by his own ſtrength to break looſe, he labours in vain: the ſuperſtitious, labour in the very fire, and are heavy laden with ſelf-impoſed burdens: the Jewiſh ceremonial, cauſed the people much labour, and laid heavy burdens on them, compared with the goſpel diſpenſation: they, who endeavour to eſtabliſh their own legal righteouſneſs, are equally burdened, and wearied in vain: the convinced, trembling, broken-hearted ſinner labours under great diſcouragement, and is heavy laden with guilt, and terror: the tempted, and afflicted believer has his labours, and burdens alſo. In ſhort every heart knows its own bitterneſs; but Chriſt invites all, who in any reſpect labour, and are heavy laden, to come to him, for reſt to their ſouls. He alone gives this invitation: prophets, apoſtles, and miniſters direct men to go to him: the Father ſpeaking from heaven, and the Spirit ſpeaking in the heart, concur in the ſame inſtruction. Men come to him, when, feeling their own guilt, miſery, and inability to help themſelves; and believing his love, and power to help them; they apply to him in fervent prayer, and rely and wait on him for the deſired mercy. All, who thus come to him, will receive *reſt*, as his gift: they will be releaſed from bondage, and condemnation, relieved from their anxious cares, fears, and ſuperſtitions; and obtain peace, ſatisfaction, and comfort in their hearts, and conſciences. But in coming to him, they muſt take his yoke upon them; they muſt ſubmit to his authority, and obey him, as their Lord and Maſter. They muſt alſo learn of him, as their Teacher, and Counſellor, all things relating to their acceptance, comfort, and obedience. To encourage them in this, He aſſures them, that he is meek, and lowly in heart: ſome explain this of the leſſon, that he teaches; even imitation of his meekneſs, and lowlineſs: and doubtleſs this is neceſſary, and tends to inward reſt and peace; for the ſtorms that rend the cedars on the lofty mountains, leave the lilies unmoleſted in the lowly valleys. But it is rather to be underſtood of our Lord's character, as a Teacher and Ruler: He does not govern with rigour, or treat his ſcholars with harſhneſs; but he deals gently with them, bears with their ignorance, and incapacity, condeſcends to their weakneſs, and infirmity, rejects no willing ſcholar for his dulneſs, and accepts the willing ſervant, notwithſtanding all his blunders, and incidental faults. In his ſchool, and ſervice therefore men may find reſt to their ſouls, and there only. Nor need they fear his yoke: His commandments indeed are the ſame, for ſubſtance, with the moral law; but that law is holy, juſt, and good, and obedience tends to proportionable felicity; as it is put by the Saviour, as his yoke upon the believer, it is deprived of its condemning power; it is enforced by evangelical motives, encouragements, and promiſes of aſſiſtance, and gracious recompence; it is made eaſy by love, and divine conſolations; and a correſpondent diſpoſition is wrought in the heart, by regenerating grace. Indeed this obedience requires ſelf-denial, and expoſes a man to difficulties in many caſes; but all this is an hundred-fold compenſated even in this world, by inward peace and joy. So that Chriſt's yoke is eaſy, and pleaſant in itſelf; as well as when compared with the yoke of ſatan, of ſin, of ſuperſtition, or of legal ſelf-righteouſneſs, which they muſt bear who reject the yoke of the Redeemer. Indeed the burden of corrections, tribulations, temptations, and perſecutions, to which Chriſt's ſervice may expoſe us; would ſink us, if we were left to ourſelves: yet being counterpoiſed with internal ſupports, it proves light, and is but for a moment, and works out for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory. So that every way Chriſt's yoke is eaſy, and his burden light.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our divine Redeemer was unwearied in his arduous labour of love; and we ſhould not be weary of well doing, for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not. The diſpenſations of providence, in laying aſide, and removing eminent inſtruments, at the very time, when we ſhould ſuppoſe they were peculiarly wanted, often appear very myſterious: but he will not permit any ſervant, in the leaſt to interfere with the glory of his beloved Son: and he will ſhew all men, that though he pleaſe to employ them, he can do his work as well without them. Patience in a priſon, or a ſick room, may as much glorify God, as the moſt active ſervices: but when we cannot do what we would, we ſhould ſtill attempt, as we can, to direct the judgments, and confirm the faith of thoſe, who regard our words; and Chriſt will ſurely, and greatly honour thoſe, who thus humbly ſerve and honour him. Men generally allow that the Saviour is already come, and that they look for no other: yet, alas, how few accept of his ſalvation, and bow to the ſceptre of his grace! Thoſe things, which men ſee, and hear, if compared diligently with the ſcriptures, would direct them to the true religion, and determine in what way ſalvation is to be ſound. Though outward miracles are no longer wrought; yet the effects produced, where the goſpel is faithfully preached to the poor, in opening their eyes, directing their walk, delivering them from their polluting ſins, and from the power of ſatan, and teaching them to lead a ſpiritual, and holy life; abundantly prove that it is the power of God to the ſalvation of thoſe, that believe: and the contempt with which the rich, the proud, the worldly wiſe, and the ſelf-righ-

who aſcribed the miracle to the power of the devil; ſhewing their extreme wickedneſs, and danger, and declaring blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt to be unpardonable, &c, 22---37. 5th. Refuſing their demand of a ſign from heaven; propoſing that of Jonas, as a type of his reſurrection; and ſhewing that the Ninevites, and the queen of Sheba would riſe up in judgment againſt them, 38---42. 6th. Deſcribing their dreadful ſtate by the parable of a relapſed demoniac, 43---45. 7th. Declaring his affection for, and the privileges of his true diſciples, 46---50.

teous regard this doctrine, and theſe effects, forms an additional demonſtration of the truth of the ſcripture, and the divinity of this kind of religion: for is it not written, that the preaching of the croſs is fooliſhneſs to them, that periſh? But men are as apt to be offended with the preachers and profeſſors of the goſpel now, as they were formerly with the lowly eſtate of the Redeemer: all their proud, and carnal prejudices are contradicted by them, and they are glad of any pretext for rejecting what they hate: bleſſed then is he, that ſtumbles not at either the infirmities, or ſins of the profeſſors of the goſpel, nor at its humiliating, and ſpiritual doctrines; but notwithſtanding all, ſubmits to, believes, and obeys it!

Alas, how bad an account can many give, of what they go to ſee, or hear, when they frequent places of worſhip, or even throng to attend on faithful preachers! They ſeem to go, to ſatisfy their curioſity, or to trifle away their time: but inſtead of going to ſee the ſhaking of a reed, or a man clothed in ſoft raiment, they often mean rather to exhibit their own elegant, and faſhionable apparel, and to compare it with that of their neighbours. For ſoft raiment is not at preſent confined to the palaces of kings; but all endeavour to wear it, whether they can or cannot afford it: and far more of it appears in worſhipping aſſemblies, than conſiſts with the ſcripture precepts, with the glory of God, the intereſts of families, the good of the poor, or the proſperity of ſouls. However the Lord will call men to an account for their motives in going to hear the word, as well as for their reaſons for not going: and it behoves them to examine themſelves about theſe matters. We ſhould go, in order to hear the meſſengers of the Lord, who come to prepare the way, that his kingdom may be ſet up in our hearts: and as in ſome things the leaſt of faithful miniſters, who now preach the goſpel, is greater than all, who came before the introduction of that diſpenſation; it behoves us to give the more earneſt heed to the things, which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip. And conſidering our ſuperior light, and information, what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation, and godlineſs! What then will be the light, purity, and felicity, of the world of glory!

In every age the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. The vileſt of tranſgreſſors, who ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, who wreſtle in prayer, and are in earneſt about their ſouls, will out-ſtrip their more moral, and decent neighbours, who are ſupine, dilatory, and luke-warm. They will ſurely ſucceed, who are determined at all adventures to find admiſſion: they will ſurely come ſhort, who poſtpone the concerns of their ſouls to their worldly intereſts, pleaſures, and diverſions; or who ſeek ſalvation in any other way, than by repentance towards God, and faith in his beloved Son. To him, both Moſes, and all the prophets bear witneſs, that whoſoever believeth in Him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins. This truth we muſt atteſt, whether men will receive it or no; and we muſt call on all, who have ears to hear, ſeriouſly to attend to it. But our natural depravity cauſes even ſenſible men to act with moſt childiſh folly, in this concern of the greateſt importance. Their cavils are often at the ſame time moſt futile, and moſt malignant: their diſlike to the meſſage dictates their objections to the meſſengers: ſomething they have to urge againſt every one of them, however excellent, and holy they may be; being determined to be diſpleaſed, they put a bad conſtruction on their beſt actions: their ſelf-denial, and abſtraction from the world ariſe from melancholy, or miſanthropy: their chearfulneſs from levity; their benevolent ſociableneſs from intemperance, or love of good cheer: their endeavours to reform the profligate are aſcribed to a congeniality of diſpoſition, and to a hatred of morality, and goodneſs: their different natural tempers, or methods of doing good are but varied modes of miſchief; and, in ſhort, they will cenſure any thing, or every thing, in order to excuſe themſelves from joining with them, in mourning for ſin, or in ſeeking their happineſs from God. In vain can we hope to eſcape the perverſe, and unreaſonable calumnies of ſuch men, as ſaid that John Baptiſt was a demoniac, and the holy One of God a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend and companion of publicans, and ſinners! Theſe are the children of unbelief, and folly: but wiſdom's children welcome the meſſengers of God, and bleſs him for them, and for their different gifts, and endowments; and they will admire and adore the divine wiſdom even in thoſe things, at which ungodly men cavil to their own ruin. Our bleſſed Lord will never upbraid the trembling penitent with any of his iniquities: but he will ſharply rebuke, and awfully condemn thoſe, who continue impenitent under the means of grace. He knows the different degrees of malignity, which poſſeſs the hearts of unbelievers, and will proportion their final puniſhment accordingly: but it will be far more tolerable for poor pagans in the day of judgment, than for wicked profeſſors of chriſtianity. The Lord exerciſes his abſolute ſovereignty, in ſending the goſpel to whom he pleaſes; and it behoves us to adore his wiſdom, and juſtice, even where we cannot perceive them. Yet he puniſhes none more, than they deſerve; and he never with-holds the knowledge of his truth from thoſe, whom he hath taught to long after it. But it behoves thoſe, who have been exalted even to heaven with outward advantages, to fear leſt they ſhould ſink them deeper into hell, through their abuſe of them: and there can be no doubt, but that multitudes of the inhabitants of this favoured city will periſh with deeper condemna-

AT that time Jeſus went on the ſabbath-day through the corn; and his diſciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Phariſees ſaw *it* they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy diſciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the ſabbath-day!

3 But he ſaid unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

4 How he entered into the houſe of God, and did eat the ſhew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the prieſts?

5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that, on the ſabbath-days the prieſts in the temple profane the ſabbath, and are blameleſs?

6 But I ſay unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the ſabbath-day.

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tion, than thoſe of Tyre, or even than thoſe of Sodom, and Gomorrah.

But whilſt the eternal Son, with all his holy angels, and his redeemed people, adore and praiſe the Father, and Lord of all, for hiding theſe things from the wiſe, and prudent, and revealing them to the unlearned, and even to liſping babes; becauſe it ſo ſeemeth good in his ſight: the hearts of ſinners rage to blaſphemy againſt his holy appointments, and they treat ſuch declarations with the moſt pointed ſcorn, and deteſtation! By ſuch conduct the wiſe and prudent of this world illuſtrate, and demonſtrate the truth, which they oppoſe; they ſhew that nothing but divine teaching can make known divine things, in their nature, and glory: and they evince the propriety of the Lord's leaving them to be blinded by their prejudices; ſeeing their pride and enmity more than equal their ſuperior knowledge, and ſagacity. But all things are given into the hands of our Redeemer: we cannot know either the Father, or the Son except by the teaching of the holy word, and the holy Spirit; and we can know nothing of the one, apart from the other: and as none can know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son ſhall reveal Him; ſo he muſt know the moſt in this matter, who ſits at Chriſt's feet, with the greateſt docility, and ſimplicity, to hear, and believe his words. The Redeemer's mercy, and condeſcenſion equal his majeſty: and he invites the labouring and burdened ſinner to come to him for reſt: why then ſhould any labour for that which is not bread, or ſeek reſt from any other quarter? Let us come to him daily for deliverance from wrath and guilt, from ſin and ſatan, from all our cares, fears, and ſorrows: let us learn of him as our Prophet, rely on him as our Prieſt, bear his yoke as our King, and copy his example of meekneſs, and lowlineſs of heart. And whatever impiety, or infidelity may object; whatever the world, the fleſh, and the devil may ſuggeſt: we ſhall find his yoke eaſy, and his burden light; his ſervice perfect freedom, and reſt to our ſouls; and that in keeping his commandments there is great reward.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—8.] (*Mark*, c. ii. v. 23—28. *Luke*, c. vi. v. 1—5.) This event took place *about the ſame time* with thoſe of the former chapter: the other evangeliſts place it earlier. Jeſus was paſſing through the corn-fields on the ſabbath-day, attended by his diſciples, and the multitude; perhaps in returning from the ſynagogue: and his diſciples became very hungry; having, it is probable, come out without taking any refreſhment, to follow their Lord, and attend on the duties of the day. The corn therefore being ripe, and the law allowing them in this way to take the produce of any man's field, they made no ſcruple of gathering the ears, rubbing them in their hands, and eating. (*Deut.* c. xxiii. v. 24, 25.) This the Phariſees obſerved; and being very exact in minute matters, eſpecially when their own traditions were diſregarded; and being full of enmity againſt Chriſt, they charged the diſciples with violating the law of the ſabbath, and enquired of Him, wherefore he allowed them to do ſo without reproof? They probably underſtood the law to forbid all preparation of food on the ſabbath; or they made this action to be equivalent to reaping and threſhing out the grain: however they objected to the labour of gathering, and rubbing the ears of corn, as a profanation of the ſabbath. Yet it was a caſe of neceſſity, in order to enable them the better to attend to their other duties. Therefore Jeſus undertook their vindication: and firſt he called the attention of the Phariſees to the account given of David's conduct, when he fled from Saul; intimating that they either had never read the ſcriptures, or neglected to make proper inferences from them. They allowed David to be a prophet, and the man after God's own heart: yet in circumſtances of urgent neceſſity, he ſcrupled not to infringe the injunction of the ritual law, by eating of the ſhew-bread, and giving of it to his attendants; when it was ordered to be eat by the prieſts alone. (*Lev.* c. xxiv. v. 5—9. 1 *Sam.* c. xxi. v. 1—6.) He had indeed been blamed, and had condemned himſelf, for other parts of his conduct: yet this was never deemed criminal in him; the neceſſity of the caſe being allowed to be a ſufficient reaſon for diſpenſing with a ceremonial inſtitution. Why then ſhould the diſciples be condemned, even if they had in a trivial matter deviated from the letter of the law, to ſatisfy the cravings of their hunger? (Note, *Exod.* c. xx. v. 8—11.) Our Lord next ſhewed them, that in ſome caſes the exact reſt of the ſabbath muſt be diſpenſed with, or other ritual obſervances muſt be neglected: for the prieſts at the temple performed a great deal of labour on the ſabbath, in preparing the ſacrifices, and tending the fire on the altar; which work, being done by others, or in another place, would certain-

9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their ſynagogue:

10 And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they aſked him, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath days? that they might accuſe him.

11 And he ſaid unto them, What man ſhall there be among you, that ſhall have one ſheep, and if it fall into a pit on the ſabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12 How much then is a man better than a ſheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the ſabbath days.

13 Then ſaith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he ſtretched *it* forth; and it was reſtored whole, like as the other.

14 Then the Phariſees went out, and held a council againſt him, how they might deſtroy him.

15 But when Jeſus knew *it*, he withdrew himſelf from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16 And charged them, that they ſhould not make him known:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying,

18 Behold my ſervant, whom I have choſen: my beloved, in whom my ſoul is well pleaſed: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles.

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ly have been a violation of the law: yet they were allowed to be blameleſs in what they did. And whether they would regard it or not, there was before them One greater than the temple, even the true Temple, in which the fulneſs of God dwelleth bodily, (meaning his human nature:) and therefore in attending on, and obeying Him, the ſtrict reſt of the ſabbath might be diſpenſed with. (*John*, c. ii. v. 19—21. c. v. ver. 16—18. c. vii. v. 21—24.) Our Lord next referred them to a text, that we have before conſidered, (c. ix. v. 13. *Hoſ:* c. vi. v. 6.) Had they underſtood the meaning of God, in requiring mercy rather than ſacrifice, they would not have condemned the guiltleſs: for the relieving of the diſciples hunger, in ſubſerviency to their attendance on him in his labours of love, was an act of mercy, ſufficient to juſtify ſo trivial a deviation from the exact reſt of the ſabbath. At laſt he aſſured them, that the Son of Man was Lord even of the ſabbath: He; the Meſſiah, even in his humiliation, was Lord and Ruler of his church in this, and every other particular. Thus he intimated that as the Son of God he had at firſt inſtituted the ſabbath; that he alſo gave the law from Mount Sinai; and that he had loſt none of his authority by his humiliation, but ſhould make ſuch alterations in the time, and circumſtances of obſerving this ſacred reſt, as it became him, the great Law-giver to make, in reſpect of his own inſtitutions. It cannot be ſuppoſed, that Chriſt would ſo frequently have diſcuſſed this ſubject, and ſhewn what works were lawful on the ſabbath day, without allowing of any other exceptions; if the inſtitution, for the ſubſtance of it, had not been intended to be continued in full force under the chriſtian diſpenſation.

V. 9—13.] (*Mark*, c. iii. v. 1—5. *Luke*, c. vi. v. 6—11.) When Chriſt had ſilenced the Phariſees, he departed: and on another ſabbath he entered into one of their ſynagogues; when a fair opportunity offered of further diſcuſſing the ſubject. For, behold, a man, whoſe right hand was withered, attended at the ſynagogue; and the Phariſees, who were preſent, watching for ſome handle againſt him, demanded of him, whether it were lawful to heal on the ſabbath days? This we find he anſwered by propoſing ſome queſtions to them, of which one only occurs here. Probably their traditions had determined, that healing by medicine was a violation of the ſacred reſt; (and though in caſes of neceſſity this muſt be allowed to be lawful; yet much *unneceſſary* work is often done on the Lord's day, by thoſe, who, from ſecular motives, prefer that to other days, for matters of this kind.) But the Phariſees alſo extended it even to healing by miracle; as if the power of the cure had not ſufficiently proved the lawfulneſs of it! However Jeſus would not be diverted from his purpoſe of mercy by their perverſe objections; nor yet give them that ground of accuſation, for which they ſought: he therefore aſked them, whether any one of them, ſtrict as they profeſſed to be, who ſhould have a ſingle ſheep fall into a pit on the ſabbath, would omit to pull it out, either from regard to the value of his property, or out of compaſſion to the animal? Yet this would indeed be attended with ſome labour, whilſt his healing miracles were performed without any. But how much more valuable is a rational creature poſſeſſed of an immortal ſoul, than a mere animal! And how much more requiſite, according to the law of love, to bring immediate relief to the diſtreſſes of the one, than the other! Wherefore it muſt be allowed to be conſiſtent with the divine law to perform thoſe actions of mercy, and love on the ſabbath day, which are evidently good in themſelves, and ornamental to the profeſſion of religion. Having thus ſilenced them, he ordered the man to ſtretch forth his withered hand; and by the power attending his word, the man was enabled to do it, and found his hand perfectly reſtored to its former ſize, and ſtrength, even as the other. (*Luke*, c. xiii. v. 10—17. c. xiv. v. 1—6.)

V. 14—21.] (*Mark*. c. iii. v. 6—12.) The Phariſees, not being able to anſwer our Lord's reaſoning; and being exaſperated by being put to ſhame, as well as anxious for their authority, and the credit of their traditions, *held a council*, or *took counſel together*, by what means they might deſtroy him, or find ſome plauſible accuſation againſt him, that he might be condemned to death, as a deceiver, or blaſphemer. But Jeſus, aware of their

19 He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the ſtreets.

20 A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

22 Then was brought unto him one poſſeſſed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, inſomuch that the blind and dumb both ſpake and ſaw.

23 And all the people were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this the ſon of David?

24 But when the Phariſees heard *it*, they ſaid, This *fellow* doth not caſt out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

25 And Jeſus knew their thoughts, and ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to deſolation; and every city or houſe divided againſt itſelf ſhall not ſtand:

26 And if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf; how ſhall then his kingdom ſtand?

27 And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your children caſt *them* out? therefore they ſhall be your judges.

28 But if I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 Or elſe how can one enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he firſt bind the ſtrong man? and then he will ſpoil his houſe.

30 He that is not with me is againſt me; and he that gathereth not with me ſcattereth abroad.

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deſign, (as his time was not yet come,) thought proper to retire from that place: yet, being followed with great multitudes of the people, he continued to heal all the ſick, that were brought to him; charging them at the ſame time not to ſpeak of his miracles, nor to let the Phariſees know where he was. (c. ix. v. 30.) This was done, that he might evidently fulfil, in his conduct and character, the prophecy of Iſaiah concerning the Meſſiah, (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. xlii. v. 1—4.) The paſſage hath already been explained: but it may here be added, that the gentle, lowly, compaſſionate, condeſcending, and beneficent nature of Chriſt's miracles, and perſonal miniſtry, devoid of oſtentation, and ſeverity; and his perſeverance in the midſt of oppoſition, without engaging in any contentious diſputation; as well as the general effects and ſucceſs of his goſpel, and his kind, and tender dealing with weak, diſcouraged, and tempted believers in all ages, are therein deſcribed. In the prophet we read "He ſhall bring forth judgment unto "truth; he ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged, till he have "ſet judgment in the earth, and the iſles ſhall wait for "his law" which is here rendered "till he ſend forth "judgment unto victory, and in his name ſhall the "Gentiles truſt." When the cauſe of the goſpel, and that of Chriſt's ſervants againſt his enemies, ſhall be tried, and judgment ſhall "be brought forth unto "truth;" they will alſo be made victorious; and when the Gentiles learn to truſt in his name, they alſo wait for his law; and when all nations ſhall thus truſt in him, judgment will be ſet, or eſtabliſhed in the earth.

V. 22—30.] (c. ix. v. 32—34. *Mark*, c. iii. v. 22—27. *Luke*, c. xi. v. 14—23:) This ſeems to have occurred ſome time after the preceding events: a demoniac was brought to Chriſt, who was both blind, and dumb, through the power, and malice of the evil ſpirit, that poſſeſſed him: when therefore Chriſt had caſt out the ſpirit, the man was able both to ſpeak, and ſee: (*Luke*, c. xiii. v. 16.) At witneſſing this miracle the people were ſo aſtoniſhed, that they openly enquired of each other, whether this were not the Son of David, the promiſed Meſſiah, the King of Iſrael? This ſtill more alarmed the Phariſees, who thought that the people would agree to ſubmit to him as the Meſſiah, which would occaſion their final diſgrace, and diſcomfiture: yet they could not deny the reality of the miracle; and therefore they malignantly renewed their accuſation, that he caſt out devils, by the concurrence of Beelzebub the prince of the devils, with whom he had formed an alliance. The term, which they employed on this occaſion, is very properly rendered, "this fellow," as expreſſive of their contempt, and deteſtation. Beelzebub is the ſame as Baalzebub, the God of Ekron in Philiſtia, (2 *Kings*, c. i. v. 3.) The name ſignifies, the Lord of flies: but the Greek word here uſed is Beelzebul, which ſignifies "the Lord of a dunghill." It does not appear on what account the Jews called the prince of all the fallen angels by this name: Satan is his more common appellation, which evidently means the ſame, as Beelzebub in this place. It ſeems the Phariſees ſpake this to each other, at leaſt it was not in the hearing of Jeſus: but he knew their thoughts, and took occaſion to argue the caſe with them. Probably they grounded their perverſe conſtruction of his miracles on his diſregard to their traditions, and his ſuppoſed violation of the ſabbath; (*John*, c. ix. v. 16. 24:) though they charged him with various other crimes, (c. xi. v. 19:) but he reſted his reaſoning on the evident tendency, and effect of his doctrine, and example, to render men wiſe and holy, to deliver them from the power of ſin and ſatan, and to make them devoted ſervants, and ſpiritual worſhippers of God: inſomuch that as far as his cauſe prevailed ſatan's kingdom muſt be ſubverted. As therefore theſe fallen ſpirits are too politic and ſagacious to aſſiſt in ruining their own cauſe; and as every kingdom, or family, that is divided into parties contending againſt each other, muſt be weakened, deſolated, and ruined:

31 Wherefore I ſay unto you, All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but the blaſphemy *againſt* the *Holy* Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

33 Either make the tree good, and his

ſo it was evident, that if ſatan aided Jeſus in caſting out devils, the infernal kingdom was divided againſt itſelf; and how then could it any longer ſubſiſt? Nothing can be more concluſive, than this argument; to which our Lord ſubjoined another, immediately addreſſed to them: upon the ſuppoſition, that he caſt out devils by Beelzebub, by what power did they think, that their children, or diſciples, caſt them out? It is plain that there were exorciſts, who made it their buſineſs to expel the evil ſpirits from poſſeſſed perſons; (*Acts*, c. xix. v. 13—16:) it ſeems that ſome of them were approved of, and countenanced by the Phariſees: and we are told, that they commonly attempted this, by invoking the name of the God of Abraham. Now theſe exorciſts might be left to determine the cauſe betwixt Jeſus, and theſe Phariſees: if they inſiſted on it, that he caſt out devils by the prince of the devils; they could not prove, that they caſt them out by any other power, when at any time they were ſucceſsful. And if they aſcribed their own exorciſms to the aſſiſtance of God; how could they doubt of His being the ſame, when they were every way ſo greatly ſuperior to their's, and when his life and doctrine were ſo holy? But the inference was alſo undeniable, that if He by the Spirit of God caſt out devils, then no doubt the Kingdom of God was come unto them. He was certainly the promiſed Meſſiah; and if they oppoſed, or rejected him, it would be at their peril. Indeed how could any one enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, whilſt he was upon his guard, and in defiance of him plunder his property? unleſs he firſt overpowered, and bound the ſtrong man, and then he might plunder the houſe as he pleaſed. Thus it was evident, that Jeſus by his divine power was able to ſubdue, and limit the power of ſatan; or he never could reſcue the bodies, and ſouls of men from his oppreſſion, in the manner, that he did. And as he came to deſtroy the works of the devil; ſo the matter would not admit of a neutrality: every one, who ſhould refuſe to join him againſt the cauſe of ſatan, would be adjudged an enemy; and all, that would not concur with him, in collecting ſinners from the devil's kingdom into that of God, whatever pains they might take in any other way, would do worſe than loſe their labour; for all their contrivances, knowledge, and religious obſervances would tend to their own loſs, and that of others, and they would finally loſe their own ſouls.

V. 31, 32.] (*Mark*, c. iii. v. 28—30. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 10.) Scarce any thing in the whole ſcripture hath given more occaſion of diſcouragement to weak chriſtians, than this paſſage. Almoſt every humble, and conſcientious believer, at one time or other, is tempted to think, that he hath committed the unpardonable ſin; whilſt they, who have come the neareſt to it, have ſeldom any fears about it: and the interpretations, that many have given without properly adverting to the context, have tended to increaſe ſuch ſcruples, and difficulties. In general we may be ſure, that they who do indeed repent, and believe the goſpel, have not committed this ſin, or any other of the ſame kind: for repentance and faith are inſeparably connected with forgiveneſs; and they are the ſpecial gift of God, which he would not beſtow on any man, if he were determined never to pardon him. On the other hand, without repentance, and faith, no man can be forgiven, though he have not committed this ſin: ſo that in ſelf-examination this is not a proper ſubject of enquiry. Probably the Lord was pleaſed to leave this matter enveloped in ſome meaſure of obſcurity, in order to deter men from preſumptuouſly venturing near the brink of ſo dreadful a precipice: however it ſeems evident that the preciſe ſin here intended cannot now be committed; though doubtleſs others may, that are equivalent to it: this will be more intelligible, when we have explained the words. Our Lord addreſſed them immediately, as a ſolemn warning, to the proud, envious, and malignant Phariſees: he began by declaring, that all manner of ſin, and blaſphemy ſhould be forgiven *unto men*; perhaps tacitly comparing the happy ſituation of men under a diſpenſation of mercy, with that of apoſtate angels, for whom there is no forgiveneſs: but though this were a general rule, it yet admitted of one exception; for the blaſphemy againſt the Spirit ſhould never be forgiven. Indeed whoſoever ſhould ſpeak any blaſphemous word againſt the Son of Man, the Meſſiah, might be brought to repentance, and pardoned: but whoſoever ſhould thus ſpeak againſt the Holy Spirit, could never be pardoned, either in this world or the next. It does not follow, that any ſin, which is not forgiven here, will hereafter be forgiven; the expreſſion only ſhews that ſome of the Jews entertained notions of this kind, as the papiſts, and other profeſſors of chriſtianity have ſince done. Now the circumſtances, in which this declaration was made, ſhould carefully be adverted to, if we would rightly underſtand it's import. The Phariſees had ſpoken moſt blaſphemous words, againſt Chriſt, and his miracles, which were indeed wrought by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, but not under the immediate diſpenſation of the Spirit. They had however gone as far in impiety as they could do, without finally excluding themſelves from forgiveneſs. Yet their caſe was not abſolutely deſperate: they had ſpoken blaſphemy againſt the Son of Man, and aſcribed his miracles to the power of the devil; but ſtill they might be pardoned, and one further method would be uſed to convince them. In a ſhort time Chriſt would be crucified, riſe from the dead, and aſcend into heaven; when, being exalted to the right hand of the Father, he would ſend forth the Holy Spirit upon his apoſtles, and diſciples, enabling them to perform various wonderful works in his name, in proof fruit good; or elſe make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, ſpeak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treaſure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treaſure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I ſay unto you, That every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.

38 Then certain of the ſcribes and of the Phariſees anſwered, ſaying, Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee.

39 But he anſwered and ſaid unto them, An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign; and there ſhall no ſign be given to it, but the ſign of the prophet Jonas.

of their teſtimony concerning his reſurrection, and aſcenſion. He therefore, who *then* ſhould blaſpheme this laſt atteſtation to Jeſus, as the promiſed Meſſiah, and, from determined enmity to him, and his kingdom, ſhould deliberately aſcribe theſe operations of the Holy Spirit to ſatan; would be given up to final obduracy, and impenitency, and thus never be pardoned, but ſink into final perdition. This is generally agreed to be the obvious meaning of the paſſage by modern expoſitors: and in this ſenſe none could commit this ſin, who did not witneſs the effects of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the apoſtles: nor were all degrees of oppoſition to, or perverſion of theſe operations thus finally deſtructive. Peter does not ſeem to have concluded, that Simon Magus had ſinned beyond the reach of mercy, when he offered to buy the power of conferring the Holy Ghoſt; (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 18—24.) But it ſeems that ſome kinds of apoſtacy, (when attended with very peculiar circumſtances of aggravation, through love of this world, and enmity to the truth,) were equivalent to it. (*Heb.* c. vi. v. 4—6. c. x. v. 26—30. *John*, c. v. ver. 16.) Of theſe we ſhall have future opportunities of ſpeaking, as well as of ſome perſons, that ſeem to have incurred this condemnation. At preſent it ſuffices to add, that there muſt be great opportunity of information, much inward conviction, determinate ſinning againſt the light of a man's own conſcience, deliberate enmity to the truth, and an obſtinate oppoſition to it in defiance of evidence, to conſtitute this kind of impiety. They, who moſt fear having committed it, have generally been at the greateſt diſtance from theſe things: they, who may be ſuppoſed to have provoked God to give them up to judicial impenitence, are generally either callous in preſumption, or enmity, or given up to abſolute, and outrageous deſperation, of which we ſometimes meet with awful inſtances. (2 *Theſ.* c. ii. v. 9—12.) Yet God alone can determine what degree of theſe aggravations render it proper for him to leave men in ſo dreadful a ſtate; and he doeth as it pleaſeth him: but the trembling contrite ſinner has the witneſs in himſelf, that this is not his caſe.

V. 33—37.] (*Note*, c. iii. v. 7. c. vii. v. 15—20.) Our Lord next ſhewed the Phariſees his knowledge of the evil of their hearts. They were proud, carnal, malicious, ungodly men; yet they pretended to piety: let them therefore either ſeek the renewal of their ſouls to holineſs, by the grace of God; or let them give up their pretenſions to religion. If the tree were made good, good fruit would be produced; otherwiſe they might as well allow the tree to be corrupt, of which the fruit was notoriouſly bad; ſeeing the tree is known, not by its appearance, leaves, or bloſſoms, but by it's fruit. Thus were they detected by their malignant oppoſition to his holy character, and doctrine, and to his beneficent miracles. Indeed their words ſufficiently determined the ſtate of their hearts, and ſhewed them to be a generation of vipers, the progeny of the old ſerpent: how then could they ſpeak good, and holy things, habitually, and conſiſtently? For out of the abundance of the thoughts, and deſires of the heart, the mouth naturally ſpeaks. If a man be truly humble, pious, ſpiritual, a lover of God and man; his memory, judgment, and affections become a treaſury of good things, from which he brings forth edifying converſation, pious obſervations, candid opinions, and equitable deciſions; and whatever can conduce to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. But wicked men have within them a treaſury of pride, malice, impiety, and ſelfiſhneſs, from which they naturally educe evil things; nor can they help, at times, venting their avarice, arrogance, envy, or enmity againſt true religion: and ſpeaking boaſting, reproachful, and injurious language. Thus the Phariſees betrayed themſelves, and however they might deem this a light matter; yet Chriſt aſſured them, that every idle, or uſeleſs word, which in no way tended to their own, or other's comfort, or benefit, or to the glory of God, (the great ends, for which man is endued with the gift of ſpeech;) much more all pernicious, polluting, and impious words, muſt be given an account of at the day of judgment: and at that ſolemn ſeaſon, they will be deemed deciſive evidences of a man's character, and the ſtate of his heart; according to which a man profeſſing religion will be juſtified as a true believer, or condemned as a hypocrite; and all men will be adjudged pious or impious, holy or unholy, according as their habitual converſation hath been. (*Rom.* c. iii. v. 13, 14. *James*, v. 17—26. c. iii. v. 2—10.)

V. 38—42.] (*Mark*, c. viii. v. 11, 12. *Luke*, c. xi. v. 16. 29—32.) The Scribes, and Phariſees ſtill perſiſted in their enmity; and therefore, after all the miracles, that they had witneſſed, they pretended to be diſſatisfied with the evidences of our Lord's divine miſſion, and deſired Him to give them a ſign from heaven to convince them of it; perhaps meaning ſome ſuch tremendous diſplays of the divine glory, as their fathers had ſeen on

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here!

42 The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for ſhe came from the uttermoſt parts of the earth to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here!

43 When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and findeth none.

44 Then he ſaith, I will return into my houſe from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, ſwept, and garniſhed,

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there: and the laſt *ſtate* of that man is worſe than

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Mount Sinai. (1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 22.) To this he anſwered, that they were a wicked, and adulterous generation of Iſrael, unfaithful to their covenant with God; who becauſe they hated the truth, wanted to cloke their enmity under this unreaſonable, and preſumptuous requeſt: but indeed no ſign ſhould be given them, except that of Jonah, who after three days continuance in the whale's belly, was brought forth alive by the power of God. In like manner, He, the Son of man, being ſlain, and buried in a ſepulchre hewn out of a rock, and covered with a great ſtone, as if in the heart of the earth, would be brought forth alive, after three days, or on the third day; for ſo the phraſe here uſed ſignifies, according to the manner of ſpeaking in uſe amongſt the Jews. Then he would be proved to be alive by many infallible demonſtrations; and they, that would not receive him for the Meſſiah, would be left to final unbelief, and deſtruction. Indeed the Ninevites, who had repented at the preaching of Jonah, (who wrought no miracles before them, whoſe conduct in many things might have tended to prejudice them, and who gave them little inſtruction, or encouragement to repentance,) would riſe up in judgment with that generation and condemn them; it would tend, by compariſon, to expoſe the aggravated guilt of the Jews, in continuing impenitent, amidſt all the miracles, inſtructions, warnings, and invitations of Chriſt, attended by his moſt holy example: for behold! it was moſt evident that a far more eminent, and excellent perſon, than Jonah was preſent in the midſt of them. In like manner the queen of Sheba, would appear againſt them, to their deeper condemnation; for ſhe came from a remote region to learn heavenly wiſdom from Solomon: whereas they had a greater, and a more excellent perſon in the midſt of them, than Solomon was; and he went from place to place to inſtruct them, without their own labour, or expence: yet they rejected, and ſinned in contempt of his inſtructions. There is vaſt dignity, and propriety, in the manner, in which Chriſt here ſpake of himſelf, when we conſider him as the incarnate Son of God; but upon the ſuppoſition of his being a mere man, the words would impreſs our minds in a very different manner.

V. 43—45.] (*Luke*, c. xi. v. 24—26.) Our Lord next deſcribes their danger, under a kind of parable, formed upon the caſe of a demoniac. He ſuppoſes the evil ſpirit, (called unclean, becauſe all ſin is filthineſs in the judgment of an holy God,) to quit poſſeſſion of the man, that he may not be violently expelled. Yet this is much againſt his will: and as he cannot obtain permiſſion to poſſeſs any other perſon, he wanders about diſconſolate, in dry or deſert places, ſeeking reſt, and finding none. At length therefore he attempts to recover poſſeſſion of the man, from whom he had departed, and whom he regards as his houſe, upon his return he finds it empty, (without any poſſeſſor, to oppoſe his entrance,) ſwept and garniſhed, or ready prepared for his reception: on this diſcovery he goes, and fetches ſeven, or ſeveral more, evil ſpirits, more malignant than himſelf, (for even devils are ſome worſe than others;) and ſo they take up their abode in the man, and his poſſeſſion becomes more dreadful, and incurable than ever: thus our Lord declared it would be with that generation. The powers of darkneſs, diſturbed by the doctrine, and miracles of Chriſt, and his apoſtles, as well as by the miniſtry of John Baptiſt, would for a time recede from among the Jews, and ſeek reſt among the Gentiles, in thoſe dry lands, where no water of life had hitherto been found: but being purſued by the faithful, and ſucceſsful preaching of the goſpel, and finding no reſt there; they would return to repoſſeſs that unbelieving generation of Jews: and meeting with no oppoſition, or hindrance; more of them, and thoſe more malignant than formerly, would take poſſeſſion of them, and they would become more hardened, than before the preaching of the kingdom of heaven among them. In this view it is a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews, and their awful ſtate of enmity to the goſpel, to this day. But it is alſo applicable to the caſe of individuals, who hear the word of God, and are in part reformed, but not truly converted: the unclean ſpirit indeed retires, but Chriſt is not admitted to dwell in the heart by faith. The evil ſpirit hankers after his old abode, and waits his opportunity of returning: on examination he finds his habitation empty, for Chriſt is not there to exclude him; it is alſo ſwept either from convictions, and ſerious impreſſions, or by ſome external form, and reformation; and it is garniſhed, or ready furniſhed for the reception, and entertainment of unclean ſpirits, by a preparation of heart to comply with the firſt. Even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked generation.

46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren ſtood without, deſiring to ſpeak with him.

47 Then one ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſpeak with thee.

48 But he anſwered and ſaid unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he ſtretched forth his hand toward his diſciples, and ſaid, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother.

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their ſuggeſtions. Thus inſtead of one ſpirit, ſeven take up their abode in the man, and his laſt ſtate becomes worſe than the firſt: He becomes perhaps a more decent, plauſible, or preſumptuous enemy of God; but ſevenfold more callous, and inveterate than before. This was doubtleſs the caſe with vaſt numbers, that had heard John, Jeſus, and the apoſtles with attention, and convictions, but who afterwards relapſed into wickedneſs: and it is the caſe of many, in all places where the goſpel is faithfully preached. (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 19—22.)

V. 46—50.] (*Mark*, c. iii. v. 20, 21, 31—35. *Luke.* c. viii. v. 19—21. c. xi. v. 27, 28.) It appears from the other Evangeliſts, that the earneſtneſs, and aſſiduity of Chriſt, in teaching the people, notwithſtanding the oppoſition of the Phariſees, gave diſquietude to his friends, or brethren, or his near relations, perhaps the children of Joſeph by a former wife, or his couſins; ſome of whom did not believe in him; (*John*, c. vii. v. 10.) They wanted to induce him to deſiſt from his work, ſuppoſing that he exceeded the bounds of prudence; and they ſeem to have engaged Mary to concur in the ſame deſign; which was doubtleſs reprehenſible, as it implied ſentiments of him, derogatory to his perfect wiſdom, and excellence. They therefore came when he was teaching the people, and not being able to approach him for the multitude, they ſent to deſire to ſpeak with him. But Jeſus was aware of their intention, and he therefore anſwered thoſe, who delivered the meſſage, by enquiring who his mother, and brethren were? Intimating thereby, that they had no right to interfere, nor any authority, or influence over him, in reſpect of his important work; that his ſpiritual affection to his diſciples was greater than any natural affection, which he bare thoſe relations; that his love to men's ſouls had the greateſt influence over him; that even his mother was nearer to him as a true believer, than on account of her natural relation to him, and that his brethren would have no advantage from him, if they were not believers alſo. He therefore ſtretched forth his hands over his diſciples, as expreſſing his cordial, and endeared affection for them; and he declared that they were his mother, and brethren; that he bare them all the regard due to thoſe near relations; and that he would honour, and provide for them with all his influence, even as a dutiful ſon would behave towards his beloved parent, or one brother to another, when advanced to ſuperior circumſtances. And not only would he admit thoſe preſent to ſuch high and valuable privileges; but whoſoever, of any age or nation, ſhould do the will of his heavenly Father, in hearing, believing, and obeying him as his Saviour; would in life, death, judgment, and for ever, be honoured and bleſſed, even as the brother, ſiſter, or mother of Him, the Lord of all, and the King of glory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who follow Chriſt, muſt be ready when called to it, to endure hunger, or ſubmit to mean fare; and to be reproached, and falſely accuſed for their cloſe attendance on him, and his ordinances: but they ſhould leave their Lord to plead in their behalf, and he will do it effectually. Such profeſſors, as are moſt deſtitute of, and enemies to, the power of godlineſs, are often moſt tenacious of forms even to a ſcrupulous minuteneſs; eſpecially when they can make uſe of them to ſupport their own credit or authority; to cloke their own iniquity, or to run down the upright ſervants of the Lord. Many of this ſtamp ſeem never to have read the ſcriptures: for they ſeverely cenſure in living diſciples, as inconſiſtent with piety, the very things, for which holy men of old were never blamed; and at the ſame time they profeſs to hold the latter in high eſtimation; becauſe their characters have acquired the ſanction of general opinion, they are no longer the ſubjects of envy, or competition, and they give them no oppoſition, or uneaſineſs in their ungodly practices. They will alſo condemn thoſe things in perſons of another party, which they overlook or excuſe in thoſe of their own. Whilſt the Lord of the ſabbath, who is far greater than the temple, and all external inſtitutions, authorizes thoſe labours on his holy day, which are neceſſary, and conducive to the real good of ourſelves, or others, or ſubſervient to piety, and charity; he doubtleſs doth more ſtrictly bind us from all ſecular employments of a contrary tendency. The exerciſe of mercy rather than ſacrifice, allows us on ſome occaſions to omit attendance on public ordinances, and to make needful proviſion for our health, and food: yet ſurely when domeſtics are confined at home, and families rendered a ſcene of hurry, and confuſion on the Lord's day, in order to furniſh a feaſt for viſitants, who can ſpare their time more conveniently than on other days, for ſocial indulgence, the caſe is very different! In cenſuring ſuch things as theſe, and many others too common among profeſſors, we need not fear condemning the guiltleſs. They, who are unable to labour for their bread, may ſometimes be capable of attending on God's ordinances; and in this way, they may beſt expect comfort under, or deliverance from their calamities. But alas, there are perſons, who frequent places of worſhip,

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1ſt. The parable of the ſower; with an interpretation of it to the diſciples, and the reaſons, why Jeſus taught the people by parables, 1--23. 2d. The parables of the tares, the grain of muſtard ſeed, and the leaven; with the interpretation of, that of the tares, and the fulfilling of the ſcripture, by Chriſt's teaching in this manner, 24---43. 3d. The parables of the hidden treaſure, the pearl of great price, and the draught of fiſhes, 44---50. 4th. The diſciples further inſtructed to make uſe of theſe parables, by the parable of the good houſholder, 51, 52. 5th. The prejudices, which were entertained againſt Chriſt, in his own country; his obſervation on it, and his conſequent conduct, 53---58.

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in order to ſtart objections, or find matter of accuſation againſt the Lord's ſervants: and many a good queſtion is propoſed from very baſe motives. We cannot, like our Lord, diſcern the thoughts of ſuch men: yet we muſt go on with our work; endeavouring by meekneſs, benevolence, an irreproachable conduct, and unanſwerable arguments, to obviate or ſilence their malicious inſinuations. Men will often do more to ſave a trifle of their own property, than to relieve their neighbours; and ſome will even refuſe to infringe the reſt of the Lord's day by viſiting the afflicted, who would not heſitate if they were likely to loſe the lives of their cattle! However the Lord's day is eſpecially the time for healing the ſouls of men: and whilſt the helpleſs ſinner hears the voice of Chriſt, and endeavours to obey it; he feels and manifeſts, that he hath received power to do thoſe things, of which before he was utterly incapable.

The more good is done by the goſpel, the greater oppoſition will proud Phariſees, and enemies excite againſt it: and the more clearly it is proved to be from God, the more determined will be their malice, if they be left to themſelves; for their credit, luſts, and intereſts are all at ſtake. However we ſhould not exaſperate them more than we can help; but ſhould give place as far as conſiſtent with continued endeavours to do good. Whilſt we take encouragement, from the condeſcending mildneſs of our gracious Lord, the choſen Servant, and well-beloved Son of the Father, in all our weakneſs, and amidſt our manifold corruptions, and temptations: we ſhould alſo pray, that his Spirit may reſt upon us alſo, and enable us to copy his example; that we may avoid all ſeverity, oſtentation, and boaſting; that we may ſtudy to be quiet, and to mind our own buſineſs; and be gentle to thoſe that are bruiſed with afflictions, and temptations, or whoſe feeble faith, and hope are like an offenſive expiring taper. Thus we ſhould try to ſtrengthen the hands, that hang down, and to confirm the feeble knees; and ſo look to him, in behalf of ourſelves, and others, to bring forth judgment unto victory; and expect the time, when all the Gentiles ſhall truſt in his name, and wait for his law.

In every way we ſee illuſtrations of the power, and malice of our formidable enemies, and of the ſuperior power, and mercy of our great Deliverer. When he reſcues the poor ſinner from the oppreſſion of the devil, the blind ſee the glory, and the dumb ſing the praiſes of our God. The changes effected in men's characters by the power of divine grace form a continued proof, that Jeſus is the Son of David, and the Son of God, and that the goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation: this ſhould induce all men to ſubmit to Chriſt; but it hath a contrary effect upon many, who even venture to aſcribe the evident effects of divine power, and holineſs to the vileſt motives, or even diabolical influence! He who knows men's thoughts, hath taught us how to anſwer ſuch objections: for the evident tendency, and effects of the goſpel are ſuch, that if ſatan could patronize it, he muſt ſubvert his own kingdom. In this reſpect the enemies of all good, might teach chriſtians an uſeful leſſon; for they exhibit to them an inſtructive example: hateful, and hating as they are, they are too ſubtle to divide againſt themſelves, to the ſubverſion of their own kingdom; but, whilſt they agree together in malice, they tempt chriſtians to divide into parties, and to quarrel with each other, to the irreparable injury of the common cauſe!

But let us obſerve, that there are two grand intereſts in the world; all that ſide with Chriſt againſt the kingdom of ſatan, are his friends; and when unclean ſpirits are caſt out by the Spirit of God, in the converſion of ſinners to a life of faith, and obedience, the kingdom of God is come unto us. For theſe powerful enemies poſſeſs the ſinner's heart, like ſtrong men, armed with their luſts, errors, and prejudices, and have poſſeſſion of all their faculties, and abilities: nor could they be expelled, did not One come upon them with ſuperior power, who is able to bind them at his will, take away from their uſurped poſſeſſions, and employ the convert with all his talents in his ſervice, and to his glory. All they, who refuſe to concur, or do not rejoice, in ſuch a revolution as this, are againſt Chriſt; and he that gathereth not with him, ſcattereth. Alas, what pains do many take in thus ſcattering abroad, and in ruining themſelves, and others, by promoting ſyſtems of human invention in oppoſition to the goſpel of God our Saviour! In theſe, and many other ways, men ſin againſt the cleareſt evidence of truth, and even againſt their own conſciences; till by reſiſting the Holy Ghoſt they provoke God to give them up to final obduracy, and impenitence. Let us all then be afraid of every approach to this fatal conduct: let ſinners regard the voice of the Lord without delay, leſt he ſhould ſwear in his wrath, that they ſhall never enter his reſt: yet let no trembling penitent yield to ſatan's ſuggeſtions, to ſuppoſe, that the ſinful words, and works, of the days of his ignorance, which he now recollects with ſhame, and contrition; or any of his ſins, when firſt brought under convictions, were of this malignant nature. All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall certainly be forgiven to the true believer; and him, that cometh to Chriſt, He will in no wiſe caſt out. Indeed we might any of us have been left under condemnation, and the power of ſin: but if God hath given us repentance to the acknowledging of his truth, we are evidently eſcaped from this ſnare of the devil, and ſhould not yield to diſ-

THE ſame day went Jeſus out of the houſe, and ſat by the ſea-ſide.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, ſo that he went into a ſhip, and ſat; and the whole multitude ſtood on the ſhore.

3 And he ſpake many things unto them in parables, ſaying, Behold, a ſower went forth to ſow;

4 And, when he ſowed, ſome *ſeeds* fell by the way-ſide, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon ſtony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they ſprung up, becauſe they had no deepneſs of earth:

6 And when the ſun was up, they were ſcorched; and, becauſe they had had no root, they withered away,

7 And ſome fell among thorns; and the thorns ſprung up and choaked them.

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, ſome an hundred-fold, ſome ſixty-fold, ſome thirty-fold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the diſciples came, and ſaid unto

couraging fears. However, it is vain for men to think that the tree is made good, when the fruit is evidently evil; or to expect good fruit from an evil tree: we ſhould therefore daily ſeek to have our hearts cleanſed by divine grace, and ſtored with the good treaſure of divine truth, and holy affections; that, whilſt numbers are corrupting, deceiving, or injuring others with the evil things, they ſpeak; we may be enabled continually to bring ſeaſonable, pious, and edifying diſcourſe from the abundance of our hearts. We ſhould conſider this as a matter of great importance: as our Judge has declared, that men ſhall give an account of every idle word at the laſt day. If there were nothing elſe to be then produced againſt us, this alone would ſuffice to leave us without excuſe. We ought then continually to examine ourſelves, and ſeek forgiveneſs for the paſt; and keep a conſtant watch over ourſelves, that we may for the future ſpeak ſuch words alone, or habitually, as conſiſt with the chriſtian character, and as may be produced in proof of our faith, and love in the day of judgment.

But men are more diſpoſed to dictate to the Lord, and to demand thoſe kinds, and degrees of evidence for their faith, which he ſees proper not to give; than to yield obedience to his call, to repent, and do works meet for repentance. The Ninevites therefore, and many from the remote regions of the earth, who by ſome faint report of the goſpel have been led to enquire after Chirſt, and his ſalvation, will riſe up in judgment againſt, and condemn unbelievers in this age, and nation alſo. For One, far more honourable, and eminent in wiſdom than Solomon, or all the ancient, and modern ſages; yea than all prophets, and apoſtles, is in the midſt of us, making all that come to him, wiſe unto eternal ſalvation, by his word, and by his holy Spirit. Let us then learn of Him, and ſeek to have his kingdom ſet up in our hearts; then the enemy will no more be able to regain poſſeſſion of us, however he may threaten, or harraſs us. But let none rely on convictions, forms, or external reformation: for every heart is properly the reſidence of unclean ſpirits; thoſe excepted, which are become the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. They will therefore watch their opportunities, when convictions, and terrors are vaniſhed, and inclinations after former indulgences are revived; and finding no effectual oppoſition, they will re-enter, ſtrengthen the garriſon, and render the man more entirely their ſlave, than ever. Such perſons cannot but be noticed, by thoſe, that obſerve the ſtate of goſpel congregations. But what encouragement does our Redeemer give us to follow him fully, to attend his inſtruction, to truſt in his mercy, and by obeying him, to do the will of God our Father! Indeed earthly relatives often fail of the duties incumbent on them: but He is ſuch a relation as men would have been, had ſin never entered; or rather far more deſirable. Whatever there is peculiar in the affection, or regard of the different endeared relations of life; all centre in the love of Chriſt to his true diſciples; yea to the pooreſt, weakeſt, and moſt ſinful of them: whatever credit, comfort, or advantage could be derived from a loving brother, father, huſband, or ſon, that was advanced to the higheſt ſtate of earthly dignity, and authority; this, and far more may we confidently expect from Chriſt, in life, death, judgment, and to eternity. Let us then ceaſe from men, and cleave to him; let us look upon every chriſtian, even in the loweſt condition of life, as the brother, ſiſter, or honoured mother of the Lord of glory: and let us love, reſpect, and be kind to them for his ſake, and after his example.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1, 2.] It is evident that the events, recorded in the latter part of the preceding chapter, took place on the ſame day, on which our Lord ſpake, ſome at leaſt of the parables contained in this: but St. Luke relates the concluding incident, after the parable of the ſower. As the multitudes increaſed, and there was not room to receive them, Jeſus left the houſe, and repaired to the ſea ſide: and when a vaſt number of people were collected together, He went into a boat, which lay cloſe to the ſhore, that he might be leſs incommoded, and better heard by the people; and being there ſeated, he ſpake to them as they ſtood around upon the ſhore.

V. 3—9.] (*Mark*, c. iv. ver. 1—9. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 4—8.) Some obſervations have heretofore been made on this method of teaching, and it's peculiar advantages; (Note, *Judg*. c. ix. v. 8—15,) Parables are a kind of pictures of ſpiritual things, under the ſimilitude of external objects; in which, when we have got the key, we

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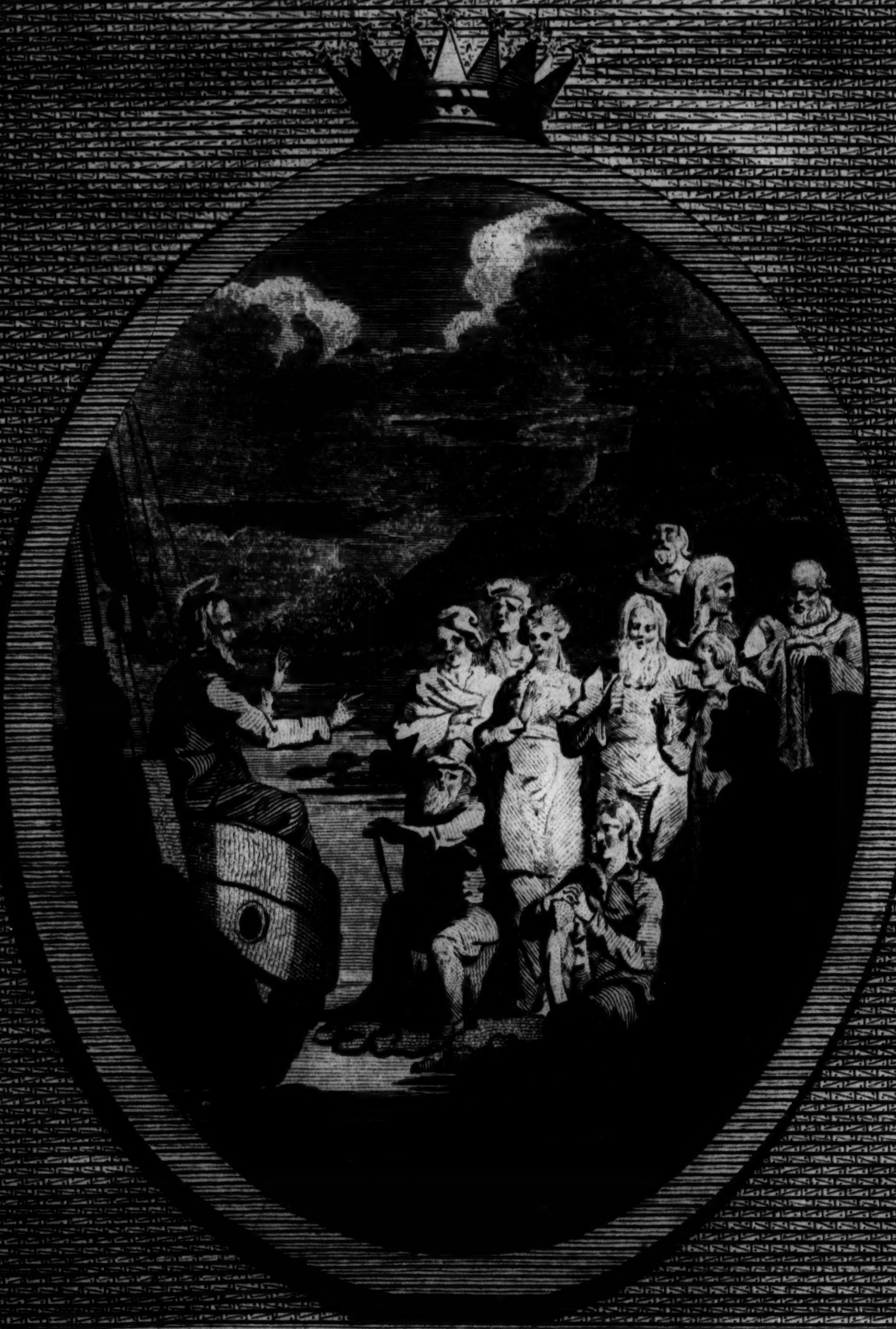

St. MATTHEW CH.XIII. VE.II.

Dayes del.

Sands sc.

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him, Why ſpeakeſt thou unto them in parables?

11 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Becauſe it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance: but whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore ſpeak I to them in parables: becauſe they ſeeing ſee not; and hearing they hear not; neither do they underſtand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy

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perceive more of their nature by a ſingle glance, than we could otherwiſe learn by laboured deſcriptions, or multiplied diſtinctions. This parable of the ſower ſeems to be a prophetical hiſtory of the effects, which would be produced by the preached goſpel, in all places, to which it ſhould be ſent. The fuller elucidation of it will be reſerved, till we come to Chriſt's own expoſition: a few hints ſhall here ſuffice, by way of giving a more diſtinct view of the picture itſelf. A huſbandman is repreſented, as ſowing his ſeed, which is ſuppoſed to be good ſeed; for no man expects a crop of corn, without ſowing the ſame grain, that he hopes to reap. But as he ſowed, it ſo happened that part of the ſeed fell by the way-ſide, a high road lying acroſs the field: here the ground would be ſo trodden, and made ſo hard, as to be unfit to cover the ſeed; and ſo the birds, that flew around picked it up, and no increaſe could be expected from it. Another part of the ſeed fell on ground, where a rock was covered with a very ſhallow ſoil: this was indeed harrowed in; and becauſe it was covered ſo little, it ſoon ſprang up, and looked very green, and promiſing to the ſuperficial obſerver. But when the ſummer ſun, in his noon-day heat, ſhone full upon it, the ſoil was dried up beneath its ſhallow root, and ſo it was ſcorched, withered, and came to nothing; becauſe it had not room to ſtrike root to a ſufficient depth in the earth. Another portion of the ſeed fell upon ground, that had not been cleared from thorns: this ſprang up, and grew till harveſt; but the thorns, being the natural produce of the ſoil, grew up much more rapidly, and overtopped, ſmothered, and choked it, ſo that it could not ear, or yield any increaſe. But the reſt of the ſeed fell into good ground, fertile, and well prepared by tillage, and manure, broken up to a ſufficient depth, cleared of thorns, and weeds, and at a diſtance from the high-way: and this produced an abundant increaſe; ſome of it yielded thirty times as much as was ſown, ſome ſixty, and ſome even an hundred times as much. This alone anſwered the ſower's purpoſe, and recompenſed his toil. This parable contained inſtruction in it of ſo important, and intereſting a nature, that all, who were capable of hearing, were bound to give a peculiar attention to it, and to endeavour to underſtand it.

V. 10—13.] (*Mark*, c. iv. ver. 10—13. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 9, 10.) The multitudes, who heard this parable delivered in public, did not underſtand it, and probably few of them at that time enquired any further about it. But the diſciples came to our Lord in private, deſiring to be informed, why he thus taught the people, and about the meaning of the parable? He had doubtleſs ſeveral reaſons for adopting this method of inſtruction, which is peculiarly ſuited to aſſiſt the memory, and engage the attention: and which communicates information and conviction to the teachable, in the moſt ſimple, and compendious way. But he here aſſigned a reaſon of another nature, which at laſt reſolves itſelf into his wiſe, and righteous ſovereignty, who does what ſeemeth good in his ſight, (c. xi. v. 25,26:) yet it is propoſed in ſuch a manner, as is replete with inſtruction, warning, and encouragement. It was *given* to them to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but not to others; that is, not at that time, for it might afterward be given to them alſo. A myſtery, in the ſcripture uſe of the term, ſeems to ſignify, a ſubject in religion, of which we can know nothing, except by revelation, and nothing more than is revealed: which knowledge muſt be appropriated by faith only, and ſo uſed as a principle, in all our other reaſonings; but which itſelf muſt not be diſputed about, as if it were the ſubject of reaſon, and argument. There are many myſteries reſpecting the kingdom of heaven; and *it is given* to Chriſt's true diſciples alone to know, or underſtand them, as far as it is needful. They, who in humble faith, take Him for their Teacher, by attending to the inſtructions of his word, and by ſeeking the teaching of his Spirit, will attain to this knowledge; and the proud, unteachable, and unbelieving will not; for no man can know them but from the great Prophet of the church. But it was His ſpecial choice, and effectual calling, that made theſe perſons his diſciples, rather than others of their country-men, and this brought them to learn of Him. At the ſame time it is his invariable rule, "that whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given, and he "ſhall have abundance:" that is, ſay many expoſitors, "they, who improve what they have." Yet if Chriſt meant ſo, why did he not thus expreſs himſelf, either here, or in other places? (c. xxv. ver. 29. *Mark*, c. iv. ver. 25. *Luke*, c. xix. v. 26.) There is no doubt, a truth in this way of ſtating the matter: for no man *will* improve either natural powers, or external advantages, without ſpecial grace: yet it is a truth often miſunderſtood, and perverted; and the obvious meaning of the words is that one of God's ſpecial gifts to his people is an earneſt of others; ſo that he, who hath faith and grace, ſhall receive further communications of knowledge, wiſdom, holineſs, and every bleſſing of ſalvation, 'till he have a vaſt abundance: whereas, he, that hath not living faith, and grace, ſhall at laſt be deprived of all his other attainments, and advantages, in which he truſted, and gloried. The plain inferences from which are, that he, who deſires theſe bleſſings muſt ſeek them from Chriſt, or he never can have them: and he, that hath received them, muſt bleſs the Lord for making him to differ, and truſt in him to perfect his own good work in his ſoul. On this account therefore Chriſt ſpake to the multitudes in of Eſaias, which ſaith, By hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand; and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and ſhall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed groſs, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have cloſed; leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and ſhould underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.

16 But bleſſed *are* your eyes, for they ſee; and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I ſay unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have deſired to ſee *thoſe things* which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them*; and to hear *thoſe things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the ſower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and underſtandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his heart. This is he which received ſeed by the way-ſide.

20 But he that received the ſeed into ſtony places, the ſame is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himſelf, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He alſo that received ſeed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of

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parables; becauſe, being blinded by pride, prejudice, and ſin, they ſaw his miracles, but could not ſee that He was the Meſſiah; and heard his doctrine, without acknowledging that it was the voice of God; and it was his ſovereign will to leave many of them to final obduracy, and unbelief.

V. 14, 15.] (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 9, 10. *Mark*, c. iv. ver. 12. *John*, c. xii. v. 39, 40. *Acts*, c. xxviii. v. 25—28.) The prophecy referred to, ſeems to have had a peculiar reſpect to the times, and perſons here ſpoken of. They were to have the fulleſt opportunity of learning the way of ſalvation; yet they ſhould not underſtand it, nor perceive in Jeſus the fulfilment of their ancient prophecies. Becauſe their hearts were become groſs, or fat, that is ſtupid and inſenſible, through pride, avarice, hypocriſy, and unbelief; ſo that their ears were cloſed againſt the report of the goſpel, and they purpoſely cloſed their eyes againſt the light, becauſe they hated it: and therefore God judicially left them to be blinded; ſo that it became impoſſible for them to underſtand, or believe the doctrine of ſalvation, or to be converted, that their ſouls might be healed: for had they been converted, they muſt have been pardoned, and healed. There ſeems throughout to be a ſpecial reference to the malevolent Phariſees, and their adherents. (c. xii. v. 22—45.)

V. 16, 17.] (c. xvi. v. 17. *Luke*, c. x. v. 23, 24.) The diſciples, notwithſtanding their remaining ignorance, miſtakes, and carnal prejudices, had already been taught of God to ſee, and hear many things relative to the kingdom of God; and thus their eyes and ears were bleſſed by this ſanctifying influence, and its happy effects; and they were thereby employed in a proper, and profitable manner; and further light, and inſtruction would continually be added to them. Their ſituation alſo as believers was very favourable: for many prophets, and righteous perſons, from the beginning of the world, had deſired to ſee the times in which they lived, and the miracles that they witneſſed, and to hear the Meſſiah's inſtruction, which they daily heard: yet they were not allowed to poſſeſs the deſired privilege. They looked forward to the Redeemer, who was in due time to appear, and reſted their hopes on him: they had their light from this ſun, before he aſcended above the horizon; but they longed to ſee him already riſen: yet this was reſerved as a peculiar bleſſing for the apoſtles, whoſe light was proportionably more diſtinct, and clear. (1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 10—12.)

V. 18—23.] After this encouraging, and inſtructive introduction in anſwer to the queſtion, “why ſpeakeſt “thou to them in parables?” Our Lord proceeded to expound the parable to them. The ſower repreſented Him, in his perſonal miniſtry, or as ſpeaking by his apoſtles, and faithful miniſters. The ſeed ſown is “the “word of the kingdom,” “the word of God.” Not every kind of preaching, is ſowing this ſeed; If men, preach mere morality, metaphyſical ſpeculations, man's traditions, falſe doctrines, enthuſiaſtical rhapſodies; as the ſeed is congenial to the ſoil, an increaſe may be expected; but it muſt be of the ſame nature with the ſeed, from which it ſprings. But the good fruit of repentance, humility, faith, piety, and holineſs can only be produced from “the word of the kingdom.” This word is of an humbling, and holy nature, and leads to ſuch views of God and ourſelves, of ſin and holineſs, of Chriſt, and eternity; that it is as properly a ſeed, in the believing heart, of all true godlineſs, as the grain of wheat is in the fruitful ſoil, of the crop of wheat upon the ground. But as the earth muſt be prepared to receive the ſeed, by its principle of fertility, and by proper culture; ſo the heart muſt be ſuitably diſpoſed, or the word of God will not yield any increaſe, when ſown in it. Many hearers of the goſpel are like the way-ſide, on which ſome of the ſeed fell: their hearts are no more ſuited to the holy meſſage of God, than the high road, continually crowded, and beaten by paſſengers, would be to receive the ſeed corn. They are carnal, proud, prejudiced, and careleſs: they hear, but underſtand not; as they have

riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received ſeed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and un-

no deſire to underſtand ſpiritual ſubjects. They come, from curioſity, or cuſtom, or from worſe motives, out of the midſt of wordly engagements, and converſation: whilſt the word is ſounding in their ears, they are often thinking about their previous diverſions, purſuits, ſchemes, or topics; about the perſons, and objects around them; or about the appointments, which are to ſucceed the tedious hour: or they come in order to object, deride, or revile; but without expectation or deſire of profiting. Therefore they underſtand nothing of the true meaning, excellence, or importance of what they hear: and thoſe evil ſpirits, who are ſure to form an attentive part of our congregations; (having more employment there, and being more in danger of loſing their ſervants, than at the places of diſſipation, or debauchery;) are ready immediately to catch away the word out of the minds of ſuch hearers, by ſuggeſting more pleaſing ideas, or engaging them in vain ſpeculations, or frivolous converſation. Thus the beſt ſermons make no impreſſion, and produce no effect; they are neither convinced, nor informed, but remain as ignorant, infidel, careleſs, profligate, and ungodly as before. What numbers of ſuch occaſional hearers help to compoſe the large congregations, which ſometimes attend to hear the word of God? Other hearers reſemble the ſtony places: they are told of free ſalvation, of the believer's privileges, and of the felicity of heaven; and without any humiliation or change of heart; without any abiding conviction of their own guilt, and depravity, of the vanity of the world, their need of a Saviour, or the excellence of holineſs; they haſtily catch at the comforts of the goſpel, take up a ſuperficial view, and a cheap profeſſion of religion, and ſoon arrive at an unwarranted aſſurance, that all the good things they hear of belong to them. Thus deluſion fills them with an unſanctified joy, and other high, and falſe affections; but they manifeſt no godly ſorrow, brokenneſs of heart, tenderneſs of conſcience, or conſiſtency in their walk. However though there be no depth, there is much ſhew of zeal, and earneſtneſs, and many pious but injudicious perſons think highly of them; which tends ſtill more to enhance their joy, and confidence. Thus they ſeem to get forward much faſter, than the humble, contrite, and conſcientious chriſtian; and often exceed him in gifts, fluency, and forwardneſs of ſpeech, and in boldneſs for the truth, where there is no danger. All the time their hearts are proud, hard, and carnal: they therefore endure for a while, even ſo long as their profeſſion coſt them little, and conduces to procure them conſideration, and advantage. But when perſecution, or tribulation for the ſake of the goſpel ariſes; it proves a ſcorching ſun upon their flouriſhing, but ſuperficial profeſſion, which deſtroys the root of it, and then the blade withers. Some heavy trial muſt be ſuſtained, if they retain their religion, or ſome ſecular advantage may be had by forſaking it; or they are proved by ſome circumſtances of peculiar temptation: and having no root in themſelves, not being rooted, and grounded in the love of Chriſt, as the only, and moſt precious Saviour of periſhing ſinners; they are not willing to forſake all, and bear their croſs for him; (*Luke*, c. xiv. v. 25—35:) and ſo they are offended, and ſtumble; they find ſome pretence for renouncing, or diſguiſing their profeſſion, or they turn aſide to ſome other more looſe, and eaſy religion, according to which they can both ſerve God, and mammon. Many ſuch hearers are doubtleſs found in our congregations; and in theſe eaſy days ſome of them may go on for a long time; but ſhould perſecution ariſe, they would drop off as the leaves from the trees in autumn. (c. vii. v. 26, 27.) Another ſet of hearers reſemble ground, that is over-run with thorns, or noxious weeds. They receive the word into an heart, crowded with cares about, or deſires after the riches, honours, and pleaſures of the world: they are convinced, alarmed, and quieted; they obtain knowledge, and take up a profeſſion; they have many thoughtful ſeaſons, and mean to be chriſtians; they often conſent to an orthodox creed, or relate a plauſible experience; and they continue to the end to impoſe on themſelves, and on others. They aim to ſerve two maſters: but their great concern is about the world; they eagerly purſue riches, are anxious to obtain a competency, to advance their families, and to make a reputable, or faſhionable figure among their neighbours. If they are in lower circumſtances, their chief ſolicitude is about a preſent, and future proviſion for themſelves, and their families: and if they be of another turn of mind the pleaſures of the world, the deſire of pomp, luxury, or authority predominate: whilſt religion is but a ſecondary concern, to quiet conſcience, to keep out the fear of hell, to keep up the hope of heaven, or to maintain the good opinion of the church, or its miniſters, whoſe approbation, or tacit connivance often rivet men in this deluſion. In this ſoil, the ſeed ſeems to grow; but it is ſmothered by the cares of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches: theſe ſeem to promiſe men many advantages, and to coincide with their ſelf-flattery in the idea, that they ſhall be enabled to do the more good; and in both reſpects they find in the event, that they have been deceived. The love of them impoſes upon their judgments, and deludes them into multiplied, perhaps iniquitous or fraudulent methods of increaſing them; it induces them to procraſtinate in their intended earneſtneſs about religion; and allures them into endleſs incumbrances, infectious connexions, ſinful compliances, conformity to the world, &c. Theſe are the thorns, which grow up, and choke the word; ſo that it becometh unfruitful, or bringeth nothing to perfection. (1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 9, 10. 17, 18.) This is the moſt unſuſpected, and fatal danger of profeſſors in great commercial cities, and in times of outward peace, and proſperity: and it is to be feared, that many are thus deceived, and loſe their own ſouls, in attempting to gain more of this preſent world. But though ſo much of this precious ſeed ſeems to be thrown away: yet it will not all return void, or fail to proſper in that, for which it is ſent. Some of it falls on good ground, even in an honeſt, and derſtandeth *it*; which alſo beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, ſome an hundred-fold, ſome ſixty, ſome thirty.

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which ſowed good ſeed in his field:

25 But while men ſlept, his enemy came and ſowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was ſprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares alſo.

27 So the ſervants of the houſholder came, and ſaid unto him, Sir, didſt not thou ſow good ſeed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He ſaid unto them, An enemy hath done this. The ſervants ſaid unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he ſaid, Nay; leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up alſo the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harveſt: and in the time of harveſt I will ſay to the reapers, Gather ye together firſt the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

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good heart, ſincerely deſirous of learning God's truth, and will, in order to receive, and obey them. This preparation of heart is from the Lord, and the want of this honeſt, and good diſpoſition is the only reaſon, why the goſpel only ſerves to condemn the majority of thoſe, who hear it. When the heart is fraught with the fear of God, and a deſire of his favour; when it is humbled, and broke up with convictions of ſin; when forgiveneſs, and ſanctifying grace are valued more than worldly objects; when ſin is hated, and dreaded, and deliverance from it's power and pollution is earneſtly deſired; when a man is thus diſpoſed to buy the truth at any price, and to become Chriſt's diſciple at all adventures: then the ground is prepared for the good ſeed, and nothing can prevent its growth, and increaſe. Such a man will come to hear the word of God, with earneſt prayer to be taught by the holy Spirit, and to be delivered from prejudice and error; he will hearken to it with reverence, humility, and docility; he will gradually underſtand more, and more of it's nature, value, excellency, authority, and tendency; he will receive it into a broken heart, by faith working by love, and overcoming the world; and he will, as it were, cover it over by meditation, and prayer. Satan can by no means take it out of this man's heart; when it ſprings up, it will ſtrike deep root, ſo that perſecutions, and afflictions, which ſcorch and wither the ſeed ſown upon the rock, will ſerve to ripen this for the harveſt: the cares, intereſts, and pleaſures of the world will be ſubordinated, and moderated with reference to the welfare of the ſoul; and when they ſeem ready to injure the believer, or to mar his fruitfulneſs, he will beſtow pains to root them up, as thorns and weeds, leſt they ſhould deprive him of his expected increaſe. Thus the ſeed will produce a plenteous crop: and he, in whoſe heart it grows, will bring forth fruit with patience, and perſeverance in well-doing, even to the end. All ſuch chriſtians, will manifeſt their holy diſpoſitions by holy actions; their piety, juſtice, truth, goodneſs, mercy, temperance, and meekneſs will glorify God, adorn the goſpel, and do ſubſtantial benefit to mankind. They will not all be alike fruitful; but all will yield a rich increaſe of thoſe fruits of the Spirit, which are the effects, and evidence of true faith, and repentance. (Note, *Gen.* c. xxvi. v. 12.) Theſe alone are valued by the Sower of the ſeed, and the Giver of the increaſe. In all congregations, where the true word of God hath been preached hitherto, there have been theſe four ſorts of hearers; and no others are conceivable: but alas, it is to be feared, that there are ſeldom a fourth part of thoſe, who receive the word into an honeſt, and good heart. However we may even conſider it as a prophecy, the accompliſhment of which continually proves the truth of the ſacred ſcripture.

V. 24—30.] As Chriſt afterwards interpreted this parable alſo, I ſhall only drop a few hints upon it in this place, as before. The kingdom of heaven, or the ſtate of things under the goſpel diſpenſation, reſembled a man, that ſowed good ſeed in his field. But whilſt his ſervants, as well as others, were aſleep, an enemy to him, and his intereſt came privily, and ſowed ſeed of a contrary nature, and then went away, that no man might ſuſpect what had been done; (2 *Pet*: c. ii. v. 1, 2.) However when the ſeed had ſprung up, and was advanced in it's growth, it was very plain that there were tares among the wheat. It is not certain what is meant by the word rendered tares; but it is evident, that it was ſomething very different from the pulſe, which we call by that name: otherwiſe the tares might early, and certainly have been diſtinguiſhed from the wheat, and eradicated without any danger; and if they had been permitted to grow till harveſt, they would have been too valuable to be caſt into the fire. Some uſeleſs noxious weed muſt therefore be ſignified, that could not ſo eaſily be diſtinguiſhed from the blade of the wheat. However the ſervants are repreſented as perceiving this, and as going to their Lord to expreſs their concern and ſurpriſe; that, whereas they were ſatisfied, that he had ſown good ſeed, the crop ſhould be marred by this pernicious intermixture. To this He is ſtated as anſwering, that an enemy had done this: but when they would have gone to work to pull them up, he would not permit it, leſt through error, or inadvertency, they ſhould root up the wheat alſo: though they would be injurious to the crop, yet he thought it beſt, that both ſhould grow together, till the harveſt; and then he would give previous orders to the reapers, to ſeparate the tares, and bind them in

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took, and ſowed in his field,

32 Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds: but when it is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, and becometh a tree, ſo that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable ſpake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

34 All theſe things ſpake Jeſus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable ſpake he not unto them:

35 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept ſecret from the foundation of the world.

36 Then Jeſus ſent the multitude away, and went into the houſe: and his diſciples came unto him, ſaying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, He that ſoweth the good ſeed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good ſeed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*;

39 The enemy that ſowed them is the devil; the harveſt is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; ſo ſhall it be in the end of this world.

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bundles for fuel, as well as to take care of, and ſecure the wheat. The meaning of this will hereafter appear.

V. 31, 32.] (*Mark*, c. iv. ver. 30—33. *Luke*, c. xiii. v. 18, 19.) Another illuſtration of the kingdom of heaven is here propoſed. A grain of muſtard-ſeed, is one of the leaſt ſeeds that men ſow in the field: yet in deep rich ſoils it will produce a plant of very great ſize; ſo large, that they who have not ſeen it, have ſeldom an adequate conception of the propriety of the ſimilitude; and it might probably grow much larger in thoſe warm fertile countries, than it ever doth in theſe northern regions. However it is certain, that it frequently becomes one of the largeſt of herbs, and at it's full growth almoſt reſembles a tree; ſo that the birds may very properly come to lodge under its branches; and they might there build their neſts, if it were at it's full ſize at the proper time of the year. This repreſented the goſpel diſpenſation, which from very ſmall beginnings, when its poor, deſpiſed preachers had all the power, wealth, learning, and falſe religion in the world againſt them, ſoon grew ſo large, as to overſpread whole nations, and to ſubvert the deep-rooted foundations of ancient idolatry, as well as to take the place of the Moſaic diſpenſation: and it will in due time fill the whole earth. It alſo repreſents the effect of the preached goſpel in any place, where it is fully, and faithfully diſpenſed. It begins in a day of ſmall things: but as one after another is converted, their examples, prayers and endeavours render it prevalent, and it diffuſes its influence around; whilſt trembling ſinners flee to take ſhelter under the power, and grace of the Redeemer, as therein exhibited. It may alſo repreſent the effect of the ſmall ſeed of the word, ſo to ſpeak, when dropped into the heart; and the entire change, that at length is effected thereby: but this ſeems more immediately the ſubject of the next parable.

V. 33. *Another*, &c.] (*Luke*, c. xiii. v. 20, 21.) Leaven is generally uſed in ſcripture as the emblem of corrupt doctrine, or wickedneſs; yet here it repreſents the truth, and grace of God: which may warn us not to overſtrain the emblems, and parables of ſcripture. Leaven hath a peculiar taſte, which it communicates by fermentation to the whole maſs of moiſtened flour, however large it may be; provided it remain in it long enough to diffuſe itſelf. Thus the word of God, when put into the heart by the Holy Spirit, gradually changes the man's judgment, diſpoſition, affections, conduct, and converſation. Though theſe were before carnal, ſenſual, proud, ſelfiſh, envious, and ungodly; they gradually receive a heavenly ſavour: the thoughts, deſires, purſuits, and diſcourſe gradually become humble, and holy, and reliſh of heaven: man's worldly affairs, poſſeſſions, comforts, and relative duties are attended to, after a heavenly manner: and this change is progreſſive, till it be perfected in heaven. The former parable repreſents the kingdom of heaven, as ſet up in the world; this ſhews us the nature of it, as it is ſet up in the heart.

V. 34, 35.] (Note, *Pſ.* xlix. v. 4. *Pſ.* lxxviii. v. 2.) That, which the pſalmiſt ſpake of himſelf, when inſtructing the people, under the influence of the Holy Ghoſt, was alſo fulfilled, when Chriſt inſtructed the people by parables: for under theſe dark ſayings, he actually ſet before them, in the moſt effectual manner, thoſe deep myſteries, which had been kept ſecret from the beginning; which neither prophets, nor patriarchs had fully underſtood; and which many of them would afterwards remember to have heard from him, when the event had in part developed their meaning. (*Rom:* c. xvi. v. 25, 26. *Eph.* c. iii. v. 5, 6.)

V. 36—43.] After our Lord had ſpoken theſe other parables, he diſmiſſed the multitude, and retired into an houſe: where his diſciples applied to him to explain to them the parable of the tares; as that ſeems moſt of all to have puzzled, and diſquieted them. In explaining it, our Lord ſhewed them that the field belonged to Him, and that by himſelf, and his ſervants, he would ſow it

41 The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.

43 Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and, for joy thereof, goeth and ſelleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

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with the good ſeed of the goſpel. The field repreſented the world, throughout which the word was to be preached under the goſpel diſpenſation; but the viſible church all over the earth was ſpecially intended. The good ſeed, (or thoſe converts produced from it,) are the children of the kingdom, true believers, the loyal ſubjects of Chriſt, and heirs of heaven: but the produce of the bad ſeed are the children of the wicked one; heretics, hypocrites, anti-chriſtians, antinomians, enthuſiaſts, &c, of all deſcriptions. For as the parable of the ſower repreſents what is amiſs in the viſible church, (even where the true goſpel is faithfully preached) through the ſubtlety of ſatan, and the depravity of the human heart; ſo that of the tares repreſents the further fatal effects of falſe teachers and doctrine, drawing men off from, and prejudicing them againſt, the truth of God. (2 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 3, 4) Theſe falſe, and diſgraceful profeſſors are the genuine produce of falſe doctrine, and diſtorted views of Chriſtianity, which ſatan transformed into an angel of light, by his miniſters of various deſcriptions propagates in the world; even as true believers are the produce of the real goſpel attended by the influence of the Holy Ghoſt. The devil is the enemy of Chriſt, and of men, who ſows this ſeed, perſonally, and by his ſervants, in order to deceive ſouls, and diſgrace the goſpel: he does it by night, and privily; and he is moſt ſucceſsful, when leaſt ſuſpected, and when miniſters and chriſtians are moſt off their watch: and he artfully counterfeits or perverts different parts of the goſpel, to prevent his malicious purpoſe from being detected. The profeſſors, that ſpring from this corrupt ſeed, are not immediately diſcovered; till circumſtances of peculiar trial cauſe their characters to be marked. And though groſs tranſgreſſors, and ſuch as openly oppoſe the fundamentals of the goſpel, are to be ſeparated from the ſociety of the faithful: yet many of the children of the kingdom are ſo defective, and many of the children of the wicked one are ſo plauſible; that an exact diſcrimination cannot be made, by any human diſcernment. In attempting too much, even true believers may be rejected, ſtumbled, or diſcouraged, and great harm may be done: nor muſt any ſeparation by perſecution be attempted; by which far more of the wheat hath been eradicated, than of the tares, ever ſince the officious ſervants, contrary to their Maſter's expreſs command, have employed that unhallowed means of ſeparating them. In general they muſt be let alone, till the harveſt; though the tares diſgrace, and injure the crop. This will be at the end of the world: for though death will ſeparate them as to their ſouls; yet the grand, and public ſeparation will be at the day of judgment. Then the holy angels will be employed as the reapers in this harveſt, by the Son of Man, the incarnate Saviour, and Judge, whoſe creatures, worſhippers, and ſervants they are. Theſe will gather together all the wicked in the world; and eſpecially all heretical, and hypocritical profeſſors, who have cauſed ſcandals, and wrought iniquity, from every part of the church, in order to their deſtruction; even as the tares are bound up in bundles to be burned. Theſe ſhall be caſt into hell, as into a furnace of fire, where will be doleful lamentations, and gnaſhing of teeth in rage, and deſpair, aggravated by the greatneſs of their diſappointment, in falling from that height of privilege, and preſumptuous hope, to which they had attained. When the tempters and the tempted, the deceivers and the deceived, and thoſe that have aſſociated together, and encouraged each other in their deluſions, and iniquities, ſhall be conſigned to the ſame puniſhment, and with deſperate enmity ſhall charge their deſtruction upon each other; then theſe tares will, as it were, be bound in bundles to be burned. But at that time the righteous, the children of the kingdom, (who could not always be exactly diſtinguiſhed from falſe profeſſors, who were liable to manifold infirmities, and expoſed to contempt, reproach, tribulation, and perſecution,) will ſhine forth in the image of Chriſt, with the luſtre of the unclouded noon-day ſun, in the kingdom of their Father; being made unſpeakably glorious, excellent, wiſe, and happy. Theſe are truths univerſally intereſting, and infinitely important: and every man in the world is concerned to attend to them, as he values the ſalvation of his ſoul.

V. 44. *Again,* &c.] We have already ſeen the nature of the kingdom of heaven, as it is ſet up in the world, and in the heart; and as it is counteracted by human depravity, and by falſe doctrine: here we have the reſemblance of it, in reſpect of it's privileges, and bleſſings, and the way, in which we obtain admiſſion into it. In this view of the ſubject, the kingdom of heaven is like an immenſe treaſure: that lies concealed in a field. Many walk over this field, without any idea, that it contains ſuch a treaſure; but when a man hath found it, he conceals his diſcovery, in order that no one may prevent his intended acquiſition; and with great joy at the proſpect of ſpeedily being enriched, he goes and ſells all his property, that he may purchaſe the field, and every thing contained in it. This repreſents the invaluable bleſſings of the goſpel, which ſuffice to render us rich, and happy to all eternity: theſe are contained in the ſacred ſcriptures; yet multitudes have acceſs to them, without any due apprehenſion of this treaſure, which is concealed from them, through their inattention. But when a man is brought to a proper ſenſe of his character, ſtate, and wants, and to be in earneſt about eternal life; he begins to ſearch the word of God with greater

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man ſeeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and ſold all that he had, and bought it.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was caſt into the ſea, and gathered of every kind:

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to ſhore, and ſat down, and gathered the good into veſſels, but caſt the bad away.

49 So ſhall it be at the end of the world: the angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the wicked from among the juſt.

50 And ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.

51 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Have ye underſtood all theſe things? They ſay unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then ſaid he unto them, Therefore every ſcribe *which is* inſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſure, *things* new and old.

tained, and becomes decided at any rate to obtain it, if he can: his joy at this diſcovery is moderated by his fear of coming ſhort of ſalvation, and he uſes every precaution againſt it: he renounces all hopes, claims, purſuits, intereſts, or pleaſures, that are incompatible with an intereſt in the ſalvation of the goſpel; and he counts all but loſs, that he may win Chriſt, who, in his ſeveral characters, and offices, is this treaſure. Though nothing can be given as the price of this ſalvation, yet much muſt be given up for the ſake of it: nor can a man be indeed Chriſt's diſciple, who is not ready, as called to it, to forſake all that he hath, from a ſenſe of His preciouſneſs, and love. Thus men enter the kingdom, and obtain poſſeſſion of its privileges: and when they have purchaſed the field, and begin to examine the treaſure; they find it like a mine of gold, which is more, and more rich, the longer, and the deeper it is wrought. (*Prov.* c. ii. v. 1—6. c. iii. v. 13—18.)

V. 45, 46.] This parable is nearly of the ſame import, as the preceding: if there be any difference, the former repreſents all ſpiritual bleſſings, as they are communicated to us through the ſcriptures; this latter, as they are laid up in Chriſt, to whom the ſcriptures direct us for them. Every man is a merchant, who is ſeeking goodly pearls: all men ſeek happineſs, and each deems his favourite object a precious jewel: but when the convinced ſinner has Chriſt diſcovered to his ſoul, as the all gracious Saviour of the loſt, he ſees Him to be a pearl of great price, and all things elſe become comparatively worthleſs in his eſtimation. Whatever it coſt him, he is determined to purchaſe this invaluable pearl, which will ſurely enrich the poſſeſſor to all eternity: but if he obtain not this prize, he ſees that eternal miſery is his portion: he counts all things therefore but loſs, and dung, that he may win Chriſt; and being determined rather to part with riches, reputation, liberty, or even life, than deny the Saviour; and giving up all other pleas, and hopes, but thoſe that ariſe from his perſon, undertaking, ſufferings, and mediation; He obtains admiſſion into the kingdom, and to the participation of all its bleſſings: which they can never do, who will not part with their worldly idols, or ſelf-confident hopes for Chriſt and his ſalvation. (*Prov.* c. viii. v. 10, 11. c. xxiii. v. 23.)

V. 47—50.] This parable ſeems to compriſe the meaning both of that of the ſower, and that of the tares, under an alluſion to thoſe things, about which ſeveral of the apoſtles had been moſt converſant. The means, uſed for repleniſhing the Meſſiah's kingdom, would reſemble the caſting of a large net into the ſea, (an emblem of this turbulent, and wicked world;) which being filled, and drawn to ſhore, would be found to contain valuable fiſhes, and ſuch as were worthleſs; either of a bad ſort, or dead, and putrid. Theſe the fiſhermen would at laſt ſeparate, gathering the good into their veſſels, and throwing the bad away. Thus multitudes have been brought to profeſs chriſtianity; and they live, and worſhip in the viſible church, as long as they continue in this world: but at the laſt the angels of Chriſt ſhall make an exact diſcrimination between the good, and the bad; gathering true believers into heaven, and caſting worthleſs profeſſors, as well as other wicked men, into hell.

V. 51, 52.] Our Lord ſeems to have ſpoken theſe latter parables to his diſciples apart from the multitude; and he then demanded of them, whether they underſtood the things intended by them? To which they anſwered, (perhaps too confidently,) that they did: yet it is probable, that they had a general apprehenſion of his meaning in them; as there was no immediate reference to His ſufferings, and death: for it is evident that they were far more clouded by their prejudices, in reſpect of his prieſtly office, than about any other part of his character, and work. He therefore concluded the whole, with another parable, immediately relating to their office in the church. The Scribes were the teachers of the Jews at that time: and the apoſtles, and other miniſters were to be the teachers under the chriſtian diſpenſation. Every one of them therefore ought to be a Scribe well inſtructed in every thing, that related to the kingdom of heaven. This he repreſented to them under the ſimilitude of an houſholder, who has a large family to provide for: ſuch a one, will take care to have a ſtock of proviſions in hand, for their ſupply, to which he will be adding continually ſuch things, as he judges to be needful, or uſeful. Thus the people would depend on the apoſtles, as ſtewards of the myſteries of God, who were to diſpenſe to them the proviſion for the nouriſhment of their ſouls. They ſhould therefore carefully treaſure up in their memory, and heart, all that they had learned, and add

53 And it came to paſs, *that* when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe parables, he departed thence.

54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their ſynagogue, inſomuch that they were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, Whence hath this *man* this wiſdom, and *theſe* mighty works?

55 Is not this the carpenter's ſon? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his ſiſters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all theſe things?

57 And they were offended in him. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour, ſave in his own country, and in his own houſe.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief.

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to their fund of knowledge continually, deriving freſh inſtruction from all they heard, ſaw, or experienced. Then they would be able to bring forth old truth, with new obſervations, inferences, illuſtrations, and exhortations; and to lead the people forward in knowledge, as they made progreſs themſelves. Some reference may alſo be had to the old, and new diſpenſations.

V. 53—58.] (*Mark*, c. iv. ver. 35.) St. Mark expreſsly fixes our Lord's croſſing the ſea of Tiberias, to go over to the Gadarenes, to the evening of the day, on which he ſpake the parable of the ſower: though St. Matthew records it in a different connexion. (c. viii. v. 23—34.) He therefore departed thence by ſhip, when he had delivered all theſe parables. However on another occaſion he came into his own country; (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 1—6:) and there he taught the people in the ſynagogue; thus giving the people of Nazareth another opportunity of hearing his doctrine, and applying for the benefit of thoſe miracles, of which they muſt have heard a great deal. (*Luke*, c. iv. ver. 16—30.) And indeed the authority, and wiſdom, with which he ſpake, aſtoniſhed his former neighbours; and led them to enquire where he had obtained the wiſdom, which he ſhewed; and the power, by which he wrought ſuch miracles? But as they were acquainted, as they ſuppoſed, with his low parentage, education, and manner of life; and knew that he was not brought up under the ſcribes, and had not been authoriſed by the chief prieſts; they perverſely objected thoſe things to him, which indeed were the moſt evident proofs, that he was ſent of God. For they enquired in a cavilling manner, whether this were not the poor carpenter's Son, whoſe mother Mary ſtill was living in obſcurity among them? And whether ſuch and ſuch poor perſons were not his brethren, and ſiſters, or near relations? And when this could not be denied, they ſtumbled at it, as if it had invalidated all, that he had ſpoken, and done! Whereas it plainly evinced, that his wiſdom, and power were not from man, but immediately from heaven. Probably they did not know, that he was born at Bethlehem, and of the family of David: however they did not reliſh a Meſſiah, who appeared with ſuch external meanneſs, and poverty. Upon which Jeſus obſerved to them, that a prophet was ſeldom without honour, except in his own country, and among his own relations: they, who have moſt known, and converſed with the man, are leaſt diſpoſed to reſpect the prophet, or the miniſter. He ſeems to them to take too much upon him, in authoritatively addreſſing their conſciences; they are diſpleaſed with his pretenſions, and the credit that he acquires: and various circumſtances of no importance, reſpecting his former occupations, and appearance, recur to their memory, and prejudice them againſt all he ſays. If it was thus, in reſpect of Chriſt, whoſe wiſdom, holineſs, and goodneſs were perfect; merely from external circumſtances: how muſt it be with others, who, alas! generally moſt betray their infirmities to thoſe, who are moſt familiarly acquainted with them? However the unbelief of the Nazarenes precluded them from ſharing the benefit of our Lord's power, and grace: few applied to him for healing, and he deemed it not conſiſtent with his wiſdom, and dignity to obtrude his miracles, and preſence upon them: and ſo he retired, and left them to their prejudices; and as far as we can find, he went among them no more.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our divine Teacher orders every thing in that manner, as beſt tends to the edification of the humble, teachable, and attentive diſciple: but at the ſame time he leaves occaſions of falling, in the way of the careleſs, the captious, the ſelf-ſufficient, and preſumptuous. We have not only his word to inſtruct us; but, when we meet with difficulties, we are allowed, and required, to apply to him privately, for the teaching of his holy Spirit: and to thoſe, who thus wait on him, it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, which are concealed from all other perſons under an impenetrable veil. We ſhould therefore fear above all things an unteachable diſpoſition, the reſult of ignorance, folly, pride, and a carnal mind. To thoſe, that are under this influence, the things of the Spirit of God appear fooliſhneſs: and by deriding, reviling, and oppoſing them, they provoke the Lord to leave them under the power of a ſtrong deluſion, to their final perdition. Such men may have excellent abilities, and profound erudition, and they may poſſeſs many valuable advantages: but not having humble faith, and love, all elſe will ſoon be taken from them, or turn to their unſpeakable detriment. But the meaneſt, and moſt illiterate believer is happy: his ſenſes, and faculties are bleſſed, they are employed to good purpoſe, and are inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God: under the chriſtian diſpenſation, we all enjoy that bleſſed light, and hear that joyful ſound, which prophets, and righteous men of old, deſired to ſee, and hear, and were not able; and if we have grace to make a proper uſe of our advantages; more knowledge and wiſdom will be given us, and we ſhall have abundance. But do any deſire

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CHAP. XIV.

Contains 1*ſt. Herod concluding Jeſus to be John Baptiſt riſen from the dead; with an account of John's impriſonment, and death, through the reſentment of Herod, Herodias, and her daughter, &c.* 1--12. 2*d. Jeſus departing to a deſert place, and miraculouſly feeding the multitudes,* 13---21. 3*d. His retiring to a mountain to pray, having ſent the diſ-*

theſe bleſſings, who are not able to aſcertain, that they have received them? Let ſuch perſons wait on the Lord for his teaching, and apply themſelves to the ſcriptures, and to prayer: let them not cloſe their own eyes, and ears, and then God will not cloſe them: and let them remember that God's purpoſes, and promiſes are perfectly conſiſtent, and that "every one that aſk-"eth, receiveth." As for thoſe, who harden themſelves againſt the truth, they can have no reaſon to complain, if God leave them to their perverſe choice, 'till they be ſo blinded that they can neither ſee, hear, be converted, or be healed. Yet matters are laid open enough in the word of God, that all, who have ears may hear: the goſpel is propoſed to men in general: the good ſeed is to be ſown in every part of the field; though it can only bear fruit upon the good ground. But let all, who preſume to preach, be careful to ſow the "word of the "kingdom," and to keep this good ſeed as free from every intermixture as poſſible: let them ſow it liberally, for they may have it in abundance; let them be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, whether men will hear, or forbear. For theſe things they are accountable; but not for their ſucceſs, except as they prevent it by their own miſconduct: nor ſhould they be ſurpriſed or diſcouraged, if many hear in vain, or to bad purpoſe; for this was the caſe, when our Lord himſelf condeſcended to preach the word.

We ſhould however eſpecially look to ourſelves, that we may aſcertain what ſort of hearers of the goſpel we are. We ought to beg of God to prepare our hearts as good ground; to teach us the value of his word; to deliver our minds from pride, and prejudice; to preſerve us from wandring thoughts, and vain imaginations; and to impreſs us with a ſerious and earneſt deſire to learn of him, all thoſe things, which pertain to our ſalvation. For want of thus giving earneſt heed to the truths, that are delivered; a multitude of hearers of the pure goſpel, receive the ſeed by the way-ſide; thus ſatan immediately catches it out of their hearts, and no good effect can follow. Though this may not abſolutely be the caſe with us; yet we need to be humbled by the recollection, that it too often is ſo. It it the great object of our enemy to deprive us of the bleſſing, totally, or in part: our's therefore ought to be, to diſappoint him. Having therefore gone to hear the word with a mind prepared by recollection, and devotion; and having attended on it with ſerious, and humble reverence; we ſhould ſeek to preſerve it in our hearts, by retirement, meditation, prayer, or pious converſation. But there are more plauſible paths to ruin, than thoſe of the careleſs, the infidel, or the profligate: numbers of thoſe, who are greatly affected by the preached goſpel, and who are led to make a high profeſſion, with much confidence, joy, and violent zeal, are found by the event to have no root in themſelves, no depth in their experience: for without deep humiliation, reverential fear of God, and a ſolemn ſenſe of eternal things, of the evil of ſin, and the loſt eſtate of our ſouls; all high affections reſemble the joy of a madman, who deems all the magnificent edifices, that he ſees, to be his own. Nothing can ſo grow in a unhumbled heart, as to ſtand the noon-day ſun of tribulation, and perſecution, in all their varied forms: many, on ſuch occaſions go out from among God's people, becauſe they are not of them: whilſt others, who are upright, but not diſcerning, are ready to ſtumble at the truths of God, becauſe ſuch men ſeem to be exceptions to them. Yet if this ſuperficial kind of religion will not ſtand theſe trials, how will it endure in the day of judgment? But let us beware of the thorns, as well as of the rock: many a man has a name to live, whom God ſees to be dead in ſin: many deep convictions, and ſerious purpoſes are choked by the love of the world, and the things that are in the world; (1 *John*, c. ii. v. 15—17;) thus no fruit is brought to perfection. Such profeſſors often draw their hope of heaven from the goſpel; but their preſent comfort is derived from the world, and their religion itſelf is ſubſervient to carnality: the kingdom of God, and it's righteouſneſs are placed *laſt*; and the getting, keeping, and ſpending of deceitful riches; or anxiety about ſecular affairs, cheat them of their time, and at laſt of their ſouls; for unleſs the goſpel render our ſouls fruitful, it will never bring us to glory. Let us then continually watch, and pray againſt theſe fatal deluſions; and keep at a diſtance from any meaſure, or degree of this pernicious attachment to worldly objects, which muſt proportionably prevent our fruitfulneſs, and weaken our evidence. We ſhould therefore be inſtant in prayer for that honeſt, and good heart, which is the only ſoil, in which the good ſeed will ſpring up, and grow, and ripen with a rich increaſe. This is the grand diſtinction betwixt the chriſtian, and all other men: and the preachers of the goſpel do as much towards enſuring ſucceſs to their labours, when they are employed in earneſt prayer to the Lord, thus to prepare the people's hearts for the ſeed, as when they are faithfully diſpenſing the word of life; and in this part of their work, all that love the ſouls of men, may afford them much aſſiſtance. Nor let it be forgotten, that there are different degrees of fruitfulneſs among true chriſtians, to which their own preſent comfort, or future glory will be proportioned: we ſhould therefore "abide in Chriſt, that we may bring "forth much fruit, even an hundred fold," that God may be glorified, and that all may know whoſe diſciples we are. (*John*, c. xv. ver. 1—8.)

We ſhould alſo recollect, that beſides the dangers, to which men are expoſed, through the deceitfulneſs of their own hearts, and the ſubtlety of ſatan, even where the good ſeed is ſown; there is alſo another ſet of dangers, from the bad ſeed, which the enemy is continually endeavouring to ſow in the ſame field; whence innumerable offences, and deluſions originate. Though the ſervants be as watchful as poſſible, this enemy will find time to work: but his chief advantage ariſes from their drowſineſs, and unſuſpecting inattention. No wonder *ciples away in the ſhip; their being toſſed with a tempeſt; his coming to them walking on the ſea; their terror and ſurpriſe; Peter obtaining leave to come to him on the waters, begining to ſink, preſerved, and rebuked by Jeſus; his entranee into the ſhip, the ceaſing of the ſtorm, and their worſhipping him as the Son of God,* 22---33. *4th. Chriſt healing all the ſick, that were brought to him, by their touching the hem of his garment,* 34---36.

AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jeſus,

2 And ſaid unto his ſervants, This is John the Baptiſt; he is riſen from the dead; and

then that ſo many ſpring up, in the viſible church, whoſe pernicious hereſies, and unchriſtian ſpirit, or or immoral conduct, evidently prove them to be the children of the wicked one. The enemies of the goſpel will indeed charge all theſe wild opinions, and enormities upon the truth itſelf; as if theſe profeſſors grew from the ſeed, which Chriſt ſows in his field: and this anſwers ſatan's end, for many are thus prejudiced, and periſh. But the ſervants know that they ſpring from a contrary ſeed; and often wonder, as well as grieve, to find tares, where wheat was ſown. This brings them to complain to, and conſult, their Lord: and he ſhews them, that an enemy hath done this. It is indeed our duty to counteract by all proper means, the effects of theſe fatal deluſions, which ſatan privily propagates by his ſervants in every part of the viſible church: yet we may be too officious, in attempting to make a complete ſeparation. This exceeds our ability; and we ſhall be in danger of uſing improper inſtruments, and of rooting up the wheat along with the tares: and thus ſatan hath ſucceeded in bringing in furious controverſies, and accurſed perſecutions, under pretence of oppoſing and eradicating hereſies; to the unſpeakable detriment, and reproach of the chriſtian church. Indeed both muſt in general be left to grow together unto the harveſt; and a perfect purity in the church muſt not be expected till we come to heaven. At length however an awful ſeparation will be made: and then the angels of our glorious judge will gather out of his kingdom, all that offend, and work iniquity, and caſt them into a furnace of fire, where ſhall be wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth. What a dreadful event will this be to the hypocrite, and the deceiver, who will periſh miſerably with all thoſe, who have been ſtumbled, prejudiced, deceived, and hardened by them! But what a bleſſed event will this be for the true believer, who will then ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of his Father! May we be found of that happy number! And may increaſing numbers attend to, and conſider theſe things for their good!

As eternal life is ſet before us in the ſcripture, like a treaſure hid in a field; may we diligently ſearch that ſacred book, that we may become acquainted with its invaluable contents: and let us be very circumſpect, that we be not deprived, or come ſhort of, the felicity, to which it directs us. And as all the ſalvation of God is laid up in Chriſt, our great Prophet, Prieſt, and King; let us determine, by the grace of God, to part with all that we have, that we may be made poſſeſſors of this ineſtimable treaſure. What worthleſs pebbles are all worldly things compared with this Pearl of great price! Why then ſhould we heſitate to give up all for him? He, who is thus diſpoſed, will never come ſhort of Him, though he may often fear, that he ſhall; but he that prefers any thing to Chriſt, will not obtain his unſearchable riches, though he often hopes that he may. Many ſuch are encloſed in the goſpel net; and the fiſhers of men will find themſelves miſtaken in them, when the grand diſcrimination ſhall be made: yet let them go on patiently with their work, for their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. From ſmall beginnings we may hope that a large increaſe will ariſe, perhaps after our deceaſe: the grain of muſtard-ſeed, which we have ſown, and deemed to be loſt, may at length ſpring up, and become a tree: the leaven, that ſeemed buried in the hearts of the hearers, may be gradually diffuſing it's influence, till the whole lump be leavened; and thus many may hereafter appear to be caſt into the very mould, and transformed into the very temper of the goſpel, of whom perhaps we now have little hopes. But we ſhould often ſuppoſe, that our Teacher enquires of us, whether we have underſtood all theſe things? And we ſhould endeavour to be able, on good grounds to anſwer him, "Yea Lord." If we would thus be Scribes well inſtructed unto the kingdom of God, (as ſet up in the world, and in the heart, as counteracted by human depravity, and counterfeited by ſatan's artifice; and as maintained by the watchful care, the wiſdom, and power of our King,) we muſt be always learners. Our place is at Chriſt's feet, and we muſt never think ourſelves got above it: we muſt daily learn the old leſſons over again, and learn new leſſons alſo: and we muſt ſeek to have an increaſing fund of knowledge, and wiſdom, the reſult of ſtudy, experience and obſervation; that we may render old ſubjects attractive, and intereſting, by new elucidations and applications of them.

Yet let none wonder if ſuch faithful, and able miniſters are regarded with contempt, and enmity, even where they labour moſt to do good, or where they might be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs the greateſt influence. Men are ſeldom diſpoſed to be taught by their neighbours, or relations, or by their equals, or inferiors, in worldly circumſtances. Even the wiſdom, power, holineſs and beneficence of Chriſt, could not preſerve him from the moſt illiberal prejudices, and contempt, in his own city, and amongſt his own relations. It is a general caſe, that the truths ſpoken are diſregarded, in proportion as the ſpeaker is known; even where there is no reaſon for it, in his character, and conduct: for the carnal heart is glad of any pretence for rejecting the ſpiritual word of God, which it abhors. Thus, whilſt the ſervant of the Lord loſes his labour, and is treated with contempt; men loſe the benefit of the goſpel, yea loſe their own ſouls; and the power, and grace of the Saviour are of no avail to them, becauſe of their unbelief.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1, 2.] (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 14--29.

therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him.

3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in priſon for Herodias's ſake, his brother Philip's wife.

4 For John ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, becauſe they counted him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleaſed Herod.

7 Whereupon he promiſed with an oath to give her whatſoever ſhe would aſk.

8 And ſhe, being before inſtructed of her mother, ſaid, Give me here John Baptiſt's head in a charger.

9 And the king was ſorry: nevertheleſs for the oath's ſake, and them which ſat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

10 And he ſent, and beheaded John in the priſon.

11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damſel: and ſhe brought *it* to her mother.

12 And his diſciples came and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jeſus.

Luke, c. ix. v. 7—9.) John was not caſt into priſon, till ſome time after Chriſt had entered on his public miniſtry. (*John*, c. iii. v. 22—36. c. iv. ver. 1—3.) He is ſuppoſed to have lain above a year in priſon; and it muſt have been a good while after his death, that Herod could conclude, that he was riſen again to perform the miracles, of which he heard. We may therefore ſuppoſe that ſeveral years had now elapſed ſince Chriſt's baptiſm, probably more than harmonizers in general can make out. It is at the ſame time wonderful, that Herod, and his courtiers ſhould not have heard of his miracles, and preaching, previous to the death of John; or that they ſhould have utterly diſregarded the report, as they muſt have done; ſeeing they could not otherwiſe have ſuppoſed, that Jeſus was John riſen from the dead. However at this time Herod had a more full account brought him of the miracles of Jeſus; and, forgeting all, that he might previouſly have heard, he concluded that it was John, whom he had beheaded, who was riſen again endued with greater powers than before; and probably his guilty conſcience expected, that he would ſoon come, and take vengeance upon him: nor could he conceal theſe humiliating convictions from his ſervants. Herod is called the Tetrarch, and afterwards the king. (v. 9.) He was the ſon of Herod the great, whoſe dominions were divided into four parts among his ſons after his deceaſe; and the word Tetrarch ſignifies the governor of the fourth part: Judea, one fourth in this diviſion, ſoon fell under the rule of a Roman governor, and other alterations ſoon took place. However Herod: who was ſurnamed Antipas, was allowed to hold his tetrarchy, in which he was as much a king, as his father had been, only his dominions were ſmaller. Some think, that he was a Sadducee, becauſe what is called the leaven of the Sadducees, is elſewhere called the leaven of Herod: (c. xvi. v. 6. *Mark*, c. viii. v. 15;) Yet the Herodians ſeem to have been a diſtinct ſect from the Sadducees. However this perſuaſion of Herod ſhews exceedingly the power of conſcience over the worſt of men, in defiance of all their principles, and conduct.

V. 3—12.] The Evangeliſt, having mentioned this circumſtance, made a digreſſion to give an account of John's impriſonment, and death. We learn from a parallel paſſage, (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 14—29,) that Herod had taken much notice of John, and had attended to his inſtructions with apparent ſatisfaction, and done many things at his inſtance; regarding him as a holy man of God: but this did not ſatisfy him, ſo long as he retained Herodias his brother's wife. Joſephus ſays, that Herodias was grand-daughter to Herod the great; and conſequently ſhe was niece both to her former huſband Philip, and to Herod, with whom ſhe at this time lived. Herod had divorced his own wife in order to take her; and her huſband Philip was ſtill living, as well as the daughter, which he had by her. So that no connexion could be more contrary to the law of God, and all decorum, than this was. John therefore, being a prophet, and no courtier, plainly reproved Herod for his conduct in this, and other particulars: it is probable many would cenſure him, and think, that he ſhould, for a time at leaſt, have connived at this irregularity, to which kings often deem themſelves privileged; ſeeing Herod was in other reſpects ſo hopeful, and favourable. But John knew nothing of ſuch reſerves, or exceptions, being an Elijah in intrepidity, and faithfulneſs. His conduct therefore greatly offended Herod, and Herodias ſtill more; ſo that John was caſt into priſon, as a common malefactor. (*Luke*, c. iii. v. 19, 20:) and by the inſtigation of Herodias, (who was another Jezebel in this matter,) Herod was deſirous of putting him to death; even contrary to his own conſcience, for he feared him as a holy, and righteous man: however he was reſtrained by the fear of the people, who deemed John to be a prophet; and Herod dreaded leſt they ſhould make an inſurrection, if he proceeded to extremities againſt him. Theſe motives induced him for a time to reſiſt the importunity of Herodias; though he kept him ſtill in priſon, and Herodias retained her malice, and waited her opportunity of wreaking her vengeance on the oppoſer of all her favourite ſchemes; and ſhe probably deemed his reproof of Herod an inſult on her character. In this poſture of affairs Herod celebrated his birth-day, entertaining all his nobles with great magnificence; and Herodias's daughter, (whoſe name was Salome, and who was probably poſſeſſed of all exterior

13 When Jeſus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ſhip into a deſert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14 And Jeſus went forth, and ſaw a great multitude, and was moved with compaſſion toward them, and he healed their ſick.

15 And when it was evening, his diſciples came to him, ſaying, This a deſert place, and the time is now paſt; ſend the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themſelves victuals.

16 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17 And they ſay unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fiſhes.

18 He ſaid, Bring them hither to me.

19 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the graſs, and took the five loaves, and two fiſhes, and, looking up to heaven, he bleſſed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baſkets full.

21 And they that had eaten were about five thouſand men, beſide women and children.

accompliſhments,) contrary to general cuſtom, came in, and danced before all the company, in order to honour the gueſts, and grace the entertainment. This conduct ſo delighted Herod, who might be in ſome degree heated with wine, that he raſhly and impiouſly promiſed her, with repeated oaths, that he would give her whatever ſhe thought proper to aſk, though it were equal in value to the half of his kingdom! Thus profuſely would he reward a worthleſs dance; whilſt a priſon and death were the recompence of the man of God, who honeſtly ſought the ſalvation of his ſoul! Upon this propoſal, Salome retired to conſult with her mother, in what way the moſt advantage might be made of it: and revenge getting the better of all other paſſions, Herodias perſuaded, and urged her daughter, (who would be reluctant to give up all thoſe objects, which would be deſirable to her youthful mind,) to demand that the head of John the Baptiſt might be immediately brought to her in a charger, or large diſh! When Herod heard this ſtrange requeſt he was ſorry; probably not ſo much from a deſire of preſerving John's life, but from the fear of conſequences, and from the oppoſition of his own reluctant conſcience: and we may conclude, that if Salome had aſked any thing evidently of material detriment to his intereſt, and authority, he would have deviſed ſome method of evading her requeſt. But though he was in ſome ſenſe ſorry, that this demand had been made ſo ſuddenly, and on this occaſion; yet he ſeems not to have been very unwilling to get rid of John: and therefore pleading his oath, and his regard for his gueſts, he commanded his immediate execution. Herod's oath was raſh, and profane in the extreme; and when it was found to involve ſuch conſequences, it became abſolutely unlawful to obſerve it: he ought to have repented of his impiety, and with abhorrence, to have rejected Salome's application. Nor was it very honourable to his gueſts to ſuppoſe, that they would be offended, if he refuſed to murder one of the moſt holy men in his dominions, through a raſh engagement in their preſence. Had Salome demanded the execution of ſome eſteemed chieftain amongſt them, who had diſpleaſed Herodias, they would doubtleſs have ariſen to oppoſe the demand: but probably John was as obnoxious to many of them, as to Herodias; and his death appears to have been acceptable to them. Accordingly he was ſuddenly, and ſpeedily diſmiſſed to his eternal reſt; and his head, reeking in it's blood, was brought as a ſtrange preſent to Salome, and by her given to her mother, who is reported to have treated it with indignant barbarity. This horrid ſpectacle could gratify even female malevolence: and it was cuſtomary for the heads of criminals to be thus brought to thoſe who condemned them, in order to certify their execution. Thus by a ſurpriſing diſpenſation of providence, this moſt eminent man of God was cut off in the prime of life, and fitneſs for uſefulneſs, to gratify the malice of an inceſtuous adultereſs, to recompenſe the vain exhibition of a giddy young female, by the orders of a raſh, perhaps intoxicated prince, and to humour the companions of his revels! But they could not long enjoy this impious, and cruel triumph: and it is recorded that Salome had her head cut off by the ice, through its breaking as ſhe paſſed over it: Herod was engaged in a diſaſtrous war on the account of Herodias, and he was at length expelled his territories, and they both died in exile in a diſtant land. When John's diſciples heard of this cataſtrophe, they came, and were allowed to take the body of John; and having honourably buried it, they went to inform Jeſus of what had taken place.

V. 13, 14.] (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 30. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 10, 11.) This ſeems to refer not to our Lord's hearing of John's death; but to Herod's ſuppoſition, that He was John Baptiſt, ariſen from the dead; being a continuation of the ſubject from the ſecond verſe. About the ſame time the apoſtles returned from their circuit; and Jeſus to avoid obſervation, as well as to give them ſome relaxation, departed in a boat into an unfrequented place, on the ſhore of the ſea of Tiberias: but the people, hearing which way he bent his courſe, followed him by land, to a great diſtance from their cities, and villages. And when he ſaw them, he did not object to their intruſion, but compaſſionately healed all the ſick perſons, that they had been able to bring along with them; as well as taught them many things.

V. 15—21. (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 35—44. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 12—17. *John*, c. vi. v. 5—14.) This miracle is recorded by all the evangeliſts, without any material va-

22 And ſtraightway Jeſus conſtrained his diſciples to get into a ſhip, and to go before him unto the other ſide, while he ſent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had ſent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ſhip was now in the midſt of the ſea, toſſed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jeſus went unto them, walking on the ſea.

26 And when the diſciples ſaw him walking on the ſea, they were troubled, ſaying, It is a ſpirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But ſtraightway Jeſus ſpake unto them, ſaying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter anſwered him and ſaid, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

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riation. When Chriſt had taught the multitudes, till the day began to decline; ſome of the apoſtles repreſented to him, that, as the place was deſert, and the proper time of teaching them was paſt, it would be expedient to diſmiſs them, that they might reach the neighbouring villages before night, and thus procure lodging, and victuals. To this He anſwered, that there was no need for them to depart, in order to be fed: for *they* ought to give them ſomething to eat. After this general intimation, he aſked Philip, (in order to make trial of his faith,) whence they ſhould get food enough for the multitudes before them? To which Philip replied, (ſome others perhaps concurring with him,) that, if they had the opportunity of purchaſing what proviſions they choſe, it would take 200 penny-worth of bread, (near ſeven pounds ſterling,) to buy a little for every one of them; intimating that this was more than their ſcanty fund could afford. They ſaid alſo, that there were not in that place more than five barley loaves, and two fiſhes, which a lad had to diſpoſe of; and would he have them go to the diſtant towns to buy them victuals? But Jeſus ordered this ſmall proviſion to be brought to him; and having, with up-lifted eyes, returned thanks for, and prayed for a bleſſing, on it, (which we may ſuppoſe to have been his conſtant cuſtom;) he began to break and diſtribute the bread, and the fiſhes to the diſciples, that they might diſpenſe it to the multitude, as if there had been a ſufficient quantity: and it is probable, that the portion given to each of the apoſtles continued to increaſe, by his creating power, in their hands, as they diſpenſed it, till the whole multitude were ſufficed. When this was done, he ordered them to gather together the fragments that remained, that nothing might be loſt; when they found they had twelve baſkets full left, one for each apoſtle, which ſeems to have been far more, than they had at firſt; and on theſe broken pieces of barley bread and dried fiſh, we may ſuppoſe that Chriſt and his diſciples made afterwards many a contented, and thankful meal. As the men were placed on the graſs, by hundreds, and by fifties, or an hundred in rank, and fifty in file, (as we ſay;) ſo it appeared that 5000 men had thus been fed; beſides women and children, who were arranged in a ſeparate company. We ſhall ſee, in the proper place, that this miracle is replete with practical inſtruction.

V. 22—27.] (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 45—52. *John*, c. vi. v. 15—21.) The multitudes, that had been thus miraculouſly fed, concluding Jeſus to be their promiſed Meſſiah, were about to uſe coercive meaſures to place Him as a King over them, that he might lead them forth to victory, and proſperity, according to their carnal notions: and as the apoſtles themſelves might be diſpoſed to concur in theſe meaſures; our Lord choſe to break them by conſtraining the latter to put to ſea without him; and then he diſmiſſed the people, who for the preſent retired quietly to their own homes. After this, inſtead of ſeeking for ſome place, in which to reſt after his fatigues, he retired to a mountain to pray. He had no ſins to be pardoned, or ſubdued, as we all have: but he had manifold, and immenſe ſervices, temptations, and ſufferings to endure; through which he was to paſs, as man, in dependance on the divine power, truth, and love; He had the cauſe of his diſciples, and that of his church to plead; his delight was in this ſacred communion with the Father; and he acted as our Surety, and Example. So that when the evening was come, and the day cloſed, he was upon a mountain alone; and there he ſeems to have continued in this employment, during the greateſt part of the night. In the mean time the diſciples met with tempeſtous weather, and a contrary wind, and toiled hard to little purpoſe; whilſt his abſence would increaſe their uneaſineſs: yet he ſaw their difficulties, and was praying for them. At length, in the fourth watch of the night, (which began three hours before ſunriſe,) he came to them, in the moſt ſurpriſing manner, walking upon the tempeſtuous waves, as if on ſolid ground This was an atteſtation, that He was the God of nature, the Lord of the creation; (*Job.* c. ix. v. 8;) and it was an emblem of his power over all the troubles, temptations, and perſecutions, which diſquiet his church. But when the diſciples ſaw a human form upon the ſurface of the ſea, approaching to them, they were thrown into a new conſternation: for, as they could not conceive that any living man could thus walk on the water, they concluded, that it was a ſpirit; either the apparition of ſome deceaſed perſon foreboding evil to them, or an apoſtate ſpirit coming to do them ſome miſchief. To allay their terror Jeſus ſpake to them with his uſual voice, aſſuring them, that He, their Lord and Friend, was coming to their relief; and that they ought to be encouraged, and not affrighted at his approach.

V. 28—33.] Peter ſeems from the firſt to have been a man of great integrity, and to have had very exalted thoughts of Chriſt, and a cordial affection to him: but he was of a ſanguine temper, and not deeply acquainted

29 And he ſaid, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ſhip, he walked on the water, to go to Jeſus.

30 But when he ſaw the wind boiſterous, he was afraid; and beginning to ſink, he cried, ſaying, Lord, ſave me.

31 And immediately Jeſus ſtretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and ſaid unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ſhip, the wind ceaſed.

33 Then they that were in the ſhip came and worſhipped him, ſaying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Genneſaret.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they ſent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diſeaſed;

36 And beſought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

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with his own heart; he was therefore always moſt forward to ſpeak, to propoſe, to object, or attempt. When he ſaw Chriſt walking on the ſea, he found himſelf excited to a very high confidence in Him; and with a mixture of faith, and ſelf-preference, he deſired permiſſion to come to Him on the water; probably expecting a commendation of the ſtrength of his faith, for this ſelf-impoſed ſervice. But our Lord to ſhew him his weakneſs, and to teach them, and us all, many uſeful leſſons, bid him come, and Peter without heſitation, left the veſſel, to walk to his Maſter on the unſtable waves. As long as his faith, and attention were fixed upon the divine power of Chriſt, he was actually enabled to do this: but the boiſterouſneſs of the elements ſoon drew off his attention, and ſtaggered his faith, and then he began to ſink: yet ſtill he relied on his Lord for deliverance in this emergency, and in anſwer to his application, Jeſus caught him by the hand, and brought him ſafe to the veſſel; at the ſame time rebuking him, as one of little faith, becauſe he doubted for a moment, of his power to preſerve him in that perilous ſituation, to which he had called him. As ſoon as Jeſus had entered the veſſel, the wind ſubſided; and the apoſtles, being more impreſſed with this, than any of his preceding miracles, came with one accord, and proſtrated themſelves before Him as worſhippers, declaring, that of a truth he was the Son of God: nor did he in the leaſt decline this honour, which they rendered to him.

V. 34—36.] (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 53—56.) The land of Genneſaret lay to the weſt of the ſea of Tiberias: and as the inhabitants had previous knowledge of Jeſus, they flocked to him with their ſick, who only deſired leave to touch the hem, or fringe of his garment; and as this was done in faith, and expectation, they were all immediately, and perfectly healed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The terror, and reproach of conſcience, which the moſt daring offenders cannot abſolutely ſhake off, are both a demonſtration of a future judgment, and an anticipation of future miſery. *They* are commonly moſt callous in ſin, who have moſt rebelled againſt the light of God's word, and their own convictions; and who have quarrelled with religion, and it's miniſters (contrary to their own better judgment,) for the ſake of ſome favourite iniquity, which at all adventures they are determined to retain. This, often proves the ſource of the moſt envenomed malice, eſpecially when companions in vice prove tempters to revenge, and murder. When the ſervants of Chriſt, by their faithful doctrine, and reproofs, interfere with the ſenſual, intereſted, or ambitious ſchemes of abandoned tranſgreſſors; their reſentment will often prove more powerful even than their moſt domineering luſt: not only are *men* on ſuch occaſions regardleſs of equity, humanity, or truth; but even *women* may be wrought up to ſuch a pitch of fury, and vengeance, as to thirſt for blood more than all thoſe objects, to which they would otherwiſe be moſt addicted; and to ſacrifice all other opening proſpects to this horrid paſſion. Yet the man of God, being fully aware of the conſequences of his faithfulneſs, muſt rebuke even the greateſt with all authority, when he is fairly called to it. In leſſer matters indeed, tenderneſs, and caution, as well as prudence, are requiſite: but when men pretend to favour the goſpel, and yet live in evident evil, we muſt in no degree abet their deluſion, or the diſgrace they bring upon the cauſe, by our connivance, or ſilence; but muſt fairly deliver our meſſage, and diſcharge our conſciences, declaring ſuch conduct to be abſolutely unlawful, and inconſiſtent with a profeſſion of godlineſs. For this is the right hand, which muſt be cut off, if a man would be a diſciple, and ſave his ſoul from hell. Indeed by this conduct we ſhall incur from the world the reproach of rudeneſs, and bigotry; and from falſe profeſſors, nay from timid chriſtians, the cenſure of imprudence, and want of courteſy: and if they, whom we thus counſel, and reprove in love, do not profit by us, they will certainly be affronted, and perhaps exaſperated to perſecution. Yet the Lord will honour us, and bear us out: nor can our moſt powerful, or enraged enemies, proceed any further, than He ſees good. Even the fear of man, though it in many caſes bringeth a ſnare, often reſtrains wicked men from acting out all the evil, that is conceived in their hearts. Yet when malice is harboured within, opportunities will be found to gratify it: and we have little encouragement from the ſcripture, to favour thoſe feſtive occaſions, which are ſo celebrated in this vain world. When reflection is diſſipated, and conſcience ſtunned by clamorous mirth, and when

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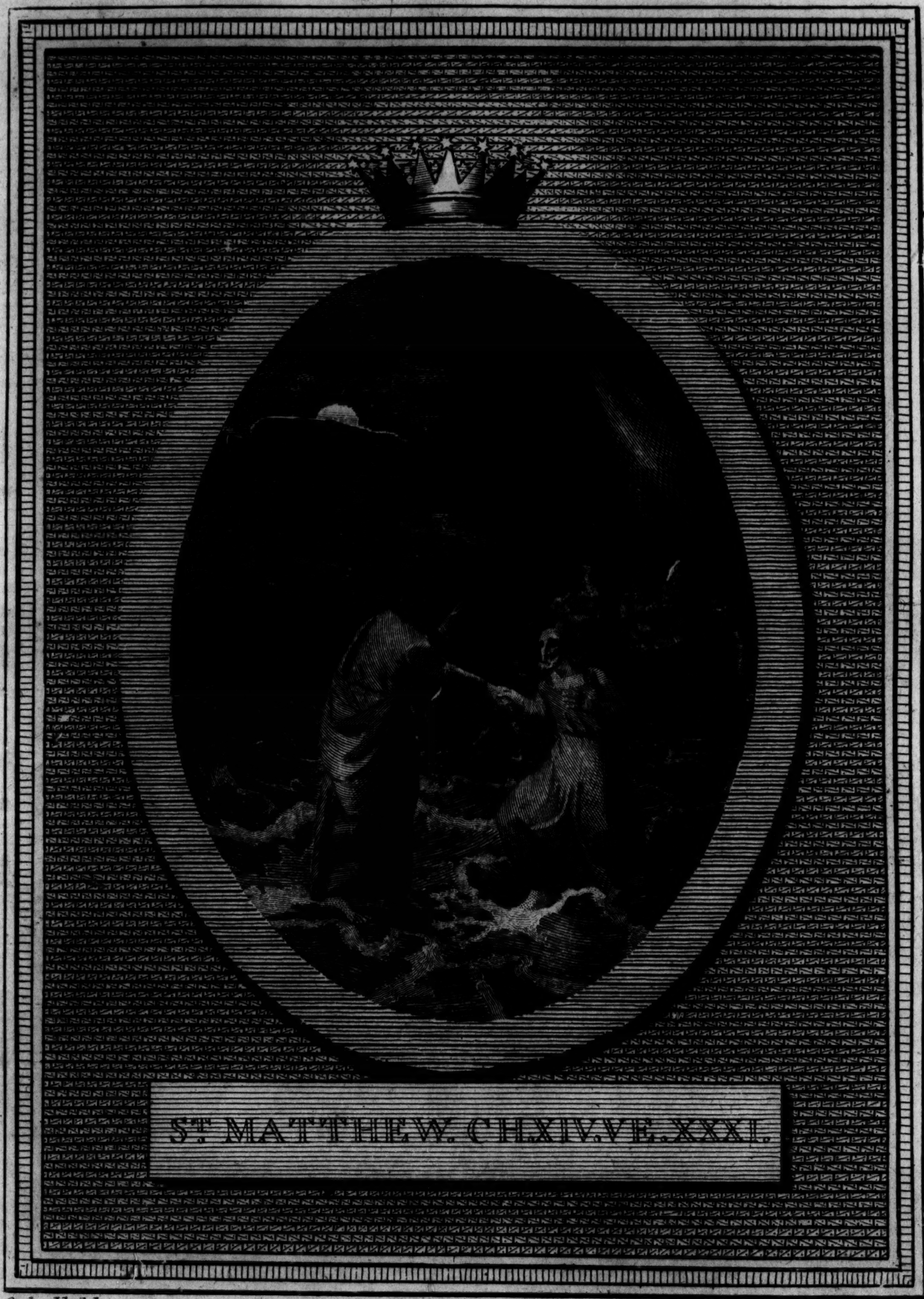

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CHAP. XV.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Anſwering the objections of the Scribes, by ſhewing their traditions to be repugnant to God's law; and by expoſing their hypocriſy, 1---9. 2*d. Warning the people againſt their doctrine, ſhewing them the nature, and ſource of defilement, and more fully explaining the ſubject to his diſciples,* 10---20. 3*d. Proving, and com-*

paſſions are inflamed by ſenſual indulgence; men are eaſily tempted to accede to inſidious propoſals, or to form raſh engagements; and by yielding to the preſent emotion, to make work for future and bitter repentance. (*Notes*, &c. *Eſther*, c. i. *Job*, c. i.) It ſeems a general rule amongſt the rich and great, (though it hath ſome honourable exceptions,) to reward men in an inverſe proportion *to the value* of their endeavours to ſerve them: ſo that no liberality is too great to be laviſhed on thoſe, who miniſter to their indulgence, and diſſipation; uſeful employments are more niggardly encouraged; and endeavours to ſave their ſouls are recompenſed by reproaches, contempt, or puniſhment! The vile occaſions, and impious manner, in which oaths are often uſed, form another proof of men's contempt of God, and religion. But how lamentable is their caſe, whoſe parents are their tempters to impiety, and vice; and who are urged on to greater enormities, even by their regard to parental counſel, and authority! Yet thouſands have been thus tutored for deſtruction by thoſe, who were the inſtruments of their wretched exiſtence, and whoſe guilt, and puniſhment muſt be ſtill more aggravated! Haſty meaſures are ſeldom wiſe: and if we could ſee the predominant inclinations of many, who appear gentle, tender, and modeſt; we ſhould be as much ſhocked, as if we had heard Salome's requeſt, that the head of John might be brought to her in a charger! If ſuch perſons ſhould attempt to pray, they muſt either utter before the Lord the vileſt hypocriſy, or the moſt abominable, malice, cruelty, and iniquity. Men may be ſorry, in doing thoſe things, which they are reſolved to proceed with; for they grieve, that they muſt venture ſo much to gratify their inclinations: but they will find, or pretend ſome reaſon for getting over their ſcruples; and in this way, they often more impoſe upon themſelves, than on others. Raſh oaths, and bad companions are above all things to be avoided: but if men are entangled by them, and tempted to further enormities; they ought rather to infringe the ſinful oath, and to affront their wicked aſſociates, than to add ſin to ſin, and ruin their own ſouls. The only wiſe God may ſee good to let the lives of his moſt valuable ſervants fall a ſacrifice to the humours, and paſſions of his vileſt enemies: but death can never find them unprepared, or prevent their finiſhing their work, and teſtimony; and the *manner* is of ſmall moment, when the conſcience is at peace, hope aſſured, and God their Comforter; the more ſpeedy, the leſs their ſufferings commonly are. But how different will be the hour of death, and the ſeaſon of righteous retribution to their impenitent perſecutors? Whoever is cut off, the Lord Jeſus ſtill liveth to take care of his cauſe; and when we have paid our tribute of reſpect, and affection to his deceaſed ſervants, we muſt apply to him for ſupport, and for directions about redoubled diligence in his ſervice.

Though we ſhould give place to the reſentment of perſecutors, and ſhun oſtentation; yet we muſt not refuſe to do good, for fear of trouble or reproach, or for the ſake of our own eaſe, and indulgence. In promoting the welfare of men's ſouls, we ſhould have conſideration, and compaſſion for their bodies alſo, and endeavour to relieve their wants, and redreſs their inconveniences. Yet even diſciples are prone to ſhift this from themſelves to others, on various pretences, eſpecially on that of poverty. But our Lord often, as it were, ſays to us, "they need not depart; give ye them to eat:" and a little, properly managed, and brought to him for his bleſſing, will go much further in this matter, than is generally ſuppoſed. He does not commonly give his diſciples a great fund to begin with: but he diſpoſes them to make a proper uſe of their little; and when this is done in the obedience of faith, it increaſes in their hands, and they are rather enriched, than impoveriſhed by their liberality. They, who ſerve Chriſt muſt not covet delicacies: he uſes his power to feed, not to feaſt his people; and whilſt the rich recollect how He, and his diſciples fared, they ſhould learn to ſpare from their own expences to feed his poor; and the poor ſhould learn to be contented with their mean food, which is ſeldom leſs luxurious, than that with which the Saviour of the world was pleaſed to ſatisfy his hunger. We ſhould all learn to thank God for, and to crave his bleſſing on our meals; and to avoid all profuſion and waſte: remembering that our Lord would not ſuffer the fragments of this miraculous proviſion to be loſt, and conſidering that frugality is the proper ſource of liberality. But we ſee alſo in this miracle an emblem of the Bread of life, which came down from heaven, to ſuſtain our periſhing ſouls: the proviſions of his goſpel appear to the carnal eye mean, and ſcanty; yet they ſuffice for the whole multitude, that feed on Him, in their hearts, by faith with thankſgiving: and his miniſters may go forth confidently to break this bread of life to their auditories; aſſured that it will increaſe in their hands, and ſupply all their hunger; and that whilſt they feed others, they will alſo enrich themſelves.

But even in thoſe places, to which the Lord hath evidently appointed us, we may expect ſtorms, and difficulties: yet if we have not the ſenſible comfort of his preſence amidſt our conflicts, we may by faith realize his watchful eye over us, and his interceſſion continually made in our behalf: and we may reſt aſſured that in due time he will come to our relief. We ſhould have more of the comfort of this, did we more copy his example in the days of his humiliation, and were more careful not to omit fervent, conſtant prayer, on account of any engagements or interruptions. Yet we are ſometimes troubled at thoſe incidents, which denote our deliverance; but our Lord beholds our fears, and will make himſelf known for our comfort. We find it hard to be very humble without dejection, or animated without ſelf-complacency: but our faith is irregular in its exerciſe, when it leads us to covet difficult, or perilous ſervices, without a *mending the faith of a woman of Canaan, and healing her daughter,* 21---28. *4th. Healing various diſeaſes to the aſtoniſhment of the ſpectators, and again miraculouſly feeding the multitude,* 29---39.

THEN came to Jeſus Scribes and Phariſees, which were of Jeruſalem, ſaying,

2 Why do thy diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders? for they waſh not their hands when they eat bread.

3 But he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why do ye alſo tranſgreſs the commandment of God by your tradition?

4 For God commanded, ſaying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curſeth father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ye ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſay to *his* father, or *his* mother, *It is* a gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me;

6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he ſhall be free.* Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

7 *Ye* hypocrites, well did Eſaias propheſy of you, ſaying,

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worſhip me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

proper call: the Lord often lets his ſervants have their choice in ſuch matters, in order to humble, and prove them, and to ſhew the greatneſs of his power, and grace: yet in the moſt perilous ſituation, to which in any way *he calls us,* if our faith be ſtedfaſtly fixed on his infinite power, truth, and love, we may proceed with ſafety, and confidence. But when we look off from Him, and view the greatneſs of oppoſing difficulties, and perils; we ſhall begin to fall: yet if we feel ourſelves ſinking under trouble, or temptation, or into deſtruction, and apply to him, he will ſtretch out the arm of his power to deliver us. But he will rebuke the weak believer, though he will not leave him to periſh: and when we vainly expect a commendation of our wiſdom and ſtrength, we commonly are convicted of weakneſs and folly. We ought indeed to doubt, and to examine ourſelves, whether we be true diſciples or not: but we never ſhould doubt of Chriſt's power to ſave, and help all, that call upon Him. All the dangers, trials, and humiliations of the believer will eventually render the Saviour more glorious in his eyes, and precious to his heart. Were men more acquainted with him, and with the diſtempered ſtate of their ſouls, they would flock to him to experience his healing influence: for all that touch him, though with a feeble trembling faith, ſhall in due ſeaſon be made perfectly whole: and whilſt we conſider all theſe wonders of his divine power and love, ſhall we refuſe to adore him, or to acknowledge, that of a truth He is the Son of God?

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—9.] (*Mark,* c. vii. v. 1—15.) The report of Chriſt's miracles ſeems to have given great uneaſineſs to the Scribes, and Phariſees, who reſided at Jeruſalem; and ſome of them had come from thence, in order to watch his conduct, and to ſeek for matter of accuſation againſt Him. But not finding that He, or his diſciples neglected any part of the divine law; they objected to him his diſregard of the traditions of the Elders. Theſe traditions were pretended to have been originally received from God by immediate revelation, and to be of equal authority with the written law: they were ſaid to have been delivered down, by word of mouth from one to another, through ſucceſſive generations: and thus the Scribes, who were the ſuppoſed repoſitories, and interpreters of them, had the power of deciding, altering, and impoſing upon the people, as was convenient for them: in the ſame manner as the church of Rome long maintained it's uſurped authority, by dictating to the whole weſtern church, under ſimilar pretenſions, They were ſo addicted to theſe ſuperſtitious vanities, that ſome of their Rabbies have decided, that it was more criminal to omit waſhing before meat, than to commit fornication! Such additions to the laws of God are not only an infringement of his legiſlative authority, and a preſumptuous imputation on his wiſdom, as if he had omitted ſomething neceſſary, which man could ſupply; but, in one way or other, they always claſh with the divine precepts; and an attachment to human traditions neceſſarily leads men, *in ſome circumſtances,* to diſobey God. Our Lord had therefore, as it ſeems, taught his diſciples to diſregard theſe human inventions; and the Scribes obſerving it, enquired why they violated regulations of ſo great authority, and antiquity, in eating bread with unwaſhen hands, by which defilement might be contracted? Doubtleſs the diſciples at this time obſerved the ceremonial diſtinction of meats, and other divine appointments: but this was a mere human addition. Our Lord therefore anſwered their malignant cavil by aſking them, why they tranſgreſſed God's commandments by *their* traditions? For he did not allow them even to be entitled to the ſanction of antiquity, but intimated that they were novel inventions of their own. He then pointed out one inſtance, in which this was notoriouſly the caſe. God had commanded them to honour their parents; and this implied among other things, the providing for their comfortable ſubſiſtence in their old age: and to ſhew the importance of this duty of children to their parents, he had enjoined that whoſoever curſed father, or mother ſhould be put to death by the magiſtrate; (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xx. v. 12. c. xxi. v. 17;) and it muſt certainly be as wicked to do evil to them, as to wiſh that it might befal them. But the Scribes had decided by their traditions, that in caſe a ſon ſhould ſay to his parents, however aged, poor

10 And he called the multitude, and ſaid unto them, Hear, and underſtand:

11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 Then came his diſciples, and ſaid unto him, Knoweſt thou that the Phariſees were offended, after they heard this ſaying?

13 But he anſwered and ſaid, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both ſhall fall into the ditch.

15 Then anſwered Peter and ſaid unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16 And Jeſus ſaid, Are ye alſo yet without underſtanding?

17 Do not ye yet underſtand, that whatſoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is caſt out into the draught?

18 But thoſe things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies:

20 Theſe are *the things* which defile a

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and diſtreſſed, that he had vowed to the ſacred treaſury whatever he could ſpare, by which he might otherwiſe have relieved, or benefited them; and ſhould thus excuſe himſelf from ſhewing reſpect, gratitude, or kindneſs to them, leaving them, in indigence whilſt he lived in plenty; he ſhould not only not be required, but he ought not to be ſuffered, to do any thing for them; it being probably expected from him to put ſums of money from time to time into the treaſury, (of which the Scribes and Prieſts had the charge,) by way of compenſation for his omiſſion. Thus from a vain pretence of piety they directly repealed God's law, and rendered it of none effect by their traditions: and as this was one inſtance out of many of the ſame kind, it was very reaſonable that their traditions ſhould be diſregarded and oppoſed, that God's law might be honoured, and obeyed. In concluding this reply, our Lord declared them to be mere hypocrites, whoſe character Iſaiah had well deſcribed, (c. xxix. v. ~~30~~ 13:) They indeed approached God in his ordinances with good words, and honoured him with fair profeſſions; but their hearts were eſtranged from his holy character, law and ſervice, through pride, avarice, and all wickedneſs: ſo that their very worſhip was vain and unprofitable to themſelves; even as their inſtructions were to the people, whilſt they taught them the traditions of men, inſtead of God's word. The paſſage in the prophet ſeems to refer as much to the deluded people, as to their falſe teachers.

V. 10—20.] When Chriſt had thus anſwered the Scribes, he ſaw good to caution the people alſo againſt their deluſions. He therefore called them around Him, and bid them carefully to hear, that they might underſtand his words; and he aſſured them, that the defilement, which they ought to be afraid of, did not ariſe from what entered the mouth as food, but from thoſe evil words, which proceeded out of their mouths, as the reſult of the wickedneſs of their hearts. This was an intimation of the inferior value of ceremonial obſervances, and of their ſpeedy abolition: and it cogently inſtructed them that real pollution was not an adventitious matter from without, but the genuine produce of man's fallen nature; and that the tongue was one main inſtrument in venting and propagating it. (c. xii. v. 35—37. *James*, c. iii. v. 5, 6.) When our Lord had ſpoken theſe words he retired; and ſoon after the diſciples came to him with great concern to enquire, whether he was aware how great offence the Phariſees had taken at this direct attack upon their traditions? Intimating that they feared they would now be more inveterate in their malice than ever. To this he anſwered, that "every "plant, which his heavenly Father had not planted, "ſhould be rooted up:" meaning that the teaching, and traditions of the Scribes and Phariſees, were not from God, and muſt be deſtroyed, to make room for his true religion; and it was therefore proper to expoſe them before all the people. But the words are an univerſal rule, in reſpect to profeſſors, doctrines, obſervances, and every thing relative to religion: all that is not immediately from God, has no authority, or excellency, and cannot be of long duration; and true godlineſs can never proſper, till ſuch weeds, and ſuckers be extirpated, which, as it were, draw away the nouriſhment from it's root. As to the Scribes and Phariſees, they were to let them alone, without endeavouring to conciliate or convince them, (c. vii. v. 6:) for whilſt they pretended to guide others, they were moſt ignorant, and deluded themſelves: and they would as certainly fall into the pit of deſtruction with their obſtinate followers, as a blind leader of another blind man would fall with him into a ditch, or into ſome miſchief. Upon this Peter, as the ſpeaker for the company, deſired of Chriſt an explication of his ſaying to the people, which he ſuppoſed to be a parable: for probably it ſeemed to them contrary to ſome parts of the Moſaic law, as well as to the traditions of the Scribes. And Jeſus, (having reproved their dulneſs by enquiring whether they were deſtitute of underſtanding, like the blind Scribes, &c?) proceeded to ſhew them, that their food, (if not unlawful, or intemperate,) could not by any contracted pollution defile them: for it entered not into the heart, and had no effect on the diſpoſitions, and affections of the ſoul; but it went into the ſtomach, and all that was unſuitable to nouriſh the body, was carried off by a regular proceſs of nature, without communicating any ſinful defilement. But thoſe things, which proceeded out of the mouth, came from the heart; when lies, impiety, blaſphemy, or man: but to eat with unwaſhen hands defileth not a man.

21 Then Jeſus went thence, and departed into the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the ſame coaſts, and cried unto him, ſaying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* ſon of David: my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a devil.

23 But he anſwered her not a word. And his diſciples came and beſought him, ſaying, Send her away; for ſhe crieth after us.

24 But he anſwered and ſaid, I am not ſent but unto the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.

25 Then came ſhe and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, help me.

26 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to caſt *it* to dogs.

27 And ſhe ſaid, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their maſter's table.

28 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

29 And Jeſus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the ſea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and ſat down there.

30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *thoſe that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and caſt them down at Jeſus' feet; and he healed them:

31 Inſomuch that the multitude wondered,

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wickedneſs were uttered, the corrupt nature was venting itſelf, and this defiled a man in the ſight of God. Indeed from the ſame corrupt ſource all kind of wickedneſs proceeded; ſuch as, polluting, malicious, proud, or covetous imaginations, and corrupt perverſe reaſonings againſt God, and true religion; and even murders, adulteries, and every ſpecies of lewdneſs, injuſtice, and impiety. Theſe crimes were indeed perpetrated by the body, but they were conceived in the heart, and proved it's deſperate wickedneſs: this rendered men loathſome and filthy in God's ſight, and not eating their meals with unwaſhen hands; as ſuch things related only to natural decency, and were no part of religion.

V. 21—28.] (*Mark*, c. vii. v. 24—30.) After this, our Lord retired from the perverſe Scribes into the moſt remote part of the land, in the borders of Tyre, and Zidon: and though he uſed proper means for concealing himſelf, his coming was ſoon made known. For a woman of Canaan, a Syro-phenician, (probably deſcended from the ancient Canaanites, a remnant of whom, had taken ſhelter in the adjacent regions;) heard of his miracles, and was convinced that he was the promiſed Meſſiah; having doubtleſs before this been brought to renounce idolatry, and to become a worſhipper of the true God. She, being in diſtreſs, and hearing that Jeſus was come into that neighbourhood, watched her opportunity, and made her moſt earneſt ſupplication to him; calling him Lord, addreſſing him as the Son of David, and ſtating to him the deplorable ſtate of her daughter, through a grievous poſſeſſion. But he, contrary to his uſual cuſtom, heard her with ſilence, and apparent neglect, intending thereby to prove and manifeſt the ſtrength of her humble faith. At length the diſciples, pitying her diſtreſs, or wearied with her importunity, requeſted him to grant her petition, and to diſmiſs her; for ſhe continually diſturbed them with her moving complaints. In anſwer to this interpoſition, our Lord obſerved to them, in her hearing, that he was not ſent to the Gentiles, but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael; (c. x. v. 6.) This was the general rule of his perſonal miniſtry, though not without exceptions; but he mentioned it on this occaſion to diſplay the woman's character: for inſtead of being offended by this diſtinction, ſhe redoubled her expreſſions of reverence, falling down before him, and intreating him to help her, having no doubt of his power to do it. To this he anſwered apparently with harſhneſs, and in a manner that ſeemed to preclude all hope of ſucceſs; obſerving that it would be improper to rob the children of their bread, in order to feed the dogs. Thus the Jews were uſed proudly, and contemptuouſly to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the Gentiles: and the woman might, and, if ſhe had not been a very humble believer, ſhe would, have taken great offence at this affronting diſtinction; diſdaining the title of dogs, and altering her opinion of One, who had treated her moſt reſpectful addreſs in a manner ſo contrary to her expectation. But ſhe, (being conſcious of perſonal unworthineſs, and recollecting her Gentile extraction, and above all, filled with the higheſt ſentiments of the dignity, wiſdom, and excellency of Chriſt,) ſubmitted quietly to this humbling obſervation, and by a peculiar ingenuity turned it into a cogent argument in ſupport of her petition. "Truth "Lord," ſaid ſhe, "I am a vile ſinner of the Gentiles, "and have no claim to the privileges of God's people: "but as the dogs eat the fragments of a plentiful table, "without the children being at all injured by it; ſo "thy power, and mercy are ſo large, that thou can'ſt "heal my daughter, without in the leaſt deducting from "the bleſſings intended for thine Iſrael." Our Lord's purpoſe was now anſwered; and having openly commended the greatneſs of the woman's faith, notwithſtanding all her diſadvantages; he aſſured her that her daughter was healed, and in a manner which intimated that all her other deſires were, or would be granted.

V. 31. *Maimed*, &c.] It is generally allowed, that this word ſignifies ſuch perſons, as had been deprived of

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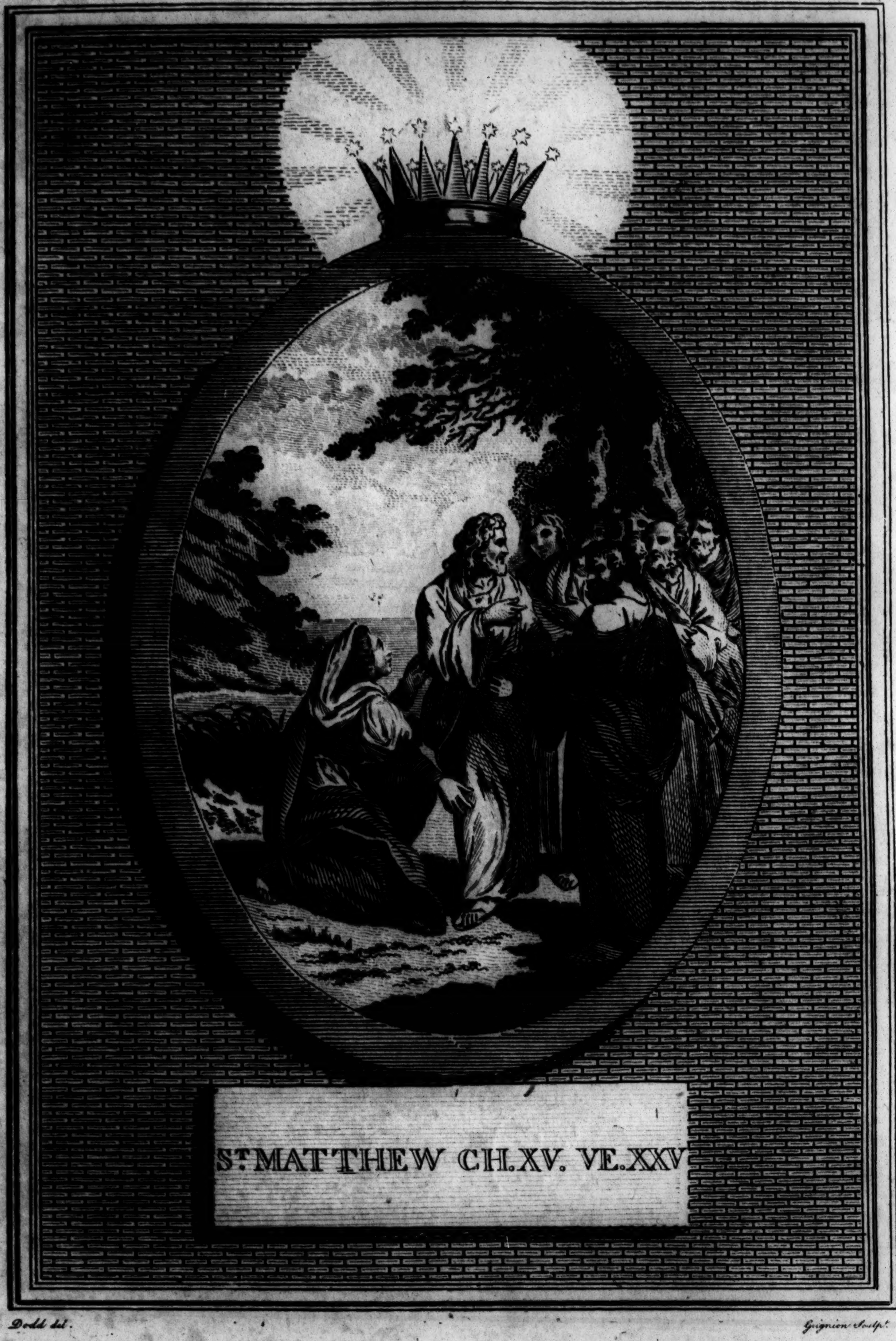
St. MATTHEW CH.XV. VE.XXV

Dodd del.

Grignion Sculpt.

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when they ſaw the dumb to ſpeak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to ſee: and they glorified the God of Iſrael.

32 Then Jeſus called his diſciples *unto him*, and ſaid, I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not ſend them away faſting, leſt they faint in the way.

33 And his diſciples ſay unto him, Whence ſhould we have ſo much bread in the wilderneſs, as to fill ſo great a multitude?

34 And Jeſus ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they ſaid, Seven, and a few little fiſhes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the ground.

36 And he took the ſeven loaves and the fiſhes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude.

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left, ſeven baſkets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thouſand men, beſide women and children.

39 And he ſent away the multitude, and took ſhip, and came into the coaſts of Magdala.

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their limbs; and the reſtoration of them may be conſidered as one of the moſt ſtupendous effects of our Lord's creating power.

V. 32—39.] (*Notes*, &c. c. xiv. v. 15—21. *Mark*, c. viii. v. 1—9.) The multitudes on this occaſion continued with our Lord three days, ſo that they muſt have lodged out of doors two nights, which might be done in thoſe warm climates: but it ſhews the earneſtneſs, with which they liſtened to his inſtructions. We are ſurpriſed to hear the diſciples renew their objection, when Chriſt intimated his deſign of feeding the people; eſpecially as their proviſion was ſomething larger, and the multitude not ſo great. In other reſpects the miracle was much the ſame as the preceding.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt malevolent enemies to vital godlineſs are often extremely tenacious of their own inventions, by which they dreſs up a vain pageant of religion, to amuſe their own conſciences, and to impoſe upon the ignorant. The diſciples of Chriſt are ſufficiently juſtified in their diſregard to the traditions of men, however ſanctioned, by the oppoſition of thoſe traditions, in many things to the holy law of God: for the goſpel itſelf, and the obedience unto death of the divine Saviour were intended to magnify and make honourable this law, in the ſight of men and angels, and to enforce obedience to it by new motives and obligations. How thankful ought we to be for the written word of God; when oral traditions are ſo liable to error, perverſion, and uncertainty! And never let us for a moment imagine, that the religion of the Bible can in any thing be improved by any poſſible additions, doctrinal, or practical: but common ſenſe will teach a candid enquirer to diſtinguiſh between thoſe circumſtances of worſhip, which every ſociety *muſt* order for themſelves, though none have a right to impoſe them on others; and thoſe inventions, which corrupt the purity, deſtroy the ſimplicity, and deform the ſpiritual beauty of religious worſhip. We ſhould peculiarly advert to our Lord's regard to the due performance of relative duties, eſpecially that of children to their parents. No forms, notions, ſplendid tales of experience, ſubſcribing to charities, building chapels, or any thing elſe, that looks like faith, zeal, or piety, can prove him a true chriſtian, who neglects to honour his father, or mother, or to ſupply their wants according to his ability. To diſpenſe with this, or other duties, on ſuch grounds, would be as unſcriptural, as to ſay, “it is a gift, by “whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me;” and, as this would make the law of God of none effect by an human tradition; ſo it muſt be a proof of hypocriſy for a man either to teach, or practiſe in this manner. Indeed temporal death is not now inflicted on him, who curſeth his parents; yet a more dreadful puniſhment will be awarded hereafter to all ſuch diſobedient children, who continue impenitent; and they muſt expect no comfort or bleſſing from God even in this preſent world. Alas! too many prove that they draw near to God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, whilſt their hearts are far from him, and that they worſhip him in vain; not only among thoſe, who teach for doctrines the commandments of men, but amongſt thoſe alſo, who pretend to piety, and evangelical religion, but neglect relative duties, and evidently commit iniquity, and deceit!

When profeſſed teachers contradict God's word in a dangerous manner, it becomes neceſſary, not only to anſwer their objections, and arguments, but to point out their errors, and expoſe their ignorance to the people; and to call upon them to hear and underſtand the truth, and will of God. In doing this, it is not generally expedient for *us* to bring any decided perſonal charge of hypocriſy againſt our opponents, in the manner, which became the heart-ſearching Saviour: yet we muſt by no means put either the honour of the clerical order, or our own reputation in competition with the glory of God, and the ſalvation of ſouls. But when proud Scribes, and Phariſees are offended with plain truths; timid diſciples will be concerned, and almoſt diſpoſed to think that their bolder brethren go too far, even though in other things they honour them; eſpecially when they ſee thoſe exaſperated, whom they had hopes of conciliating. However we ſhould ſtill remember, that nothing in religion

CHP XVI.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Rebuking the hypocriſy of the Phariſees, and Sadducees, who demanded of him a ſign from heaven, 1---4. *2d. Diſcourſing with his diſciples concerning the leaven of the Phariſees, &c, and reproving their unbelief and want of underſtanding,* 5---12. *3d. Enquiring of them the opinion of the people concerning him; approving Peter's confeſſion; ſhewing the ſecure foundation of his church, declaring the nature of their apoſtolical authority, and impoſing ſilence on them,* 13---20. *4th. Foretelling his own death, and reſurrection; rebuking Peter for diſſuading him from his ſufferings; ſhewing them what they muſt ſuffer, as his diſciples, and the invaluable worth of the ſoul; and giving them intimations of a gracious recompence, and of the ſpeedy eſtabliſhment of his kingdom,* 21---28.

is of any value, except what God himſelf hath planted: nothing will endure in the ſoul, but the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit; nothing ſhould be admitted into the church, or will be ſuffered to abide there, but what is of heavenly extraction: and therefore, if hypocrites be detected, falſe teachers offended, and profeſſed friends changed into avowed enemies, by an open declaration of the truth, we ſhould not be diſconcerted; for the trees of righteouſneſs will grow more fruitful, when ſuch noxious plants are rooted up. If men will quarrel with the truth, we muſt let them alone, and not attempt to caſt pearls before ſwine: yet it is grievous to reflect how the blind have, in every age of the church, undertaken to lead the blind; and what numbers are thus continually plunging together into the pit of deſtruction; in which the blind leader ſinks the deepeſt, proportionate to the degree of his pride, enmity, and preſumption. Yet as God hath ſometimes opened the eyes of ſuch blind guides, and changed them into faithful teachers; we ſhould remember ſtill to pray *for them*, as well as againſt their wickedneſs.

In all our difficulties we ſhould apply to Chriſt for inſtruction: and though he will rebuke, and put us to ſhame, for our ſtupidity, and want of underſtanding; yet he will continue to teach us, and his reproofs will tend to our humiliation, and increaſed attention. When he teaches, he will certainly convince men, that their ſin, and pollution originate from themſelves, and not from any external cauſe: He will ſhew them the deceitfulneſs, and deſperate wickedneſs of their own hearts; and whilſt they perceive that all the wickedneſs of every kind, that hath filled, and corrupted the earth, was the genuine produce of depraved nature, and that it would have been tenfold greater, but for merciful reſtraints; they will be led to ſee and feel, that all this, exiſts in their own hearts, and might be educed from them by ſuitable temptations. He will teach them to trace all the ſtreams of their own actual tranſgreſſions to this corrupt fountain; to watch the evil thoughts, that work within; to humble themſelves for, and to ſeek to be cleanſed from, theſe defilements, in the fountain, that He hath opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs; to conſider inward ſanctification as far more important than all forms and notions; and that even truth is no further valuable *to them*, than as it tends to purify their hearts, and conſciences. Theſe are ſome of the leſſons, that Chriſt teaches his diſciples, and by our proficiency in them we may know ourſelves to belong to that happy company.

But though he be the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever, he often ſees good to vary the expreſſions of his love, to thoſe that wait on him. Sinners of every nation, and deſcription are alike welcome to his ſalvation, and he will in no wiſe caſt out thoſe that cry to him for mercy, and truſt in him as the great Redeemer. Yet he can veil the mercies of his heart under a frowning countenance, not only to humble and prove thoſe whom he loves, but to ſhew the ſtrength of their preſent faith, and the depth of their humility. In ſome caſes the diſciples may *ſeem* more compaſſionate than their Lord: but when the folly and ſelfiſhneſs of their pity, and the wiſdom and mercy of his frowns and delays come to be compared, the matter will appear far otherwiſe; and above all, the event will prove, that he is rich in mercy to all them that call on him. Let then ſuch, as ſeek help from Him, and receive no gracious anſwer, increaſe their importunity, and endeavour with heavenly ſkill to turn even their unworthineſs, and diſcouragements, into arguments, with which to plead before him at his mercy ſeat. Let ſinners ſubmit without reſerve to every humiliating charge, and rely on his mercy. Thus whilſt they allow that they are not worthy of the crumbs from his table, they may expect to be ſupplied with children's food; for he cannot be impoveriſhed by his bounty to the vileſt tranſgreſſors. Indeed true faith gathers ſtrength by trials, as healthy bodies do by exerciſe: and when the Lord hath ſufficiently proved the waiting ſoul, he will honour faith, and humble perſeverance, and abundantly anſwer every believing prayer. We ſhould alſo intreat him for our children, relatives, and neighbours; eſpecially when through the oppreſſion of the devil, they are not capable of ſeeking help for themſelves; and we ſhould never fail to intercede with him for diſcouraged ſouls: though impenitent ſinners may not expect to ſhare the privileges of believers, and to give them comfort in their evil ways, would be like taking the children's bread, and caſting it to the dogs; yet the vileſt, who repent, and ſeek ſalvation, are to be encouraged to expect every bleſſing.

> “But who can deſcribe the ſentiments of theſe perſons, who, without any dangerous or painful operation, found themſelves in a moment reſtored, beyond all the efforts of nature, and beyond all the proſpects of hope? With what pleaſure did the ear, which had been juſt opened, liſten to the pleaſing accents of his inſtructive tongue! How did the lame leap around him for joy! And the maimed extend their recovered hands in grateful acknowledgements of his new-creating power! Whilſt the voice of the dumb ſang forth his praiſes in ſounds before unknown! And the eye of the blind checked the curioſity, which would have

THE Phariſees alſo, with the Sadducees, came, and tempting, deſired him that he would ſhew them a ſign from heaven.

2 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, When it is evening, ye ſay, *It will be* fair weather: for the ſky is red.

3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to-day: for the ſky is red and lowring. O *ye* hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky; but can ye not *diſcern* the ſigns of the times?

4 A wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign; and there ſhall no ſign be given unto it, but the ſign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5 And when his diſciples were come to the other ſide, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees.

7 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have taken no bread.

8 *Which* when Jeſus perceived, he ſaid unto them, O ye of little faith, why reaſon ye among yourſelves, becauſe ye have brought no bread?

9 Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thouſand, and how many baſkets ye took up?

10 Neither the ſeven loaves of the four

“ prompted it to range over the various, and beautiful objects of unveiled nature; to fix its rapturous regards on the gracious countenance of Him, that had given it the day! Let us further reflect, with what correſpondent pleaſure muſt our Lord ſurvey theſe grateful, and aſtoniſhed creatures, while his benevolent heart took its ſhare in all the delight that he gave! Theſe trophies of his greatneſs! How unlike to thoſe of the field, the monuments of ſlaughter and devaſtation!” (Doddridge.) With what raptures then will they, whoſe ſouls have been reſtored to holineſs by his healing grace, for ever contemplate and adore their divine Benefactor, and meditate on the price, which he paid for their redemption! And how will He for ever behold them with immenſe complacency, and delight over them to do them good! Let us then wait on him to open our eyes that we may behold his glory; to enable us to walk in his ways, and do his will; and to teach us to ſhew forth his praiſes, that the Father may be glorified in him, and in us, in this world, and for ever. And let us copy his example of love, according to the ability that he hath given us, delighting to do good, and to communicate felicity.

Whilſt we are willing to endure hardſhip, in attending to the concerns of our ſouls; we may be ſure that our gracious Lord will compaſſionate us under all our outward troubles, and ſupply what he ſees needful for our temporal ſupport. But alas how ſoon do even believers forget his interpoſitions in their behalf! How often do we repeat our objections againſt ſelf-denying and expenſive duties; though we never yet were loſers by them! And how frequently do our unbelieving doubts revive even under leſſer trials, after we have been delivered out of greater! Lord increaſe our faith, and pardon our unbelief; and ſtill renew thy mercies towards us; teaching us to live upon thy fulneſs, and bounty, for all things pertaining to this world, and to that which is to come.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—4.] (Notes, &c. c. xii. v. 38—40. *Mark*, c. viii. v. 11—13. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 54—57.) No two deſcriptions of men could be more oppoſite to each other, in principles and conduct, than the Phariſees, and Sadducees; yet they were alike enemies to Chriſt, and joined in their endeavours to entangle, and expoſe him. They could find nothing to object againſt his conduct, and doctrine, but what he anſwered in a ſilencing manner; and they therefore came inſidiouſly to make trial of his power, deſiring again a ſign from heaven to ſatisfy them that he was the Meſſiah, of which they pretended his other miracles were not a ſufficient proof. Indeed the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon Him at his baptiſm, and the voice of the Father, declaring him to be his beloved Son, were ſigns from heaven: but they wanted ſomething of another kind, probably like the appearances of the divine glory, which their Fathers had witneſſed at the giving of the law. To this our Lord anſwered, that they conjectured what kind of weather it was like to be, from their obſervations on the clouds, and ſky, and acted in their temporal concerns on ſuch evidence: and if they had not been hypocrites in their enquiries, they might as eaſily, and more certainly have diſcerned the ſigns of the times. The ſceptre was now departing from Judah; Daniel's ſeventy weeks were terminating; John Baptiſt's miniſtry, as the predicted forerunner of the Meſſiah, evidenced his approach; and all prophecies were fulfilling, in his character, doctrine, and miracles: ſo that it was plain theſe were the times of the Meſſiah, and that their nation was about to be given up for rejecting him. Having therefore again reproved them as a wicked, and adulterous generation, and refuſed them any other ſign, but that of Jonas, the type of his death, and reſurrection, he left them to their own perverſeneſs. This occurred at Magdala, or Dalmanutha, to the eaſt of the ſea of Tiberias.

V. 5—12.] The diſciples, having been taken up with other matters, had forgotten to take bread with them, and the fragments of their late miraculous meal being conſumed, they had only one loaf remaining. Whilſt they were uneaſy on this account, Jeſus called their attention to a more important matter, and with reference to what had lately paſſed, he bid them moſt cautiouſly beware of *the leaven* of the Phariſees, Sadducees, and Herodians. (*Mark*, c. viii. v. 14—21. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 1, 2;) meaning their hypocriſy, infidelity, corrupt docthouſand, and how many baſkets ye took up?

11 How is it that ye do not underſtand that I ſpake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye ſhould beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees?

12 Then underſtood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees.

13 When Jeſus came into the coaſts of Ceſarea Philippi, he aſked his diſciples, ſaying, Whom do men ſay that I the Son of man am?

14 And they ſaid, Some *ſay that thou art* John the Baptiſt; ſome, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I ſay alſo unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build

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trine, vain traditions, and enmity againſt the truth; which ſoured, and corrupted all they did, and infected all perſons, over whom they obtained any influence. But their minds were ſo occupied with their temporal concerns, that they ſuppoſed him to refer to their want of bread, and that he cautioned them againſt obtaining any from the Phariſees, &c, as if they polluted every thing, that they touched: and they reaſoned together about the intention of ſuch a reſtriction, or about what was proper to be done on the occaſion. Our Lord therefore, knowing what they were diſcourſing of, reproved their weakneſs of faith; as they might confidently have relied on his power to provide for them, if they had properly underſtood, and kept in mind the miracles, which they had recently witneſſed, in the feeding of the multitudes with ſo ſmall a proviſion, and in the quantity that was left. He alſo reproved them for not underſtanding, that he had reference to matters far more important, than the leaven of bread, which he had before taught them could not defile men. (c. xv. v. 10——20.) And though he no further explained his meaning, they now perceived, that he referred to the pernicious doctrines of theſe ſects.

V. 13—16.] (*Mark*, c. viii. v. 27—30. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 18—22.) Ceſarea Philippi is ſuppoſed to have been the ſame place, that anciently had been called Laiſh, or Dan; and it lay in the northern extremity of the land, within the Tetrarchy of Philip, Herod's brother. He had rebuilt this city, and called it Ceſarea, in honour of the Roman Emperor, and had added his own name to it, to diſtinguiſh it from another Ceſarea, which was a much greater city, in a more ſoutherly part of the land. Our Lord ſeems to have retired thither, for the ſake of privacy, and diſcourſe with his diſciples: and he enquired of them, what ſentiments the people entertained of him, who appeared as a man amongſt them, but who gave abundant proof, that he was a very extraordinary perſon? To this they anſwered, that ſome, who had lately heard of his miracles, ſuppoſed that John Baptiſt was riſen again; others thought he was Elijah, the forerunner of the Meſſiah; and others imagined he was one of the ancient prophets riſen again. Many thought Jeſus a deceiver: but they, who eſteemed him more highly, had very inadequate apprehenſions of his real dignity. He then aſked them what their ſentiments of him were? And this was evidently the drift of the former queſtion. To which Peter, with his uſual promptitude, replied in his own name, and in that of his brethren, that they were aſſured of His being the promiſed Meſſiah, and the Son of the living God. Probably Peter had reference to his kingly, and prophetical offices, rather than to his prieſtly anointing, in this declaration; yet it implied the whole, and ſhewed, that the apoſtles believed Jeſus to be more than man; even a divine perſon, the only begotten of the Father, of whom the prophets had ſpoken ſo many glorious things. (c. xiv. v. 33. *John*, c. vi. v. 66—69.)

V. 17, 18.] When Peter had made this confeſſion of his faith, our Lord immediately pronounced him bleſſed, or a happy man: as this knowledge, and faith were not the effect of natural ſagacity, or human teaching, but of immediate revelation from the Father. Others had enjoyed the ſame outward means of conviction, and inſtruction, who were not yet brought to believe in him, as the Chriſt the Son of the living God; and it was the teaching of God alone, that had made him differ from his unbelieving countrymen: his faith and knowledge were of a ſpiritual, and ſaving nature, and therefore he was bleſſed. Peter was at this time greatly ignorant of, and prejudiced againſt many evangelical truths; he underſtood not the plan of redemption, by the blood of Chriſt; he was little acquainted with his own heart, and with ſpiritual things; he had a variety of carnal, and vain expectations; he was afterwards left to make many blunders, and even to commit grievous ſins, and to incur rebukes, and chaſtenings; and he had many perſecutions to endure, and was at length to die a martyr: yet he was bleſſed; becauſe he was regenerate, and an honeſt believer in Chriſt; having received theſe gifts, more would in due time be given him, and his everlaſting happineſs was ſure. To this our Lord added, that he had named him Peter, in alluſion to his ſtability in profeſſing his truth; and this bold anſwer correſponded to his name: for in fact it contained that fundamental truth, reſpecting his perſon, and offices, upon which, as on a rock, he would build his church: and on this foundation it would ſtand ſo ſure, that no machinations or efforts, of devils or of men, could ever ſubvert it, though they ſhould meet in council, to form devices againſt it; and ſhould unite all their forces, and lead my church; and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on earth ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on earth ſhall be looſed in heaven.

20 Then charged he his diſciples, that they ſhould tell no man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt.

21 From that time forth began Jeſus to ſhew unto his diſciples, how that he muſt go unto Jeruſalem, and ſuffer many things of the elders and chief prieſts and ſcribes, and be killed, and be raiſed again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, ſaying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this ſhall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and ſaid unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence

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them forth to aſſault it. Nor ſhould the powers of death, or the entrance into the eternal world, deſtroy the hope of thoſe, who ſhould be builded thereon: but one generation of believers ſhould be raiſed up, as others were removed to heaven, to profeſs theſe great truths, even to the end of time; and the whole company would be made more than conquerors, and be ſaved by the belief of them, to all eternity. The word, tranſlated "rock" is of a ſimilar meaning with the name of Peter, but it is not the ſame word. However nothing can be more abſurd, than to ſuppoſe that Chriſt meant, that the perſon of Peter was the rock, on which the church ſhould be builded; except it be the wild notion, that the biſhops of Rome have ſince been ſubſtituted in his place! Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themſelves being judges. Without doubt Chriſt himſelf is the Rock, and tried Foundation of the church, and woe be to him, that attempts to lay any other: but Peter's confeſſion is this Rock *doctrinally*; the profeſſion of theſe truths conſtitutes a man a member of the viſible church; the vital belief of them, conſtitutes a member of the real church, however he may err in other matters: but nothing leſs than this can intitle a man to the name of a believer. Againſt theſe doctrines, the power, and policy of Satan, and his ſervants, have in every age been directed; both by exciting furious perſecutions, bringing in damnable hereſies, and employing the ingenuity of plauſible infidels: the Deity of Chriſt, as the Son of the living God, and his human nature, as the Son of Man, have by turns been oppoſed; and his unction to his Prophetical, his Prieſtly, or his Kingly offices have been explained away by different deſcriptions of deceivers. Yet the church, eſtabliſhed on the perſon of Chriſt, as God-man, the Prophet, Prieſt, and King of his redeemed people, ſtill ſubſiſts, and will to the end; yea it will aſſuredly ere long, gain a decided victory over all its adverſaries of every name, on earth, or in hell.

V. 19, 20.] Our Lord next added a declaration of the authority, with which Peter would be inveſted. He had ſpoken in the name of his brethren, as well as in his own; and doubtleſs this related to them, as well as to him: but he might be eſpecially addreſſed, as he firſt preached the goſpel, after Chriſt's aſcenſion, both to the Jews, and to the Gentiles, (*Acts*, c. ii—14x:) thus opening the kingdom of heaven, as it were, to them both, in which it was impoſſible, that any ſucceſſor could ſhare with him. Keys were an ancient emblem of authority; (*Iſaiah*, c. xxii. v. 22. *Rev*. c. iii. v. 7, 8.) The expreſſion immediately related to the apoſtolical authority, by which they were employed as Chriſt's repreſentatives. (*John*, c. xx. v. 21—23.) They were endued with the Holy Ghoſt, that they might infallibly declare his truth, and will to mankind, and determine what was binding on the conſcience, and what not; to ſhew what perſons ought to be admitted into the church, or excluded from it; to decide on the characters of thoſe, whoſe ſins were forgiven, or the contrary: and whatever in theſe, and ſimilar reſpects they bound on earth, would be bound in heaven, &c. The apoſtles themſelves do not appear to have had an infallible inſight into the characters of men, and they were liable to miſtakes, and ſins in their own conduct; (*Gal*. c. ii. v. 11—14:) But they were infallibly preſerved from error, in ſtating the way of acceptance, and ſalvation the rule of obedience, the believer's character and experience, and the final doom of unbelievers, hypocrites, and apoſtates. In ſuch matters their deciſion was abſolute, and ratified in heaven, as all would find that deſpiſed it. In this reſpect their apoſtolical authority continues in their doctrine, as tranſmitted to us in the New Teſtament: all other miniſters, of whatever rank, name, or age, can do no more, than declare their doctrine, and apply it to particular caſes, by preaching the word, adminiſtering divine ordinances, admitting men into, or excluding them from the viſible church, or by perſonal encouragement and warning. As far as they proceed according to the ſcripture in theſe things, their deciſions are warranted, and ratified in heaven; but not when they miſtake either in their doctrine, or its application to particular perſons, or characters. As no man can ſee another's heart; and as no man hath any inherent power to forgive ſin, or the contrary: ſo all pretenſions *abſolutely* to abſolve, or to retain men's ſins, claim more than even apoſtolical authority: for ſure none can be ſo abſurd, as to ſuppoſe that any man can be made a true believer, or a hypocrite, by the erroneous deciſion of another, that he is ſo! Our Lord having opened theſe things in confidence to his diſciples, charged them not to ſpeak to others concerning his being the Meſſiah. They might collect it from evidences, but the time for an explicit declaration of it was not yet come.

V. 21—23.] (*Mark*, c. viii. v. 31—33. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 22.) The apoſtles probably were at this time in expectation of their Lord's appearing in external glory, as the King of Iſrael: but on the contrary he began to ſhew them, that he muſt go up to Jeruſalem, to ſuffer unto me: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men.

24 Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.

25 For whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

27 For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I ſay unto you, There be ſome ſtanding here, which ſhall not taſte of death, till they ſee the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

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many things from thoſe in authority, and even to be put to death; and that on the third day he ſhould riſe again. Thus he proceeded to bring them acquainted with his prieſtly office, and to prepare their minds for thoſe trying ſcenes, which they were about to witneſs. But Peter, who had overlooked all thoſe prophecies, that related to the Meſſiah's ſufferings, and who probably was elated by the commendation beſtowed on him, took him aſide, or by the hand, and with a mixture of affection and ignorance, expreſſed to him his deſire, and hope, that it ſhould not be ſo with him. The words are rendered by ſome, "ſpare thyſelf," by others "mercy be unto thee," or I hope and pray thou wilt be more favourably dealt with, and that this ſhall not happen to thee. Thus Peter ſoon ſhewed how unfit he was to be the rock, on which the church was to be builded. Accordingly Chriſt turned, and rebuked him in the very terms, which he had uſed in repelling the devil's temptations. Some wiſh to ſoften the apparent harſhneſs of the expreſſion: but doubtleſs Chriſt intended to ſhew, that on this occaſion ſatan ſpake by Peter, and uſed him, (beſide his purpoſe,) as his inſtrument, in tempting Him to ſhun the croſs; and ſo it was proper to recognize ſatan, as well as Peter in the buſineſs. However Peter was an offence, and ſtumbling block to him, which muſt be removed, by his being brought to a better judgment: for in this inſtance he ſpake as a carnal man, who did not properly value, or reliſh the ſpiritual excellency of divine things; but was more diſpoſed to value, and chooſe the things of men, ſuch as eaſe, indulgence, honour, and riches, than to underſtand the doctrine of redemption, and the glory of God in it.

V. 24—28.] (*Mark*, c. viii. v. 34—38. c. ix. v. 1. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 23—27.) Our Lord next proceeded to ſhew the apoſtles what they muſt expect, in following Him. (c. x. v. 38, 39.) He was indeed ſhortly to enter into his glory: but if any of them deſired to come after him thither, and to ſhare the privileges of his kingdom, he muſt firſt learn from his example to deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, &c: he muſt habituate himſelf to give a flat denial to the moſt clamorous ſolicitations of his pride, ambition, avarice, and carnal ſelf-love in all its exerciſes; and to inure every ſelfiſh inclination to ſubmiſſion: he muſt alſo be prepared in mind, to carry his croſs, as a condemned perſon, to the place of execution; determined rather to be nailed to it, and there expire, than to renounce his Lord, who had thus ſuffered an excruciating, and ignominious death for his ſins. And if any man ſhould determine to ſave his life, even by denying Him, he would certainly forfeit the eternal life of his ſoul, which would be enſured to thoſe, that ſhould lay down their lives for his ſake. To this Jeſus ſubjoined two moſt intereſting queſtions, which are ſuppoſed to have been proverbial among the Jews. What would that man be profited, who ſhould gain the poſſeſſion of the whole world, and all its riches, power, and ſplendour, but at the ſame time ſhould loſe *his own life*, in doing it? Or what could be deemed an adequate price to be given a man in exchange for his life, if that ſhould be loſt, or forfeited? If then all worldly things were worthleſs when compared with temporal life; how forcibly muſt the ſame argument conclude in reſpect of the ſoul, and its ſtate of eternal happineſs or miſery? If a man ſhould ſave his life, and gain the whole world, by apoſtacy from Chriſt, and thus loſe the happineſs, and enſure the deſtruction of his ſoul, where would be his gain? Or with what would he endeavour to redeem his forfeited felicity, or to reſcue his ſoul from deſerved miſery? And though Chriſt at this time appeared as the Son of man, in a ſtate of humiliation, and was about to ſet them an example of patient ſuffering even unto death: yet He aſſured them, that he would at length appear in the glory of his Father, diſplaying the divine perfections of power, wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and mercy; exerciſing ſovereign authority over all creatures; and attended with the holy angels, as his ſervants: then he would *graciouſly* reward all his diſciples for all their ſelf-denying ſervices, and patient ſufferings for his ſake, and execute *righteous* vengeance on his enemies; thus rendering both to believers and unbelievers according to their works. And, though this event was diſtant, yet verily, ſome, there preſent, would certainly be preſerved from death, notwithſtanding all their perſecutions, till they ſaw him come to ſet up his kingdom in a glorious manner. This referred eſpecially to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the abolition of the Moſaic diſpenſation, when Chriſt came in his kingdom to deſtroy his moſt inveterate enemies.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Ungodly men of oppoſite ſentiments, and parties, are united under one common head, and engaged in one common oppoſition to the cauſe of Chriſt: and infidels, Phariſees, and time-ſerving conformiſts often defer their own ſubordinate controverſies, that they may join all their ſubtlety, and influence, in running down the truths of God's word. Men frequently diſcover great ingenuity, and ſagacity: they make accurate obſervations, and de-

CHAP. XVII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Transfigured, and converſing with Moſes, and Elias, before Peter, James, and John, with what paſſed on that occaſion, and his diſcourſe concerning John Baptiſt, &c, 1---13. *2d. Caſting out an evil ſpirit from a young man, reproving the unbelief of the people, and ſhewing the diſciples why they could not caſt him out,* 14---

duce juſt inferences, in matters of a temporal nature: and yet when they turn their minds to ſpiritual ſubjects, they ſeem abſolutely deſtitute of reaſoning powers, and incapable of underſtanding the plaineſt truths, which run counter to their intereſts, and prejudices. And many are conſtrained to act upon probable evidence, in their moſt important ſecular concerns, who perverſely demand demonſtration in every thing relating to Religion, nay refuſe to be ſatisfied with demonſtration itſelf! But Chriſt will convict ſuch diſingenuous prevaricators of enmity, and hypocriſy: and in the mean time it is commonly beſt for us to leave them, and not to waſte our time, or give them a handle againſt us, by diſputing with them. We ſhould not neglect our temporal concerns, in attending to thoſe of our ſouls: yet if any are betrayed into it occaſionally, through great earneſtneſs about ſpiritual things, they need not fear, but the Lord will provide for them. Our main concern ſhould be to beware of falſe teachers, and falſe doctrine, and to avoid the leaven of hypocriſy, pride, and infidelity, which diffuſe their baneful influence on every ſide: yet even diſciples are ſometimes more anxious concerning the ſupply of their wants, than about keeping at a diſtance from error, and ſin! This ariſes from weakneſs of faith, and will expoſe them to rebukes. Should the Lord interrogate us, under many of our deſpondings, concerning our paſt experience of his power, truth, and love; he would ſoon ſhew us what cauſe we have to be aſhamed of our preſent diſtruſt, and ſolicitude; and force us to confeſs, that we did not properly underſtand and remember his former interpoſitions in our favour. But it is well, if we learn to profit by our own dulneſs, and blunders, and are made more attentive to his inſtructions.

We often fooliſhly want to know what men ſay of us, expecting perhaps ſome flattering report, but this commonly tends to our mortification, or temptation to reſentment, or diſcontent: but our bleſſed Lord had holy, and important reaſons for making this enquiry; and we ought to imitate his manner of grafting inſtructive obſervations on every topic of converſation. There are various opinions at preſent, as well as formerly, concerning the Lord Jeſus; and they, who think the moſt honourably of him, come neareſt to the truth: but none can be his true diſciples, who heſitate to confeſs, "that "he is the Chriſt the Son of the living God," or who labour to explain away the meaning of ſuch emphatical words. Happy are they, who confeſs this from an underſtanding, and believing heart! Whatever may be their preſent errors, and infirmities, or their future trials, and temptations, they certainly are ſpecially favoured of the Lord: for human teaching *alone* hath not given them this knowledge of the truth, but it is the gift of their heavenly Father, and an earneſt of further favours. (1 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 3. 1 *John.* c. v. ver. 1.) We ſhould then learn to make candid allowances for enquirers, who ſeem to have an honeſt, and teachable ſpirit, but are yet ſtrangers to many important truths: for not the doctrines known and believed, but the origin, and nature of their faith, and knowledge, diſtinguiſh the diſciples from other men. However the Perſon, and work of Chriſt, the Son of God, is the Rock, on which alone the church is built; and let the powers of darkneſs plot, and rage, let infidels and heretics revile, and menace, as they will; they will never be able to ſubvert this foundation, or to deſtroy one ſoul, that reſts his hope upon it.

We have not at preſent ſuch authority, as was entruſted to the apoſtles, and none can forgive ſins, but God only: yet let no man deſpiſe the declarations, and cenſures of faithful miniſters; for as far as they agree with the word of God, they will be ratified in heaven; whether they pronounce the penitent, and believing to be fully pardoned, or the unbelieving and hypocritical to be under the wrath of God. We ſhould not ſo look to one part of the Redeemer's character, as to overlook another; but ſhould keep in view at once the depth of his voluntary humiliation, and ſufferings, as our great High Prieſt; and the height of his exaltation as our glorious King. Thus we ſhould alſo connect our view of the believer's privileges with that of his duty, and the croſs, that he muſt bear, in his way to glory. But it often happens, that men ſpeak excellently of one part of Chriſtianity, and ſo as to be entitled to our commendation; who afterwards betray their ignorance and carnal prejudices, when they give their ſentiments on other ſubjects, and ſo lay themſelves open to deſerved rebukes. They, who would diſſuade us from ſelf-denying duties, or ſet us againſt the croſs, ſhould in that reſpect be conſidered as adverſaries; and in all ſuch carnal counſellors we ſhould recognize the voice of ſatan, whoſe policy it is to tempt us by thoſe we love, and who are in other things moſt worthy of our eſteem. We muſt not parley with thoſe, who are an offence to us, but decidedly reject their ſolicitations; ſhewing them that their falſe tenderneſs ſprings from their not favouring the things of God, but thoſe of men: for this is the caſe in part, even with ſuch, as are regenerate.

But what repeated inſtructions do we need, to teach us to deny ourſelves, and to copy the example of our ſuffering Redeemer! and to convince us that every diſciple muſt have the ſpirit of a Martyr, whether it ever be put to the trial, or no! If life be ſo valuable, that the whole world is a paltry compenſation for the loſs of it, and unworthy to be given in exchange for it: what words can deſcribe, or computations reach the worth of an immortal ſoul? It is the nobleſt work of God below, formed at firſt in his own image, poſſeſſed of vaſt and moſt valuable powers, capable of moſt exquiſite happineſs, or miſery, and intended for eternal exiſtence! Such an invaluable treaſure every man is poſſeſſed of; but how few ſeem ſenſible of it's preciouſneſs, or of the danger of

21. *3d. Again foretelling his ſufferings, and reſurrection, and paying tribute with money taken from the mouth of a fiſh, &c.* 22---27.

AND after ſix days Jeſus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moſes and Elias talking with him.

4 Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias.

5 While he yet ſpake, behold, a bright cloud overſhadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.

6 And when the diſciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were ſore afraid.

7 And Jeſus came and touched them, and ſaid, Ariſe, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they ſaw no man, ſave Jeſus only.

9 And as they came down from the moun-

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loſing it! This conſiſts in the final loſs of God's favour, deprivation of his image, and baniſhment from his preſence, in the regions of darkneſs, miſery, and deſpair. Indeed the ſouls of all men are in themſelves thus loſt, by tranſgreſſion of the holy law of our Creator: yet through the mercy of the Lord Jeſus, none will eventually periſh, but the impenitent, and unbelieving. Could any man therefore obtain the whole world, and the ſure enjoyment of it for a thouſand years, as his recompence for neglecting the ſalvation of the goſpel; he would through the countleſs ages of eternity curſe his own folly, in making ſo mad a bargain. Yet thouſands loſe their ſouls for the ſake of the moſt trivial gain, or the moſt worthleſs indulgence, nay from mere ſloth, and negligence! for whatever the object be, for which men refuſe, or forſake Chriſt; that is the price, at which ſatan purchaſes their ſouls. Yet becauſe men are propenſe to believe the ſoothing lies of that cruel murderer, and his emiſſaries, and to diſbelieve the alarming truths of God, and his miniſters; becauſe they will procraſtinate; and becauſe they take it for granted, that all is well, when it is far otherwiſe: therefore men in general loſe their ſouls for a thing of nought. But what can they give in exchange for them? Alas, death reduces the wealthieſt ſinner to the level of the meaneſt beggar, and he hath nought to give. The dying tranſgreſſor cannot, with all his ill-gotten treaſure, purchaſe one hour's reſpite, in order to ſeek mercy to his periſhing ſoul. The whole world in this caſe is of no value; it coſts more to redeem the ſoul, and that muſt be let alone for ever, by all thoſe who neglect that precious ranſom, which the Saviour once paid, when he gave *himſelf* for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to Himſelf, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Let us then learn to value our ſouls, and Chriſt as the Saviour of them; and to deſpiſe every glittering bait, and every formidable danger, by which ſatan would allure, or fright us from our only refuge. Let us fear coming ſhort of this ſalvation, and continually anticipate the ſeaſon, when the Son of Man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, and all his holy angels with him, to reward every man according to his works. We can indeed merit nothing from Him: yet he will mercifully recompenſe the fruits of his own grace in us, and all our loſſes, and ſufferings for his ſake: but if any man draw back, his ſoul will have no pleaſure in him. Though our trials muſt come firſt; yet they will ſoon be over; and we ſhall ſoon behold our once ſuffering Saviour in his glory, and our taſte of death will introduce us into his preſence where is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures at his right hand for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1—8.] (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 2—8. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 28—36.) Matthew, and Mark place this event ſix days after the diſcourſe of the preceding chapter, as ſix whole days intervened: but Luke, taking in both the day of the diſcourſe, and that of the transfiguration, ſays that it was eight days after. Our Lord retired to a mountain apart to pray, where he ſpent the night, as we find that he did ſeveral times: Tradition reports that it was mount Tabor to the north of Galilee. He was pleaſed to take with him Peter, James, and John, but not the other apoſtles; becauſe it ſeemed good in his ſight: for we cannot aſſign any other ſatisfactory reaſon. The ſame apoſtles had witneſſed the reſurrection of Jairus's daughter, and they afterwards attended him in his agony in the garden. (c. xxvi. v. 27. *Mark*, c. v. ver. 38.) They were a competent number to prove the fact, and more were unneceſſary. Whilſt he was engaged in prayer he was "transfigured before them," or metamorphoſed: the original word is of the ſame meaning with that uſed by the apoſtle, for "the *form* of God, and "the *form* of a ſervant, (*Phil.* c. ii. v. 6—8.) The apoſtles ſaw their maſter daily in the form of a ſervant, and as the Son of Man: but on this occaſion, they beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, and had ſuch a diſcovery of him in the form of God, as they were able to ſuſtain. His diſguiſe was, as it were, laid aſide, and he appeared like himſelf; the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and the Light of the World ſhone forth from behind thoſe clouds, that commonly obſcured his ſplendour. The faſhion of his countenance was altered, and did ſhine like the Sun: and his very raiment became white as ſnow, ſo as no fuller on earth could whiten it; yea white as the light, and reſplendent as lightening. This appearance of Chriſt as

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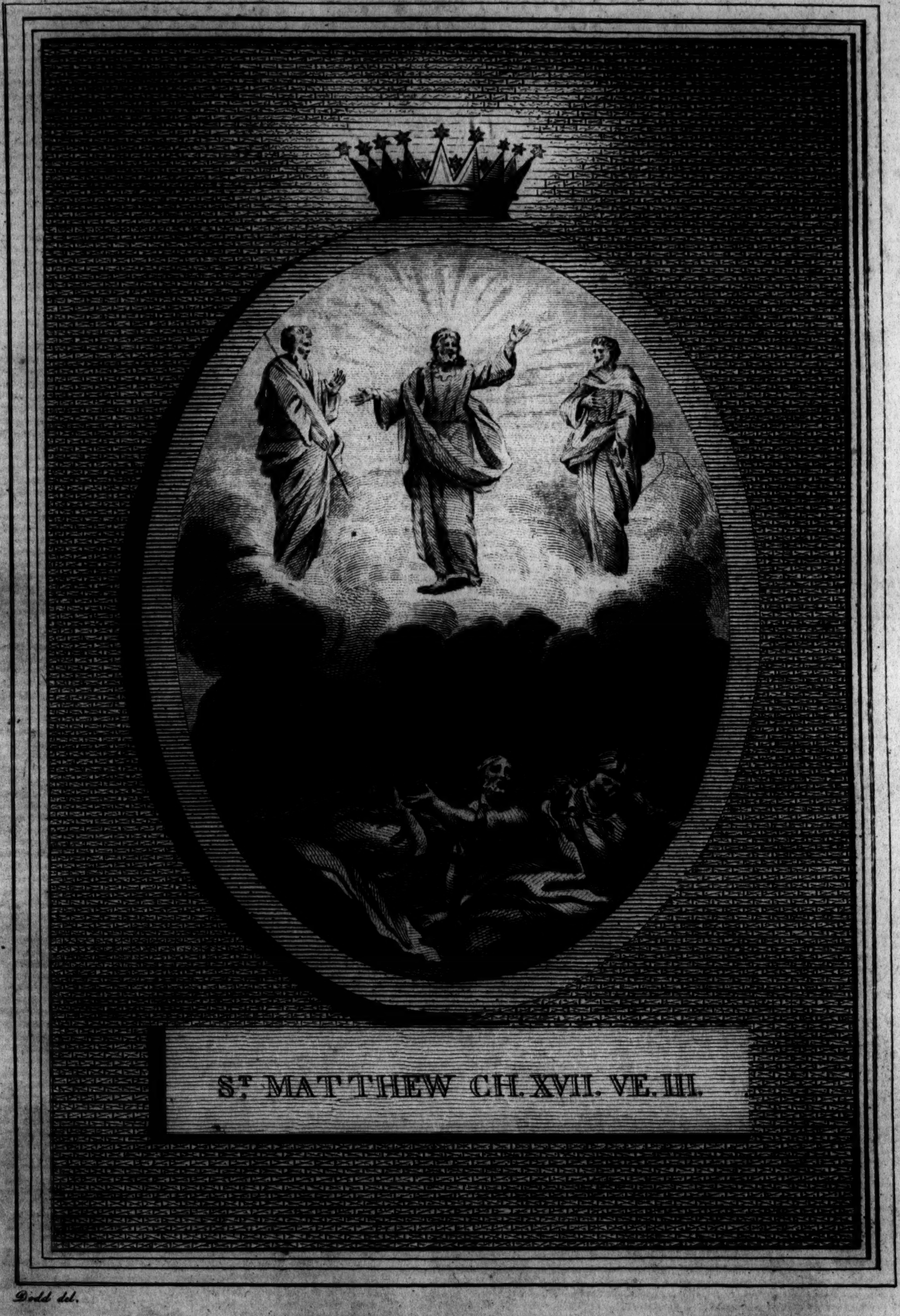

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tain, Jeſus charged them, ſaying, Tell the viſion to no man, until the Son of man be riſen again from the dead.

10 And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, Why then ſay the ſcribes that Elias muſt firſt come?

11 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Elias truly ſhall firſt come, and reſtore all things.

12 But I ſay unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatſoever they liſted: likewiſe ſhall alſo the Son of man ſuffer of them.

13 Then the diſciples underſtood that he

Man would give the apoſtles ſome apprehenſion of the divine glory, which he had with the Father before his incarnation; and which was always inherent in him, though he ſaw good to veil it under external meanneſs: it would ſerve to interpret to them the meaning of their own confeſſion, "thou art the Son of the living God:" it was intended to ſupport their faith, at that approaching ſeaſon, when they would witneſs his crucifixion: and it would give them an idea of his heavenly glory, after his aſcenſion; and of the glory prepared for them alſo, when changed by his power to be like him, even in reſpect of his glorified body. (*John*, c. i. v. 14. *Phil.* c. iii. v. 21. 2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 16—18.) In addition to this perſonal glory, there appeared Moſes, and Elijah converſing with him, on the ſubject of the painful, and ignominious death, which he was ſhortly to ſuffer at Jeruſalem, in accompliſhment of the ſcriptures, and the great deſigns of mercy, for which he came into the world. The apoſtles, who heard part of this converſation at leaſt, probably underſtood *from it*, that the perſons, whom they ſaw, were Moſes, and Elijah: the latter was taken up alive into heaven, and doubtleſs appeared in his glorified body; but whether Moſes's body was raiſed for this purpoſe, or how he appeared, are no proper ſubjects of our enquiry. This too was ſuited to give the apoſtles a realizing apprehenſion of the inviſible world, and of the preſent felicity of departed believers, to which they would immediately be admitted, if they were faithful to death. They likewiſe ſaw theſe two eminent perſons attending on Jeſus, as ſervants on their Lord, coming as it were on purpoſe to do homage to him; glorious indeed, but with glory far beneath His, as the planets are leſs reſplendent than the noon-day ſun, from whom they derive their luſtre, and by whoſe beams they are eclipſed. Moſes was the great lawgiver of Iſrael, and Elijah the chief of the prophets, and the zealous vindicator of the authority of the law: but they both came, as it were, to lay down their commiſſions, and their honours, at the Redeemer's feet; in whoſe perſon, and obedience unto death, the moral law was magnified, the ceremonial types were fulfilled, the prophecies were accompliſhed, and the end of all preceding diſpenſations was anſwered. Thus Moſes, and Elijah bare witneſs to the apoſtles, that Jeſus was *their* Lord alſo; and that by his coming the time of the law, and the prophets was to be terminated, and that of the goſpel to be introduced. Yet with this glorious ſcene before their eyes, the apoſtles were heavy with ſleep, either overpowered by the ſplendour of it, or drowſy through wearineſs: but when they were awaked, Peter, delighted, and ſurpriſed to ſee his beloved maſter appear in ſuch glory, and receive ſuch honour; inſtead of hearkening to the diſcourſe about his death, broke out into an exclamation, that "it was moſt pleaſant and deſirable "for them to continue there," and to go no more down, to meet thoſe ſufferings, of which he was ſo reluctant to hear. He therefore propoſed to erect upon the mountain three temporary huts, or tents, for Jeſus, Moſes, and Elijah; whilſt he and his companions would ſhift as well as they could: but in this he knew not what he ſaid. That ſacrifice was not yet offered, without which his ſinful ſoul could not have been ſaved: important ſervices were appointed to him, and his brethren, for the good of the church in all ſucceeding ages: their ſufferings, and temptations would both glorify God, and work together for their good: Peter at that time too much ſavoured the things of men, and was not ready for that ſpiritual felicity, which he aſpired to: and he ſeems to have forgotten the diſciples, that were left below, from a ſelfiſh regard to his own preſent eaſe, and comfort. However he ſcarce underſtood the meaning of his own propoſal, which was rather the language of his feelings, than of his underſtanding. Whilſt he was yet ſpeaking, "a "bright cloud overſhadowed them;" an emblem of the divine preſence, and glory, but ſo veiled, as to ſuit their mortal ſtate: yet it was not like the tremendous diſplay from Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, nor the thick darkneſs, by which the Lord took poſſeſſion of the temple; (*Exod.* c. xix. 1 *Kings*, c. viii, v. 12;) but a bright cloud, denoting the introduction of a clearer and more encouraging diſcovery of the divine glory, by the goſpel. From this cloud a voice was diſtinctly heard, which coincided with the teſtimony borne to Chriſt at his baptiſm; the eternal Father declaring "Him to be his "well beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed:" to which was added a command to them to "hear him," in preference even to Moſes and the prophets, whoſe external appointments he would ſuperſede, or alter. (*Deut.* c. xviii. v. 15—19. *Acts*, c. iii. v. 22, 23.) This glorious viſion aſtoniſhed, and terrified the apoſtles, as much as the other had delighted them; and they fell proſtrate in adoration, and diſmay, and lay till Jeſus came to encourage them: when ariſing, and looking around, they found that the whole was departed, and their Lord left alone with them in his uſual appearance; ſave that it is probable, ſome luſtre ſtill continued in his countenance, even after they went down from the mount. (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 15.)

V. 9—13.] (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 9—13.) As Jeſus came down the next day to the other apoſtles, and the people, he charged thoſe with him, not to mention this inſtructive, and animating ſcene, which they had witneſſed, to any perſon, till after his reſurrection from the dead: for previous to that event it would not have obtained credit, ſpake unto them of John the Baptiſt.

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and ſaying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my ſon: for he is lunatic, and ſore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy diſciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you? Bring him hither to me.

18 And Jeſus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the diſciples to Jeſus apart, and ſaid, Why could not we caſt him out?

20 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Becauſe of your unbelief: for verily I ſay unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it ſhall remove; and nothing ſhall be impoſſible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and faſting.

22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jeſus ſaid unto them, The Son of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of men;

23 And they ſhall kill him, and the third day he ſhall be raiſed again. And they were exceeding ſorry.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and ſaid, Doth not your Maſter pay tribute?

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and might rather have prejudiced the minds of men; and it was for the preſent rather intended for their own ſupport, and encouragement. This gave them the occaſion of aſking him, on what grounds the Scribes had taught that Elijah was to come, before the Meſſiah appeared? And whether the viſion of Elijah, that they had juſt ſeen was all, that was intended by the prophet Malachi? To this He replied, that it had doubtleſs been predicted, that Elijah would come, and reſtore, or regulate all things, in order to prepare the way for the Meſſiah's kingdom; but that in fact he had come, and the people and ſcribes had not known him, and at length he had been put to death by the malice of his enemies: and in like manner they would alſo perſecute and ſlay their promiſed Meſſiah, as it had been predicted by the prophets. By this the diſciples more clearly perceived, that John Baptiſt had been foretold under the name of Elijah, becauſe of the ſimilarity of his diſpoſition, and work.

V. 14—18.] (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 14—29. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 37—42.) The conſideration of this miracle is poſtponed, till we come to St. Mark's goſpel, where it is more fully recorded.

V. 19—21.] The apoſtles had doubtleſs been often ſucceſsful in caſting out devils: but being baffled in this inſtance, they enquired from Chriſt the reaſon of their diſappointment? To this he replied, that it was wholly owing to their unbelief. Perhaps they had been diſcouraged in their attempt, by an apprehenſion of the difficulty of the caſe; or perhaps they had confided in ſome meaſure in themſelves: however they had not that ſimple, and entire reliance on his power, and promiſe, that was requiſite. For if this had been the caſe, though their faith had been ſmall, and apparently inadequate to the effect, like a grain of muſtard-ſeed; they might have removed the mountain before them, had it been neceſſary; as nothing could be impoſſible to that Almighty Power, which their faith engaged on their ſide. We have no warrant to expect a miraculous aſſiſtance: but no difficulties can be inſurmountable to us, in the path of duty, except as we fail to exerciſe faith on the power, and promiſe of our Lord. To this he added, "this kind "goeth not out, ſave by faſting, and prayer." This is variouſly interpreted: but it ſeems to me evidently to imply, that there are different orders of evil ſpirits, ſome more powerful, and malignant than others; and conſequently more difficult to be expelled; and that theſe could not be caſt out, except by thoſe perſons, who gave themſelves up to faſting, and prayer. As the ſucceſs evidently depended on the ſtrength, and ſimplicity of their believing reliance on Chriſt; the faſting, and prayer could only be conſidered as proper means for increaſing humility, zeal, compaſſion, ſpirituality, and thoſe holy affections of the ſoul, with which the vigorous, and ſimple exerciſe of faith in ſuch caſes muſt be intimately connected: and the ſpirit of the inſtruction is equally applicable to us, in our perſonal conflicts, and public ſervices.

V. 22, 23.] (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 30—32. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 43—45.)

V. 24—27.] This tribute ſeems to have been the half-ſhekel, a piece which was occaſionally collected to defray the expence of the temple ſervice; and which might be in ſome meaſure at this time, a kind of voluntary oblation: for the anſwer of our Lord ſhews, that it was not a tax paid to the Romans. When Peter was aſked, whether his Maſter paid this tribute, without heſitation he anſwered in the affirmative; being aſſured that he was always ready to every expreſſion of piety, and equity. But when he entered the houſe, Jeſus prevented his mention of the ſubject, by enquiring of him, from whom kings generally levied cuſtoms and taxes; whether from their own families, or ſtrangers; that is ſubjects, or foreigners? Intimating by this queſtion, (to which the anſwer was obvious,) that as the Son of God, the Lord of the temple, of whom all it's ſervices were typical; he could have no right to contribute to the ex-

25 He ſaith, Yes. And when he was come into the houſe, Jeſus prevented him, ſaying, What thinkeſt thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take cuſtom or tribute? of their own children, or of ſtrangers?

26 Peter ſaith unto him, Of ſtrangers. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithſtanding, leſt we ſhould offend them, go thou to the ſea, and caſt an hook, and take up the fiſh that firſt cometh up; and when thou haſt opened his mouth, thou ſhalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

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pences, which were there incurred for the benefit of thoſe, who in themſelves were ſtrangers, and enemies. Yet leſt any ſhould take offence, at his refuſal, as if he were regardleſs of the temple worſhip, he waved his privilege: and as he had no money by him, he ordered Peter to caſt a hook into the ſea, which was cloſe by; and aſſured him in the mouth of the firſt fiſh, that he caught, he ſhould find a piece of money, containing a ſhekel of ſilver, which would ſuffice for them both. The other apoſtles ſeem not to have been with them. The external poverty of Chriſt, contraſted with this diſplay of divine glory muſt ſenſibly affect every conſiderate mind. By whatever means this piece of money was lodged in the mouth of the fiſh, omniſcience alone could diſcover it there, and omnipotence enſure its being firſt brought to Peter's hook! And had he ſo pleaſed, all the treaſures in the depths of the ſea, and in the heart of the earth might with equal eaſe have been laid at his feet. His poverty was therefore voluntary, as our ſuffering Surety, to take away the reproach of that condition, and to reconcile his people to it, as beſt, and ſafeſt for them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Diſcoveries of the Redeemer's antecedent, and ſubſequent majeſty tend greatly to a right underſtanding of the motive, the benefit, and the glory of his abaſement. Could we now behold that ſacred countenance, that once for our ſins was disfigured with blood, and ſpitting; we ſhould view it more glorious than the unclouded meridian ſun: we ſhould no longer ſee him crowned with thorns, inſulted with the purple robe, and nailed to the croſs betwixt two thieves; but arrayed with light as a garment, and ſurrounded with the adoring throng of prophets, apoſtles, glorified ſaints, and holy angels, vying with each other, who ſhould moſt rapturouſly celebrate his praiſes: yea we ſhould hear the eternal Father; from the inacceſſible light, in which he dwells inviſible, proclaim his honours, as the coequal Son in human nature, and deem himſelf glorified in all the adorations, that are rendered to him. But how dull are our apprehenſions, and drowſy our minds, when we would contemplate ſuch ſubjects! Yet when by faith we get a glimpſe of our Redeemer's glory, and our hearts begin to glow with love, and joy; we find our heaven begun below, and are ready to ſay “It is good for us to be here;” and we want always to continue in that pleaſant frame of ſpirit, and to ſpend our lives in abſtracted contemplation. But in this we know not what we ſay, or do: there is much of nature and of ſelf in it; ſome knowledge of the eſſence of felicity, but much ignorance of what is needful to fit us for it, and of the ſituation, in which we are placed, during our continuance here. Theſe glimpſes, and foretaſtes are vouchſafed, to prepare us for, and ſupport us under tribulations: we muſt paſs through varying experiences in our way to glory, and we muſt ſpend our lives in ſelf-denying ſervices for the honour of Chriſt, and the benefit of his people. But we know not what we ſhall at laſt be: ſave that we are aſſured, that when the Saviour ſhall appear we ſhall be like him: and as our bodies muſt be changed by his Almighty power; ſo muſt our ſouls be transfigured, and transformed, by his renewing grace. This ſhould be our grand perſonal object, whilſt we wait for the time, when he will receive us to himſelf, that where he is, there we may be alſo. In order to this we muſt continue to hear him, as our Prophet, and King; to truſt in him as the great Mediator, in whom the Father is well pleaſed; and to wait for the communication of his grace, in the exerciſe of fervent prayer, and retirement from the hurry of this vain world. But we could not now endure the refulgency of the divine glory: not only the terrors of Mount Sinai: but the glories of Mount Tabor would overwhelm us, ſave for the gracious interpoſition, and encouraging words of the incarnate Saviour.

After ſweet ſeaſons of communion with God we muſt come down from the mount, and return to our ſeveral employments: yet we may take Jeſus with us, if we rely on his promiſes, and be obſervant of his precepts; and we ſhould ever keep in mind his death and reſurrection, and anticipate the time, when we ſhall behold him in his glory, and be for ever with him. But with the ſcriptures in our hands, how apt are we to overlook their accompliſhment! And how little in compariſon has yet been effected, in bringing men back to God, by the labours of all his ſervants! Indeed men knew not the Son of the Father, but crucified and ſlew him; and we need not wonder if they treat his diſciples, and miniſters in the ſame manner. Manifold are the troubles of body, and mind, perſonal, and domeſtic, which we are liable to, through the power of Satan, and our ſins: but through the Lord's goodneſs theſe enemies have not ſucceeded in deſtroying us, though they have ſorely vexed, and often endangered us: and if our troubles bring us humbly to ſeek help from Chriſt, they will eventually do us good. We may do right in applying to diſciples, and they may be deſirous of helping us; but they are often utterly unable to do us any ſervice: however nothing but our entire perſonal unbelief, and diſobedience can preclude us from finding relief in Chriſt; though he will rebuke us, if in any meaſure we remain faithleſs, and perverſe, amidſt opportunities of inſtruction, and conviction. Should we enquire the reaſon of our ill ſucceſs, in our conflicts with our luſts, and temptations, and our endeavours to do good? The anſwer would ſtill be, “becauſe of your unbelief:” wonderful is the power of faith, in its genuine exerciſe; and nothing is im-

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Teaching humility, by the emblem of a little child, and warning his diſciples againſt all occaſions of ſtumbling others, or falling themſelves, 1---9. *2d. Shewing his care of his choſen, and his tenderneſs to the leaſt of his people, by the parable of a loſt ſheep,* 10---14. *3d. Directing them how to prevent offences, and giving ſpecial promiſes to thoſe, that unite in prayer, and aſſemble in his name,* 15---20. *4th. Inculcating forgiveneſs of injuries, by a parable of a king, and his dealings with a ſervant, that was deeply indebted to Him,* 21---35.

AT the ſame time came the diſciples unto Jeſus, ſaying, Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jeſus called a little child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them,

3 And ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little child in my name receiveth me.

6 But whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his

poſſible to thoſe, who go forth in the Redeemer's name, to obey his commands, and promote his cauſe. But our faith will commonly be ſtrong, and our efforts ſucceſsful, in proportion, as we ſeek the victory by faſting and prayer: and it eſpecially behoves us to make a fair trial of this method, in thoſe conflicts, wherein we have been the moſt foiled. What a varied ſcene of outward debaſement, and of divine glory was the life of our Redeemer! Yet all his humiliation iſſued in his reſurrection, and final exaltation. Let us then learn to endure the croſs, to deſpiſe riches, and worldly honours, and to be contentedly needy, if that be his will concerning us. Let thoſe, who are rich, learn to be poor in ſpirit, and not to truſt in riches, or to deſpiſe the needy; leſt they be found to have reproached the Saviour, as well as their Maker. We ſhould always be ready to wave our privileges, and exemptions, rather than give offence. Yet we ſeldom act of our own head, in the moſt obvious concerns, without committing ſome miſtake. Even the poor believer ſhould be ready to pay tribute and cuſtom, for the credit of the goſpel; and truſt in the Lord to defray the expence. And the fiſhers of men, though poor, may go on chearfully in their work, truſting in the Lord to ſupply their wants: for he will when neceſſary bring to their net ſuch, as ſhall be both able and willing to contribute to the ſupport of his cauſe. But how glorious are the privileges, and how noble the freedom of the children of the King of kings! To theſe we ſtrangers, and enemies are admitted by faith in Chriſt; and if the Son make us free, then ſhall we be free indeed.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1—6.] *Mark*, c. ix. v. 33—37. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 46—48.) Our Lord firſt enquired of the diſciples, what they had diſputed about by the way? and for ſome time they remained ſilent, being afraid to mention the ſubject to him: but at length ſenſible, that he knew their thoughts, they plainly aſked him, which of them was to be the greateſt in that kingdom, which he was about to eſtabliſh? No doubt they had reſpect to a ſuppoſed ſecular kingdom, and its dignities, and preferments; to the chief of which they each aſpired, reſting their claims on different grounds: ſo that the diſpute originated from error, ambition, and emulation; (*Gal.* c. v. ver. 15—21;) and it had no reference to growth in grace, and real eminence in the ſpiritual kingdom on earth, or to a proportionate degree of glory in heaven, however plauſibly they worded it. Had our Lord intended any pre-eminence in authority to Peter, or any of his ſucceſſors; he would at this time have given ſome intimation of it; but on the contrary he treated all ſuch pretenſions with the moſt decided diſapprobation. Having therefore called a little child to him, he ſet him before them, ſolemnly aſſuring them, that without they were converted, and rendered like little children, they could not at all enter his kingdom: and that he, who ſhould humble himſelf, like the little child, would eventually be found the moſt excellent, and honourable perſon in it. Children, when very young, ſhew little of a diſpoſition to claim precedency, or to aſpire after authority: they willingly aſſociate with their inferiors, are regardleſs of external diſtinctions, and devoid of malice, and guile: they are docile, ſimple, ſubmiſſive to authority, willingly dependant on their parents, and diſpoſed to credit what they ſay. No doubt they ſoon begin to ſhew other propenſities, and other ideas are early inculcated in many of them; but theſe are the obvious characteriſtics of child hood, and ſuffice to render them proper emblems of the lowly, unambitious, tractable, ſubmiſſive, dependant, and inoffenſive diſpoſition, which is the eſſence, and the excellency of genuine chriſtianity. Though not innocent, they are comparatively harmleſs: as the young, even of the moſt ferocious animals are at firſt innoxious, but ſoon begin to diſcover the nature of that ſtock, from which they ſprang. In general therefore little children are apt emblems of thoſe qualities, which are the effects of regeneration: and though all the apoſtles, but Judas, were at this time regenerate, and converted, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word; yet they needed a very great change, in reſpect of their ambition, and carnal emulation; and it was proper to ſhew them, that in their preſent temper, they were not only unfit to be the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven, but even unmeet for the meaneſt ſtation in it; as well as to ſhew all others, that the luſt of domineering is as contrary to chriſtianity, neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the ſea.

7 Woe unto the world becauſe of offences! for it muſt needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and caſt *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be caſt into everlaſting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be caſt into hell fire.

10 Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 For the Son of man is come to ſave that which was loſt.

12 How think ye? If a man have an hundred ſheep, and one of them be gone aſtray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and ſeeketh that which is gone aſtray.

13 And if ſo be that he find it, verily I ſay unto you, He rejoiceth more of that *ſheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not aſtray.

as any kind of immorality; and that without converſion, of which humility, and a ſpiritual mind are the grand effects, no man can be a real chriſtian: a leſſon, which moſt of Chriſt's nominal diſciples have ſtrangely overlooked! As this is the very ſpirit of the kingdom; they, who are moſt lowly, and indifferent about conſequence and pre-eminence, and moſt willing to be little, inferior, and neglected, muſt needs be the greateſt in the kingdom; and not they who have the greateſt abilities, moſt ſplendid gifts, or moſt exalted ſtations in the church. We ſhall frequently have occaſion to reſume this ſubject as we proceed. Our Lord further aſſured them, that this humble diſpoſition would tend directly to their being honoured: ſuch diſciples would be moſt proper, and evident repreſentatives of the meek, and lowly Saviour: and whoever ſhould receive, (that is, embrace in love, entertain or be kind to, or hearken to inſtruction from,) ſuch an humble diſciple, and ſervant of Chriſt; would, in the perſon of a mean, and obſcure perſon, like a little child, receive Chriſt himſelf, and be accepted, and recompenſed accordingly. But he, who ſhould wilfully, or impenitently injure, deceive, or enſnare him, would be guilty of ſo great a crime, and expoſed to ſo terrible a puniſhment, that it would have been better for him to have had a large mill-ſtone tied round his neck, and to have been caſt into the ſea, as was the cuſtom ſometimes in executing notorious criminals; and indeed every one ought to dread ſtumbling, or grieving ſuch humble chriſtians, worſe than the moſt terrible death.

V. 7—9.] (*Luke*, c. xvii. v. 1, 2.) Our Lord here proceeded to ſpeak more generally concerning offences; meaning not only the injuries, and ſnares, whereby men would diſcourage, and entangle his diſciples, and bring guilt upon themſelves; but all thoſe evils within the viſible church, which prejudice men's minds againſt his religion, or any doctrines of it. The ſcandalous lives, horrible oppreſſions, cruelties, and iniquities of men called chriſtians; their diviſions, and bloody contentions; their idolatries and ſuperſtitions are at this day the great offences, and cauſes of ſtumbling to Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans, in all the four quarters of the globe; and they furniſh infidels of every deſcription, with their moſt dangerous weapons againſt the truth. The acrimonious controverſies agitated amongſt thoſe who agree in the principal doctrines of the goſpel, and their mutual contempt, and revilings; together with the extravagant notions, and wicked practices found amongſt them, form the grand prejudice in the minds of multitudes againſt evangelical religion; and harden the hearts of heretics, diſguiſed infidels, and careleſs ſinners, againſt the truths of the goſpel. In theſe, and numberleſs other ways, it may be ſaid, "woe be to the world becauſe of offences:" for the devil, the ſower of theſe tares, makes uſe of them in deceiving the nations of the earth, and murdering the ſouls of men. In the preſent ſtate of human nature it muſt needs be, that ſuch offences ſhould intervene; and God has wiſe, and righteous reaſons for permitting them: yet we ſhould conſider it as the greateſt of evils, to be acceſſary to the deſtruction of ſouls; and an awful woe is denounced againſt him, whoſe deluſions, or ſcandalous miſconduct thus ſtumble men, and ſet them againſt the only method of ſalvation. If this be wilful and impenitent, the offender's puniſhment will be moſt tremendous: and believers ought to dread occaſional falls, worſe than death; and to ſubmit to any preſent loſs, or ſelf-denial, rather than cauſe others to fall. In this connexion therefore our Lord introduced again a warning, and counſel, which have been conſidered; (*Note*, c. v. ver. 29, 30. *Mark*, c. ix. v. 42—50;) and which here intimates, that they, who for the ſake of any temporal intereſt, or indulgence, or to avoid any loſs or ſelf-denial, wilfully cauſe others to ſtumble; have cauſe to ſuſpect themſelves of hypocriſy, and to fear leſt they ſhould periſh through their unmortified luſts; and ſo fall themſelves, as well as prove ſcandals to their profeſſion. We ſhould not forget, that there was a Judas in the company, to whom this warning was addreſſed.

V. 10—14.] The ſame hereſies, diviſions, and ſcandals, which cauſe numbers to ſtumble to their ruin; tend alſo to miſlead, and enſnare uneſtabliſhed believers, and thus lead as much to *their* deſtruction alſo, as any thing can do. (*Rom.* c. xiv. v. 1—3. 13—25. 1 *Cor.* c. viii.

14 Even ſo it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh.

15 Moreover if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed.

17 And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye

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v. 6—13.) Such as are ſtrong, or think themſelves ſo, are apt to undervalue, and deſpiſe, weak, wavering, and unconfirmed diſciples; when they ſee them miſtaken, or confuſed in their judgments, and liable to be diſcouraged, or drawn aſide, by example, authority, perſuaſion, or plauſible reaſonings: yet theſe things may often be the effect of deep humility, and weak natural powers. Chriſt therefore cautioned his diſciples, not to aſpire after being the greateſt, ſo as to deſpiſe the leaſt of thoſe, who profeſſed themſelves his diſciples. We are to remember, that they were all miniſters, and the admonition is therefore directed eſpecially to all their ſucceſſors, in that ſacred function; who are very apt to pay more regard to the eminent, the wiſe, and the ſtrong, not to ſay the wealthy, than to the poor, the ignorant, and the weak of the flock. In enforcing this exhortation, Chriſt aſſigned ſome reaſons for it: and firſt he declared, that "their angels do always behold the face of his heavenly Father." They are all miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation; and it ſeems that weak, and trembling believers are their ſpecial charge: yet do they always behold the face, and enjoy the favour of the eternal God; and they do not deem their attention to the new convert, or the diſcouraged, poor, or deſpiſed believer, any degradation from their dignity, or any interruption of their felicity: nay it ſeems, as if they had ſpecial tokens of the divine approbation when thus employed. And ſhould their brethren on earth deſpiſe thoſe, whom angels delight to attend upon? Again Chriſt obſerved, that He, the Son of Man, whom they knew to be the Son of God alſo, came into the world to ſave the loſt: He did not deſpiſe them even when dead in ſin, nay ſtrangers or enemies to him: and did He ſtoop ſo low to ſave them? And ſhould they deſpiſe their weak brethren, whom he was bringing home to himſelf? In illuſtration of this he added a parable, enquiring at the ſame time their opinion of the caſe, that he ſtated to them. If a man had an hundred ſheep in his paſture, and one of them ſhould be loſt: would not this ſtray ſheep more occupy his attention, than all the reſt? Would he not go to the mountains, &c, to ſeek it, until he found it? And would he not in that caſe expreſs more joy on the account of it, than for all thoſe, that had never gone aſtray? This ſhews the expoſed, helpleſs condition of periſhing ſinners; who, having wandered from God, are liable to be deſtroyed by ſatan, and to fall into hell; even as ſheep, when wandered from the fold, are expoſed to devouring beaſts, or to fall into the pit, and periſh. It moreover ſhews how the good Shepherd knows, and values his choſen flock, even before they are brought into his fold; that He ſeeks for them, before they ſeek for Him; that he rejoices in ſaving them; and that he will reſtore them from all their wanderings, and ſuffer none of them to periſh. It therefore behoves his miniſters to concur in this deſign, to rejoice at the appearance of a ſinner's converſion, to encourage and help the weak, and not to grieve, deſpiſe, or ſtumble them. To this our Lord added, that it was not the will of their Father, that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh: they ought therefore to concur in judgment with, and copy the example of angels, of the Son of God, and the Father himſelf, reſpecting them; and not that of proud phariſees.) (*Luke*, c. xv. v. 1—7.)

V. 15—18.] Contentions amongſt chriſtians tend exceedingly to ſet the world againſt the goſpel: and as they muſt ariſe, in this preſent ſtate, amongſt perſons, who are ſanctified only in part, and who are liable both to give cauſe for anger, and to be angry without cauſe themſelves; therefore our Lord next preſcribed ſome rules for ſtopping the progreſs, and preventing the effects of them, which could ſeldom fail of being effectual, if they were honeſtly followed. In caſe a man ſhould be injured by a brother, a profeſſed chriſtian, he ought not to go, and complain of it to others, (as is commonly done, perhaps merely upon rumour;) to inflame his own reſentment, and wound his neighbours reputation; but he ought to go privately, and in a gentle, but plain, and convincing manner to ſtate the matter, and ſhew him the injuſtice and unreaſonableneſs of his conduct. If this produce a proper effect, (as it generally would with a true chriſtian,) and he ſees and acknowledges his fault; then the offending brother is won over, and inſtead of an open breach, a cordial reconciliation takes place, and love is continued, and increaſed. But if this private application fails of ſucceſs, and the offender perſiſts in his injury, and refuſes reaſonable terms of agreement: the offended party is next ordered to take with him one, or two other chriſtian friends, who may hear, and bear witneſs to the facts that are alledged, and the terms of accommodation that are propoſed; that they may be reported to the church, on more unexceptionable teſtimony: and if theſe witneſſes determine the perſon to be faulty, and approve of the conceſſions required; and he refuſe to hearken to them, and perſiſt in his injury; it will then be neceſſary to declare the matter more openly, not to the world, but to the church; (i. e. the teachers, and profeſſors of the goſpel;) that the injurious party may be ſolemnly cenſured, and reproved by them. And if he ſtill refuſe to ſubmit, he is thenceforth to be conſidered as an heathen, or publican; he is to be ſhun-ſhall bind on earth ſhall be bound in heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth ſhall be looſed in heaven.

19 Again I ſay unto you, That if two of you ſhall agree on earth as touching any thing that they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.

21 Then came Peter to him, and ſaid, Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? till ſeven times?

22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven times; but, Until ſeventy times ſeven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his ſervants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thouſand talents:

25 But foraſmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be ſold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The ſervant therefore fell down, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that ſervant was moved with compaſſion, and looſed him, and forgave him the debt.

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ned by believers, that he may be aſhamed; and excluded from their communion, till he give tokens of repentance. It would be abſurd to apply theſe rules to any particular form of church government, and diſcipline; yet they certainly ſuppoſe their exiſtence among chriſtians, and the excluſion of diſorderly perſons from thoſe ſocieties, to which they immediately belong. They are capable of being reduced to practice, under different forms of church government; though they are almoſt neglected by them all. (1 *Cor.* c. v, vi.) In confirmation of this method of procedure our Lord added a ſolemn aſſurance, that ſuch deciſions would be ratified in heaven; whether they expelled the unruly from their communion, or received the penitent back again, by reverſing the ſentence paſſed on them: this ſuppoſes, that the perſons concerned decided according to truth, and equity; for a groundleſs ſentence of excommunication, or abſolution cannot poſſibly make any alteration in a man's ſtate, or character; all ſuch deciſions being merely declaratory. This has been overlooked, in all thoſe ſcandalous abuſes of church cenſures, which are the real cauſe of that relaxation, or deſtitution of diſcipline, which now ſo generally prevail.

V. 19, 20.] It is here ſuppoſed, that all ſuch tranſactions ought to be conducted with prayer for direction, and for the humiliation of the offender: and not only might an anſwer be expected, when many ſhould concur; but even when two perſons ſhould agree to preſent their joint requeſt *on earth*, the eternal Father, whoſe throne is in heaven, would ſurely regard, and anſwer it. Some interpret this of thoſe miraculous interpoſitions, by which ſuch cenſures were ſometimes followed, and confirmed in the primitive times: but it ſeems to be a general promiſe, encouraging ſocial prayer, eſpecially in arduous caſes. When ſuch prayers are preſented in faith, and the petition of them is conducive to our good, and to the glory of God, we are every where warranted to expect an anſwer: and this muſt have been an implied limitation, even in the days when miracles were wrought. To this Chriſt added, that when two or three were aſſembled in his name; that is, in dependance on his promiſe, in obedience to his command, out of love to Him, and a regard to his glory, for prayer, or other acts of worſhip, to hear his word, or to regulate ſuch things, as pertain to the peace and purity of his church; "there," ſays He, "I AM, in the midſt of you:" He ſays not "I will be," but I am, referring to his divine preſence at all times, and in all places; and to his ſpecial preſence by the influences of his Spirit to communicate bleſſings to his people, whenever, or wherever, they wait upon him for them. (c. xxviii. v. 20.) Two, or three of his people may be met together, in thouſands of places all over the earth, at the ſame time: this muſt therefore be allowed to be a direct aſſertion of his omnipreſent Deity; and cannot on any other ſuppoſition be rendered conſiſtent with propriety.

V. 21—22.] As our Lord had intimated that his diſciples were to beſtow pains to obtain peace even with their offending brethren, Peter wanted to be informed, how often they were to renew their forgiveneſs of injuries to ſuch, as repeated the offence. And perhaps with reference to the traditions of the elders, he aſked whether they were to proceed as far as ſeven times? To this our Lord anſwered, that they ought to forgive, not only to the ſeventh time, but to ſeventy times ſeven; meaning an indefinite number, even as often as men renew their offences, or as God renews his pardons to believers.

V. 23—35.] To illuſtrate the ſubject, Jeſus uſed a parable. He obſerved, that the kingdom of heaven, or God's method of dealing with men, under the chriſtian diſpenſation, might be compared to that of a king, who required his ſervants to paſs their accounts before him, of the ſums they had received, and the way in which they had expended them. This repreſents the Lord himſelf, as requiring of men an account of the uſe, they have made of their abilities, and advantages, in their conduct towards him, and each other; eſpecially as this diſtinguiſhes the true chriſtian from the falſe profeſſor. When this ſcrutiny was inſtituted, the king ſoon met with one, who, having been high in office, and very unfaithful, 28 But the ſame ſervant went out, and found one of his fellow-ſervants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, ſaying, Pay me that thou oweſt.

29 And his fellow-ſervant fell down at his feet, and beſought him, ſaying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and caſt him into priſon, till he ſhould pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow-ſervants ſaw what was done, they were very ſorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, ſaid unto him, O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me:

33 Shouldeſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.

owed him ten thouſand talents, which by the loweſt computation amounts to ſeveral millions ſterling: this repreſents our vaſt obligations to God, and our exceeding guilt as tranſgreſſors of his law, which is alſo increaſed by the neglect, or abuſe of his goſpel; in which reſpects all are deeply indebted, but ſome more than others; (*Luke*, c. vii. v. 41—43.) As the ſervant was unable to pay this immenſe ſum, his lord commanded, that he, and his wife, and children, ſhould be ſold for ſlaves, and his ſubſtance confiſcated, according to the cuſtom of thoſe countries, in order that payment might be made: this repreſents the ſtrictneſs of the law, and juſtice of God, and the dreadful puniſhment, to which ſinners are righteouſly expoſed, from which they cannot deliver themſelves, and in which they often involve their connexions. The ſervant, terrified by this ſentence; in the moſt ſubmiſſive poſture, and manner, craved time, and patience, and promiſed that he would at length diſcharge the whole debt: this ſhews the terrors, and convictions, to which men are ſubject from a view of the ſeverity of God's juſtice, and that general hope of mercy, by which they ſeek relief from them; but the engagement of paying the whole ſeems an intended intimation of the unhumbled, and ſelf-confident ſpirit of falſe profeſſors, even in the midſt of their forced confeſſions of guilt. However the lord of that ſervant is ſuppoſed to be induced by compaſſion, to ſet him at liberty, and to remit the debt; knowing well that he would never be able to pay it: this repreſents the Lord's readineſs to forgive all true penitents, and the falſe concluſions, which many thence draw concerning their ſins being pardoned; though their ſubſequent conduct proves that they never entered into the ſpirit, or experienced the ſanctifying grace, of the goſpel. For the ſame perſon went out, and ſtraightway met with a fellow ſervant, who owed him a trifling debt of an hundred denarii, or a little more than three pounds ſterling; and laying hold of him by the throat, in a fierce and inſolent manner, he inſiſted upon immediate payment; and even when the other uſed the ſame words to him, as he had done to his lord; (and he might in time have paid his ſmall debt, though the other could not his immenſe ſum;) he would not wait, but caſt him into priſon, till he paid the debt. This ſhews the ſelfiſhneſs, ſeverity, and unrelenting ſpirit of many profeſſors, to the poor, and to their debtors; and their pertinacious reſentments, the reſult of pride, hardneſs of heart, and malevolence: for their views of the goſpel, and their forced confeſſions ſeem to exaſperate them, inſtead of ſoftening and meliorating their tempers. Such men deal with their neighbours in ſo ſevere a manner; that if God mete to them by the ſame meaſure, as no doubt he will, judgment without mercy muſt be their portion. (*James*, c. ii. v. 12, 13.) When the fellow ſervants ſaw this tranſaction, they were grieved that a man, who had ſo merciful a maſter ſhould be ſo cruel to one, that was in his power; and they came, to inform their lord of all theſe things: this ſhews, that real believers are grieved, and ſhocked at the miſconduct of falſe profeſſors, more than at the wickedneſs of thoſe that pretend not to religion; and that they complain to the Lord of the diſhonour thus done to his goſpel. The Lord then called the ſervant, and having reproached him, for acting in ſuch direct oppoſition to the merciful example he had ſet him; and ſhewn the wickedneſs of his character, and the unreaſonableneſs of his conduct; he with deep indignation delivered him over to the executioners of juſtice, to be confined, and puniſhed by them till he had paid the whole debt; and as he was not able to pay it, he could never obtain deliverance. We are not to ſuppoſe, that God actually forgives men, and then afterwards imputes their guilt to them, to their final condemnation: but men often entertain a falſe confidence, that their ſins are pardoned, when their conduct evinces the contrary; and they will at laſt be dealt with, not according to their notions, profeſſion, or confidence; but according as the conduct towards their offending brethren has evidenced the reality of their faith in, and love to Chriſt, or the contrary. This is our Lord's own inference from it: whatever men's profeſſion may be, God will deliver them as wicked ſervants to the tormentors, to be puniſhed according to their ſins with exact juſtice; if they do not *from their hearts*, which he eſpecially regards, forgive their brethren their treſpaſſes. (c. vi. v. 12. 14, 15.) No doubt, if true believers are betrayed into any degree of this unchriſtian ſpirit, they will experience frowns, rebukes, and chaſtenings: but to ſuppoſe that a real chriſtian can be of this revengeful temper; and that being delivered as a wicked ſervant to the tormentors, till

CHAP. XIX.

Contains Jeſus, 1*ſt. Journeying towards Judea, and healing the ſick,* 1, 2. 2*d. Stating the caſe of divorces, and marriage, in anſwer to the enquiries of the Phariſees, and his diſciples,* 3---12. 3*d. Bleſſing young children,* 13---15. 4*th. Diſcourſing with a rich young man, concerning the way of eternal life, and detecting the covetouſneſs of his heart,* 16---22. 5*th. Declaring the difficulty of a rich man's ſalvation, and making gracious promiſes to thoſe, who renounce worldly objects for his ſake,* 23---30.

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the whole debt be paid, means no more than fatherly correction, as ſome have inadvertently interpreted it; directly militates againſt the tenor of the parable, and of the whole ſcripture; and is calculated to encourage ſelfiſh, malignant, and hard, hearted profeſſors, who are the ſcandal of the goſpel, and as much unlike Chriſt, as the vileſt libertine, or drunkard in the world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Pride, and ambition are deep rooted in our fallen nature; ſo that they remain, and often break forth even in thoſe, who are born of God. Hence ſo many contentions in the church, not only among thoſe, whoſe religion is only an occaſion of aſpiring to dominion; but even among real diſciples, who are tempted to ſeek pre-eminence above their brethren, after they have been induced to give up their proſpects of worldly honour, and greatneſs. Yet ſuch ambitious projects are peculiarly contrary to the ſpirit of the goſpel, and to the character of Chriſt; and they are productive of envy, diſcord, and other fatal conſequences. In this, as well as other reſpects, we need to be daily renewed in the ſpirit of our mind, that we may become as little children, ſimple, humble, and willing to be the leaſt of all, and the ſervants of all. Without we have ſome meaſure of this diſpoſition, we are miſtaken; if we deem ourſelves the ſubjects of Chriſt; and he that hath made moſt proficiency in this leſſon of ſelf-abaſement, is in fact the greateſt in the kingdom of grace, and will ſhine the brighteſt in the kingdom of glory. But they, who moſt aſpire after preference, and authority in the church, commonly ſhew themſelves ſtrangers to converting grace; and ſo prove, that they have neither part nor lot in the matter. (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 18—23.) We ought therefore daily to ſtudy this ſubject, and to examine our own ſpirits reſpecting it; that we may be, more and more, caſt into the mold of the goſpel; that we may learn to behave properly towards our fellow chriſtians, eſteeming and honouring thoſe whom the Lord honours, and being afraid of injuring or grieving any of his little ones. Alas, what miſeries come upon the world, through the ſcandals that prevail in the church! Whilſt we mourn over the evils which we cannot remedy; we ſhould be careful not to add to them, and ſhould fear death leſs, than diſhonouring the goſpel, and cauſing ſouls to ſtumble and periſh by our miſconduct. We ought conſtantly to aſſociate the idea of the Redeemer's glory, with that of our own ſalvation; and to mortify every inclination, and renounce every intereſt, which may throw a ſtumbling block in the way of others; even as if it endangered the loſs of our own ſouls. This diſpoſition is a proper evidence, that we are true believers: but how dreadful will be the diſappointment of ſelfiſh, or ſelf-indulgent profeſſors; who taking it for granted that they are ſafe, and caring nothing about the ſouls of their neighbours, prove the occaſions of their ruin; and will at laſt ſink themſelves, into the unquenchable, and everlaſting fire of hell, under the guilt of thoſe ſins, and the power of thoſe darling luſts, which they refuſed here to relinquiſh, and mortify! But let us keep at a diſtance from this fatal precipice, and labour to remove thoſe offences, which prejudice men againſt the goſpel: let us remember that they are peculiarly entitled to an intereſt in our prayers, and to every countenance that we can give them, who attempt, in any way, to terminate thoſe cruel oppreſſions, which are the reproach of the chriſtian name; or to reform abuſes, and heal diviſions within the church. As numbers, who have been in ſome degree awakened to a concern about their ſouls, ſtumble, and periſh by the miſconduct of profeſſors: ſo weak chriſtians are greatly harraſſed, and perplexed by them. We ought therefore ſeriouſly to conſider what effects our conduct may have upon ſuch perſons; and by no means deſpiſe their ſcruples, and miſtakes, or endanger their comfort, and progreſs, from ſelfiſh motives. Miniſters eſpecially are called upon to watch over, and be gentle towards the weak, feeble, and diſcouraged of the flock, and the young uneſtabliſhed convert. And ſhall any of us refuſe our attention to thoſe, whom the bleſſed angels delight to miniſter unto? Whom the Son of God came to ſeek, and ſave? And concerning whom, it is the Father's good pleaſure, that not one of them ſhould periſh? This would be the more inexcuſable in us; as we all have been as loſt ſheep, and have been ranſomed by the blood, and brought back by the tender care of our good Shepherd; who delights more in ſaving loſt ſinners, than even in the worſhip of thoſe holy intelligences, that never went aſtray; and who receives, as it were, a new acceſſion of joy, and glory, by every one, that is brought back to his fold. Let us then remember from what a dreadful ſtate we have been ſaved, and copy the pattern of our gracious Benefactor; and let us ſtudy to to be gentle, harmleſs, and uſeful, as behoves the ſheep of his paſture.

How careful ſhould all chriſtians be, to preſerve the peace, as well the purity of the church! Alas, many are prompt to deem themſelves injured, and to be clamorous in their complaints, when in reality they have no cauſe: and others, when injured, have recourſe to ſlander, and litigation, and almoſt every other expedient; inſtead of trying the method, which Chriſt hath expreſſly enjoined to all his diſciples: and but few, in any place, have uniformly followed theſe directions of our common Lord. Various corrupt maxims, cuſtoms, and reſerves prevent even conſcientious men, from ſpeaking privately to their offending brethren, and from referring their diſputes to the arbitration of pious chriſtians: hence jealouſies, reſentments, continued contentions, and even frivolous lawſuits, amongſt profeſſors of the goſpel; and hence

AND it came to paſs, *that* when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe ſayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coaſts of Judea beyond Jordan;

2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 The Phariſees alſo came unto him, tempting him, and ſaying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe?

4 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Have ye not read, that he, which made *them* at the beginning, made them male and female.

5 And ſaid, For this cauſe ſhall a man leave father and mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife: and they twain ſhall be one fleſh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one fleſh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put aſunder.

7 They ſay unto him, Why did Moſes then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He ſaith unto them, Moſes becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts ſuffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not ſo.

mutual criminations, and appeals *in print* to the world againſt each other, to the ſcandal of religion, and the inſulting triumphs of its enemies. Yet ſurely we ought not to harbour ſo injurious an opinion of a profeſſed diſciple, as to think that he would not endure to be mildly expoſtulated with, when he had evidently done wrong! Surely we ſhould prefer gaining, recovering, and conciliating our offending brother, to obtaining a victory over him, or expoſing his character! And certainly he, who hath done injuſtice, and will not be induced to make moderate conceſſions, and amends, by private expoſtulations, or by the united judgment of chriſtians, and miniſters; has no longer a right to be treated as a believer, till he repent, and do works meet for repentance. Yet harſher means ſhould never be adopted, till milder have been tried without ſucceſs; no man ſhould think himſelf a competent judge in his own cauſe: nor ſhould any chriſtian ſeek *legal* redreſs, till it is evident, that no other means can procure that juſtice, which is requiſite ſhould be done him. Indeed the abuſe of diſcipline, through the pride, and corrupt paſſions of men, has ſo prejudiced the minds of numbers againſt it, that it is grievouſly fallen into diſuſe: yet in whatever way the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, and conſiſtent believers concur to ſhew their decided diſapprobation of an offender's conduct, by withdrawing from his ſociety, or objecting to communion with him in holy ordinances; it ought to be deemed a very ſolemn matter: for whatſoever is thus bound or looſed on earth, ſhall be ratified in heaven, however the offender may deſpiſe the proteſt. In all our undertakings, we ſhould ſeek direction in prayer; and we cannot too highly value the promiſes of God to this effect: all the public concerns of families, and churches ſhould be conducted with ſocial, as well as ſecret prayer: nor ſhould we ever cenſure, or rebuke any man, without at the ſame time praying for his humiliation and ſalvation. Whenever we meet in the name of Chriſt, in our families, or in public ordinances, at any time, or in any place; we ſhould realize his preſence in the midſt of us; that we may both be impreſſed with awe of his holy heart-ſearching eye upon us, and encouraged to expect abundant bleſſings from him.

But whilſt we ſinners live ſo entirely on mercy, and forgiveneſs, how backward are we to forgive the repeated offences of our brethren! Yet let us not think, that any provocation can authorize us to harbour reſentment, or ſeek revenge. This we can never ſuppoſe, if we conſider duly, how many and aggravated our former, and later tranſgreſſions have been againſt our Creator, and daily Benefactor; and how ready he is to forgive us, when we repent and ſeek his face. If he enter into judgment with us, our debt will be found immenſely large, all the terrible curſes of the law will be adjudged to be our righteous deſert, and it will be in vain for us to ſay, "have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." This, the humbled ſinner will perceive, and he will rely only on free, abounding mercy, through the ranſom of the death of Chriſt; in this way, his ſins will be blotted out, and buried in the depths of the ſea; and his gentle, forgiving, and compaſſionate ſpirit, and conduct, towards thoſe, who have injured, or are dependant on him, will prove him a partaker of the Spirit, and mind of Chriſt. But the unhumbled profeſſor will often betray himſelf, by a harſh, unforgiving, and unrelenting behaviour to his debtors, his ſervants, the poor, and eſpecially to thoſe, that have offended him. Such men ſcandalize the cauſe, and grieve true believers: but they deceive, and deſtroy themſelves; and their offended Lord will ſhortly deliver them as wicked ſervants, to the executioners of his vengeance, and the everlaſting puniſhment prepared for the workers of iniquity. (c. xxv. ver. 41—46.) Let us then examine ourſelves, whether *from our hearts* we forgive every one our brother his treſpaſſes? let us frequently aſk ourſelves whether our conduct towards poor debtors, ſupplicants, or ſuch as have affronted us, reſembles the merciful conduct of our Lord towards us? And let us ſeek more and more for the renewing grace of God, to teach us to forgive others, even as we hope for forgiveneſs from him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1, 2.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 1. *Luke*, c. ix. v. 51.) This ſeems to have been our Lord's final departure from Galilee, previous to his crucifixion: but he took a large compaſs in his journey, and paſſed through the diſtricts, that lay eaſt of Jordan.

V. 3—9.] (Note, c. v. ver. 31, 32. *Mark*, c. x. v. 2—12. *Luke*, c. xvi. v. 18.) Theſe Phariſees had probably heard, that Jeſus oppoſed their deciſions concern-

9 And I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and ſhall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoſo marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.

10 His diſciples ſay unto him, If the caſe of the man be ſo with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he ſaid unto them, All *men* cannot receive this ſaying, ſave *they* to whom it is given.

12 For there are ſome eunuchs, which were ſo born from *their* mothers womb; and there are ſome eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's ſake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

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ing divorces; and they were deſirous of drawing ſomething from him, which they could repreſent as contrary to the law of Moſes. With this inſidious deſign, they queſtioned him, "Whether it were lawful for a man to "put away his wife for every cauſe?" That is on account of any thing in her temper, or perſon, or for any infirmity, which rendered her diſagreeable to him. To this he replied, by enquiring, whether they had not read the account given by Moſes of the creation, and of the original inſtitution of marriage? Intimating, that this was the ſtandard, by which that tranſaction ought to be regulated, as every deviation from it was an abuſe conſequent on man's depravity. The Creator firſt formed Adam, and from his ſide took the rib, whence the woman was made: and from this one man, and one woman he appointed the whole human ſpecies to be deſcended: and when the Lord brought the woman to Adam, he acknowledged her, as a part of himſelf, and it was added, either by him under the influence of immediate inſpiration, or by Moſes; that for this cauſe, in all future ages, a man ſhould leave father, and mother, foregoing many of the comforts, and relinquiſhing many of the duties of theſe endeared relations, to cleave to his wife, as a part of himſelf: and thus theſe two were to conſtitute, as it were, one body, no more to be ſeparated, ſave by God, who in this appointment of marriage hath joined them together; but to have ever after the ſame intereſts, and to ſhare each other's comforts, or ſorrows, even as the members of the ſame body do. When marriage was inſtituted, ſin and death had not entered: the ſinful cauſe of ſeparation afterwards mentioned, and the natural diſſolution of the union were therefore not referred to: but they have ſince been ſpecified; and reſemble the cutting off of a mortified limb, and the ſeparation of the parts of the body by death. In all other reſpects the union is to be conſidered as indiſſoluble. It is obſervable, that Chriſt inſerts the word *twain*, which is not in the original inſtitution, purpoſely, as it ſeems, to obviate all miſconſtruction of his meaning. (*Gen.* c. ii. v. 21—25.) To this anſwer our Lord ſubjoined an enquiry, what Moſes had commanded in the law? And in anſwering this they aſked, by way of objection, wherefore he had "*commanded* to give a writing of divorcement, and to put "her away?" But our Lord ſhewed them, that this was not a command, but a permiſſion: they were *allowed*, without puniſhment by the magiſtrate, to put away their wives; becauſe they were ſo hard-hearted, that they would otherwiſe have uſed them ill, or even murdered them: ſo that this permiſſion was a ſtigma on their national character, a teſtimony to the depravity of human nature, a mere judicial regulation, and a departure from the original inſtitution, and the meaning of the moral law. The general ſcope of this reaſoning is equally applicable to polygamy. To this our Lord added, that thenceforth, whoſoever ſhould put away his wife, except for unchaſtity, (which violates the marriage covenant, and deſtroys as it were the very nature of it;) and ſhould marry another woman, would be adjudged an adulterer; as he alſo would, that ſhould marry the divorced woman. Whatever injuſtice there might be in the divorce, it could not be adultery *againſt her*; if the man, and woman were not put entirely upon a level in this reſpect: ſo that, under the chriſtian diſpenſation, it is as much adultery for the huſband to take another woman, as for the wife to take another man.

V. 10—12.] The diſciples had imbibed the prejudices of their countrymen: they ſuppoſed, that theſe regulations would in many caſes render marriage a ſource of perpetual uneaſineſs; and they concluded, that it would be moſt prudent, and conducive to happineſs for men to continue unmarried. To this obſervation our Lord replied, that all men were not capable of complying with ſuch a reſtriction; as entire continence was a ſpecial gift of God to ſome men, and not to others: for ſeeing it was his purpoſe, that the human ſpecies ſhould be continued, and that men ſhould generally marry for that purpoſe; he had ſo conſtituted them, that many could not live conſcientiouſly, and comfortably in a ſingle ſtate. Indeed ſome were born, with ſuch a temperament of body, that they were all their lives devoid of thoſe inclinations, to which others are ſubject: others were mutilated in infancy, through the avarice, or policy of men: and others were ſucceſsful in their endeavours to ſubdue their natural inclinations; that they might more entirely dedicate their time, and talents to the ſervice of God, and have leſs incumbrance in ſo doing: and if any man found himſelf diſpoſed to, and capable of, that kind of life; it would be good for him not to marry, as he might be more uſeful, in promoting the kingdom of heaven among men. But for the generality of men, it is better for them, and for ſociety, that they ſhould marry, notwithſtanding all the cares, and incumbrances of that ſtate: and as every man muſt judge for himſelf in this matter; ſo our Lord intimated to the apoſtles, that whatever they choſe for themſelves, they muſt impoſe no reſtriction on others in this matter. (1 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 1—9.)

V. 13—15.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 13—16. *Luke*, c. xviii

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he ſhould put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the diſciples rebuked them.

14 But Jeſus ſaid, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

16 And, behold, one came, and ſaid unto him, Good Maſter, what good thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He ſaith unto him, Which? Jeſus ſaid, Thou ſhalt do no murder, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs,

19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

20 The young man ſaith unto him, All theſe things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven; and come *and* follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that ſaying, he went away ſorrowful: for he had great poſſeſſions.

v. 15—17.) We meet with ſeveral inſtances of thoſe, who applied to Chriſt in behalf of their afflicted relations, and friends: but theſe perſons brought their little children, or infants to him, in order that he might lay his hands on them, and pray for, or bleſs them. As they were in health, and too young to receive inſtruction, the diſciples thought that their Lord was needleſsly troubled, or that it would be beneath Him to notice infants; and they therefore rebuked thoſe, who brought them. Yet their conduct could only ariſe from a high regard to Chriſt, and an earneſt deſire of ſpiritual bleſſings upon their children: He therefore was much diſpleaſed with them, for diſcouraging the application: and he bid them let the little children alone, and not offer to prohibit their coming unto him; "for, of ſuch," added He, "is the kingdom of heaven." We have already conſidered little children as emblems of the chriſtian temper: (c. xviii. v. 3, 4.) Our Lord might in part be diſpleaſed with the diſciples for ſo ſoon forgetting that inſtructive diſcourſe: and doubtleſs he meant to encourage parents to ſeek a bleſſing from Him on their children from their earlieſt infancy; and to teach the children to apply to him, as ſoon as they can underſtand his words. But the expreſſion "of ſuch is the kingdom of "heaven," ſeems to mean, that little children are admiſſible into the viſible church, under the New Teſtament diſpenſation, as they had been under that of Moſes. Chriſt did not indeed order theſe infants to be baptized; for chriſtian baptiſm was not then expreſſly inſtituted as the initiatory ordinance; and this change, like ſeveral others, took place gradually: yet the paſſage ſeems to give conſiderable ſanction to that method of bringing children to Chriſt, that they may be admitted amongſt the ſubjects of his viſible kingdom; and we cannot but think thoſe diſciples miſtaken, who object to it, ſometimes with arguments, that would have equally held good againſt infant circumciſion, or againſt bringing infants to Chriſt, that he might touch them. Indeed the expreſſion may alſo intimate that the kingdom of heavenly glory is greatly conſtituted of ſuch, as die in infancy. Infants are as capable of regeneration, as grown perſons: and there is abundant ground to conclude, that all thoſe, who have not lived to commit actual tranſgreſſions; though they ſhare in the effects of the firſt Adam's offence, will alſo ſhare in the bleſſings of the ſecond Adam's gracious covenant; without their perſonal faith and obedience, but not without the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Chriſt on their ſouls.

V. 16—22.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 17—22. *Luke*, c. xviii. v. 18—23.) We learn from the other evangeliſts, that the young perſon here introduced was a ruler, or magiſtrate: he was alſo a perſon of great decency, and amiableneſs in his moral character, and had ſerious thoughts about religion, and an honourable opinion of Chriſt. He therefore came running, and kneeling down to Him, he called him "good Maſter," or Teacher; and with great apparent earneſtneſs, and docility, enquired "what good thing he might do, that he might "have eternal life?" The queſtion, at firſt ſight, may ſeem to us equivalent to the enquiry, "what muſt I do to be ſaved?" But our Lord ſaw, that his judgment was erroneous, and his heart unhumbled, and carnal: he therefore firſt objected to his giving him, whom he ſuppoſed to be a mere man, the title of good: as all mere men are evil in themſelves; and none is ſtrictly, and abſolutely good, but the one living, and true God, the Fountain and Perfection of goodneſs, and excellency. This intimated to him, that he was not properly ſenſible of the depravity of his own heart; or of the dignity of the perſon, whom he thus addreſſed, to whom the title of good belonged in a far higher ſenſe, than he ſuppoſed. He then directed him to keep the commandments of God, if he meant to enter into life, by the good things that he ſhould do. This was a direction ſuited to this caſe: for the knowledge of the holy law is the proper cure of a ſelf-juſtifying ſpirit, as it tends to diſcover the deficiencies, and defilements of all human obedience: but probably this young man expected ſome external obſervances, and auſterities to have been ſuperadded by our Lord, in order to complete his juſtifying righteouſneſs.

23 Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, Verily I ſay unto you, That a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I ſay unto you, It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his diſciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, Who then can be ſaved?

26 But Jeſus beheld *them*, and ſaid unto them, With men this is impoſſible; but with God all things are poſſible.

27 Then anſwered Peter and ſaid unto him, Behold, we have forſaken all, and followed thee; what ſhall we have therefore?

28 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man ſhall ſit in the throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.

29 And every one that hath forſaken hou-

He therefore ignorantly replied, by enquiring which of the commandments he was to keep? Whereas a perfect obedience to them all, is the indiſpenſable condition of life, according to the covenant of works; and curſed is every one, that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them. In order therefore to make way for his conviction, or detection, our Lord pointed out to him the commandments of the ſecond table, and ſummed them up, in the rule of loving our neighbour as ourſelves. (*Notes*, &c. *Exod.* c. xx.) But he, regardleſs of the firſt table, and ignorant of the ſpiritual import of the precepts adduced, anſwered, that he had kept them all from his youth. He could only mean the letter of them, and that he was free from the groſſer violations of it: for doubtleſs he had infringed ſeveral of them, even in his outward conduct; and he certainly was far enough from loving his neighbour as himſelf. However to this ignorant anſwer he added an enquiry, concerning what was yet wanting to complete his righteouſneſs? But our Lord, to diſcover to him, and others, the evil that lurked under all theſe plauſible appearances, told him that he yet lacked one thing, and that if he would be perfect, he muſt go and ſell his eſtate, diſtribute the money among the poor, and come and follow him; and then he ſhould have a better treaſure in heaven. This was acting like a ſkilful phyſician, who was aware of the patient's diſorder, and determined to apply the medicine directly to it. It ſerved at once to prove him far diſtant from the righteouſneſs of the law, and from the temper required by the goſpel. Not to mention the ſupreme love of God: had he loved his neighbour as himſelf, and believed Jeſus to ſpeak with divine authority; he would readily have diſpoſed of his wealth, at his command, in relieving the afflicted, when at the ſame time, it would have enſured his own felicity: and had he been an humbled ſinner, earneſtly ſeeking mercy, and eternal life, as the gift of God, through the divine Saviour; he would readily have left all to have followed him: but the event proved, that his wealth was dearer to him, than either God, or his neighbour; than Chriſt, an heavenly Treaſure, or even his own ſoul. Doubtleſs it was his duty to have yielded a prompt obedience to this command: yet our Lord knew that he would not; and he intended it as a touchſtone, by which to diſcover him to himſelf. For when he heard that ſaying, all his pleaſing proſpects at once vaniſhed, and he departed ſorrowful, for he had great poſſeſſions; and though he was reluctant to give up the hope of eternal life; yet he would not at that time renounce his riches for the ſake of it. We cannot decide what he afterwards did: it is poſſible that he was at length brought to a more ſpiritual frame of mind; certainly all that Chriſt ſaid to him was ſuited to humble, and convince him; and ſome would infer his ſubſequent converſion from St. Mark, who ſays that Jeſus loved him: though this may only mean, that he ſaw a natural amiableneſs, which excited in him, as man, a peculiar regard to him.

V. 23—26.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 23—27. *Luke*, c. xviii. v. 24—27.) This incident afforded our Lord an occaſion of ſhewing the fatal tendency of riches. He obſerved, as in aſtoniſhment, how hard it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven! Or to become his true ſubject, and diſciple: and, he even added, with affectionate application to the apoſtles, as his children, that it "was eaſier for a camel to paſs through "the eye of a needle, than for a rich man, (or one "that truſted in riches,) to enter into the kingdom of "heaven, &c." Some would read it, "a cable:" but it ſeems to have been a proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying extreme difficulty, or apparent impoſſibility. Riches tend to increaſe pride, covetouſneſs, and ſelf-indulgence; they purchaſe flatterers, and exclude faithful reprovers; they prejudice the mind againſt the levelling truths, and ſelf-denying precepts of Chriſt; and they increaſe the number, and force, of thoſe obſtacles, that muſt be broken through, and the ſuppoſed value of thoſe objects, that muſt be renounced, if a man would become a diſciple of Chriſt. Far more in proportion of the poor, than of the rich are converted, and enter the kingdom of grace, and of glory; and the converſion of a very wealthy man ſeems the peculiar triumph of almighty grace. However the diſciples, who were poor, and felt their own difficulties, and probably thought that the rich had more advantages for religion than themſelves, were exceedingly aſtoniſhed at this ſaying, and exclaimed, "who "then can be ſaved?" But Jeſus to ſhew them, that he meant not, that all rich perſons muſt be loſt; but to warn them againſt the deſire of ſuch dangerous diſtinctions, aſſured them, that with men indeed it was impoſſible, but that with God all things were poſſible.

V. 27—30.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 28—31. *Luke*, c. xviii.

ſes, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's ſake, ſhall receive an hundred-fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life.

30 But many *that are* firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt *ſhall be* firſt.

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v. 28—30.) The young ruler's departure from Chriſt, and his obſervations upon it, led Peter to recollect, that he, and the other apoſtles had actually left all to follow him; and it ſeems to have excited ſome degree of ſelf-complacency in his mind. With his uſual forwardneſs, he therefore reminded Jeſus of this circumſtance, and enquired what reward they were to receive for this obedience? Indeed Peter's *all*, had been only a few fiſhing nets, and a boat, &c; yet they were the means of obtaining a maintenance; and the ſame faith, which induced him to renounce them for Chriſt's ſake, would have led him to make a larger ſacrifice, if he had been called to it, as he afterwards was: our Lord therefore overlooked what was amiſs in this queſtion, and aſſured the apoſtles, that they, who had followed him, *in the regeneration*, ſhould at length be advanced, and honoured in a peculiar manner. If we join the expreſſion, "in "the regeneration," to the preceding clauſe, it may either mean the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, diſpoſing them to obey his call; or the nature of their work, even to be his inſtruments, in reforming the nation, and regenerating, ſo to ſpeak, a living church from that dead formal ſtate, into which religion had fallen. But it may be joined to the ſubſequent clauſe; and then it refers to the time, when the apoſtles were to receive their full recompence: even when the Son of man ſhall ſit on the throne of his glory. (c. xxv. v. 31.) Then he will make all things new; and then they will be his aſſeſſors in judgment; the world, and the church will be judged according to their doctrine; and they will appear diſtinguiſhed in an eſpecial manner from all their brethren in Chriſt. Some reference may perhaps be had to the eſtabliſhment of the chriſtian church, and the condemnation of the Jewiſh nation, in conſequence of their miniſtry: but the day of judgment ſeems immediately intended. Judas was at this time one of the number: but he had never truly followed Chriſt; and when he by tranſgreſſion fell, another was appointed in his place, and the number twelve was continued, with reference to the twelve tribes, of which Iſrael was originally conſtituted. To this our Lord ſubjoined, that though a peculiar dignity would be reſerved to them, as apoſtles; yet every one, that had forſaken any temporal poſſeſſion, or relative comfort, for his ſake, and that of the goſpel, would receive an hundred fold increaſe of happineſs for it, even in this life; (notwithſtanding the perſecutions, to which he would be expoſed;) as well as inherit eternal life at laſt. This muſt be underſtood eſpecially of divine conſolations, which commonly moſt abound, when great ſacrifices are made, or great hardſhips endured, for conſcience ſake; and which are an hundred fold better, than all earthly comforts, and poſſeſſions; as they beſt know, who have moſt experienced them. But we may alſo include thoſe providential interpoſitions, by which the Lord often makes up in outward comforts, of a far more valuable nature, all our loſſes for his ſake: for no doubt the promiſe has reſpect to all times, and places. To this our Lord added, "that many, that were firſt "ſhould be laſt, and the laſt firſt:" He doubtleſs referred to the moral, hopeful, and amiable young man, that was found to be farther from the kingdom of heaven, than many publicans and harlots; who became firſt, when he was caſt behind: but the rule has reference to a variety of caſes: vile prodigals often repent, and get before decent moraliſts: the gentile converts obtained the priority to the Jewiſh nation: falſe profeſſors apoſtatize, and open perſecutors become preachers of the goſpel: and they, who have been the grief and reproach of families, and neighbourhoods, ſometimes become their chief credit, and bleſſing; whilſt more plauſible characters are thereby made more inveterate againſt the truth.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are again called to follow with our meditations the divine Saviour, as he went about doing good, and endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf: let us not fail to look earneſtly at him, that we may not be wearied of well-doing, by the ingratitude and perverſeneſs of our fellow ſinners. Human depravity has deranged the appointments of the all-wiſe Creator, and perverted them, to the introduction of accumulated miſery; and the unjuſt oppreſſors ſhare the conſequences with thoſe, whom they cruelly oppreſs: but the goſpel is intended to ſoften the hard heart, and meliorate the harſh ſpirits of men; as well as to regulate their paſſions, and ſubdue their iniquities. When it is really embraced, it's ſacred energy renders men affectionate relatives, and faithful friends: it teaches them to bear with the infirmities, and to bear the burdens of thoſe, with whom they are connected; and to conſider their intereſt, peace, and happineſs, more than their own indulgence, or convenience. This will reduce marriage, in good meaſure, to its original inſtitution; and teach men to regulate their conduct reſpecting it, by the law of God, and not by their own humour, paſſion, or caprice. The true chriſtian will conſider his wife, as the gift, and appointment of God; and his union with her, as his ordinance: he will learn to love her as his own fleſh; and no more want a ſeparation, on every guſt of paſſion, or incidental uneaſineſs; than he would deſire to have his limb cut off, or his fleſh mangled, every time he feels pain, or wearineſs. This he regards as a deſperate, and moſt painful remedy, in caſe of an incurable gangrene. He will conſider the regulations of God's word, as the dictates of wiſdom and love; and every deviation from them, as a ſource of temptation, and diſquietude, and the bane of domeſtic felicity: and he will perceive, that this view of the marriage union as indiſſoluble, and as an inſeparable conjunction of intereſts, and comforts, till death; gives the moſt effectual motives to perſevering endeavours for mutual peace, and harmony. Should a chriſtian even be united with an unconverted perſon, which is indeed a heavy affliction; he will ſee it beſt to take it up as his croſs, and to ſubmit to the will of God, in thus correcting him; endeavouring to extract good from

CHAP XX.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Illuſtrating the preceding ſubject, by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, 1---16. 2d. Foretelling his own death, and reſurrection, 17---19. 3d. Rejecting the improper requeſt of the mother of James and John, in behalf of her ſons; aſſuring them, that they would have communion with him in his ſufferings; and repreſſing the envy, indignation, and ambition of the apoſtles, 20---29, 4th. Giving ſight to two blind men, 30---34.

it, and expecting grace ſufficient to ſupport him under it: this he will perceive to be far preferable to any irregular method of diſſolving the union. As to ungodly perſons, it is proper, that their paſſions ſhould be ſo reſtrained by human laws, formed according to the law of God, that they may not prove injurious to the peace of ſociety. It does not indeed follow, that if the caſe of a man be ſo with his wife, it is *generally* not good to marry: but it certainly proves, that men ſhould enter into this ſtate with great ſeriouſneſs, and fervent prayer; and that they ſhould not form the indiſſoluble union with one, whoſe external appearance, or riches are the chief recommendation; and that chriſtians ſhould be very careful, not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. As to the reſt, our gracious Lord has impoſed upon us no rigorous reſtrictions; but has left each of his diſciples to chooſe that ſtate of life, in which he can ſerve God, and mind the concerns of his ſoul, with moſt comfort, and leaſt diſtraction: and his condeſcending, and conſiderate ſtatement of this difficult ſubject forms a proper example, for his people to imitate, in their conduct towards one another.

But as the training up of children in true religion, is one grand deſign of God, in this inſtitution; ſo it behoves all men to have reſpect to it in every ſtep they take about it. And all chriſtians ſhould bring their children to the gracious Saviour, at, or even before, their birth, that he may bleſs them with all his ſpiritual bleſſings. Whether they deem it right to devote their infant offspring to Him in baptiſm, or form other concluſions on that controverted ſubject; they ſhould certainly agree, in giving them up to, and bringing them up for him. We may take encouragement, in attending to theſe important duties, from the very rebuke, which Chriſt gave his diſciples, and from his readineſs to grant the deſire of theſe parents for their children: nor can we much doubt, but he really received, and bleſſed them, as the lambs of his flock. Whilſt we teach our children, as they become capable of learning, how ready the condeſcending Son of God is to anſwer their liſping petitions, and to accept of them as his diſciples; we may be well ſatisfied, that he hath taken to his heavenly kingdom ſuch of them, as died in their infancy: for doubtleſs the covenant is made with the believer, for the good of this part of his offspring, in an eſpecial manner. If then chriſtian parents have their beloved branches cropt in the bud, they cannot ſure have cauſe to complain, or to think much of their pain, care, or trouble, when they are made the inſtruments of God, in raiſing up children to Him, who may inherit his everlaſting kingdom.

It is neceſſary that we inculcate on thoſe, who are put under our care, not only a decency of moral conduct, and an external regard to religion; but an attention to the goſpel, as the only remedy for loſt ſinners: otherwiſe, they may appear very amiable, ſerious, and earneſt about eternal life; they may ſhew ſome reſpect to Chriſt, and his precepts; and yet never know their need of his precious ſalvation. Many abſtain from very groſs vices, through pride, and regard to character, intereſt, health, or outward peace, who remain entirely inattentive to their obligations towards God, and reſt in the outward letter of the commandments, which reſpect their neighbours: and they are ready to ſay, "all theſe have I kept from my youth;" when ten thouſand inſtances of diſobedience, in thought, word, and deed, are marked againſt them, in the book of God, to be produced to their conviction, and confuſion at the day of judgment. Indeed, no man can enter into life, who doth not habitually aim to keep the commandments of God; and wilful, cuſtomary tranſgreſſion will prove many profeſſors to be further from the kingdom of God, than even this ruler. But there is none righteous, no not one: and it is proper ſometimes to taſk ſelf-ſufficient enquirers harder, and harder; and when they proudly aſk, "what lack I yet?" to point out to them more, and more of their duty, according to the ſpiritual, and extenſive law of God. This may lead them into an acquaintance with their own weakneſs, and depravity, and detect the ſecret pride, and worldlineſs of their hearts; and ſo prepare the way for their underſtanding, and welcoming the goſpel of free ſalvation. Not only does the law require us, (if providence call us to it,) to part with our ſubſtance, or even our lives, for the glory of God, and the good of our neighbours: but except a man be ready to forſake all that he hath for Chriſt's ſake, he cannot be his diſciple, or be ſaved according to the goſpel. No unregenerate man will comply either with the precept of the law, or the requiſition of Chriſt; when he is fairly put to the trial. In this manner, numbers forſake Him, loving this preſent world: they have their convictions, and deſires; but the ſacrifice inſiſted on is too valuable: therefore they depart ſorrowful, perhaps trembling. This is peculiarly the caſe with thoſe, who have great poſſeſſions, and who live in trying times. Few in compariſon, of the numbers of thoſe, who call Chriſt Lord, Lord, ſeem prepared for obedience, ſhould he bid them ſell all, and give to the poor, and come and follow him, that they may have a treaſure in heaven. Many refuſe, at his expreſs command, to part with the moſt trivial intereſt, or indulgence: many will not give even a moderate proportion of their goods to the poor, notwithſtanding all the promiſes made to thoſe, who do this out of faith in, and love to Chriſt. It behoves us then to try ourſelves in theſe matters: for the Lord will ere long put us to the trial.

But nothing more fully proves men's want of faith than their eagerneſs to be rich; though Chriſt hath ſpoken in ſo alarming a manner, concerning the additional dangers, to which riches expoſe their precious ſouls.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an houſholder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he ſent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and ſaw others ſtanding idle in the market place,

4 And ſaid unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the ſixth, and ninth hour, and did likewiſe.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others ſtanding idle, and ſaith unto them, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle?

7 They ſay unto him, Becauſe no man hath hired us. He ſaith unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard; and whatſoever is right, *that* ſhall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard ſaith unto his ſteward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the laſt unto the firſt.

9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the firſt came, they ſuppoſed that they ſhould have received more; and they likewiſe received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured againſt the good-man of the houſe,

12 Saying, Theſe laſt have wrought *but* one hour, and thou haſt made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

Yet, who almoſt, does not labour to be rich, and to enrich his children? Who does not aſſociate the idea of wealth with that of felicity? Who, that hath riches, doth not confide in them as a ſubſtantial advantage? And who, that is poor, is not tempted to envy them? But experience fatally confirms the declarations of Chriſt, and proves that all men's earneſtneſs in this matter, is like toiling to build a high wall, to ſhut them, and their children out of heaven: for in this manner, many that will be rich, fall into fatal ſnares, and involve their families in every kind of ruinous temptations, to their everlaſting perdition. (1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 6—10.) Such aſſertions will not only offend unbelievers: even diſciples will be aſtoniſhed at them, and be ready to think that none then can be ſaved. Indeed not many of the rich, and honourable of the earth are called; but God's people are generally found amongſt the poor; and the difficulties in the way of the wealthy ſinner's converſion are ſo many, and inſurmountable by man; that we ſhould have no hope of them, except as we know, that with God all things are poſſible. And, bleſſed be his name, he ſurpriſes us with ſome few demonſtrations of the omnipotence of his grace, even in theſe degenerate days: here, and there a very wealthy perſon is brought forth, and appears eminent for humility, ſimplicity, ſpirituality, and fruitfulneſs: ſome of this kind are even found amongſt thoſe who are *growing rich*, from inferior circumſtances; but none among thoſe, that *will* be rich, or who truſt in, idolize, or love riches. However what we have read ſhould ſurely make us willing to be poor, to beware of covetouſneſs, and to pity; and pray for the rich, as we would for men at ſea, in a violent ſtorm, whom nothing but an extraordinary interpoſition of God could ſave from being ſwallowed up by the tempeſtuous waves: and in all our labours of love, we may ſtill apply this rule, even to the moſt abandoned, and hardened, that with God all things are poſſible. But whether a man have a kingdom, or only a fiſhing boat; if he be duly humbled as a ſinner, and earneſtly ſeek eternal life from the Saviour, he will at his call, leave all, and follow him; and if he be allowed to keep his ſubſtance, he will learn to uſe it in his ſervice. Indeed mixtures of ſelf-preference often tarniſh our conſcious integrity, and our gratitude to him, who hath made us to differ: yet our gracious Lord accepts his own work, and pardons our evil: and if we here follow him with ſimplicity, he will at length cauſe us to inherit a crown of glory, that fadeth not away. Nay he hath promiſed moſt abundantly to recompenſe us, for all, that we give up for his ſake; ſo that it is only like ſowing ſeed, with the aſſurance, even in this world, of reaping an hundred fold; as well as eternal life, in that which is to come! May He then give us faith to lay hold of, and reſt our hope on this his promiſe; and then we ſhall be prepared for every ſervice, or ſacrifice. But let us neither truſt in promiſing appearances, or in outward profeſſion; nor deſpair of ſuch, as are fallen the deepeſt into immorality, impiety, or infidelity: ſeeing many of the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt; and the chief of ſinners may, for what we know, become moſt eminent in faith and holineſs.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1—16.] This parable was intended to illuſtrate the equity of the Lord's dealings, even when the firſt are put laſt, and the laſt firſt; (c. xix. v. 30.) In this reſpect the kingdom of heaven reſembles a houſholder, when he went forth to hire labourers to work in his vineyard. He is therefore repreſented, as going very early in the morning, according to the cuſtom, to hire labourers; and as bargaining with certain perſons at the uſual price of a *denarius* a day, (about ſeven pence halfpenny;) and as ſending them immediately to their work. But he went afterwards alſo, about nine o'clock in the morning, about noon, about

13 But he anſwered one of them, and ſaid, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didſt not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this laſt, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, becauſe I am good?

16 So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt: for many be called, but few choſen.

17 And Jeſus going up to Jeruſalem took the twelve diſciples apart in the way, and ſaid unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem; and the Son of man ſhall be betrayed unto the chief prieſts and unto the ſcribes, and they ſhall condemn him to death.

19 And ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to ſcourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

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three in the afternoon, and about an hour before ſun-ſet; and finding perſons unemployed, he ſent them into his vineyard, with a general aſſurance, that he would give them whatever was right. When even was come, he gave orders to his ſteward, to call the labourers to receive their wages: and as they, who were ſent to the work at the lateſt hour, were called firſt, and received a full day's pay; the others, eſpecially they, who had gone to work early in the morning, expected to have received more; and being diſappointed, they murmured, as if injuſtice had been done them: but the maſter vindicated himſelf, by ſhewing, that they were not injured by his rewarding the others above their deſerts; that they had their whole due, whilſt the others had more than their's; that it was reaſonable for him to diſpoſe of his own property, as he ſaw good; that their objections aroſe from envy, and ſelfiſhneſs, excited merely by his goodneſs; and that he certainly ſhould continue his bounty to the others, notwithſtanding their murmurs, and objections. In application of this parable, our Lord aſſured the diſciples, that the laſt ſhould be firſt, and the firſt laſt; and that many "would be called," by the word, and to the outward profeſſion of the goſpel; though but few of them would be choſen, as true believers, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus." In interpreting the parable, the grand ſcope ought principally to be adverted to. The viſible church, as repreſented by a vineyard, the employment of the ſervants and their privileges, &c, are only circumſtances: the main ſcope of the parable reſpects the dealings of God with men, according to the goſpel, and vindicates them from the charge of injuſtice, and partiality. Some expoſitors refer the different hours of the day, at which the labourers were ſent into the vineyard, of the different periods of the Jewiſh church: others, of the times, when the Jews, and afterwards the Gentiles, were brought into the chriſtian church: but it is very difficult to make the circumſtances accord to theſe events. With more plauſibility they may be made to apply to the converſion of ſinners to Chriſt, at the earlier, and later ſtages of human life; for thus one man doth ſerve the Lord longer, than another; and much practical inſtruction may be deduced from this view of it. Yet this muſt not be ſtrained too far: for it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that real chriſtians at the great day of account, ſhould murmur at the appointments of the Judge, or boaſt of their own ſervices. It is rather a deſcription of the ſtate of the viſible church, and an illuſtration of the maxim, "the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt," in all its various references. Many outwardly embrace chriſtianity, and profeſs its truths, who are not made humble and ſpiritual: many real chriſtians, who have been early converted, and always preſerved from outward vices, do not for a time underſtand the caſe of their fellow-ſervants, who are called later into the vineyard. Men are apt to over-rate their own ſervices, and to derogate from thoſe of their neighbours. Innumerable objections have been ſtarted againſt the methods of divine grace: the Jews could not endure the admiſſion of the Gentiles, to the full participation of all the privileges of the people of God; though there was no difference, ſave that they were called into the vineyard at a later hour: the elder brother thought himſelf wronged, when the prodigal was welcomed home: the Phariſees were offended at Chriſt's attention to publicans, and harlots: and the freeneſs of ſalvation to the chief of ſinners hath ever ſtumbled decent moraliſts, and formaliſts, who boaſt of having borne the burden, and heat of the day. But ſuch objections are eaſily anſwered: the Lord does none injuſtice; he puniſhes none above their deſerts, and recompenſes, one way or other, every ſervice, that is performed for him; he therefore does no wrong to any, by ſhewing extraordinary grace to ſome; and he will, at the cloſe of the day, if not before, convince all men of his own equity, truth, and goodneſs, and of the pride, ignorance, and ſelfiſhneſs of their murmurs, and objections: he will then prove his right to do what he will with his own, to the full ſatisfaction of his friends, and the final confuſion of all thoſe, whoſe eye is evil becauſe he is good: He will fulfil his largeſt promiſes to every believer, in whatever period of the church, or in whatever time of his life, he becomes a labourer in the vineyard: and he will ſhew, that in real grace, as well as in privilege, and conſolation, many that are lateſt converted, exceed thoſe, who have been longer in the ſervice of Chriſt. But the concluding ſentence evidently ſhews, that mere profeſſors were eſpecially intended, and that they were addreſſed according to their own opinion of themſelves, and not according to the real ſtate of their ſouls. (c. xxi. v. 28—32. *Luke*, c. xv. v. 7. 29. 31.)

V. 17—19.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 32—34. *Luke*, c. xviii. v. 31—34.)

V. 20—23.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 35—45.) Perhaps Zebedee, the father of James, and John, was dead before

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her ſons, worſhipping *him*, and deſiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he ſaid unto her, What wilt thou? She ſaith unto him, Grant that theſe my two ſons may ſit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Ye know not what ye aſk. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with? They ſay unto him, We are able.

23 And he ſaith unto them, Ye ſhall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with: but to ſit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it ſhall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation againſt the two brethren.

25 But Jeſus called them *unto him*, and ſaid, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them, and they that are great exerciſe authority upon them.

26 But it ſhall not be ſo among you: but whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your miniſter;

27 And whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your ſervant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

30 And, behold, two blind men ſitting

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this time, or elſe he was not ſo conſtant a follower of Chriſt, as Salome his wife was; (c. xxvii. v. 36. *Mark*, c. xv. v. 40:) ſhe therefore is mentioned as "the mother of Zebedee's children." At their deſire, in their name, and along with them, ſhe proſtrated herſelf before Chriſt as an adoring ſupplicant; and beſought him to grant her one requeſt; which ſhe at length explained to be, that her two ſons might have the chief places of honour, and authority in his kingdom. Our Lord had juſt been diſcourſing of his ſufferings, and death; but the apoſtles were too prejudiced in that particular to underſtand his meaning. They were continually expecting, that he would appear in his glory, (c. xix. v. 28:) and probably Salome in her requeſt had reſpect to the twelve thrones, which he had promiſed to the apoſtles; the two principal of which ſhe wiſhed to engage for her ſons, as the chief places of honour, and power in his kingdom. But Jeſus told her, and them, that they knew not the nature, or conſequences of their requeſt: for the chief preferments, which he had to beſtow, would expoſe thoſe, who obtained them, to the largeſt ſhare of ſuffering. He therefore aſked them whether they were able to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptiſm? He was about to be betrayed, condemned, ſcourged, mocked, and crucified: were they prepared to pledge him in this cup, and to be initiated into his ſervice, by this bloody baptiſm? Either they did not advert to the meaning of this queſtion, or they had too great a confidence in themſelves; when they anſwered, that they were able. However he aſſured them, that this would be the caſe, and that they would be enabled to endure perſecutions, and ſufferings for his ſake: but that the higheſt honours of his kingdom were not now to be diſpoſed of by him, to gratify the ambition of any favourite diſciple: in this ſenſe, they were not his to give, as Mediator, ſave to thoſe, for whom they had been prepared of the Father; for that matter had been previouſly determined, in perfect harmony between the Father and the Son. James was the firſt of the apoſtles, who ſuffered martyrdom: John ſurvived all the reſt, and is not ſuppoſed to have died a violent death; however he endured hardſhips, and perſecutions, contempt, and ſuffering, from the enmity of the world, and for the ſake of Chriſt, and the goſpel; and thus it may be ſaid that he drank of Chriſt's cup, and was baptized with his baptiſm. Our Lord might be ſaid to have been immerged in ſufferings, when he endured the wrath of God, as the propitiation for our ſins; but the lighter afflictions of the apoſtles, connected with abundant joys, and conſolation muſt be allowed, in this ſenſe, to have been another, and a far milder kind of baptiſm than His.

V. 24—29.] (*Luke*, c xxii. v. 24—27.) The other apoſtles were as ambitious of the chief place in the kingdom, as James and John, notwithſtanding our Lord's former diſcourſe on this ſubject: (c. xviii. v. 1—4.) They were therefore angry with the two brothers, for taking this undue advantage in this conteſted point. But Jeſus, aware of their reſentment, and ambition, was pleaſed to argue the caſe with them. He therefore ſhewed them the difference between his kingdom, and thoſe of the nations: the rulers indeed of thoſe monarchies were ambitious of lordly authority, in order to gratify their love of domineering, and of being flattered, and had in honour: but this reſulted from falſe notions of greatneſs, and the pride of the human heart. It might indeed conſiſt with the conquerors, and tyrants of the Gentiles; but it was unſuitable to the rulers of God's people, and moſt of all to the ſpiritual paſtors of his flock. It muſt not then be at all the caſe with them: inſtead of aſpiring to dominion, and lording it over God's heritage; he, that would indeed be great amongſt them, muſt become the menial ſervant of the whole company, and ſtoop to the loweſt and moſt laborious employments, in order to be the more uſeful. This humility, ſelf-abaſement, and diligence would at length render him the chief perſon among them: whilſt a contrary conduct would by the way-ſide, when they heard that Jeſus paſſed by, cried out, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* ſon of David.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, becauſe they ſhould hold their peace: but they cried the more, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* ſon of David.

32 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and called them, and ſaid, What will ye that I ſhall do unto you?

33 They ſay unto him Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34 So Jeſus had compaſſion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received ſight, and they followed him.

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tend to a man's diſgrace, and degradation. Of this way to be chief in the kingdom, He had ſet, and would ſet them an example: he appeared among them, as the Son of man, not to aſſume external authority, and to be miniſtered to, by courtiers, and dependants; but to be a ſervant to them, and to all, who would require of him any thing, conducive to their good. (*John*, c. xiii. v. 1—17.) And after ſpending his days in this manner, he was about to lay down his life, as a ranſom for the ſouls of multitudes, even of all, that ſhould ever believe in his name; ſuffering once for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God.

V. 29—34.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 46—52. *Luke*, c. xviii. v. 35—43.) The other evangeliſts give a more particular account of the cure of one blind man, who ſeems to have been more remarkable, than the other: St. Luke ſeems to place it before Chriſt's entrance into Jericho: but this, and ſome other things reſpecting the miracle will be more properly conſidered hereafter.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The rooted pride of the human heart, and it's enmity to the divine ſovereignty, render it very difficult to convince us of the juſtice, and goodneſs of the Lord's diſpenſations: yet nothing can be more certain, than that he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: and this may be evidently proved, in reſpect of thoſe, that fall under our cognizance; if we impartially judge of them, according to the rules eſtabliſhed in human ſociety, for the conduct of men towards ſubjects, ſervants, and dependants, and for their diſpoſal of their property. In every age, the great Owner of the vineyard comes by, and with his miniſters, to hire labourers for his work: and he condeſcends to take thoſe, who have been rebels againſt him, and ſervants to another maſter; and having pardoned and reconciled them, he ſends them into his vineyard, not merely to enjoy manifold privileges, but to labour, in their ſeveral ſtations, in order to promote the common cauſe of his church. They are peculiarly favoured, who are early in life called to accept of his ſalvation, and to yield themſelves to his ſervice: for his yoke is eaſy, and his burden is light; nor can they too ſoon begin to ſerve ſo good a Maſter, in ſo pleaſant a work. They may rather deem themſelves happy, in being preſerved from doing miſchief, and from forming bad habits, and connexions; and in being early habituated to do good, and aſſociated with the excellent of the earth. Yet they, who have been left to waſte their youth in vanity, and ſin, are invited to enter the Lord's ſervice at a later period: and when they have not before heard the faithful meſſage of the goſpel, but have loitered "becauſe no man hath hired them," their caſe is more hopeful, than when they have long withſtood the invitations of the word, and the convictions of their own conſcience. However we are authorized even to the eleventh hour, to remonſtrate with thoſe, who ſtand all the day idle, and to call upon them to enter the Lord's vineyard; aſſuring them, that whatever is right, that ſhall they receive. To the laſt it is written over mercy's gate, "knock, and it ſhall be opened:" but life is ſo uncertain, that it is madneſs for men to procraſtinate, when they know not how ſoon death may for ever bar the door, and leave them to everlaſting, and unavailing lamentations, and deſpair. Whether men enter early in the morning, or at the eleventh hour, they will ſpend their ſubſequent lives in the work of the Lord; and if a very ſhort ſpace be allotted to them they will notwithſtanding be enabled to evince the ſincerity of their repentance, faith, and love; and to prove their intereſt in the gift of God, which is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Theſe exceeding riches of divine grace, excite loud murmurs amongſt proud phariſees, and nominal chriſtians: for many are called into the viſible church, in compariſon with the number of the remnant, according to the election of grace: many outwardly perform ſome ſervice to the Lord, who have never humbly ſubmitted to his righteouſneſs, his ſovereignty, and his authority. All their performances are therefore leavened with ſelf-preference, and boaſting: they often claim an excluſive right to the promiſe; and if they can make good their claim, it will be performed to them: but their objections to the Lord's gracious dealings with the publicans, and prodigals; their boaſting of their own ſervices, and their complaining of the burden, and heat of the day, betray the mercenary, or the ſlave, and ſavour not at all of the ſpirit of adoption, the loving temper of a child, who keeps his father's commandments, and counts them not grievous. Firſt, or laſt, the mouths of all ſuch objectors will be ſtopped; and it will be well for them, if it be in this world: for the Lord will at the great day of retribution prove to the whole univerſe the equity of his procedure; and ſilence all thoſe, who quarrel with him, for doing what he will, with his own, though they aſſume that privilege themſelves, with what he hath entruſted to them. Then it will appear, that many, who were firſt in morality, profeſſion, and ſuppoſed converſion, were in their hearts at enmity with God: whilſt the late convert will, in many inſtances, be ſhewn, to have loved much, and to have been humble, and diligent, in proportion to the greatneſs of his obligations, and unworthineſs. Let us then remember, that we are

CHAP. XXI.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Entering Jeruſalem, upon an aſs's colt, amidſt the acclamations of the multitudes, 1---11. *2d. Expelling the buyers, and ſellers, &c, from the temple; healing the blind, and lame, and anſwering the objections of the prieſt's, &c.* 12--16. *3d. Cauſing the barren fig-tree to wither; and ſhewing the diſciples the power of faith, and the neceſſity of it when they prayed,* 17---22. *4th. Silencing thoſe, who demanded by what authority he acted; and ſhewing the wickedneſs, and predicting the doom of the unbelieving Jews, by the parable of the two ſons, and by that of the vineyard let out to huſbandmen,* 23---46.

AND when they drew nigh unto Jeruſalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then ſent Jeſus two diſciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over againſt you, and ſtraightway ye ſhall find an aſs tied, and a colt with her: looſe *them*, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And if any *man* ſay ought unto you, ye ſhall ſay, The Lord hath need of them; and ſtraightway he will ſend them.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and ſit-

all condemned criminals; and that our wiſe, and righteous Sovereign diſpenſes his unmerited favours as he ſees good: let us forego every proud claim, and apply for ſalvation as a free gift: let us remember that it is a favour, and honour to be employed in his ſervice, which proportionably increaſes our obligations: and let us never envy, or grudge; but always rejoice, and praiſe God, for every diſplay of his mercy to the vileſt of our fellow ſinners.

A believing view of our once crucified, and now glorified Redeemer is the great antidote to this proud, ſelf-juſtifying diſpoſition. When we conſider the need, that there was of the humiliation, and ſufferings of the Son of God, in order to the ſalvation of us periſhing ſinners: and when we recollect the willingneſs, meekneſs, conſtancy and patience, with which the Redeemer endured the inſults, and cruelty of men, and the wrath of God for us; we cannot but feel our ſelf-ſufficiency abate, and be ſenſible of the unſpeakable freeneſs, and riches of divine grace, in our ſalvation. Yet with what ſtrange indifference do even diſciples ſometimes read, hear, or ſpeak of theſe intereſting topics! Eſpecially, when ſatan, taking advantage of their remaining pride, tempts them to aſpire after the honour, that cometh from man! If we aſk ſuch things of the Lord, as are truly good for us, or others, He will not refuſe our requeſts: but when we pray under the influence of pride, avarice, or any other paſſion, we know not what we aſk; we miſtake poiſon for food, or medicine; and if the Lord love us, he will with-hold from us what we fooliſhly crave. If we would at laſt be conformed to our glorified Lord, we muſt be willing here to have fellowſhip with him in his ſufferings; we muſt paſs through tribulation, and reproach; we muſt drink in ſome meaſure of his bitter cup, and experience ſome degree of his afflictive baptiſm: yet how light, and mingled with comfort are our ſharpeſt trials, compared with the unmixed agony, and anguiſh, which he endured for us! If we have a hope of being at length admitted into the felicity of heaven, we muſt not pretend to preſcribe to the Lord, what place we are there to occupy; being ſatisfied, that it will be, according as is prepared for us by our heavenly Father. Even in this world it becomes us to be more earneſt about growth in grace, and uſefulneſs in the loweſt ſtation allotted to us, than about external pre-eminence. Alas, how has ambition, and envy moved chriſtians to indignation againſt each other, and ſown contentions among brethren in every age of the church, and under every ſpecies of government! And what enormous miſchiefs have ariſen from profeſſed church rulers, and paſtors exerciſing dominion, and authority, after the manner of the kings, and tyrants of the nations; or indeed with more atrocious pride, cruelty, and iniquity! Carnal men may thus ſeek to be the greateſt: but that chriſtian, or miniſter is in reality the chief, and moſt honourable, and will be deemed ſo by all competent judges, who ſtoops the loweſt, labours the moſt diligently, and ſuffers with moſt entire meekneſs, and patience, in ſeeking to do good to his brethren, and to promote the ſalvation of ſouls. This man moſt reſembles Him, who came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many, and will be moſt honoured by him to all eternity. Indeed a humble ſenſe of our own indigence, unworthineſs, and miſery, and exalted apprehenſions of the Saviour's power, and grace, are in ſome reſpects the ſtandard of human excellency, and the ſource of human felicity. However poor, ignorant, weak, and ſinful that man be, who thus humbly applies to Chriſt for help; he will be earneſt in proportion, as his applications are diſcouraged; he will cry the more vehemently, when men would bid him hold his peace; and the Lord will at length attend to, and anſwer his petitions: he will compaſſionate his ſorrows, open his eyes, ſupply his wants, and forgive his ſins, and thus enable him to join the number of his followers, to ſhew forth his praiſes, who hath called him out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—11.] (*Mark*, c. xi. v. 1—11. *Luke*, c. xix. v. 29—40. *John*, c. xii. v. 12—19.) Several events, eſpecially the reſurrection of Lazarus from the dead, intervened before thoſe recorded in this chapter, which occurred only five days before Chriſt's crucifixion. In his laſt journey to Jeruſalem, our Lord tarting upon an aſs, and a colt the foal of an aſs.

6 And the diſciples went, and did as Jeſus commanded them,

7 And brought the aſs, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they ſet *him* thereon.

8 And a very great multitude ſpread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and ſtrewed *them* in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna to the ſon of David: bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hoſanna in the higheſt.

10 And when he was come into Jeruſalem, all the city was moved, ſaying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude ſaid, This is Jeſus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

12 And Jeſus went into the temple of God, and caſt out all them that ſold and

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ried all night at Bethany, and then proceeded on the road towards the city, to the extremity of that village, or rather to a part of the mount of olives, which lay between it, and Bethphage. From thence he ſent two of his diſciples to the village over againſt them, probably to Bethphage; informing them, that in a certain place, which he deſcribed, they would find a ſhe aſs tied, and her colt with her, and ordering them to looſe them, and bring them to him: and if any man objected to their doing this, as he foreſaw that the owners would, they were bid to ſay, that the Lord had need of them: they might have heard of Jeſus under that title; but it undoubtedly implied a high claim of authority over, and propriety in them, and their's. On ſaying this, he aſſured them, that they would find the perſons concerned, entirely willing to ſend them away with the aſs, and her colt. Some indeed explain this, as if Jeſus had bid them engage in his name, that he would ſend them back again, when his purpoſe was anſwered: and probably he did this; but the ſacred hiſtorians do not deſcend to ſuch *minutiæ*. In this, and what followed, our Lord had reſpect to a prophecy concerning the Meſſiah, (*Zech.* c ix. v. 9,) which deſcribed him as meek, and lowly, and coming to Zion as her king, riding on an aſs, *even* on a colt the foal of an aſs. The kings of Iſrael and Judah were forbidden to multiply horſes, or to uſe them in war; for this would have led them to carnal confidence: it was therefore a proper characteriſtic of Zion's king, to come riding on an aſs, to denote the ſpiritual nature of his kingdom. Aſſes were then frequently uſed to ride upon, though not ſo much as in preceding ages: yet this was an emblem of his external poverty, and humiliation; and an open declaration, that he was Zion's predicted King, and Saviour. The diſciples went without heſitation on this ſervice, and found every circumſtance accord to what Chriſt had foretold them: which could not fail to impreſs their minds with an apprehenſion of his divine knowledge, and power, and help to prepare them for that trying ſcene, which was about to open. When therefore, they had brought the aſs, and the colt to Jeſus, they threw their looſe upper garments upon them, inſtead of ſaddles: and he was pleaſed to be ſet upon the *unbroken* colt; and by his miraculous energy to render it tractable, and ſteady, amidſt the acclamations of the multitude, which were ſufficient to have rendered unruly an animal, that had been accuſtomed to the road. This ſeems to have been an emblem of his power, in rendering the hearts of ſinners ſubmiſſive to his will, in the midſt of the temptations of this world, notwithſtanding their natural pride, obſtinacy, and carnal affections. When our Lord's intentions of entering Jeruſalem in this humble kind of triumph, became known; the multitudes, that attended him, (being doubtleſs increaſed by continual acceſſions,) began to ſpread the way, on which he was to paſs, with their garments, and to ſtrew on each ſide green branches cut from the trees, or to carry palms in their hands, as was uſual, at the feaſt of tabernacles. Thus they ſhewed their joy, and attempted to honour him, by ſuch methods, as were uſed upon the acceſſion of kings to the throne, or on the triumphal return of victors to their capital cities. It was owing in great meaſure to the miracle of Lazarus's reſurrection, which took place not long before, that the people came thus to meet Chriſt, and welcome him to Jeruſalem: and he was pleaſed to accede to it, both as an open avowal of his character, and in order to accelerate his crucifixion, which he knew would be one effect of it. The multitudes on this occaſion acknowledged him as the Son of David, who was come in the name of Jehovah, to aſſume the kingdom over Iſrael: they ſhouted "Hoſanna," before and after Him, which ſignifies, "ſave I pray," and may be deemed nearly equivalent to "God ſave the King;" they wiſhed proſperity, and bleſſings on him, and on his kingdom, with "peace in heaven, and glory in the higheſt;" either the peculiar favour, and friendſhip of heaven, to render his kingdom glorious above all other kingdoms; or that God might through him be at peace with Iſrael, and be glorified with the moſt exalted praiſes of men, and angels, by means thereof. (*Pſ.* cxviii. v. 25, 26.) Some of the multitude might uſe one expreſſion, and ſome another; but all meaning the ſame for ſubſtance; namely to welcome him, as the promiſed Meſſiah, and to wiſh peace and proſperity to his kingdom. (c. xxiii. v. 39.) Part of them were true diſciples; numbers might be favourably diſpoſed, and act under an immediate impulſe; and many might ſcarce advert to the meaning of their own words, only joining with the reſt, as is cuſtomary on ſuch occaſions. No wonder therefore, that when his diſciples and favourers were intimidated and retired, and perſons of another character came to lead them; they as loudly cried out crucify him, crucify him: for they were perhaps diſappointed in their expectations of a temporal kingdom immediately to be ſet up; and they might bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves,

13 And ſaid unto them, It is written, My houſe ſhall be called the houſe of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſaw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and ſaying, Hoſanna to the ſon of David; they were ſore diſpleaſed,

16 And ſaid unto him, Heareſt thou what theſe ſay? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt perfected praiſe?

17 And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19 And when he ſaw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and ſaid unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And preſently the fig-tree withered away.

20 And when the diſciples ſaw *it*, they marvelled, ſaying, How ſoon is the fig-tree withered away!

21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye ſhall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but alſo if ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea, it ſhall be done.

22 And all things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.

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be willing to atone with their rulers for their former offence, by joining them againſt Jeſus. For it gave them great umbrage to ſee the city in ſuch commotion, and every body enquiring who this was? And ready to receive Jeſus of Nazareth, as a prophet, and as their promiſed Meſſiah.

V. 12—16.] (*Mark*, c. xi. v. 11. 15—19. *Luke*, c. xix. v. 45, 46.) It appears from St. Mark, that Jeſus went to the temple, and ſurveyed it, on the ſame day, on which he rode into Jeruſalem; yet he relates the expulſion of the traders, as happening on the next day: hence ſome conclude, that he repeated this two days running; the mercenary dealers returning to their occupation, as ſoon, as he was departed. But this is not certain, nor is it very material to us, on which day it took place. However, when Zion's King came to her, he went not to any palace, or ſenate houſe, or courts of juſtice; but to the temple, to ſhew the ſpiritual nature of his kingdom. There he found ſome of the precincts, probably the court of the Gentiles, turned into a market for cattle, and ſuch things, as were uſed for ſacrifices; and in part occupied by money changers, who gave the current coin, in exchange for that of other countries, for the ſake of a premium. We may ſuppoſe, that the perſons, who kept this market for ſacrifices, exacted upon the ſtrangers, that came from diſtant places to worſhip, and thus joined iniquity to profanation: whilſt the prieſts encouraged this vile buſineſs, doubtleſs for a ſhare of the booty! Our Lord, therefore, drove the whole company from the place, as he had once done before, at the entrance of his miniſtry, (1 *John*, c. ii. v. 13—17;) a divine energy attending his words, and works, which diſmayed every mind, and prevented all oppoſition: and when the nature of the property of the money-changers, and the ſellers of doves, cauſed them to loiter, he overturned their tables, and ſeats, and conſtrained them to be gone: reminding them, that it was written, (*Iſaiah*, c. lvii. v. 7,) that the temple ſhould be rendered a houſe of prayer, and holy worſhip, not only to the Jews, but to perſons of all nations; whereas inſtead of allowing the Gentiles a place to worſhip in, they had converted the court intended for that purpoſe, into a place of merchandize, which was conducted with ſuch fraud, and exaction, that it was become a den of thieves; ſo that, diſhoneſt men were ſheltered from juſtice within the precincts of the temple, as robbers in their caves, and foreſts. At the ſame time the blind, and lame perſons, who frequented the avenues of the temple, to aſk alms of thoſe that entered, came around him, and he healed them: thus he ſhewed the benign nature of his authority, and produced as it were the ſeal of heaven to what he had done. But the chief prieſts, and ſcribes, inſtead of being convinced by his miracles, were the more exaſperated; eſpecially when they heard the very children, who had followed him into the temple crying out, "Hoſanna to the Son of David," as the multitudes had done before. They therefore, in a cavilling manner enquired whether he heard what they ſaid? To which he anſwered, that he did, and approved of it, as an honour juſtly due to him: and he aſked them whether they had never read the words of David; (*Pſ.* viii. v. 2;) declaring, "that God perfected his praiſe, "even out of the mouths of babes?" Thus he intimated, that, as the Son of God, he had cauſed honour to be rendered to him by theſe children, whilſt the rulers, and prieſts were endeavouring to diſgrace him; and that it was very acceptable to him, and a ſpecimen of that glory, which he would receive in all ages, from the humble, and deſpiſed of the human race.

V. 17—22.] (*Mark*, c. xi. v. 12—14. 20—26.) We do not find, that any perſon in Jeruſalem offered hoſpitably to entertain Chriſt, on this occaſion: or if any did, he choſe rather to retire to Bethany, from the rage of his enemies, and the acclamations of the people.

23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief prieſts and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and ſaid, By what authority doeſt thou theſe things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I alſo will aſk you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wiſe will tell you by what authority I do theſe things.

25 The baptiſm of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we ſhall ſay, Of men; we fear the people: for all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid, We cannot tell. And he ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

28 But what think ye? A *certain* man had two ſons; and he came to the firſt, and ſaid, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

29 He anſwered and ſaid, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30 And he came to the ſecond, and ſaid, likewiſe. And he anſwered and ſaid, I *go*, ſir: and went not.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They ſay unto him, The firſt. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and harlots believed him:

Accordingly he ſpent the night at the houſe of Lazarus and his ſiſters: and in the morning, it is probable, that he might not be hindered from being early at the temple, that he might have opportunity of retirement, and that he might not diſturb the family, he went away faſting. He was therefore hungry in his way to the city; and ſeeing a fig-tree, covered with leaves, he went to it, as though he had expected to have gathered fruit from it. But when he found, that there were only leaves on it, he pronounced a ſolemn malediction upon it, ſaying, "Let no fruit grow henceforth on thee for ever." The next morning, as he, and his diſciples paſſed the ſame way, they obſerved with aſtoniſhment, that the fig-tree was entirely dead, and all it's verdure withered! This was an emblem of the Jewiſh nation, which made a profeſſion of religion, and ſeemed to promiſe fruit; but when Chriſt came, he found none: and therefore they fell under his wrath, and their profeſſion and privileges withered, nor have they produced any more of the fruits of ſpiritual righteouſneſs from that time, to this preſent day. It is alſo applicable to the final doom of every hypocritical profeſſor of chriſtianity. When Jeſus obſerved the ſurpriſe of the diſciples on this occaſion; he again ſhewed them the energy of faith, with a ſpecial reference to the miracles they were to work in his name: whenever a proper occaſion offered of performing any miracle, in ſupport of their doctrine, and they went about it, relying on his power, and not doubting of his concurrence; they would not only be enabled to perform as wonderful works, as that of withering the barren fig-tree; but even the Mount of Olives might at their word be removed, and caſt into the ſea; that is, nothing that they undertook, would be impoſſible for them. (c. xvii. v. 20, 21. *Zech.* c. xiv. v. 4. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii. v. 2.) We are not called to work miracles: but whatever, in the path of duty, we attempt in faith, and for the honour of Chriſt; we may confidently expect to be aſſiſted in it. To this our Lord ſubjoined, that they ought not to doubt, but verily to believe, that they ſhould receive, whatever they aſked in prayer. (*James*, c. i. v. 6, 7.) We ſhould indeed often queſtion, whether we offer proper petitions, or in a right manner: but as far as we are conſcious, that our prayers are ſincere and ſpiritual, and grounded on God's expreſs promiſe; we ought not at all to doubt of his power, or willingneſs to grant what we aſk; on account either of our own unworthineſs, or of any difficulty in the way; provided it be right that it ſhould be granted: but having offered our petitions, we ſhould go on with our work, as if we had already received the wiſdom, ſtrength or help, for which we aſked; aſſured, that they will be ſent, when they become neceſſary.

V. 23—27.] (*Mark*, c. xi. v. 27—33. *Luke*, c. xx. v. 1—8.) As our Lord now openly appeared in the character of the Meſſiah; the chief prieſts, and other leading perſons of the nation, were exceedingly offended, at his teaching, and working miracles, in the temple; and eſpecially, as he had expoſed, and purged out thoſe abuſes, at which they had connived. They deemed themſelves the ſource of eccleſiaſtical authority, and the rulers of the temple; and therefore they came to him in a body, to demand of him by what authority he did theſe things? For they overlooked the divine power of his miracles, which ſanctioned all his other actions. The anſwer of our Lord to this demand is a moſt beautiful model of the meekneſs of wiſdom, which we ought to aim at. He did not harſhly, or oſtentatiouſly, aſſert his divine prerogative, or appeal to his miracles, or reproach them with their perverſeneſs and hypocriſy: (though he did the latter on other occaſions, in the character of their heart-ſearching Judge:) but he left them at this time to condemn themſelves. He therefore enquired of theſe profeſſed oracles of the nation, what they thought of John's miniſtery, and baptiſm; were they of divine authority, or merely from man? If they fairly anſwered this plain queſtion; he would then explicitly inform them, by what authority he acted. As they had and ye, when ye had ſeen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain houſholder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-preſs in it, and built a tower, and let it out to huſbandmen, and went into a far country;

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the huſbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35 And the huſbandmen took his ſervants, and beat one, and killed another, and ſtoned another.

36 Again, he ſent other ſervants more than the firſt: and they did unto them likewiſe.

37 But laſt of all he ſent unto them his ſon, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon.

38 But when the huſbandmen ſaw the ſon, they ſaid among themſelves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us ſeize on his inheritance.

39 And they caught him, and caſt *him* out of the vineyard, and ſlew *him*.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto thoſe huſbandmen?

41 They ſay unto him, He will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other huſbandmen, which ſhall render him the fruits in their ſeaſons.

42 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Did ye never read in the ſcriptures, The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore ſay I unto you, the kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

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not authorized John, and moſt of them had neglected Him; ſo they had never choſen to declare their minds on the ſubject. This queſtion therefore threw them into the greateſt embarraſſment: they readily perceived the drift of it, and reaſoned among themſelves; obſerving that if they allowed John to have acted by divine authority, Jeſus would certainly enquire of them, "why "they had not believed him?" Which not only referred to his exhortations to repentance, &c; but alſo to his teſtimony to Chriſt, as the promiſed Meſſiah, the Lamb of God, and the Son of God: and this inference, they did not know how to evade. On the other hand, if they treated John's baptiſm as a mere human device, they feared leſt the people ſhould ſtone them; as they were generally perſuaded that John was a prophet, and a very eminent ſervant of God. Being thus preſſed on every hand, they were conſtrained to confeſs their ignorance, or uncertainty; and thus to allow that they were incompetent to determine who was, and who was not ſent of God; that is, that they were blind guides, who could only miſlead thoſe, that depended on them. And therefore our Lord refuſed to give them any anſwer to their enquiry, about the authority, by which he acted; concerning which John's teſtimony, his own character, doctrine, and miracles, and the ſcriptures of the prophets fulfilled in him, gave abundant information to every impartial perſon.

V. 28—32.] The perſons, who oppoſed Chriſt, were the chief pretenders to, and apparent ſupporters of religion among God's profeſſing people: yet they were more inveterate enemies to the truth, than the vileſt profligates in the nation. This, Jeſus ſhewed in a parable, with reference to John Baptiſt's teſtimony to him. The Father of theſe two ſons repreſents the Lord, as the Creator, and Benefactor of all men, and as the ſpecial Friend of the Jewiſh nation, to whoſe obedience he had the fulleſt right. The firſt of the two ſons, (who being ordered to work in the vineyard, and openly refuſed, yet afterwards repented and went,) repreſented the profligate, and openly wicked of the Jews, who were at length brought to repentance, and became Chriſt's diſciples: and the ſecond ſon, who gave good words, but continued obſtinately diſobedient, repreſented the prieſts, ſcribes, and phariſees, who had a form of godlineſs, but proved the greateſt enemies to the goſpel. Our Lord therefore aſked their opinion of theſe two ſons, which of them they ſuppoſed did the will of their Father? And they could not but acknowledge, that the latter, though at firſt faulty, was the more obedient, and diligent of the two. He then applied it to the publicans, and harlots, whom they deſpiſed, and deſpaired of; but who actually would enter into his kingdom, as true believers, and obedient diſciples, before them. This was evident in the ſucceſs of John's miniſtry: for when John came to the nation, ſhewing them by his doctrine, and example, the way of righteouſneſs; the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and phariſees had not believed him; whilſt many of the publicans, and proſtitutes had received his teſtimony, and as true penitents had been ready to embrace the goſpel: and even when they had ſeen the effects of John's miniſtry, in the reformation of many ſuch perſons, they ſtill continued impenitent in their enmity, and hypocriſy; they neither changed their judgment, nor their conduct; or believed John's word, to acknowledge the Meſſiah, whom he pointed out to them. This parable coincides in ſome reſpects with that of the houſholder; (c. xx. v. 1—16,) and may be applied to ſimilar characters in every age.

V. 33—46.] (*Mark*, c. xii. v. 1—12. *Luke*, c. xx. v. 9—19.) Our Lord next ſubjoined a parable, which

44 And whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder.

45 And when the chief prieſts and Phariſees had heard his parables, they perceived that he ſpake of them.

46 But when they ſought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, becauſe they took him for a prophet.

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related to the nation at large, but with ſpecial reference to their rulers, and teachers. We can be at no loſs to underſtand what is meant by the houſholder, his vineyard, the wine-preſs, the tower, &c. (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. v. ver. 1—7.) All the peculiar privileges, the ordinances, and ſacred oracles, vouchſafed of God to the Jewiſh nations, were intended. Theſe were committed to them, in order to their fruitfulneſs in the works of righteouſneſs. But when the Lord was no longer viſibly preſent among them, as he was when they came out of Egypt, they forgot him, and their accountableneſs to Him; and acted, as if Canaan, and all their privileges had been indefeizably their own. However, from time to time, when they failed of their engagements, he ſent his prophets, to call them to repentance, and to direct their attention to the promiſes of a Meſſiah, that was to come: thus the fruits were demanded of them in their ſeaſon. But their rulers, and teachers in every age, had been exaſperated by theſe faithful monitors; and inſtead of becoming more fruitful, they had often apprehended the ſervants of Jehovah, beating one, and killing another; and when he ſent others, they ſtill treated them as criminals and enemies, out of hatred to their Maſter, and their meſſage. At length he deemed it proper to ſend his only, and well-beloved Son, ſuppoſing that they would reverence him. In applying the parable, we need not enquire, how far this would have been prudent in the houſholder; for it was doubtleſs in infinite wiſdom, as well as love, that the Father ſent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. On the other hand, he certainly did not expect that the Jews would reverence him; for he had for ages before predicted how they would reject, abhor, and perſecute him: but they ought to have adored, and ſubmitted to Him; and their uſage of One ſo excellent, and honourable formed the grand aggravation of their atrocious wickedneſs. "For when they ſaw "the Son, they ſaid among themſelves, let us kill him, "&c." This deſcribed the ſpirit, and conduct of the Jewiſh rulers, who were at that very time conſulting together about putting Jeſus to death, in order to ſecure their own authority, and reputation; as if determined wilfully to murder the heir, in order to ſeize upon the inheritance. They therefore apprehended, and caſt him out of the vineyard, and put him to death; that is, the Jewiſh rulers ſeized Chriſt, condemned him, and led him out of Jeruſalem, to be crucified. But what did the chief prieſts ſuppoſe, the Lord of the vineyard would do to theſe huſbandmen, when he ſhould come to call them to an account for their conduct? To this they anſwered, as not at firſt fully underſtanding his meaning, that he would put them to death in ſome terrible manner, and let out the vineyard to other huſbandmen, who would render him the fruits of it, in due ſeaſon. This he declared in reply, would be the method of the Lord's dealing with them: then they underſtood the drift of the parable, and ſaid "God forbid." He therefore further called their attention to a paſſage in the pſalms, (*Pſ.* cxviii. v. 22, 23;) in which it was foretold, that the ſtone, which the builders rejected, would be made the Head of the corner; that is the grand ornament, ſtability, and cement of the whole ſpiritual temple. This was about to be fulfilled in their rejection of him, and in his ſubſequent exaltation, (*Acts*, c. iv. ver. 10—12:) and in conſequence of their conduct towards him, they would be excluded from all the bleſſings of his kingdom, forfeit all their privileges, and be viſited with terrible calamities; whilſt the Lord would form another Iſrael, a holy nation, by the incorporation of Gentile converts amongſt the unbelieving Jews, who would bring forth the fruits of righteouſneſs to his praiſe, and glory. Whoſoever therefore ſhould ſtumble at, and fall on this corner-ſtone, in unbelief, and diſobedience; would be broken, and periſh: yet their ruin would be ſtill more aggravated, on whom it ſhould fall; namely ſuch, as ſhould, be found guilty of crucifying him, and perſecuting his followers. Some ſuppoſe the diſtinction to refer to thoſe, that oppoſed him, in his ſtate of humiliation; and thoſe that ſhould perſiſt in their enmity, after his reſurrection, and exaltation, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt on his diſciples. (*Iſaiah*, c. viii. v. 14, 15. c. xxviii. v. 16. *Rom.* c. ix. v. 32, 33. 1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 4—9.) The prieſts now fully underſtood his parables: but they were the more exaſperated by them, and determined as ſoon as they could to apprehend, and put him to death, whatever were the conſequence: yet they would not do it openly, leſt the multitude ſhould excite a tumult, as they were generally of opinion, that he was at leaſt a prophet of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould be ready, chearfully to reſign whatever we poſſeſs, if the Lord ſee good to require it: for he has a prior, and better title to our *all*, than we have; and has a full right to diſpoſe of us, and ours, for the purpoſes of his glory, as he ſees beſt. There is nothing ſo mean in itſelf, but He knows how to employ it in his ſervice, if he ſees good: we ſhould not then deſpiſe men of weak abilities, or in obſcure ſtations; and we have no ground for ſelf-complacency, ſhould he be pleaſed to "have "need of us," or to uſe us as the inſtruments of his work: nor ought we to wonder, if he at one time employ us, and afterwards lay us by, having no further occaſion for us. As meekneſs, and external poverty were the characteriſtics of Zion's king, and even marked his triumphal entrance into Jeruſalem; how inconſiſtent muſt avarice, ambition, and the pride of life be with the character of Zion's citizens. Once the divine Redeemer rode, but it was on an aſs's colt; at all other times, as far as we can learn, he went on foot, to perform

CHAP. XXII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Speaking the parable of the marriage ſupper, and of the wedding garment, 1---14. 2d. Anſwering the Phariſees, and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæſar; the Sadducees about the reſurrection, and future ſtate: and a lawyer concerning the chief commandment in the law, 15---40. 3d. Enquiring of them how the Meſſiah could be David's Son, and yet his Lord, &c, 41---46.

his labours of love: ſurely then his diſciples, and miniſters ſhould be content to weary themſelves in his ſervice, and to be poor if he call them to that ſtate; and they ſhould by no means covet, or value ſuch diſtinctions, and indulgences, as more ſuit the kingdoms of this world, than that of the meek, and lowly Jeſus. It behoves his ſubjects unreſervedly to obey his orders, however oppoſite to the opinions, and faſhions of the world, and in ſo doing he will order every circumſtance for their good, and give them continual experience of his foreknowledge, truth, and love. He hath every heart in his hand; and he can when he pleaſes, diſpoſe the multitude to favour his cauſe, and to honour his miniſters. But of how little value in general is popular applauſe! It is the way of the unſtable multitude to join the cry of the day, whether it be Hoſanna, or crucify him: and even that popularity, which ſometimes attends the preaching of the goſpel, is little to be depended on. Multitudes often hear, and ſeem to approve; yet few become conſiſtent diſciples: the applauſe conferred, frequently is injurious to the preacher; his doctrine ſerves in numerous inſtances only to condemn the hearers; and it is well *in this caſe*, if he ſo declare the whole counſel of God, as to ſtand clear of the blood of thoſe, that periſh. It is therefore more deſirable to be faithful and uſeful in an obſcure ſituation; than to aſpire to notoriety, and popularity. But though many ſeem earneſtly to cry "Hoſanna to the Son of David," who prove as inconſtant as the winds, or waves: yet ſure the peace, and proſperity of his kingdom ſhould be the object of our moſt ardent wiſhes, and fervent prayers; and we ſhould both labour ourſelves, and encourage all, who come in the name of the Lord, to promote his intereſt in the world: and if we have the mind of Chriſt in us, we ſhall rather reſort to the houſes of prayer, when we come to populous cities, than to places of diverſion, of pleaſure, or of oſtentatious magnificence.

When Zion's king ſhall come to enlarge his kingdom, he will begin with purging the church from traders, and money-changers. Alas, what numbers of ſuch, frequent, and engroſs the *outer* courts of the temple! (*Rev.* c. xi. v. 2.) The worſhip of God, the adminiſtration of ſacraments, the moſt ſacred functions and engagements, and the cure of ſouls, are only valuable, or important in their judgments, as far as preferment, or wealth can be got by them! If Chriſt ſhould come into many parts of the viſible church, how many receſſes of iniquity, and avarice of this kind, would he diſcover, and cleanſe? And how many things, that are daily practiſed under the guiſe of religion, would he ſhew to be more ſuitable for a den of thieves, than for the houſe of prayer! Ingenious, and intereſted men may plead in favour of ſuch abuſes, and rulers may connive at them: but it will at length appear, that the mercenary ſpirit of ſuch eccleſiaſtics has been one grand cauſe of the ſpread of infidelity, one grand hindrance to the progreſs of the goſpel, and one grand engine of the devil for hardening the hearts, and murdering the ſouls of men: ſo that in fact ſuch brokers, and traders in the temple have far more to anſwer for, than any depredators; who only plunder men's property, but do no injury to their immortal ſouls. May the Lord then come, and drive them out of the church; and may he ſtir up the ſpirit of ſuch, as have influence, and authority to check the progreſs of ſuch ſacrilegious profanations. Indeed it is to be feared, that buying, and ſelling, in every way, are often connected with great diſhoneſty: yet certainly no merchandizing is ſo iniquitous, as that, which is conducted within the precincts of the ſanctuary. Yet no wiſdom, holineſs, beneficence, or kindneſs to the poor and afflicted, can ſilence the clamours of intereſted men againſt ſuch perſons, as endeavour to put a ſtop to their iniquitous lucre: nor can we wonder at their virulence againſt all, that attempt any thing of this kind; when we recollect, that even the miracles, and holineſs of the Son of God could procure him no exemption in ſuch a cauſe. They, who hate his goſpel, becauſe it interferes with their intereſts, reputations, or authority, will be ſore diſpleaſed with ſuch, as ſhew favour to it: and the Lord hath often perfected his praiſe out of the mouths of mere children, in age, abilities, learning, or low eſtate; when chief prieſts, and learned ſcribes have contradicted, and blaſphemed. But it is beſt to ſhun needleſs altercations with malicious oppoſers, and all appearances of oſtentation: and the genuine followers of Chriſt will chearfully ſubmit to the pinchings of poverty, or the cravings of hunger, rather than be deprived of opportunities of uſefulneſs; though their zeal and love will not prevent them from feeling the inconveniency, as ſenſibly as other men.

But let us be peculiarly afraid of the doom denounced upon the barren fig-tree. The leaves of profeſſion may impoſe on men; but the Lord will ſhortly come, and ſeek for fruit; and if to the laſt he find none, the tree will fall under his curſe of everlaſting unfruitfulneſs: and how tremendous the ſentence of being left to eternal unholineſs, and enmity againſt God; to be eternally contrary to him, and the objects of his holy abhorrence, and indignation! Such conſiderations ſhould excite us to more fervent prayer; and lead us to offer all our petitions, as much as we can, in an unwavering reliance on God's promiſes, and on the merits of our great Advocate; fully expecting, that he will grant our requeſts, in every thing really good for us. In this way no impediments need diſcourage us: for we may ſurmount, or remove them all, by the power of faith, and prayer. Thus we may go on with our maſter's work, without regarding the objections of his enemies. Men, that are evidently deſtitute of faith, and grace, will often be demanding of the Lord's ſervants, by what au-

AND Jeſus anſwered, and ſpake unto them again by parables, and ſaid;

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his ſon,

3 And ſent forth his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandiſe:

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thority they act? As if men might do miſchief without aſking any body leave; but might not endeavour to do good, without obtaining the permiſſion of the enemies of all goodneſs! No doubt in general, order, and regularity are expedient: but even where the external order of the church was of undoubted divine original; when its regular teachers, and rulers degenerated, or evidently neglected their duty; God raiſed up perſons, in an irregular manner, to expoſe their crimes, and call ſinners to repentance, faith and holineſs. It is true, that the ſanction of miracles is requiſite for thoſe, who would introduce a new revelation of God's will: but it cannot be proved from ſcripture, that ſuch credentials are neceſſary, in order to authorize men to call upon their periſhing fellow ſinners, to repent, and believe the goſpel: and if God honour men in this work, as inſtruments in reviving true religion, and promoting the ſalvation of many ſouls; who are they, that ſhall deem themſelves authorized to call them to account, about the ſuppoſed irregularity of their uſeful labours? Indeed there have been ſome characters of this kind, in different ages, of whom it would greatly embarraſs objectors, to give a decided opinion, whether they were ſent of God, or ran without being ſent; as either concluſion would involve them in perplexing difficulties. However many more will give the eminent ſervants of God a good word, eſpecially after their death; than are diſpoſed to believe their doctrine, or obey their call to repentance, and the obedience of faith.

The whole human race are like children, whom the Lord hath brought up, but they have rebelled againſt him: only ſome are more plauſible, and decent in their diſobedience than others. But it often happens, that the more daring rebel is brought to repentance, and becomes the Lord's ſervant; whilſt the decent formaliſt grows hardened in pride, and enmity to the goſpel. So that it was not peculiar to the days of Chriſt, that publicans, and harlots entered the kingdom of heaven, before proud phariſees, and learned ſcribes. But it exceedingly aggravates the guilt of ſuch men; when the evident reformation of the vileſt tranſgreſſors, by the "fooliſhneſs of preaching," ſerves only to render them more outrageous in their ſcorn, and oppoſition. In theſe circumſtances it is peculiarly incumbent on thoſe, who come in the way of righteouſneſs, to exemplify, as well as to explain the holy tendency of their doctrine.

We have parable after parable, to ſhew us the rage and enmity of the human heart againſt the religion of the Saviour. How can we, if faithful to his cauſe, expect a favourable reception from a wicked world, or from ungodly profeſſors of chriſtianity: when the holy prophets, and the well-beloved Son of God himſelf, were thus rejected with contempt, and treated with outrageous cruelty, by his profeſſed worſhippers! How can we expect to convince, or conciliate them merely with our words, when thoſe of Chriſt only exaſperated them, to whom they were addreſſed; even when they felt the truth of his reproofs, and the energy of his arguments! The awful doom of the hypocritical rulers, and unbelieving nation of the Jews, was recorded for our warning. They ſlew the prophets, and crucified the Lord of glory; and they were deſtroyed with more tremendous vengeance, and the kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof. We now have the vineyard, and all its advantages: but do we as a nation, render the fruits in due ſeaſon? Here we muſt be ſilent, or anſwer no. Yet amidſt all our abominations, the monſter perſecution is chained up by authority: and whilſt this is the caſe, we may ſtill hope for the continuance of our privileges. But numbers ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient; and thus fall on the corner-ſtone and are broken: numbers cauſe others to ſtumble by their wicked lives. Some uſe all their abilities in oppoſing the goſpel, and diſhonouring Chriſt, apparently in order to obtain reputation, and diſtinction for themſelves: it is to be feared even profeſſed builders thus reject the head ſtone of the corner; and that ſome are reſtrained in their oppoſition by no higher motive, than the fear of man. Alas! few conſider, that we are accountable for all our privileges, and ſhall be the worſe for them, if not made fruitful by them. Yet bleſſed be God, there is a remnant of ſuch, as adorn the goſpel by their holy lives: may we be found amongſt them; may we attend to the voice of thoſe, whom the Lord ſends to reprove, or exhort us, in order to our increaſing fruitfulneſs; may we reverence, and obey the beloved Son of God; may he become more, and more precious to our ſouls, as the firm Foundation, and tried Corner-ſtone of the church; may we be willing to be deſpiſed, and hated for his ſake; and may we be faithful and obedient even unto death; and when he ſhall come to deſtroy his enemies, we ſhall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1—10.] (*Luke*, c. xiv. v. 15—24.) Our Lord, proceeding to ſhew the prieſts, and people the criminality, and conſequences of their unbelief, ſtated the matter to them in another parable; or in parables, for two are connected together. The kingdom of God might in this reſpect be compared to a king, who

6 And the remnant took his ſervants, and entreated *them* ſpitefully, and ſlew *them*.

7 But when the king heard *thereof* he was wroth: and he ſent forth his armies, and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then ſaith he to his ſervants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and, as many as ye ſhall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So thoſe ſervants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furniſhed with gueſts.

11 And when the king came in to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he ſaith unto him, Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was ſpeechleſs.

13 Then ſaid the king to the ſervants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt *him* into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few *are* choſen.

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made a marriage-feaſt for his Son. The preceding parable repreſented the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the guilt, and puniſhment of thoſe, who put him to death: but this ſhews the motive of his humiliation, and the effects that followed to himſelf, his people, and the abuſers of his goſpel. The union of the Son of God with us, by aſſuming our nature; and the endeared relation, into which he hath received his redeemed church, and every true member of it; with the ſpiritual honours, riches, and bleſſings, to which they are advanced by this ſacred union; and the comforts they receive from his condeſcending, tender, and faithful love to them, and from their communion with him; as well as the reciprocal duties of their relation to him, are all intimated by this metaphor. The abundant, and rich proviſion, that the Lord hath made for our periſhing ſouls, in the goſpel, is repreſented by a royal feaſt, made on ſo important and joyful an occaſion, as the marriage of the king's ſon. John Baptiſt, the apoſtle, and ſeventy diſciples, who firſt announced to the Jews the arrival of their promiſed Meſſiah, were the ſervants that firſt went to call thoſe, that were bidden, to the feaſt. They had been bidden long before, and had been taught to expect the coming of the Meſſiah, to ſave, and bleſs them: yet they would not come to him, when he appeared, being prejudiced againſt his holy doctrine, and lowly character. The other ſervants, who were ſent with the ſecond invitation, when all things were got ready, ſeem to mean the apoſtles, and preachers of the goſpel, after Chriſt's aſcenſion into heaven; who ſhewed to the Jews *firſt*, the nature of the goſpel feaſt, the preparation that had been made for it, and the immenſe expence at which all things had been made ready for their reception. But the perſons invited, are deſcribed as having no value for the king, or his ſon, or deſire for the feaſt, or gratitude for the ſpecial honour, and favour ſhewn them: they therefore treated this repeated, and preſſing invitation with ſupercilious indifference, and contempt; making light of it, and going away to their different employments, and intereſts: and as the ſervants may be ſuppoſed to have remonſtrated with the remnant of them on the impropriety, and criminality of their conduct; they were enraged at them, and ſhewed their enmity againſt the king, by abuſing, wounding, or killing them. This repreſents the final rejection of Chriſt, and the goſpel by the Jewiſh nation; and the contempt, inſult, and cruelty, with which they treated the apoſtles, and other miniſters of Chriſt; with the vile motives, and extreme wickedneſs of their conduct. When the King heard this, he reſolved to ſend them no more invitations; but in due time made war upon them, deſtroyed the murderers, and burned their city: thus the Lord ſent the Roman armies to execute vengeance on the Jewiſh nation, and to deſolate Jeruſalem, for their obſtinate contempt of his goſpel, and the cruelties exerciſed towards the miniſters of Chriſt, which completed their guilt in crucifying Him. As the perſons firſt invited would not come, and proved themſelves unworthy of the favour ſhewn them; the king determined to find other gueſts to partake of his royal banquet: he therefore ſent his ſervants into the public roads, ordering them to invite all they met with, of every rank, deſcription, and character. Accordingly they executed their orders, and collected together a ſufficient number, of one ſort, or other, to furniſh the wedding with gueſts. This repreſented the ſucceſsful preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles, and their indiſcriminate admiſſion to partake of all the privileges of the Lord's people: but it is alſo applicable to the caſe of others in every age. (*Prov.* c. ix. v. 1—6. *Iſaiah*, c. xxv. v. 6.)

V. 11—14.] The preceding part of the parable repreſented the repleniſhing of the church with profeſſors of chriſtianity: this ſhews the difference between nominal, and real diſciples. According to the cuſtom of thoſe times, when princes had large ward-robes, from which on ſome occaſions they furniſhed numbers with ſuitable apparel; it muſt be ſuppoſed, that wedding garments were offered to each of the gueſts, when they entered the banqueting houſe: for it could not be expected, that travellers of every rank were properly habited for the royal entertainment, to which they were ſo unexpectedly invited. However one man either proud of his own apparel, or deſpiſing the feaſt, obtained admiſſion without the wedding garment, and continued unnoticed, till the king came in to ſee his gueſts: when being queſtioned how he came there, he was ſpeechleſs, (which he could not have been, had not a garment been offered him:) and he was therefore ordered to be exclud-

15 Then went the Phariſees, and took counſel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

16 And they ſent out unto him their diſciples with the Herodians, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the way of God in truth, neither careſt thou for any *man*: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Ceſar, or not?

18 But Jeſus perceived their wickedneſs, and ſaid, Why tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites?

19 Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny.

20 And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription?

21 They ſay unto him, Ceſar's. Then ſaith he unto them, Render therefore unto Ceſar the things which are Ceſar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

22 When they had heard *theſe words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

ed, and puniſhed, as a deſpiſer of the king, and the royal banquet; by being thrown, bound hand and foot, into ſome dark dungeon without the palace; where weeping, and extreme vexation would be his portion, whilſt the gueſts were enjoying the feaſt, to which they had been called. This denotes, that ſome appear to be willing, and welcome gueſts at the goſpel feaſt, and intrude into its moſt ſacred ordinances, who are not true believers. It is not material whether we underſtand the wedding garment to mean the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, or the ſanctification of the Spirit, for both are alike neceſſary, and they always go together. No man hath the wedding garment by nature, or can form it for himſelf; yet they, who go without it, are chargeable with refuſing it, when offered to them Such profeſſors often impoſe upon miniſters and chriſtians: but when the king ſhall come to ſcrutinize the whole multitude of his gueſts, he will detect their hypocriſy, ſilence their excuſes, and expoſe their wickedneſs. The appellation "Friend." ſeems to allude to the man's profeſſion, and contains a tacit reproof of his inconſiſtent character. The outer darkneſs, &c, plainly enough deſcribes the future portion of all hypocrites, as well as open unbelievers: this parable our Lord cloſed, as he had done one before, by obſerving, that many were outwardly called, who were not choſen, and approved as true diſciples. (c. xx. v. 16.)

V. 15—22.] (*Mark*, c. xii. v. 13—17. *Luke*, c. xx. v. 19—26.) This queſtion was propoſed to our Lord, in conſequence of a plan formed by the chief Prieſts, &c, in order to compaſs his death. The perſons ſent as ſpies on this occaſion were Phariſees, and Herodians. They were of contrary ſides in the controverted point of paying tribute to the Roman emperor: the Phariſees inferred from the law, which forbad them placing a ſtranger over them, as their king; (*Deut*. c. xvii. v. 14, 15;) that it was unlawful for them to obey, or pay tribute to the idolatrous Romans; though they were now forcibly reduced to ſubjection under them: this ſuited the refractory ſpirit, and the pride of the people, and was the more popular opinion. But the Herodians, who were ſtrongly tinctured with Sadducean infidelity, and avowedly attached to Herod's family, made their religion ſubſervientto their politics, and endeavoured to accommodate it to the humours, and intereſts of their prince: and as he was ſupported by the Romans; ſo they argued, that tribute might lawfully be paid to them. They therefore combined to entangle him, in his talk; and they addreſſed him as a teacher of righteouſneſs, of whoſe knowledge, faithfulneſs, and diſintereſted intrepid impartiality they entertained the higheſt opinion. After this inſidious exordium, they deſired him to inform them, whether he thought it lawful to pay tribute to Ceſar, or not? For they were diſpoſed to ſettle that controverſy by his judgment. It ſeems, that they thought it impoſſible for Jeſus ſo to anſwer this queſtion, as to eſcape the ſnare: had he ſimply directed them to pay the tribute; they would have repreſented him to the people as an enemy to their liberties, and accuſed him of deciding in oppoſition to the law of Moſes, and of requiring unreſerved obedience to idolaters: from this they would have inferred, that he could not be the Meſſiah, who, they ſuppoſed, would come to ſet them at liberty from the Roman yoke; and thus they probably hoped to obtain their concurrence, in proſecuting him as a deceiver. On the other hand, had he declared it unlawful to pay tribute to Ceſar; they would have accuſed him, before the Roman governor, and have delivered him up into his hands to be puniſhed for ſedition, or rebellion. (*Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 2.) But Jeſus was perfectly acquainted with their hypocriſy, ſubtlety, and malice; and gave them to underſtand, that he was aware of their inſidious intention: yet he choſe to anſwer the queſtion, becauſe he intended to graft on it moſt important inſtruction. He therefore ordered them to bring him the coin, in which the tribute was paid: and having drawn them to acknowledge, that it was ſtamped with Ceſar's image, and name, &c; he tacitly inferred from thence, that Ceſar was the civil ruler, to whom the providence of God had ſubjected them: and therefore, as they derived protection, and the benefits of magiſtracy from him, (of which the currency of his coinage was an evidence,) they were not only allowed but required, to render to him both tribute, and civil honour, and obedience. At the ſame time, they were to render to God, that honour, worſhip, love and ſervice, which his commandments claimed, and which were juſtly due to him, and not to diſobey him, out of regard to any earthly ſovereign whatſoever. This anſwer condemned equally, the refractory ſpirit of the Phariſees, who ſcrupled civil obedience to the Ro-

23 The ſame day came to him the Sadducees, which ſay that there is no reſurrection, and aſked him,

24 Saying, Maſter, Moſes ſaid, If a man die, having no children, his brother ſhall marry his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us ſeven brethren; and the firſt, when he had married a wife, deceaſed, and, having no iſſue, left his wife unto his brother:

26 Likewiſe the ſecond alſo, and the third, unto the ſeventh.

27 And laſt of all the woman died alſo.

28 Therefore in the reſurrection, whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of the ſeven? for they all had her.

29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But as touching the reſurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was ſpoken unto you by God, ſaying,

32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine.

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man emperors, under pretence of their religion; and the time-ſerving conduct of the Herodians, who made a compliment of their religion to their prince, and conformed to many heathen cuſtoms to pleaſe him: and it is moreover of univerſal application, and replete with practical inſtruction. The conviction conveyed by this moſt wiſe, and unexceptionable anſwer to ſo delicate a queſtion, aſtoniſhed, confounded, and diſappointed theſe ſpies, and they went away unable to take any advantage of his words.

V. 23—33.] (*Mark*, c. xii. v. 18—27. *Luke*, c. xx. v. 27—38.) The doctrine of Chriſt was as offenſive to the infidel Sadducees, as to the Phariſees, and Herodians. They denied the doctrine of a future reſurrection, as well as the immortality of the ſoul: yet they pretended to allow the divine authority of the books of Moſes, and of ſome parts of the ſcripture. They knew that Jeſus held a contrary doctrine, and they therefore purpoſed to embarraſs him with a difficulty, which had probably perplexed ſome of their other opponents: though the caſe ſtated would not have been worth recording, had it not ſhewn the cavilling frivolous ſpirit of infidelity, and given our Lord an occaſion of returning a moſt inſtructive anſwer. The whole of the difficulty lay in determining to whom the woman would belong, in the future world, as ſeven brothers had married her, and ſhe had borne no children to any of them: but the inference that they meant to inſinuate from it, was no leſs than the impoſſibility of a reſurrection. Yet the matter was as plain as poſſible; except as it was perplexed by their erroneous, and groſs apprehenſions about the ſubject. This method of arguing by inſinuation from imagined difficulties againſt authenticated revelation, or even ſtubborn facts, forms a ſpecies of logic, for which infidels, ancient, and modern have a peculiar predilection: and indeed it is the beſt method in the world of perplexing weak minds, and of amuſing ſuperficial enquirers. Our Lord therefore firſt declared, that they greatly erred; becauſe they underſtood not the ſcriptures, nor the power of God, to raiſe the dead incorruptible, and fitted for a far different life, than they here lead. Among other of their egregious errors, the Sadducees took no notice of a ſtate of puniſhment in the future world; but ſpake as if they, who believed the reſurrection, thought all men to be of one character, and to go to one place; though they could not but know the contrary. But our Lord further informed them, that marriage was only intended for this preſent world, to repleniſh the earth, and to repair the ravages that death continually makes amongſt its inhabitants: but that in the future ſtate, as there would be no death, ſo there would be no marriage; for all the righteous would be made like unto, yea equal with the angels, as the children of God, as well as the children of the reſurrection. There the very body will be made ſpiritual; and all their employments, and pleaſures will be pure, intellectual, and angelic: ſo that there can be no arguing from the ſtate of things in this world, as to what will there take place; and every deduction, or objection of that kind muſt needs be fallacious, and preſumptuous. Having refuted this cavil, our Lord next proceeded to eſtabliſh the truth of the doctrine oppoſed, from that part of the ſcripture, which they pretended to believe: he therefore referred them to the words of God to Moſes, when he ſpake to him from the burning buſh. The patriarchs had been dead a conſiderable time before this: yet the Lord there declared himſelf to be their God; but he is not the God of the dead, who have ſunk into non-exiſtence, but of the living, who are capable of enjoying his favour. This argument ſeems at firſt ſight more immediately to prove, that the ſouls of the patriarchs were then in exiſtence, and felicity, than to evince the reſurrection of their bodies: but if we conſider, that man is conſtituted of ſoul, and body, we ſhall perceive that it proves both; for if Jehovah gave himſelf by an everlaſting covenant to be the God and Portion of any perſon; it implies that he will finally, render him happy in body, and ſoul, by bringing him to the complete enjoyment of his preſence, and favour: and this could not be done, without their bodies were reſtored from the grave. The whole reaſoning ſhews, that the doctrine of the reſurrection, and the future ſtate is as certainly contained in the old teſtament, when properly underſtood, as in the new. The reſurrection of the wicked is revealed in other places, but

34 But when the Phariſees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to ſilence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, aſked *him a queſtion*, tempting him, and ſaying,

36 Maſter, which *is* the great commandment in the law?

37 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the firſt and great commandment.

39 And the ſecond *is* like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

40 On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41 While the Phariſees were gathered together, Jeſus aſked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Chriſt? whoſe ſon is he? They ſay unto him, *The ſon* of David.

43 He ſaith unto them, How then doth David in ſpirit call him Lord, ſaying,

44 The LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool?

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his ſon?

46 And no man was able to anſwer him a word, neither durſt any *man* from that day forth aſk him any more *queſtions*.

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the queſtion propoſed led Jeſus rather to ſpeak of that of the righteous.

V. 34—40.] (*Mark*, c. xii. v. 28—34.) St. Mark records this matter more fully, and we will poſtpone the conſideration of it, till we come thither.

V. 41—46.] (*Mark*, c. xii. v. 35—37. *Luke*, c. xx. v. 41—44.) When Chriſt had baffled the inſidious devices of his enemies, and expoſed their ignorance, hypocriſy, and malice, by his anſwers to their queſtions; he was pleaſed to propoſe one to them, as they were gathered around him. He enquired therefore what thoughts they had of their promiſed Meſſiah? Whoſe Son did they ſuppoſe him to be? And, when they anſwered that he would be the Son of David; He aſked them, why David, ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, had called the Meſſiah Lord, or Governor, ſeeing he was to be his remote deſcendant? (*Pſ.* cx. v. 1.) If he had been a mere man, who was to have no exiſtence, till many ages after David's death, with what propriety could his progenitor call him his Lord? For he could not poſſibly owe him any ſubjection. This queſtion, which is equally intereſting to modern ſocinians, the Phariſees could not anſwer; and they were ſo baffled in their endeavours to entangle Jeſus, that they never after dared to put another queſtion to Him. Nor can any man ſolve the difficulty propoſed, in a ſatisfactory manner, except he allow the Meſſiah to be truly and properly the Son of God; and to have been equally with the Father, David's Lord, and the Lord of all, at the time when his progenitor thus ſpake of him; and that at the appointed ſeaſon he aſſumed our nature into perſonal union with the Deity, and ſo became "God manifeſted in the fleſh," and in this ſenſe the Son of man, and the Son of David. To this the Old Teſtament had given abundant teſtimony: but the Phariſees, blinded by their carnal prejudices, overlooked all that had been ſaid of Immanuel, of the mighty God becoming a Child born, &c; and expected a mere man, and a temporal Deliverer, inſtead of a divine, and ſpiritual Redeemer.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our merciful God hath not only provided food, but a royal feaſt, for the periſhing ſouls of his rebellious creatures: and there is enough, and to ſpare of every thing, that can conduce to our preſent comfort, and everlaſting felicity, in the ſalvation of his Son Jeſus Chriſt. Let none then think of religion as an uncomfortable, and unpleaſant ſervice, to which they are urged; but as a rich, and magnificent feaſt, to which they are invited: and, whilſt believers enjoy peace of conſcience, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, communion with God, and the lively hope of glory; let them not forget at what a price, the feaſt was provided for them. All things are now ready, and the ſervants are continually employed in inviting more, and more gueſts, to partake of the feaſt; and their commiſſion reaches not only to the utmoſt limits of the viſible church, but to the highways of the Gentile world. They are commanded to invite all, as many as they find, both bad, and good; to renew their invitations to ſuch as have repeatedly rejected them; and not to be wearied out by diſappointments, or ill uſage, but to apply to others, and to others ſtill, that the wedding may be furniſhed with gueſts. Yet after all theſe invitations numbers periſh in their ſins: not becauſe they may not come, nor, properly ſpeaking, becauſe they cannot; but becauſe they will not. This is the effect of their profane contempt of ſpiritual bleſſings, their inordinate love of worldly objects, their carnal diſlike to the divine character, and government, and their proud averſion to the humbling ſalvation of the goſpel. From ſuch motives, numbers make light of the invitations; and with careleſs, and ungrateful contempt, turn aſide to their worldly employments, diverſions, or ſtudies; perhaps pretending want of leiſure, or purpoſing to come at a more convenient ſeaſon. Others are enraged at the warnings, and expoſtulations, with which the ſervants enforce the invitation: and breaking forth into enmity againſt them, and their Lord; treat them with inſult, and reproach, or even murder them, if they can get them into their hands. Thus the goſpel of ſalvation occaſions their deeper condemnation, becauſe they hate the light, through their love of ſin: and ſo the Lord is provoked to give them up to temporal and eternal deſtruction. Sometimes they, that have been

CHAP XXIII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Teaching the people how far to regard the Scribes, and Phariſees, and in what reſpects to beware of them; and exhorting the diſciples to humility, 1---12. *2d. Denouncing tremendous woes on the Scribes, and Phariſees, for their enmity, hypocriſy, perverſion of God's word, and manifold iniquities,* 13---33. *3d. Predicting the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the temple, and the long continued deſolations of the Jews, for their conſtant perſecutions of God's prophets, and meſſengers, by which they would ſoon fill up the meaſure of their ſins,* 34---39.

brought up under the goſpel prove the greateſt deſpiſers, and enemies to it: and the ſervants, that are ſent forth into the high ways, and hedges, have often moſt ſucceſs, in winning ſouls to Chriſt. No objections will be made to any man, on account of his previous character, who is deſirous of admiſſion to this ſacred feaſt: yet no man will actually partake of it, who hath not the wedding garment, prepared for loſt ſinners; and who doth not apply for an intereſt in the merits of Chriſt, or who remains a ſtranger to converting grace. Many find admiſſion among believers, and continue with them to the laſt, who have not this wedding garment, and whom the King will at length diſtinguiſh, and ſeparate from the company of his choſen people: then their preſent pretences will be ſhewn to be fallacious, and they will have nothing to plead in arreſt of judgment, when he ſhall order them to be bound hand and foot, and caſt into outer darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth. As therefore many are called, and few choſen; let us examine ourſelves whether we be in the faith, and ſeek to be approved of by the King himſelf, when he ſhall come in to ſee the gueſts.

Whilſt we carefully ſhun the hypocriſy, and wickedneſs of the enemies of Chriſt; we may learn from their words, what a miniſter of God ought to be. By their allowance, he ſhould be an upright faithful man; teaching the way of God in truth; able, and bold, to declare the whole counſel of the Lord; and not ſo caring for, fearing or reſpecting the perſon of any man, as to keep back, alter, or ſoften any part of his meſſage. Now who will deny in words, that this ought to be the character of a miniſter? Yet who almoſt reduces it to practice? Who expects ſuch unpliant faithfulneſs, and unreſerved honeſty towards all ranks, and deſcriptions of men, from their miniſters? Who does not cenſure that man, as rude, uncourtly, and intruding, who flatters no one, negatively, or poſitively; who will not connive at the errors, or ſins of his patron, his friend, or his prince; and who will not diſguiſe his ſentiments to pleaſe any party, or for fear of the frown of any man? However, the nearer any ſervant of God comes to this character, the more need he will have to pray for the meekneſs of wiſdom, and to copy the example of his Lord: for many will ſeek for matter of accuſation againſt him, that they may reeſtabliſh their reputations, by ruining his; and if his boldneſs be not evidently diſintereſted, benevolent, humble, harmleſs, and prudent, he will often be entangled in their ſnares. Few ſubjects are more perilous in this reſpect, than thoſe, which in any degree connect with political conteſts: for it is difficult to touch upon them without giving advantage to one party, or other, or without verging to ſome extreme: yet miniſters muſt teach the people their duty; though it ſhould interfere with their popularity, or incur the diſpleaſure of their rulers: and with this they ſhould bound their interpoſition. They muſt inſiſt upon men's rendering tribute, honour, and civil obedience without reſerve, to the powers that be; let Phariſees, of whatever name, attempt as they pleaſe to render religion the watch-word of ſedition, or the cloke of their depredations on the public revenue; or indulge their rebellion againſt the providence of God, by reviling the perſons, or meaſures of their rulers: and they muſt equally inſiſt upon men's rendering to God, the things that are God's; let Herodians ſay what they will, to prove, that kings are authorized to lord it over the conſciences of their ſubjects, and to model the goſpel, and its ordinances, as may beſt ſuit their intereſt, convenience, or caprice. Nor will it be very difficult to apply this general rule to particular caſes; provided the heart is upright: except that it will ſometimes expoſe a man to ſecular loſs, or perſecution, if he determine to obey Ceſar as far as, and no farther than, his duty to God will give him leave. But how broad is the rule of God's commandments! The enlightened ſoul can never ſeriouſly meditate on any one of them, without ſeeing cauſe to ſay “God be merciful to me, and write this “law in my heart, I beſeech thee.”

They, who are moſt proud of their reaſoning powers, often form the groſſeſt conceptions of ſpiritual things: they ſpeak of God, as if he were altogether ſuch a one, as themſelves, and of heaven with carnal ideas, and imaginations; ſo that they are commonly fighting with their own ſhadows, when they ſtart objections to the doctrines of the goſpel. If they underſtood the plain meaning of the ſcriptures, or had any proper ideas of the divine power, they muſt be convinced of the futility of their own arguments, and inferences; which ſeldom need any other anſwer, than a fair ſtatement of the truths, they oppoſe. Indeed all our errors reſult from our not knowing the ſcriptures, and the power of God: and this ſhould excite us to redouble our diligence in ſearching the ſacred oracles, and in prayer to be led into a right underſtanding of them. We are continually reminded what a dying world this is. The hiſtory of men in general reſembles the account here given of one family: death removes one after another, and ſo terminates all their carnal hopes, joys, cares, ſorrows, and connexions. How wretched then muſt they be, who have all their good things here, and can expect nothing but miſery beyond the grave! And how grovelling the ſoul of an infidel, who can be content, and even hope, to die like a beaſt, for the ſake of living without God in the world! Yet even of his forlorn hope, he will moſt certainly be diſappointed! The whole ſcripture warns us to flee from the wrath to come, and calls us to expect a far better, and happier ſtate, than this: and

THEN ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his diſciples,

2 Saying, The ſcribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes' ſeat:

3 All therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, *that* obſerve and do; but do not ye after their works; for they ſay, and do not.

4 For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's ſhoulders; but they *themſelves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 But all their works they do for to be ſeen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6 And love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues.

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be

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the thoughts of that felicity will be the more welcome to the ſpiritual man, (however comfortable in his relative connexions,) by the conſideration that there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage. For he aſpires at a higher ſtate of exiſtence, and emulates the worſhip, the holineſs, and the bleſſedneſs of angels; compared with which the moſt rational, and honourable of earthly comforts are mean, and of no eſtimation. In that happy world the God of Abraham will be the Portion of all his believing children; and they will, in body and ſoul, live to, and with him, and have the unalloyed fruition of that fulneſs of joy, which is at his right hand for evermore.

But whilſt Phariſees, Sadducees, and Scribes are perplexing each other, and trying to diſconcert us, by curious queſtions, and frivolous diſputes: let us remember that the love of God with all our heart, and the love of our neighbours as ourſelves, though the miniſtration of condemnation to the ſinner, is yet our perfect rule of obedience; and that Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one, that believeth. It behoves us ſinners therefore above all things to enquire ſeriouſly, what we think of Chriſt? What are our views of his perſon, his prieſthood, his atonement, his interceſſion, his power, truth, and love? Is he altogether glorious in our eyes, and precious to our hearts? Do we truſt in him as the incarnate Son of God, and ſubmit to him as the anointed King of Iſrael? Do we apply to Him in all his characters, and offices? Do we deſire that all his enemies ſhould be put under his feet, without excepting any of our own ſinful paſſions? Do we deem him entitled to all the ſervice, and honour, which we can poſſibly render him, and far more? According to a man's practical judgment in theſe matters, will his ſtate, character and conduct be. His judgment of God's perfections, law, and government; of ſin, and holineſs; of this world, and the next; of himſelf, his life paſt, and preſent, and of his heart; and in ſhort of every object around him, will be influenced by his view of this ſubject. The temper of his mind will be humble, meek, patient, compaſſionate, thankful, ſpiritual, or the contrary, according to his thoughts of Chriſt; and his whole conduct will be habitually influenced thereby. May Chriſt then be our joy, our confidence, our all: may we daily ſee more of his glory, and preciouſneſs, and experience more of his love; and may we daily be more conformed to his image, and devoted to his ſervice. Then our words and works will confute, and ſhame thoſe, who would falſely accuſe us; and effectually ſilence the malicious objections, and ſubtle inſinuations of Phariſees, and Sadducees.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1—4.] Our Lord ſeems to have continued ſtill in the temple; and to have addreſſed himſelf to the diſciples, and the multitude, in the preſence of ſome of the Scribes, and Phariſees. Theſe were the ſtated teachers, and rulers of the nation: in theſe reſpects they ſat in Moſes' ſeat; for they explained the law of Moſes to the people, and enforced obedience to it. Whatever therefore *from this ſource*, they inculcated, the people ought to practiſe. This limitation muſt be admitted; otherwiſe their traditions, and perverſions of the law, and even their oppoſition to Chriſt, muſt have been included; for they taught theſe to the people. But it evidently meant, that whatever they enforced, or required according to the law of Moſes, or the writings of the prophets, was to be obeyed. No argument can fairly be formed on this, to prove men obliged to follow the inſtructions, or obey the commands of any teachers, or rulers, further than they conſiſt with the word of God; on the other hand, their bad characters ſhould not induce men to diſobey their lawful commands, or to reject their ſcriptural inſtructions. But, corrupt as the doctrine of the Scribes was, their works were ſtill worſe: and therefore the people were in no reſpect to imitate them; as they did not even practiſe their own injunctions. Indeed by enforcing under ſevere penalties, great exactneſs in ceremonial obſervances, and in their traditional reſtrictions, and auſterities, as well as moral duties; they bound up very heavy burdens, to lay on the ſhoulders of the people: but they found out methods of diſpenſing with, or compounding for, whatever was uneaſy to themſelves: ſo that they would not put a finger to aſſiſt in moving the load, which they impoſed on the people.

V. 5—7.] *Mark*, c. xii. v. 38—40. *Luke*, c. xxi. v. 45—47.) Our Lord further warned them to be upon their guard againſt the doctrine, and ſpirit of the Scribes, and Phariſees, who were oſtentatious hypocrites in all their duties. (c. vi. v. 1—5. 16—18.) The Jews underſtood the words of Moſes in a literal ſenſe, (*Deut.* c. vi. v. 7—9,) and therefore uſed to have ſcraps of parchment, inſcribed with texts out of the law, faſtened to their foreheads, or wriſts: theſe were called phylacteries, or preſervatives, being ſuperſtitiouſly conſidered as amulets, to protect them from dangers; and the Phariſees, in oſtentation of their extraordinary devotion, wore their phylacteries remarkably broad. For the ſame reaſon, they enlarged the fringes, which they were commanded called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Maſter, *even* Chriſt; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called maſters: for one is your Maſter, *even* Chriſt.

11 But he that is greateſt among you ſhall be your ſervant.

12 And whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf ſhall be exalted.

13 But woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men: for ye neither go in *yourſelves*, neither ſuffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore

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to wear upon their garments. (*Num.* c. xv. v. 38—40.) In the ſame ſelf-exalting ſpirit they were ambitious of, and delighted to intrude into, the chief ſeats, when they went to a feaſt; or to be placed in a conſpicuous ſituation, as very honourable perſons, even when they went to the ſynagogue, profeſſedly to abaſe themſelves in the worſhip of God. It was alſo very pleaſing to them, to be addreſſed with great reſpect, in the places of public reſort, as men of eminent wiſdom, and piety, under the appellation of Rabbi; a word importing the greatneſs, and variety of their learning, and knowledge of religious ſubjects.

V. 8—12.] This ſeems to have been immediately addreſſed to the diſciples, who were warned to ſhun all approaches to, or appearances of ſuch oſtentation, or deſire of human applauſe. Even the apoſtles, though the moſt eminent perſons in many reſpects, that ever appeared on earth, were commanded not to accept of the title of Rabbi; becauſe they had one Maſter, even Chriſt himſelf; and they were all as brethren, without any preeminence, or authority over each other; but were all equally dependant on, and ſubject to their common Lord. This is twice repeated, perhaps to ſhew how prone men are to forget it. And as they were not to affect lordly authority, or worldly honour; they were required not to call any man "their father upon earth." This cannot be ſuppoſed to forbid men from expreſſing reſpect, affection, and gratitude to thoſe, who have been inſtrumental to their ſpiritual good; any more than to interfere with the duties of children to their parents. (1 *Cor.* c. iv. ver. 14—16.) But they were forbidden to look up to any man, as having dominion over their faith, as entitled to implicit credence and ſubmiſſion; or as the head of their ſect, whoſe deciſions were ſtamped with authority over their conſciences: but they were to oppoſe all claims, and pretenſions of this kind, by whomſoever they were advanced, or on whatever grounds. If theſe rules were proper for the apoſtles, and primitive diſciples; they muſt be ſtill more ſuitable to the caſe of all other teachers, and chriſtians: and it is evident, that they were given with a prophetic view to the enormous abuſes, and fatal effects that have ſince been witneſſed in the chriſtian church, from the ambition, and luſt of dominion in ſome; and the abject ſubjection of others, to their aſſumed authority, and pretenſions to infallibility, &c. The aſtoniſhing degree to which theſe evils have proceeded, eſpecially in the church of Rome; the exorbitant claims, and high ſounding titles of eccleſiaſtics, and the ſervile and ſtupid ſubmiſſion of the people, are well known: but the ſame leaven ſtill works; and many things are found amongſt different bodies of proteſtant chriſtians, which by no means comport with theſe rules; and which do not at all ſavour of the ſimplicity, and humility of the goſpel; or conſiſt with believing, or obeying no teacher, church ruler, learned doctor, or head of a ſect, in the leaſt matter, further than he evidently declares the truth, and will of Chriſt, our common Teacher, and Lord. It is obſervable, that aſſuming prieſts of all religions have been ambitious of being called, "father," or of ſome ſuch name; importing rather what they are conſcious they ought to be, than what they really were. Our Lord further directed, that if any one of them was, in any reſpect, the greateſt; he ſhould ſhew it, by being more active, humble and condeſcending than others; and by becoming the willing ſervant, rather than the domineering lord, of the whole fraternity; (1 *Cor.* c. ix. v. 19:) for it was the invariable rule of his kingdom, to abaſe all, who exalted themſelves, and to advance all who abaſed themſelves. (c. xx. v. 24—28.)

V. 13. *Woe*, &c.] Our Lord next addreſſed the Scribes, and Phariſees, who ſtood around him; and without any remaining reſerve, in the character of their heart-ſearching Judge, he expoſed their hypocriſy, and wickedneſs, and denounced ſentence againſt them; as he had before done in ſome meaſure on another occaſion. (*Luke*, c. xi. v. 37—54.) He firſt convicted them "of ſhutting the kingdom of heaven againſt men." They pretended to be the teachers of the people; yet they uſed all their influence, and authority, to ſet them againſt Him, and to keep them from becoming the ſubjects of his kingdom. Thus they wickedly deſtroyed the ſouls of numbers, to ſupport their own reputation, dominion, and worldly intereſt: for, being blinded by their carnal luſts, and prejudices, they would neither themſelves receive him as the Meſſiah, nor permit the people, who ſeemed diſpoſed to it: and ſo, by keeping them out of the heavenly kingdom, that was ſet up among them, they would eventually ſhut them out of the kingdom of future glory, and felicity.

V. 14. *Woe*, &c.] The Scribes, and Phariſees, by their pretenſions to extraordinary piety, inſinuated themſelves into the confidence of the people, and induced many perſons, when they died, to leave them in truſt for their widows, and families. Thus they got their effects ye ſhall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! for ye compaſs ſea and land to make one proſelyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourſelves.

16 Woe unto you, *ye* blind guides, which ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor?

17 *Ye* fools and blind, for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that ſanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the altar, it is nothing; but whoſoever ſweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 *Ye* fools and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that ſanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoſo therefore ſhall ſwear by the altar, ſweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoſo ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that ſhall ſwear by heaven, ſweareth by the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon.

23 Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and aniſe and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 *Ye* blind guides, which ſtrain at a gnat,

into their hands; and on one pretence or other defrauded the widows, and orphans of their property; (as if they had ſwallowed up the whole at once, in the manner, that ſome greedy animals devour their food;) and left them to indigence, and diſtreſs. But to avoid ſuſpicion, and ſilence every complaint, they made long formal prayers; which prevented the deluded people from believing any report to their diſadvantage. Thus religion was diſgraced, by being made the covering of enormous oppreſſion; and God was diſhonoured, as if he had been a partner in the robbery. Therefore they would be more terribly puniſhed in another world, than other wicked men; and than other oppreſſors, who had not pretended to piety as the cloke of their iniquity.

V. 15. *Woe*, &c.] The ſame perſons were very zealous, and aſſiduous in their endeavours to make proſelytes to the Jewiſh religion, or to their own ſect; not from any deſire to promote the glory of God, or the ſalvation of ſouls; but in order to ſtrengthen their party, and to advance their reputation. When therefore they had, with immenſe pains, got any one under their tuition, they worked him to ſuch a degree of ignorant, and furious bigotry, and enmity to Chriſt, and his goſpel; that he became fit for the moſt deſperate ſervices, to which they could direct him. So that inſtead of being benefited by his ſuppoſed converſion, he became a more devoted ſervant of ſatan, and more deeply deſerving of divine wrath, than before: and as, he might be urged to ſuch actions, as they declined, he became even two-fold more a child of hell, than themſelves; that is more openly, and outrageouſly miſchievous, in oppoſing the cauſe of Chriſt, and in perſecuting believers.

V. 16—22.] Our Lord proceeded next to expoſe the ignorance, and ſtupidity of theſe almoſt adored teachers; who in fact were blind guides, leading the blind into the pit of deſtruction. As a ſpecimen of their abſurdities, he obſerved, that they taught the people, that they were not bound by their oaths, when they ſware by the temple, or the altar; yet were guilty of perjury, if they ſware falſely by the gold in the ſacred treaſury, or by the ſacrifices. This deciſion led the people to a ſtupid veneration for the latter, in preference to the former, and ſubſerved the intereſts of the prieſts, and ſcribes: but it expoſed their folly, and blindneſs in the moſt evident manner; for the gold, and the ſacrifices had no other ſanctity, than that, which they derived from their relation to the temple, and the altar; which muſt therefore of courſe be greater, and more honourable, than the oblations, on which they conferred a relative ſanctity. In fact all ſuch oaths referred to whatever was connected with that, which was ſworn by: an oath, by the altar, included the gift upon it; and an oath by the temple, the God whoſe typical reſidence it was, as well as the gold, that was therein conſecrated to Him: even as when a man ſware by heaven, he ſware by the throne of God, and him, that ſat thereon. Our Lord had before diſallowed all ſuch oaths: they are profane in common converſation, and not ſolemn enough, on important occaſions: but he here ſhews, that they all imply an appeal to God, for the truth of what is thus declared, or promiſed. (c. v. ver. 33—37.)

V. 23, 24.] Another inſtance of the blindneſs of theſe Jewiſh teachers is here adduced. They were very ſcrupulous in minute externals, but very lax in important matters: they were ſo tender in their conſciences, that they paid tythe even of their garden herbs; but they neglected juſtice, mercy, ſincerity, and fidelity, in their conduct towards man, as well as their moſt important duties to God. Theſe were the moſt weighty requirements of the moral law, which muſt be obligatory under every diſpenſation: and if they had attended to them, it would then have been proper to have obſerved the leſſer matters, which the ritual law preſcribed: but to be ſo exact in mere trifles, and ſo devoid of conſcience in matters of vaſt importance, was egregiouſly abſurd. They ſtrained at a gnat, or ſtrained a ſmall inſect *out* of their liquor, leſt it ſhould choke them; and yet they could on occaſion ſwallow down a camel. We muſt ſuppoſe this to have been a common proverb; denoting, that the ſins they committed were as much larger than thoſe that they and ſwallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outſide of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and exceſs.

26 *Thou* blind Phariſee! cleanſe firſt that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outſide of them may be clean alſo.

27 Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanneſs.

28 Even ſo ye alſo outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocriſy and iniquity.

29 Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! becauſe ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the righteous.

30 And ſay, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witneſſes unto yourſelves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the meaſures of your fathers.

33 *Ye* ſerpents, *ye* generation of vipers! how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?

34 Wherefore, behold, I ſend unto you prophets, and wiſe men, and ſcribes; and *ſome* of them ye ſhall kill and crucify; and *ſome* of them ſhall ye ſcourge in your ſynagogues, and perſecute *them* from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, ſon of Barachias, whom ye ſlew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I ſay unto you, All theſe things

ſcrupled, as a camel is larger than an inſect.

V. 25—28.] Theſe Scribes, and Phariſees, who truſted in themſelves, that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others, and who knew not any want of Chriſt's ſalvation, were yet mere hypocrites. They acted as abſurdly, as a man would do, that ſhould carefully waſh the outſide of his cup or diſh, and yet leave the inſide filthy, and nauſeous with the remains of his former exceſs. They were careful to maintain a decent exterior, and to practiſe outward duties, as far as human inſpection could reach: but they paid no attention to the ſtate of their imaginations, or affections; ſo that avarice, pride, ſenſuality, and ſelfiſhneſs reigned with uncontrolled dominion in their hearts; and induced them covertly to graſp at wealth by extortion, and to ſpend it in every kind of luxury. This proved them blind, and ignorant of God, of his law, of true religion and of themſelves: for if they had meant to do any thing to the purpoſe, common ſenſe might have directed them, to begin firſt with their hearts; and when this had been cleanſed from the love of ſin, and its gains, and pleaſures; their external conduct would have become clean of courſe. (c. xii. v. 33—35:) but as they proceeded, all their labour was unprofitable, and vain. At the beſt, they only reſembled the ſepulchres of rich perſons; which being painted, and decorated, appear beautiful to the beholder; yet they contain nothing but dead men's bones, putrid corpſes, and ſuch things as are loathſome, and polluting. Thus the Phariſees appeared righteous to their neighbours, but God ſaw, and abhorred their inward, and ſecret wickedneſs, though varniſhed over by hypocriſy.

V. 29—33.] As a part of their profeſſion of religion, the Phariſees in the days of Chriſt, repaired, and beautified the ſepulchres of the ancient prophets, and others, who had been put to death for conſcience ſake, by their rebellious anceſtors: pretending exceedingly to diſapprove of their conduct, and proteſting, that they would have had no hand in ſuch perſecutions, had they been living in thoſe days. Yet they hated the doctrines, and precepts, which the prophets taught, and rejected, with determined ſcorn, and enmity, the Meſſiah, whom they predicted; nay they were then counſelling to put him to death! The truth is, the dead prophets no longer gave offence to their pride, or interfered with their favourite ſins; and it ſubſerved their hypocriſy, and increaſed their reputation, to appear as their friends, and to build their ſepulchres: but Chriſt, and his diſciples greatly offended, and expoſed them, and therefore they mortally hated them. So that comparing their profeſſion, and their conduct together, it was evident, as it were by their own teſtimony, that they were the genuine offſpring of thoſe, who ſlew the prophets: let them therefore lay aſide their diſguiſes, and openly proceed to commit thoſe crimes, which they were meditating, and which would fill up the meaſure of their fathers iniquity: for they were a moſt ſubtle, and poiſonous race of ſerpents, a generation of vipers, the brood of the old ſerpent, though they pretended to be the children of God: and how could ſuch enemies to God, his truth, and his ſalvation, eſcape the damnation of hell, by any of their hypocritical obſervances? It is remarkable, that the moſt ſevere, and awful things contained in ſcripture were ſpoken by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf: but it was in mercy to the ſouls of the deluded people, that he thus ſpake to expoſe their blind guides; and he well knew how much his miniſters would afterwards be reprobated, for delivering the awful part of the counſel of God.

V. 34—36.] Chriſt here evidently, ſpeaks in his own ſhall come upon this generation.

37 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *thou* that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate.

39 For I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, till ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

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name, and as acting by his own authority: he was about to ſend his apoſtles, and evangeliſts, as prophets, wiſe men, and ſcribes well inſtructed unto the kingdom of God, to declare to the Jewiſh nation, his truth and ſalvation: but he foreſaw, that they would put ſome of them to cruel, and ignominious deaths, and treat others with great indignity, and enmity. For they would be left to this infatuated conduct; that they might ripen for the deſtruction, which the nation had ſo long deſerved; and that the guilt, and puniſhment of all the righteous blood ſhed from the murder of Abel, through the different ages of the world, might be laid upon that generation of Jews: becauſe they were about to give their ſanction to, and to exceed all the wickedneſs of this kind, that ever had been committed; and they might therefore juſtly be made an example for it, to all future generations of the world. It hath been before obſerved, that there are reaſons, which may induce us to think, that Zechariah the prophet is here meant. (Note, *Zech.* c. i. v. 1.) But moſt expoſitors underſtand it of Zechariah the ſon of Jehoiada, whom they ſuppoſe to have been alſo called Barachias: of this the reader muſt judge for himſelf.

V. 37—39.] Jeruſalem, that ought to have been the holy city, is here characterized, as the cruel murderer of God's prophets, and meſſengers; (c. xx. v. 34—39.) After this introduction our Lord proceeds with immenſe tenderneſs, and dignity, to declare the miſeries, which its inhabitants, were about to bring upon themſelves, by crucifying him; without taking the leaſt notice of the ſufferings, which himſelf was ſo ſoon to endure. The emblem of an hen gathering her chickens under her wings is ſimilar to what is uſed, with reſpect to Jehovah, in ſeveral places of the Old Teſtament. (*Ruth.* c. ii. v. 12. *Pſ.* xxxvi. v. 7. *Pſ.* xci. v. 4;) and it is only in, and through Jeſus, that Jehovah takes ſinners under his gracious protection. The hen, having hatched her brood, with aſſiduous attention, by her genial warmth, continues to foſter them under her wings, and calls them to her for that purpoſe, when ſhe perceives them to be in any danger. She expoſes herſelf to the ſtorm in order to ſhelter them; and though timid by nature, ſhe becomes heroic, when called to defend them from birds of prey; and they are comfortable, and nouriſhed up, as well as ſafe, under her wings. All nature does not afford a more apt emblem of the Saviour's tender love to, and faithful care of thoſe, who truſt in him: but his *power* is alſo adequate to the truſt repoſed in Him. He bare the ſtorm of divine juſtice againſt our ſins, in order to ſave us from it; and he ſuffered being tempted, that he might ſuccour us. He calls ſinners to take refuge under his tender, and compaſſionate protection; and there he keeps them ſafe, and comfortable, and nouriſhes them unto eternal life. He had for ages, by his prophets, repeatedly warned, and invited the children of Jeruſalem, to take ſhelter under his Almighty wings, before he came to call them by his perſonal miniſtry: but they *would* not come; ſo that their ruin was wholly owing to their obſtinate unbelief, and rebellion. (*Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 29. *Pſ.* lxxxi. v. 13. *Iſaiah*, c. xlviii. v. 18.) Individuals indeed might ſtill come to him for ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation; and great numbers afterwards did: but their national ruin was abſolutely determined; the temple would ſoon be levelled with the ground, together with the city; and the nation would be caſt out of the church, and excluded from the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom; till they became willing to ſubmit to Him, who came to them in the name of the Lord; and to be thankful for, and wiſh well to, his ſpiritual kingdom, and ſalvation. (c. xxi. v. 9.) No doubt but their preſent diſperſion, and unbelief, and their future converſion to Chriſt were here predicted. (*Luke*, c. xiii. v. 33—36. c. xix. v. 41—44.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It has been too common in every age, not only for civil governors, but for thoſe in the higheſt ſtations in the viſible church, to be ſtrangers and enemies to the power of godlineſs; and to be the entire reverſe of thoſe, to whom they ſeem to ſucceed in their ſacred functions. We muſt not however think the worſe of the truths, and ordinances of God on that account; but muſt obſerve, and do, whatever they ſcripturally command and teach. Yet we ſhould be upon our guard againſt their perverſions, and careful not to imitate any part of their ungodly conduct: for looſe as the principles of ſuch men are, their lives are ſtill worſe, and they are far from practiſing even the ſcanty meaſure of duty, which they teach. Indeed, if the human inventions, and uncommanded auſterities, which ſome of this deſcription enforce with great rigour on men's conſciences, be taken into the account; they may be ſaid to bind up heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and to lay them on men's ſhoulders: but their negligence, and looſe living have often evidenced, that they diſdained to move them with one of their fingers; except as ambition, and vain-glory led them to do ſome worthleſs externals to be ſeen of men, and to amuſe, and dazzle ſuperficial obſervers, with a ſplendid ſuperſtition: and thus far they have been able to render appearances of piety ſubſervient to their love of homage, diſtinction, and authority. But how contrary is this to the humble, unaſſuming, and ſelf-abaſing ſpirit of chriſtianity! He, that is conſiſtently a diſciple of Chriſt, courts privacy for his duties, and delights moſt to commune with his Father in ſecret: he ſteps forth into notoriety with reluctance; and is pained by, inſtead of loving, the chief places, either in private houſes, or public congre-

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Contains 1ſt. The occaſion of the enſuing diſcourſe, and a general prediction of the entire deſtruction of the temple, 1, 2. *2d. A prophecy of the ſigns, which preceded, and attended the taking of Jeruſalem, intermixed with counſels, and cautions,* 3---28. *3d. A prophetic deſcription of the ſubſequent revolutions, and deſolations, in figurative language; which may alſo be interpreted of the end of the world, &c.* 29---41. *4th. Exhortations to watchfulneſs, and diligence, and enforced by the conſideration of the unexpected manner, in which theſe events would come to paſs, and their important conſequences,* 42---51.

gations; and every extraordinary reſpect, that is ſhewn him, diſtreſſes rather than gratifies him; as he is diſpoſed to make choice of the loweſt place, and in honour to prefer others to himſelf. Who, that looks around him into the viſible church, could think this to be the ſpirit of chriſtianity, and required by the precepts of its divine Author? Who could ſuppoſe, that his diſciples were forbidden to be called Rabbi, or Maſter; to uſurp dominion over each other, or to ſubmit to ſuch uſurpation? It is evident that there are many antichriſts: and that ſome meaſure of this antichriſtian ſpirit prevails in every religious ſociety; yea in every one of our hearts. Much remains to be done, in every part of the church, before chriſtians will live together as brethren, the children of one common Father, the diſciples, and ſubjects of one common Lord, and Maſter, in the equality of genuine humble love, and harmony; and before no one aſpires to be greateſt, in any other way, than by becoming the ſervant of the whole fraternity for Jeſus' ſake. We have all much to learn, and to unlearn, before we be completely qualified to form a part of ſuch a company: whilſt we therefore lament the horrid evils, the ſpiritual tyranny, and abject ſlavery, damnable hereſies, ſuperſtitions, idolatries, perſecutions, and bloody contentions, which have reſulted from the ſpirit of pride, and ambition; let us watch againſt every working of it in our own hearts: let us aſpire after no honour, except that of being accepted by our Maſter, being uſeful to our brethren, and known as the children of our Father which is in heaven. But let us by no means call any man Father upon earth; or ſo attach ourſelves to any leader, or teacher, as to be more properly his diſciples than the diſciples of Chriſt; and let us believe, and follow no man, any further than he follows our common Lord. This well conſiſts with the deepeſt humility; which muſt never be loſt ſight of, if we would be truly wiſe, honourable, or happy. In proportion as men endeavour to exalt themſelves into conſequence, and eminence, the Lord will ſurely abaſe them; he will ſave none, that continue proud, and ambitious; he ſeldom employs ſelf-ſufficient inſtruments; he will expoſe to diſgrace even his own ſervants, if they begin to be aſpiring, and deſirous of honour from men: but he will exalt to real eminence, uſefulneſs, and felicity, thoſe, who are abaſed as ſinners in his ſight, and are humbly willing to be deſpiſed of men, and to attend to the meaneſt ſervice of love to his people.

It is moſt offenſive, yet on ſome occaſions moſt neceſſary, to expoſe the hypocriſy, wickedneſs, and blindneſs of falſe teachers; eſpecially when they have acquired influence, and are eminent for learning, reputation, or authority. In ſuch circumſtances, they often miſlead numbers into fatal errors, and harden them in their ſins. It does not indeed become us to ſpeak in ſuch deciſive language of their characters, or in that authoritative manner of their ſtate, and puniſhment, as He did, who knew what was in man, and to whom all judgment belongs. But it is common for ſuch men to lay themſelves ſo open, by their egregious blunders, or enormous crimes, that it becomes obvious even to ordinary teachers to ſhew them to be blind guides, or ſubtle deceivers, who are themſelves going the broad road, and who can only lead their diſciples in the ſame deſtructive courſe. What diſcoveries will Chriſt make in the great day of account, when he ſhall ſtrip off the maſk from every character, and ſhew every man exactly as he is! Then it will appear, that it was improper that ſuch men as His enemies, ſhould eſcape the damnation of hell; yea impoſſible, conſiſtent with the wiſdom, juſtice, and truth of God. They, who are peculiarly appointed to guide men into the way of ſalvation, often uſe all their force, to ſhut the kingdom of heaven againſt them: hating the goſpel themſelves, they inſtill their proud carnal prejudices into others; and they are moſt attentive to thoſe, who ſeem about to enter, that by reaſoning, ridicule, calumny, menaces, flatteries, or promiſes, they may deter them from becoming the real diſciples of Chriſt. Woe be to ſuch deceivers; they are ſatan's agents, and ſhare with that old murderer in the guilt of deſtroying the immortal ſouls of men: let all, who deſire to be happy, be upon their guard againſt their plauſible ſophiſtry, and ſly inſinuations. Many of theſe enemies of the goſpel are notoriouſly defective in common honeſty: for in various ways, there has always been a race of men, who have uſed religion, as a maſk, or a trick, to obtain confidence, and to get money. Long prayers, demure countenances, religious phraſes, and geſtures have gained them the opportunity of devouring widows houſes, of plundering the public, and of practiſing manifold frauds, impoſitions, and oppreſſions; and have for a time ſcreened them from inveſtigation, and conviction: but ſuch ſcandals to all godlineſs ſhall receive the deeper damnation, and be more ſeverely puniſhed, than villains of a leſs ſanctimonious caſt. Such ungodly profeſſors alſo find their account in beſtowing vaſt pains to make proſelytes to their party; whilſt every one, that they win over, becomes more callous in enmity to true religion than before, and even vies with his tutor in pride, and bigotry. It is alſo obſervable, that new converts to any ſuperſtition, or to any ſect, are generally more intolerant, and furious, than ſuch as have been brought up in it: for they want to evince the ſincerity of the change, and to vindicate what they have done, by an exceſs of zeal for their new opinions.

But there is no tracing all the abſurdities of blind guides, and hypocritical profeſſors of religion. In general they inculcate a peculiar regard to the *gold of the*

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AND Jeſus went out, and departed from the temple: and his diſciples came to *him* for to ſhew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, See ye not all theſe things? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall not be left here one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down:

temple, and *to the oblations*; in which their intereſt, and credit are more concerned, than in the purity of doctrine, and the due adminiſtration of ſacred ordinances. They often teach men to trifle with oaths, and ſolemn engagements; and to diſregard important duties, in order to attend to leſſer matters, which diſtinguiſh them from other parties. But they muſt be blind guides, who on any pretence, by doctrine, or example, teach men to neglect the weightier matters of the law, and diſpenſe with their want of juſtice, mercy, and truth, that they may draw their attention to diſputed ſentiments, forms, and external obſervances: many thus ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel. Indeed theſe important matters ought firſt to be attended to; yet the other ought not to be left undone. (c. v. ver. 17—20.) Too many, who ſeem to be religious, only cleanſe the outſide of their conduct; whilſt their hearts are full of covetouſneſs, pride, ſenſuality, malice, and all uncleanneſs; their ſecret conduct is infected by theſe evil diſpoſitions, and all their duties are corrupted with them: yet being blind Phariſees, they often are not aware of it. But let us ſeek to have our hearts waſhed from wickedneſs, that evil thoughts may not lodge within us; and then our outward conduct will become clean alſo. Otherwiſe we ſhall only be like painted ſepulchres, and God will at length throw open, and expoſe the filthineſs, contained therein, to the view of the whole world. But religion muſt be very valuable, to be thus worth counterfeiting! A hypocrite could not make ſo good a maſk of the appearance of it, if the reality were not ſterling gold, in the ſecret judgment of men in general. Indeed this appears by the conduct of many wicked men, who hate the living ſervants of God, yet honour the memories of thoſe, that lived in other ages, and nations. They are ready to build their ſepulchres, or be laviſh in their commendation; but not to copy their examples, or to profit by their inſtructions. Thus, notwithſtanding their pretended reſpect to their memories, and their exclamations againſt their perſecutors; they continually teſtify againſt themſelves, that they are the children of thoſe, who killed the prophets; and their temper and conduct often evince it to their own conſciences.

But what a lamentable proof of human depravity does the hiſtory of the church exhibit? What men have ever been hated, perſecuted, and murdered, like the prophets, and apoſtles of the Lord? And this hath been more frequently perpetrated by profeſſed worſhippers of God, than by avowed idolaters: ſo that the guilt of all the righteous blood, that hath been ſhed from the days of Abel, will fall, rather on the viſible church, than on the world at large. Jeruſalem, and her children, had a large ſhare of this guilt; and their puniſhment hath been made as ſignal, for a warning to all others. But the chriſtian church *ſo called*, hath far exceeded them, the crucifixion of Chriſt alone excepted; and ere long that generation will ariſe, on whom the accumulated guilt will fall of all the blood ſhed by antichriſtian perſecutors of every name, and in every age. In the mean time the compaſſionate Saviour ſtands ready to receive all, who come to him, into a ſtate of ſafety, and comfortable reſt; as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings: and even when deſpiſers, and enemies, are made willing to welcome his ſalvation, and to ſay bleſſed is he, who cometh in the name of the Lord; they ſhall ſee his glory, and rejoice in his love. There is therefore nothing between the chief of ſinners, and eternal felicity, but their proud, carnal, and unbelieving unwillingneſs. May we then hear his voice, and take ſhelter under his Almighty protection: thus we may paſs ſafe through the trials of life, and the ſtorms of death: and then in the ſolemn day of judgment, we ſhall ſee Him in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels, and rejoice in his coming to perfect our redemption, and conſummate our felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1, 2.] (*Mark*, c. xiii. *Luke*, c. xxi.) A conſtant reference will be here made to the parallel chapters in the other evangeliſts: but many circumſtances mentioned by them will hereafter be ſeparately conſidered. It may alſo be obſerved that St. John, who wrote his goſpel after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, does not mention the prophecy contained in this chapter; probably leſt he ſhould have been thought to have penned predictions, ſubſequent to their accompliſhment. Our Lord at this time took his final leave of the temple; after having ſo awfully read the doom of the hypocritical Scribes, and Phariſees, and ſo pathetically lamented the approaching judgments coming on Jeruſalem. The diſciples, adverting to the intimation he had given of the approaching deſolation of the temple, took notice to him of the buildings, of which it conſiſted, as well as of the coſtly oblations, with which it was enriched; as expreſſing their regret that it ſhould be deſtroyed, or their ſurpriſe at ſuch a prediction. The account given by Joſephus of the ſtability, magnificence, and beauty, with which the temple had been re-edified, is well worthy of attention; but particulars cannot here be ſpecified. However we may obſerve, that it was extremely improbable, that ſuch an edifice ſhould be entirely deſtroyed, within one generation; nor would any one, that was not conſcious of ſpeaking the truth of God, have ventured to utter ſuch a prediction. But Jeſus, with a peculiar dignity, as one converſant with ſpiritual and heavenly glories, and regardleſs of that exterior ſplendour, which dazzled the minds of his diſciples, ſimply aſſured them, that not one ſtone would be left upon another, of all this enormous, and ſtately ſtructure. When Jeruſalem was taken, Titus the Roman general, deſired exceedingly to preſerve the temple, either from regard to its ſanctity, or as a monument of his victory: but the pertinacity of the infatuated Jews, and the fierce revenge of the ſoldiers defeated his purpoſe. The temple was repeatedly ſet fire to, contrary to his ſtrict

3 And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, the diſciples came unto him privately, ſaying, Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what *ſhall be* the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you:

5 For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt; and ſhall deceive many.

6 And ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: ſee that ye be not troubled: for all *theſe things* muſt come to paſs, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: and there ſhall be famines, and peſtilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All theſe *are* the beginning of ſorrows.

9 Then ſhall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you: and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my name's ſake.

10 And then ſhall many be offended, and

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orders, and menaces; and at laſt it could not be extinguiſhed: and when the fire had done it's utmoſt, the reſidue of the ſtructure was demoliſhed, and the materials removed, in order to ſearch for the treaſure, that was buried under its ruins: ſo that at laſt the very foundations were ſubverted, and the ground on which it ſtood was plowed up. Thus the prophecy received an exact, and literal accompliſhment, in about 40 years after it was uttered, and contrary to all human probability.

V. 3. *And*, &c.] After Chriſt had removed with his diſciples to the mount of olives, where they had the temple full in view; ſome of them propoſed certain queſtions to him, concerning the events, that he had mentioned. The meaning of theſe queſtions has been much controverted: perhaps the diſciples had ſome general idea, that he would go from them for a time, previous to his ſetting up of his kingdom; and expected, that he would at length come in a very glorious manner, according to ſeveral intimations he had given them; that he would then execute the predicted vengeance on his enemies, deſtroy the temple, terminate that diſpenſation, and introduce his own glorious reign, as the Meſſiah. Some expoſitors ſuppoſe this to be the meaning of the phraſe tranſlated "the end of the world;" though it is more frequently uſed in the ſenſe, which the tranſlation conveys. (c. xiii. v. 39. 49. *Heb.* c. ix. v. 26.) But it is difficult to determine what their ideas were of that ſubſequent diſpenſation: and perhaps they ſcarce knew the preciſe meaning of their own queſtions; for their views were as yet very confuſed. Some ſuppoſe that they thought the day of judgment, and the end of the world would be immediately connected with the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the temple; and that our Lord did not ſee good explicitly to undeceive them. This is not improbable; for the latter part of the chapter is couched in language very applicable to thoſe events; and it is proper for prophecy to be in ſome meaſure obſcure, till it be accompliſhed. However the general import of their queſtions was, when the events before intimated would take place? And what ſigns would indicate their approach?

V. 4, 5.] In anſwer to the enquiry of the diſciples, our Lord firſt cautioned them to take heed, that they were not deceived: for one ſign of the approach of the predicted events, would be, that many perſons would pretend to be the Chriſt, or Meſſiah; thus coming in his name, and as it were to intrude into his office, and ſo fatally deceiving numbers. Hiſtory informs us of ſeveral ſuch falſe Meſſiah's, that made their appearance previous to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Theſe perſons, promiſing the Jews deliverance from the Roman yoke, and pretending to ſet up a proſperous kingdom among them, drew after them many followers, and excited great inſurrections: this brought the Romans upon them; numbers periſhed miſerably, and the ſiege and deſtruction of Jeruſalem was accelerated thereby. At the ſame time, they took off the attention of the people from the goſpel, and occaſioned them to periſh, by neglecting its ſalvation.

V. 6—8.] The next ſign which our Lord gave the diſciples, related to the ſtate of the Jews, and neighbouring nations, when the predicted time drew nigh. He cautioned them not to be troubled by the terrible wars, which they witneſſed or heard of, ſo as to leave their work; ſuppoſing that the ruin of the nation was immediately to take place. Theſe events muſt indeed happen, and they would forebode the approach of that deſolation; yet the end of the city, and ſtate of the Jews would not yet arrive. Many ſuch wars, and bloody conteſts muſt take place, both with the Jews, and among the ſurrounding nations; together with famines, peſtilences, and earthquakes: yet all theſe miſeries, would only be as the firſt, and ſlighter pains of a travailing woman, which aſſuredly preſage the approach of more extreme anguiſh. An account of the wars, inſurrections, tumults, and maſſacres, which took place in that part of the world, prior to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, would form the beſt comment on this paſſage: together with a relation, from Joſephus, and other hiſtorians, of ſeveral famines, and peſtilences, that made great havock, in many nations, and of ſeveral terrible earthquakes, in Crete, in Leſſer Aſia, in Italy, and in Judea. The latter is thus deſcribed: "By night there broke out a moſt "dreadful tempeſt, and violent ſtrong winds, with the "moſt vehement ſhowers, and continued lightenings, "horrid thunderings, and prodigious bellowings of the "earth: ſo that it was manifeſt, that the conſtitution "of the univerſe was confounded for the deſtruction of "men." Theſe things can here be no more, than hinted at: it ſuffices to obſerve; that by the concurrent teſtimony of ancient hiſtorians, and the judgment of modern learned men, the period alluded to was diſtinguiſhed from others, that went before, and that followed, by ſuch events, as are here predicted.

V. 9—14.] The uſage, which the diſciples would ſhall betray one another, and ſhall hate one another.

11 And many falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall deceive many.

12 And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold.

13 But he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

14 And this goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world, for a witneſs unto all nations; and then ſhall the end come.

15 When ye therefore ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtand in the holy place; (whoſo readeth, let him underſtand;)

16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the houſe-top not come down to take any thing out of his houſe:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the ſabbath-day:

21 For then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch

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themſelves experience, formed the next ſign of the times, which our Lord gave them. (c. x. v. 16—23.) When theſe ſharp perſecutions ſhould be excited, many falſe profeſſors of chriſtianity would be ſtumbled, and apoſtatize for fear of ſuffering: and then to ingratiate themſelves with the perſecutors, they would become traitors, and bitter enemies to the chriſtians, and concur in ſeizing and exerciſing cruelties upon them. At the ſame time many falſe pretenders to prophecy would appear amongſt the chriſtians, ſpeaking perverſe things to draw away diſciples after them. Theſe would deceive many ſouls, and bring an additional odium on the cauſe, by their corrupt tenets, and practices. (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 1, 2.) And through the prevalence of treachery, injuſtice, cruelty, and all kind of wickedneſs, many chriſtians, who did not openly apoſtatize, would become lukewarm; they would loſe their apparent zeal for the cauſe, and their love to their brethren, and become ſhy of, and afraid of ſhewing any favour to them. Yet ſome would continue ſtedfaſt in the midſt of theſe multiplied, and varied difficulties; and they would be preſerved from all real evil, and be ſaved for ever: notwithſtanding all theſe commotions, and ſcandals, the goſpel would ſoon be preached through the various nations, of the Roman empire, and in the different parts of the then known world; for a witneſs to them, that the Meſſiah was come, to be “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for ſalvation to the ends of the earth:” and when this ſhould be accompliſhed, the end of the Jewiſh church and ſtate would come. “It appears from the moſt credible records, that the goſpel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Meſopotamia by Jude; in Egypt, Marmorica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude; in Ethiopia, by Candace's Eunuch, and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighbouring parts of Aſia, by Peter; in the territories of the ſeven Aſiatic churches by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia by Philip, and Andrew; in the northern, and weſtern parts of Aſia, by Bartholomew; in Perſia, by Simon, and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and ſeveral eaſtern parts by Thomas; through the vaſt tract from Jeruſalem round about unto Illyricum, by Paul, as alſo in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain: in moſt of which places chriſtian churches were planted, in leſs than thirty years after the death of Chriſt, which was before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.” (Doddridge.)

V. 15—18.] (*Dan.* c. ix. v. 25—27.) An abomination is the common term for idols, and idolatry; and in various ways, they tend to deſolate the church. (*Dan.* c. xi. v. 31. c. xii. v. 11:) but “the abomination of deſolation here ſignifies,” the Roman armies, with their idolatrous ſtandards, encamping on the holy ground, which was ſuppoſed to extend to ſome furlongs diſtance from Jeruſalem on every ſide. This approach of the Roman armies to beſiege that city was thus pointed out to the chriſtians, as the ſignal for them to retire to a place of ſafety; and they were exhorted to apply their minds, that they might underſtand what they read. When this token of approaching deſolation was ſeen, they were directed without delay to ſhift for their lives, by leaving Judea, and taking ſhelter in the ſurrounding mountains: and they were to be ſo earneſt in doing this, that if a man were walking on the flat roof of his houſe, when the ſignal was obſerved, he was not to go into his houſe, to carry away with him any part of his property, but to go down the neareſt way, (which generally was on the outſide,) and flee for ſafety: nay a man, at work in the field, without his upper garment, was cautioned not to go and fetch it, leſt the delay ſhould coſt him his life. “By the ſpecial providence of God, after the Romans under Ceſtius Gallus, made their firſt advance towards Jeruſalem, they ſuddenly withdrew again, in an unexpected, and indeed an impolitic manner; at which Joſephus teſtifies his ſurpriſe, ſince the city might then have eaſily been taken. By this means, they gave, as it were, a ſignal to the chriſtians to retire; which in regard to this admonition they did, ſome to Pella, and others to mount Libanus, and thereby preſerved their lives.” (Doddridge.)

V. 19—22.] Whatever could tend to prevent, or retard the flight of the perſons concerned, would increaſe their peril, and calamity: not only would many pregnant women, and ſuch, as ſuckled their tender infants, be prevented from taking proper care of themſelves, and of them; but mothers during the extremities of the as was not ſince the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever ſhall be.

22 And except thoſe days ſhould be ſhortened, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved: but for the elect's ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortened.

23 Then if any man ſhall ſay unto you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt, or there; believe *it* not.

24 For there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders: inſomuch that, (if *it were* poſſible,) they ſhall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold, he is in the deſert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the ſecret chambers; believe *it* not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt; ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be.

28 For whereſoever the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days ſhall the ſun be darkened, and the

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ſiege literally killed, and eat their own children. Then the bleſſing of being fruitful, which the Jewiſh women greatly valued, was turned into the heavieſt woe: and, in the approach of ſuch calamities, it might be expedient to continue unmarried, to avoid ſuch incumbrances, temptations, and miſeries. Our Lord alſo warned his diſciples to pray, that they might not be conſtrained to flee in the winter; as the inclemency of the weather, the badneſs of the roads, and the ſhortneſs of the days, might retard their flight, and endanger their lives; nor yet on the ſabbath-day, as their own ſcruples, or the obſtructions thrown in their way by others, might have a ſimilar effect. He moreover aſſured them, that there would then be ſuch tribulations, for extremity, variety, and continuance, as no nation had ever experienced from the beginning of the world; nor ever would to the end of it. "For indeed all hiſtory cannot furniſh us with "a parallel to the calamities, and miſeries of the Jews; "rapine, and murder, famine and peſtilence within; "fire, and ſword, and all the terrors of war without. "Our Saviour wept at the foreſight of theſe calamities; "and it is almoſt impoſſible for perſons of any humanity to read the relation of them in Joſephus, without "weeping too." (Newton.) Eleven hundred thouſand Jews are recorded to have periſhed in this ſiege; beſides the immenſe numbers, that were ſlain in other parts of the world about the ſame time. So that except thoſe days of tribulation had been ſhortened, no fleſh could have been ſaved: the whole nation muſt have been extirpated, if theſe calamities had continued much longer. But as God intended to bring forth an elect people in after ages, of their deſcendants, he was pleaſed to ſhorten thoſe days, and to preſerve a remnant of that nation, to be a ſeparate people, even to this day. (*Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 13. c. lxv. v. 8, 9.) The chriſtians cannot here be intended by the elect; for the countinuance of thoſe tribulations did not threaten the extermination of them, but that of the Jews: and the prophecies of the future converſion of that nation may be conſidered as a comment on this prediction.

V. 23—28.] When theſe calamities began to take place, the Jews were full of expectations, that their Meſſiah would ſpeedily appear for their deliverance: and the lower they were reduced, the more readily they liſtened to every report of this kind. So that many impoſtors were emboldened to aſſert their claim to this character, pretending to work miracles in ſupport of it. (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 9—11.) The artifice of man, and the power of ſatan, can, if permitted, doubtleſs produce effects, which may appear miraculous: though they will not bear to be compared with thoſe inconteſtible miracles, which were wrought by Chriſt, and his apoſtles, and which formed but one part of that abundant evidence, that demonſtrates the divine original of our holy religion. (Note, *Deut.* c. xiii. v. 1—5. 2 *Theſ.* c. ii. v. 9, 10.) However the ſigns, and wonders wrought by theſe impoſtors, would have in them ſuch a ſemblance of divine power, that they would deceive many, and would be ſufficient to impoſe even upon the elect; were that poſſible. But by the deciſion of Chriſt, that is not poſſible: that is, the elect cannot be fatally, and finally deceived; becauſe men, and devils cannot defeat the purpoſe of God, who hath choſen them unto ſalvation. Profeſſing chriſtians cannot here be meant by the elect; for many ſuch actually were deceived, and apoſtatized: their election of God, and that grace, by which he effected his merciful purpoſes concerning them, were the ſecurity of real chriſtians; and the ſame cauſe would ſecure from fatal deception thoſe, whom God had foreknown, and choſen, but who were not *yet* called to the knowledge of Chriſt, and his ſalvation. (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 28—30.) As a means of *their* preſervation, who regarded the word of Chriſt, he told them before-hand, what calamities were coming on Jeruſalem; and what deceivers would at that time ariſe. They were therefore cautioned to diſregard all ſuch reports; whether they were told, that the Meſſiah was in the deſert, waiting to be joined by the people, in order to march for the deliverance of Jeruſalem; or whether he was ſaid to be in ſome ſecret chamber, among his friends, and about to make his more public appearance. We find from hiſtory that ſuch deceivers actually aroſe; ſome collecting followers in the wilderneſs, and others caballing with their adherents in ſecret chambers; and that they were inſtrumental in accelerating, and aggravating the ruin of their country. The chriſtians, if they had not been fore-warned, might have been deceived on another ground: for they expected their Lord to come, not to deliver, but to deſtroy Jeruſalem: they were therefore reminded that this his coming would not be ſecret, or local; but like the moon ſhall not give her light, and the ſtars ſhall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens ſhall be ſhaken:

30 And then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of man in heaven: and then ſhall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they ſhall ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

31 And he ſhall ſend his angels with a great ſound of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that ſummer *is* nigh:

33 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall ſee all theſe things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

34 Verily I ſay unto you, This generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be fulfilled.

35 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe *were*, ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark;

39 And knew not until the flood came,

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lightning, that ſhineth at once from eaſt to weſt; for in his glorious providence, he would with conſpicuous, and irreſiſtible energy, deſolate the whole land. The Roman armies entered Judea by the eaſt, and carried their victorious ravages to the weſt, in a very rapid, and tremendous manner. Our Lord further added, that “whereſoever the carcaſe was, there would the eagles be gathered together!” The Jewiſh nation, ſpiritually dead, and about to be given up to deſtruction, was the carcaſe, that was doomed to be the prey of the Roman armies: theſe were repreſented by the moſt ravenous birds of prey, to denote their force, and fury; and perhaps becauſe they had eagles for their ſtandards. The hiſtory of thoſe times records the multiplied maſſacres, and devaſtations of the Jews, in different parts of the world; as if they had attracted the deſtroying ſword of the Romans, wherever they reſided, or whitherſoever they fled for ſafety. (*Luke*, c. xvii. v. 20—37.)

V. 29—31.] Theſe verſes may be ſuppoſed *intentionally* worded in ſuch a manner, as was ſuited to lead the mind of the reader to the conſideration of the end of the world, &c: yet the expreſſion, “immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days,” muſt reſtrict the primary ſenſe of them, to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the events that were conſequent to it. We have before met with language equally figurative, referring to ſimilar tranſactions. (*Iſaiah*, c. xiii. v. 9, 10. *Jer.* c. iv. ver. 23—25. *Ezek.* c. xxvii. v. 7, 8.) The darkening of the ſun, and moon, the falling of the ſtars, and the ſhaking of the powers of the heavens, denote the utter extinction of their light of proſperity, and privilege; the unhinging of their whole conſtitution in church, and ſtate; and the violent ſubverſion of the authority of their princes, and prieſts; connected with the abject miſeries to which the whole nation, and eſpecially their chief perſons, would be reduced, and the moral darkneſs to which they would be conſigned. This would be an evident ſign of the Son of man's exaltation to his throne in heaven; whence he would come, in his divine providence, as riding upon the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, to deſtroy his enemies, who would not have him to reign over them; at which events all the tribes of the land would mourn, and lament, whilſt they ſaw the tokens, and felt the weight of his terrible indignation. At the ſame time, he would ſend forth his angels, or meſſengers, the preachers of the goſpel, as with a great ſound of a trumpet, proclaiming the year of jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord: thus he would gather his elect into his church, from every quarter, all over the world. The remarkable appearances in the heavens, that attended theſe tranſactions, and which will be hereafter conſidered, might be alluded to, in theſe expreſſions; and the great ſpread of the goſpel, about the time of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, was predicted: but the whole paſſage will have a more literal, and auguſt accompliſhment at the day of judgment.

V. 32—35.] Our Lord here anſwers the former part of the apoſtles queſtion, concerning the time, when theſe events would take place. In general he aſſured them, that their approach would be as certainly determined by the ſigns that he had mentioned, as the approach of ſummer was by the budding, and the tender branch of the fig-tree; and that they would all be accompliſhed, before that generation was paſſed away. This abſolutely reſtricts our primary interpretation of the prophecy to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which took place within forty years afterwards. To which he added, that “heaven, and earth would paſs away, but his words would not paſs away.” The performance, and effects of his words would be found more ſtable, and durable, than the viſible creation: this would at length wax old, and vaniſh away; but not a tittle of his word would fail of its accompliſhment, and the effects of it would ſubſiſt to all eternity. This is as applicable to all Chriſt's words, as to this prediction.

V. 36—41.] Some expoſitors explain theſe words excluſively of the day of judgment, as being emphatically “that day;” and the context denotes, that Chriſt meant to lead the attention to that ſolemn occaſion: but whether this might not be done, with reference alſo to the pre-

and took them all away; ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then ſhall two be in the field; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two *women ſhall be* grinding at the mill; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left.

42 Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 But know this, that if the good man of the houſe had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye alſo ready: for in ſuch an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 Who then is a faithful and wiſe ſervant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his houſhold, to give them meat in due ſeaſon?

46 Bleſſed *is* that ſervant whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.

47 Verily I ſay unto you, That he ſhall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming;

49 And ſhall begin to ſmite *his* fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

ciſe day, and hour of Jeruſalem's deſtruction, muſt be referred to the reader's judgment. Even this was not declared to either man, or angel, ſo far as we can learn; nor was it a part of the revelation made known to the Son, as the Prophet of the church; to be communicated for the inſtruction of his diſciples: but they were to expect, and be ready for its approach, and to mark the ſigns, that had been given them. For it would reſemble the deluge; in that it was expreſſly predicted, and ſome general intimations were given concerning the appointed ſeaſon, when it would take place, with inſtructions how to eſcape from its fatal effects: yet men in general would not believe, or take warning; but being occupied about the employments, and ſatisfactions of life, as if nothing had been the matter; they would be overwhelmed, and deſtroyed by it's unexpected arrival; juſt as the inhabitants of the old world had been by the flood. Even when two perſons were in the ſame place, or about the ſame buſineſs; one of them would be deſtroyed, and the other eſcape; as one would be watching, and obſerving the ſigns of the times, and the other careleſſly neglecting them. This is more emphatically applicable to the day of judgment, or the time of death, which is to every one of us in effect the ſame thing.

V. 42—44.] Our Lord here at length evidently ſpeaks of his coming to take men away by death, and of his ſecond advent to judge the world. (*Luke*, c. xii. v. 35—48. *Theſ.* c. v. ver. 1—9. 1 *Pet.* c. iv. ver. 7.) The diſciples were exhorted to watch, and be on their guard, expecting, and preparing for his coming as they would not know when that would be. A man, that knew before-hand, at what hour a robber would attempt to break into his houſe, would be found watching, and ready to oppoſe his entrance: but if he knew, that the robber would come, and did not know at what hour; it would be his wiſdom to watch all night, and no prudent man would go to ſleep in ſuch circumſtances. Thus it behoved them to watch, and be ready at all times; aſſured, that in every ſenſe, the coming of Chriſt would be at a ſeaſon, and in a manner, not generally expected; and that none could have any well-grounded confidence of being found of him in peace, who did not habitually watch, and continue patiently in the exerciſe, and obedience of faith.

V. 45—51.] The exhortation applies to all the profeſſed ſervants of Chriſt, but to miniſters eſpecially, who are watchmen by office, as well as ſtewards of the myſteries of God. Who then is that faithful, and prudent ſteward, who is qualified to be placed over the houſhold of faith, to diſpenſe to every man his portion in due ſeaſon; warning, inſtructing, encouraging, reproving, &c, according to every man's character, wants, and conduct, by the rule of God's word, for the honour of his name, and from diſintereſted love to ſouls? The ſervant, that ſhall be found diligently, and humbly employed in this work, when his Lord ſhall come, will be a moſt happy man; for he will be highly honoured, and advanced in His glorious kingdom. But if a man, profeſſing to be the ſervant of Chriſt, be indeed an unbeliever; and be actuated by avarice, ambition, or ſenſuality; if he ſuppoſe that his Lord will never come to call him to an account, or that he ſhall have time enough to get ready, before he come; and ſhall thus be emboldened to domineer, and tyrannize over his fellow-ſervants, as a rapacious oppreſſor, or cruel perſecutor; or ſhall indulge in luxury, and exceſs: the Lord of that ſervant will come to take vengeance on him, when he leaſt expects it; by ſome tremendous judgment he will cut him off, ſeparating his body, and ſoul; and he will after death, appoint him his portion with hypocrites, to whom belongeth greater damnation, and there he will for ever weep and gnaſh his teeth, in anguiſh, and deſpair. We ſhall have occaſion repeatedly to conſider this ſolemn ſubject, and need here only lament at reflecting on the numbers of ſuch profeſſed ſervants, and miniſters of Chriſt which there have been in every age of the church to this preſent time!

CHAP. XXV.

Contains 1ſt. The parable of the wiſe, and fooliſh virgins, 1---13. 2d. That of the talents, committed to ſervants of different characters, &c.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The more ſpiritual our minds are, the leſs we ſhall be attracted with the glare of external ſplendour, either in the world, or in the worſhip of God. If we continually meditate on the glories of his character, and works; created beauty will feebly affect our minds, except as it leads our thoughts to the uncreated ſource of beauty, and excellency. The true temple is built upon a living foundation, and conſiſts of living ſtones; and it therefore ſhall for ever endure an habitation of God through the Spirit: but, as for all other edifices, ſacred or profane, they will ſoon be thrown down, and not one ſtone of them left upon another. We ought to apply to our great Teacher for inſtruction, in every matter that perplexes us: but it is more important for us, to be put upon our guard againſt fatal deceptions; than to be informed of the exact time, when the prophecies ſhall be fulfilled, when the world ſhall end, or when Chriſt ſhall come to judgment. Even true chriſtians are liable to be drawn into many miſtakes, injurious to themſelves, and others, and diſhonourable to their profeſſion, by thoſe who come in Chriſt's name, and pretend to declare the will of God; when they only draw men off from attending to his word, and ſo delude multitudes to their deſtruction. Whilſt we meditate on the extraordinary prophecy, that we have been reading, with admiration, and deep conviction of the truth of our divine religion: let us further apply it to our edification, by conſidering the events predicted as typical of far more important tranſactions. In the proſpect of the approaching ſeaſon of final retribution, we muſt grieve, if we are real chriſtians, to ſee ſo many deceived into a preſumptuous hope, and a fallacious peace. Wars, inſurrections, famines, peſtilences, earthquakes, which deſolate nations, will alſo excite our ſympathizing concern: yet we ſhould not be too much diſcompoſed at hearing of ſuch things; for the Lord is by them carrying on his grand deſigns, in perfect wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and mercy. It is a vain ſuperſtition to collect from ſuch events, that the end of the world is immediately at hand; for they have occurred, again, and again, in different ages of the world, to anſwer ſome wiſe purpoſe; but we are not always competent to know the intention of the Lord in them. In reſpect of ungodly men, the moſt tremendous temporal calamities are but "the beginnings of ſorrows;" and the prevalence of impiety is therefore in fact a far more awful diſpenſation, than any other judgment. But in this evil world, believers muſt experience, as well as witneſs, afflictions; not only in common with other men, but ſuch as are peculiar to themſelves. If we eſcape bloody perſecution; we muſt expect to be treated with contempt, loaded with reproach, and hated by ungodly men of every deſcription. This ſharp trial is often increaſed, by our being called to weep over ſuch as are fallen, and to tremble for ourſelves, leſt we alſo ſhould be offended. Apoſtates often prove the moſt treacherous, and rancorous enemies of thoſe, with whom they formerly aſſociated: for the evil ſpirit, that was gone out, hath returned with ſeven others, more wicked than himſelf; and the laſt ſtate of ſuch a man muſt be worſe than the firſt. Theſe things loudly call upon us to pray for ourſelves, and our brethren; and to dread the leaſt ſlackneſs in our attendance on the great concerns of our ſouls. But beſides the greedy wolves, that are ſometimes let looſe to waſte the flock; men alſo ariſe from amongſt ourſelves ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them; whoſe pernicious tenets, and unholy lives bring ſtill greater ſcandal on the cauſe of Chriſt. When iniquity thus abounds, (and as it is greatly the caſe at preſent;) the love of many, nay of moſt profeſſors of the goſpel, is apt to wax cold; they grow luke-warm, and ſelfiſh, devoid of heavenly zeal, or brotherly affection; and only warm in their fierce diſputes, and controverſies, which they agitate with each other, inſtead of uniting againſt their common enemies. Yet, in the midſt of all theſe evils, there is a remnant, who endure every trial, as gold abides the fire; theſe, and theſe only, continue unto the end, and are ſaved, being kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation. Notwithſtanding all the efforts of earth, and hell, and all the evils that are found within the church; the goſpel muſt be preached in all the world, and with the moſt glorious ſucceſs through all nations, before the end come: and let us endeavour ſo to underſtand the prophecies, that relate to theſe events; that we may know the duties incumbent on us, according to the ſigns of the times, in which we live: and remembering that the abominations of idolatry, within the chriſtian church, ſo called, are ſure indications of approaching deſolations; let us learn to ſeparate from, and ſhun all approaches to ſuch corruptions of our holy faith.

If the danger of temporal calamities render it reaſonable for men to leave all, and flee for their lives: how proper is it, that we forſake all, that we may win Chriſt, and be delivered from the wrath to come! He that believeth, will take warning, and without delay will flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before him; but the unbeliever, being often warned in vain, will at length periſh without remedy. If a man would rather ſave his life, without money, or clothes, than be ſlain, in going back to fetch them: what is he profited, who gains the whole world, and loſes his own ſoul? We ſhould then avoid even thoſe lawful things, which have an evident, or a probable tendency, to prevent our eternal good: and we ought to pray earneſtly to the great Diſpoſer of all events, to keep from us all things hurtful to our ſalvation, and to give us all things, that are profitable to the ſame. The greateſt tribulation, that ever was, or ever ſhall be witneſſed upon earth, befel thoſe, who crucified the Lord of glory, and perſiſted in rejecting his goſpel: how then ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, as is ſet before us in his word! The future puniſhment of unbelievers will doubtleſs be ſuch a tribulation, as all the complicated miſeries, that have been known on earth, fail to give us an adequate idea of: nor will the days of that only evil be ſhortened; as none of

14---30. 3*d. A ſolemn repreſentation of the day of judgment, and of it's intereſting proceedings, and conſequences,* 31---46.

THEN ſhall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wiſe, and five *were* fooliſh.

3 They that *were* fooliſh took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wiſe took oil in their veſſels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all

the elect will be expoſed to it; for whoſe ſake, it ſhould be mitigated, or terminated. Let us then give diligence to make our calling, and election ſure; that we may know, that no enemy, or deceiver ſhall ever prevail againſt us: and let us abide in Chriſt, and ſeek to have his words abide in us; that we may be aware of the various methods, which ſatan, and his inſtruments, will take to impoſe upon us. If we remember, what he hath told us before-hand, we ſhall not liſten to thoſe deceivers, who, having new modelled the goſpel, cry out lo, here is Chriſt! Or lo, he is there! When in fact he is to be found only in his word, and ordinances, and on his throne of grace. Such perſons, as deal in impoſition, or pretended miracles, love to perform their exploits in unfrequented deſerts, or in ſecret chambers; for their ambiguous performances ſhrink from inveſtigation, which real miracles have ever challenged. This ſuffices to convince the judicious chriſtian, that he ought to diſregard them. In whatever way Chriſt cometh, light is his garment, not darkneſs: his operations are conſpicuous, and illuſtrious: the eſtabliſhment of his kingdom will illuminate the earth from eaſt to weſt, and from pole to pole; and wherever the obſtinate enemies of his cauſe are found, there will the executioners of his vengeance be gathered together, with ſpeed, and rapacity like the eagle's. At length the expected end ſhall come: then the ſun ſhall be darkened, and the moon ſhall not give her light, the ſtars ſhall fall from heaven, and nature ſhall ſeem to expire in convulſions. Then will the expected tokens of the Saviour's coming be perceived; He will come with divine power, and glory, in the clouds of heaven; and all the tribes of the earth ſhall mourn becauſe of Him, whom now they deſpiſe, and diſobey. But before he execute his righteous vengeance on his enemies; he will employ his holy angels to gather his elect from every part of the earth, as with the ſound of a mighty trumpet, that they may be for ever with the Lord. (1 *Theſ.* c. iv. ver. 15—18. *Rev.* c. i. v. 7.) It is not for us to know the times, and ſeaſons of this grand event: but we may eaſily perceive the tokens of our own approaching diſſolution. Within the ſpace of thirty, or forty years, or in a far ſhorter time, the writer, and moſt of the readers of theſe obſervations, will have done with all things here below, and be fixed in an eternal, and unchangeable ſtate. Let this thought induce us to attend more diligently to the words of Chriſt: and whilſt we meditate on his declarations concerning thoſe things, which accompany ſalvation, on his promiſes, his denunciations, and his diſcoveries of the final event of things, reſpecting the righteous and the wicked; let us ſtill recollect, that heaven, and earth may paſs away, but his words ſhall not paſs away.

Yet, after all theſe warnings, and inſtructions, men in general copy the example of the unbelievers in the days of Noah; they eat, and drink, plant, and build, marry, and are given in marriage; and act in every reſpect, as if this world were all, or as if they were to live here for ever. Thus death, and judgment come upon them unawares; and with as terrible a ſurpriſe, as the deluge came upon the inhabitants of the old world: and then too late, they will wiſh to be with the believer in his derided ark. Even from the ſame families, and religious ſocieties, death continually is taking one to heaven, and another to hell. Men labour, and live together, nay they ſeem to aſſociate in the ſame acts of worſhip; yet they are the ſubjects of two oppoſite kingdoms: and at death they are removed, to the capital, ſo to ſpeak, of that kingdom, to which they belong. As we therefore know that our Lord will ſpeedily come to take us hence, but cannot know when, or how ſoon, let us watch and be ſober. To us, at leaſt, the end of all things is at hand: and as we ſhould be confounded to be found, at that ſolemn ſeaſon, indulging ſloth or ſinful inclinations, or in the place of faſhionable diſſipation; but ſhould wiſh to be found in the path of duty, or pouring out our hearts in prayer; ſo let us never venture on the former, or neglect the latter. We are not in darkneſs, that that day ſhould overtake us, as a thief; therefore, let us as the children of the light be always expecting the coming of our Lord. Above all, the ſtewards of the Lord's houſhold ſhould continually be looking to Him, to make them wiſe, faithful, and aſſiduous in their work; and to enable them to avoid all intereſted, or ambitious purſuits, or worldly pleaſures, and even all literary trifles, that they may wholly give up themſelves to their moſt important work. Bleſſed will that ſervant be, however neglected, or deſpiſed in this vain world, whom his Lord, when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing; for He will delight to honour *him*, whoſe pleaſure it was to do his maſter's work, and ſeek his glory. But woe be to the preſumptuous infidel, the mercenary hireling, the lordly oppreſſor, or the voluptuous ſenſualiſt, in the garb of a prieſt! The Lord of that evil ſervant will come in a day, when he looketh not for him; and what good will all his preferments, diſtinctions, and enjoyments do him when God ſhall cut him off, and appoint him his portion, with the hypocrites: Where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth?

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1—13.] This chapter continues our Lord's diſcourſe to his diſciples; and the whole of it ſeems to refer to the general concerns of death, and judgment, rather than to the particular events, that were coming on the Jewiſh nation. Towards the cloſe of the ſlum-

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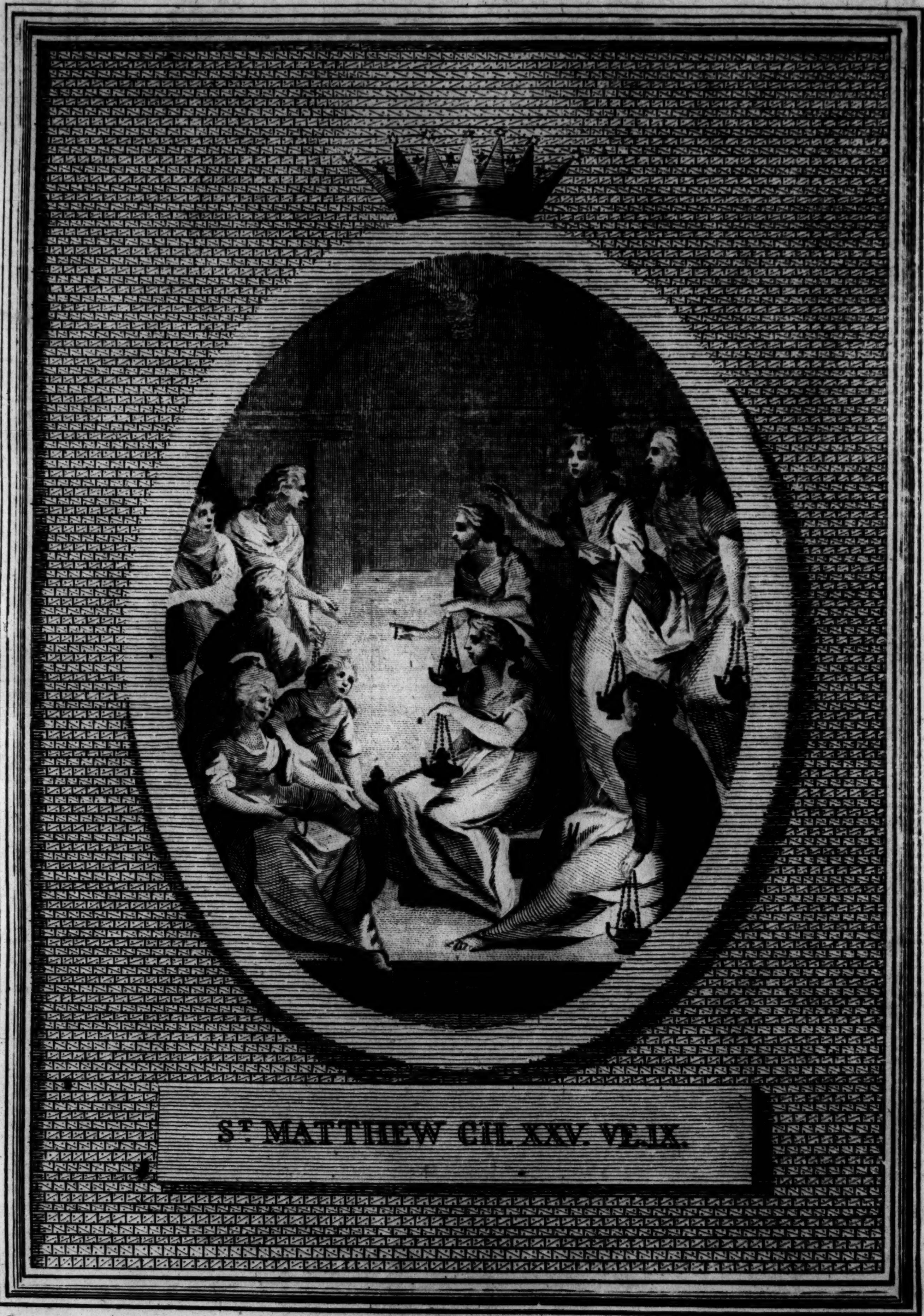

ST. MATTHEW CH. XXV. VE. IX.

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ſlumbered and ſlept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all thoſe virgins aroſe and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the fooliſh ſaid unto the wiſe, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wiſe anſwered, ſaying, *Not ſo*; leſt there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that ſell, and buy for yourſelves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was ſhut.

11 Afterward came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh.

14 For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man

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foregoing chapter, our Lord made a gradual tranſition from the latter to the former of theſe ſubjects; probably with reference to the concluſion of the queſtion, propoſed by his diſciples, (c. xxiv. v. 3:) and he here diſcuſſed theſe important ſubjects more fully. In this reſpect, "The kingdom of heaven might be likened to ten "virgins, &c." The circumſtances of this parable were doubtleſs taken from the cuſtoms of the Jews, in celebrating nuptials. The bridegroom uſed to go in the evening to fetch home his bride, by the light of lamps: theſe were carried by bride-maids, which ſome ſay were never fewer, than ten: and when they arrived at his houſe, there was a feaſt prepared for them and the company. Chriſt is the bridegroom of the church, whom he hath eſpouſed to himſelf: they, who profeſs his goſpel are as the companions of his bride, who wait for his coming to complete the ſacred union: their continuance in this world conſtitutes the time of *their* waiting; as the period preceding the day of judgment does that of the church at large. But we are not to ſuppoſe, that all nominal chriſtians are intended: numbers of them have not ſo much as the appearance of, "the virgins, "the companions of the ſpouſe," (*Pſ.* xlv. ver. 14:) ſuch only are meant, as make a credible profeſſion of the goſpel, and act externally in ſuch a manner, as to give real chriſtians a favourable opinion of them, and to induce them to admit them into their ſociety. Of this number "five were wiſe, and five were fooliſh." The latter had lamps, but no oil in their veſſels, to repleniſh them withal: that is they had religion enough to make a plauſible appearance; they might have notions; they might be able to converſe about religious ſubjects, and be at times impreſſed with them; and they might have gifts, or an outward decency of conduct: but they were ſtrangers to regeneration, they had not their hearts truly ſanctified, and ſtored with holy affections, and diſpoſitions, by the new-creating Spirit of God. But the wiſe had *this oil in their veſſels*, as well as the external lamp of profeſſion. The delay of the bridegroom repreſents the intermediate ſpace, between the real, or ſuppoſed converſion of theſe profeſſors, and the coming of Chriſt, to remove them by death, or to judge the world: their ſlumbering, and ſleeping intimates the comparative unwatchfulneſs, and inattention even of many real chriſtians, as well as that of mere profeſſors; when thoughts of thoſe ſolemn events are excluded for a ſeaſon: and it ſhews that the difference between the two characters often conſiſts more in the ſtate of their hearts, than in their external conduct. The coming of the bridegroom at midnight, with a loud ſummons to the virgins to meet Him, repreſents the unexpected manner, in which Chriſt calls men out of the world, and in which he will come to judgment; and the ſurpriſe, which his coming muſt occaſion both to mere profeſſors, and to unwatchful believers. The conduct of the virgins, when they heard this ſummons, denotes the earneſt enquiries into the ſtate of their ſouls, and the haſty endeavours to get all ready, to which the immediate apprehenſions of death, or judgment excite profeſſors. This circumſtance diſcovered the difference between the wiſe, and fooliſh virgins. The latter, when they came to trim their lamps, found that they were *going out*, nor had they any oil, with which to feed them. Thus the falſe profeſſor's religion ſerves him to make a ſhew with, whilſt he lives; but when he comes to die, and moſt wants its ſupport, and benefit, it goes out, and leaves him to darkneſs, and deſpair. But the wiſe virgins, though they had been aſleep, yet when they came to trim their lamps, had oil ready, with which to repleniſh them: thus true chriſtians, notwithſtanding their comparative inattention, are habitually ready for all events. The application of the fooliſh virgins to the wiſe, for ſome of their oil, may remind us of the conviction, that many falſe profeſſors at laſt receive of their ſad miſtake; of the difference between their religion, and that of true chriſtians; and of their earneſt application to miniſters, or believers for their prayers, and aſſiſtance, in their laſt extremity: or it might prophetically expoſe the vanity of the popiſh doctrine, concerning works of ſupererogation, human merits, prieſtly abſolutions, &c. The anſwer of the wiſe virgins implies, that the beſt chriſtians know, that they have nothing to ſpare for others, and can give them no effectual help; and it may remind us of the counſels, which we often give to dying ſinners, to repent, apply to Chriſt, pray, &c, as the utmoſt, that we can do for them, in a very hopeleſs, and diſtreſſing caſe; but which it is to be feared are generally ineffectual, eſpecially to hypocritical profeſſors. The concluſion of the matter ſhews the wiſdom, and happy effects of being ready; and the folly, and miſery of a travelling into a far country, *who* called his own ſervants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his ſeveral ability; and ſtraightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the ſame, and made *them* other five talents.

17 And likewiſe he that *had received* two, he alſo gained other two.

18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of thoſe ſervants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And ſo he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, ſaying, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beſides them five talents more.

21 His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 He alſo that had received two talents came, and ſaid, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beſides them.

23 His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been

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mere profeſſion, an unprepared ſtate, and men's carnal and preſumptuous procraſtination. The wiſe virgins, being ready, were admitted to the marriage feaſt: but the door was immediately ſhut; and the others, coming afterwards, were denied admiſſion, and were diſowned by the bridegroom, as perſons, with whom he had no acquaintance. Our Lord made the ſame application of it, that he had before done of the ſubject in the former chapter: (c. vii. v. 21—23. c. xxiv. v. 42. *Luke*, c. xiii. v. 24—30. *Rev.* c. xix. v. 7—9.) The day of judgment is doubtleſs particularly intended in this parable; yet many of it's circumſtances apply to the time of our death, which is equivalent to that ſolemn ſeaſon, in reſpect of every one of us.

V. 14—18.] In reſpect of many of the ſame things, the kingdom of heaven may be repreſented by a man, about to take a journey into a diſtant country, and entruſting ſome of his ſervants with certain portions of his property, to be employed by them for his advantage. Chriſt, as aſcended into heaven, in due ſeaſon to return to judge the world, is this Maſter: profeſſed chriſtians are his ſervants: the talents, which were of great value, repreſent the powers of body, and mind; natural, or acquired abilities; time, health, influence, authority, wealth; gifts, privileges, or offices in the church; in ſhort every thing, of which a good or bad uſe may be made. It cannot be ſuppoſed, conſiſtent with ſcripture, or indeed with common ſenſe, that the improvement of natural powers by unregenerate men, can produce, or entitle a man to ſupernatural grace. The ſanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, producing an holy judgment, and diſpoſition in the ſoul; teach, incline and enable a man, to make a good uſe of all other things: and this improvement of our talents doth not make us chriſtians, but *evidence* that we are made ſuch, by the new-creating grace of God; whilſt the contrary conduct evinces the hypocriſy of a man's profeſſion of faith in Chriſt. The five talents given to one ſervant, the two given to the ſecond, and the one to the third, repreſent the different proportions, in which the great Head of the church and Lord of the univerſe, entruſts his profeſſed ſervants, with various advantages, as it ſeemeth good in his ſight. The expreſſion “according to his “ſeveral ability,” may denote, that every man hath that portion, which beſt ſuits the ſtation intended for him, in the church, and in the community; and which would ſuffice, if made a good uſe of, to prove him an uſeful, honourable, and accepted ſervant. We are not to conclude from what follows, that our Lord intended to decide, that they, who receive moſt, are generally the moſt faithful: for the contrary is very commonly the caſe, and the ſcripture teaches us to expect, that it would be ſo. But he ſhews us, that an account muſt be rendered of the weakeſt abilities, and ſmalleſt advantages, as well as of thoſe, that are more eminent, and diſtinguiſhing; and that it will be no excuſe for a man to plead, that he had but little entruſted to him; if he neglect to make a good uſe of that little. The aſcenſion of Chriſt into heaven, and his perſonal abſence from his church, till the day of judgment, are repreſented by the maſter's departure on his journey: the trading of the ſervants with his money, ſhews that all our ability for his work is from Him; and that we ought diligently in our ſeveral places, to do all we can to promote his cauſe, and to do good. (*Mark*, c. xiii. v. 34;) And the conduct of the ſervant, that buried his talent in the earth, repreſents the character of falſe profeſſors, who make no good uſe of their abilities, opportunities, and advantages; who neglect the duties of their ſtations; who live to themſelves, and are engaged in earthly purſuits; who deem it enough not to do poſitive miſchief; and who are deſtitute of zeal, and love, and actuated by envy, diſcontent, and other ſelfiſh paſſions.

V. 19—23.] The time, that precedes the Lord's coming to judgment ſeems long in man's apprehenſion. Unbelievers are ready to conclude, that he will never come; or at leaſt it ſeems ſo doubtful, and diſtant a matter, that it hath no influence on their conduct: and even believers are apt to think of it as very remote.

faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came, and ſaid, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou haſt not ſown, and gathering where thou haſt not ſtrawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, *there* thou haſt *that is* thine.

26 His Lord anſwered and ſaid unto him, *Thou* wicked, and ſlothful ſervant, thou kneweſt that I reap were I ſowed not, and gather where I have not ſtrawed;

27 Thou oughteſt therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I ſhould have received mine own with uſury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance: but from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant in-

(2 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 4—15.) However the ſolemn, and important ſeaſon will at length arrive: and this is repreſented by the coming of the Lord of thoſe ſervants, to reckon with them. The firſt of them came, and acknowledged, that he had received five talents: and declared that he had been enabled to trade ſo ſucceſsfully with them, that he had doubled the ſum. This repreſents the humble, and thankful conſciouſneſs, with which the true chriſtian will at length be able to reflect on his labours of faith, and love; in which he hath laid himſelf out, and employed his time, abilities, and providential advantages, in the ſervice of Chriſt and his church; and which are the infallible evidences of the ſincerity of his profeſſion. This ſtatement of the ſervant, having been found to be according to truth, his Lord expreſſed the higheſt ſatisfaction in his conduct, commended his diligence as a good and faithful ſervant, declared his purpoſe of advancing him to a far higher truſt and authority, and bid him enter into the joy, prepared by his Lord for his faithful ſervants, and which in ſome meaſure reſembled his own felicity. This doubtleſs relates to the final happineſs of believers in heaven: though faithfulneſs in a lower condition, is often here recompenſed by advancement to a higher, and more honourable ſervice; yet hereafter they ſhall be made kings, and prieſts unto God, and ſhall reign with their divine Redeemer, in glory, and joy inexpreſſible, and inconceivable. The declaration of him, who had received two talents, and the gracious acceptance, and recompence which he met with, exactly correſpond with the other; and we are taught by them, that inferior endowments, and advantages, when faithfully improved, will be as graciouſly accepted, as thoſe that are greater.

V. 24—30.] The ſervant that had received one talent, and had hid it in the earth, gave a very different account of his motives, and conduct; and met with a very different reception, than the others. He pretended, that he knew his Lord to be an hard, and unreaſonable man, who expected more from his ſervants, than they were able to perform, or than he had given them the means of effecting; being like a man, who ſhould expect to reap, where he had not ſown, &c; and he ſpake as if he had required as large an increaſe from his one talent, as from the firſt ſervant's five. Being therefore afraid of any miſcarriage, if he attempted to trade with the money, he had concealed it in the earth; and though it was not increaſed, yet it was not waſted. This repreſents the very heart of many falſe profeſſors; and the reaſons of their ſlothfulneſs. They are carnal-minded, and at enmity with the holy character, and law of God; they quarrel with his providence, his ſovereignty, and his method of ſalvation; they diſbelieve his promiſe, and pretend that it is impoſſible to pleaſe him; they ſuppoſe his ſervice to be perilous, unprofitable, and detrimental; they complain, that he requires of them more than he hath formed them capable of performing; and that he puniſhes men for what they cannot help; they pervert the doctrines of Revelation, to ſupport ſuch concluſions, and confound their want of inclination to what is good, with a want of natural ability, as if they were the ſame thing. Thus they excuſe their own ſloth, and ſelfiſhneſs, and caſt the blame of all their miſconduct upon the Lord; and they ſuppoſe all their unfruitfulneſs to be juſtifiable, becauſe they are not outwardly ſo atrocious as ſome other perſons. To theſe vile inſinuations, his Lord anſwered, that if matters had been, as he pretended, he might and ought to have put out his money on good ſecurity, that ſome increaſe might have been made of it; and therefore he was, by his own confeſſion, a wicked, and ſlothful ſervant. This ſhews, that ſuch men will be condemned out of their own mouths; as they are conſcious they might have done better than they did, had it not been for their diſlike to the Lord, and his work, and their diſtruſt of his word: they will therefore be left without excuſe, and will as certainly be condemned for their ſloth, and negligence, as others will be for their open infidelity, impiety, or profligacy. His Lord then ordered the talent to be taken from him, and given to him that had ten talents: on which Chriſt obſerved, as he had done before, (c. xiii. v. 12,) that it was the rule of his kingdom, to give more and more to every man that hath, in order that he may be greatly enriched; that is to every man, that hath living faith, and grace, influencing him to make a good uſe of his talents: but that from all others, thoſe things would be taken away, which they had not improved, and they would be left under condemnation; even like this unprofitable ſervant, who was ordered to be caſt into out-to outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

31 When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth *his* ſheep from the goats:

33 And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.

37 Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee?* or thirſty, and gave *thee* drink.

38 When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?*

39 Or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came unto thee?

40 And the King ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, in as much as

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ter darkneſs, miſery, and deſpair. (*Luke*, c. xix. v. 11—27.)

V. 31—33.] (c. vii. v. 21—23. c. xvi. v. 27. c. xix. v. 28. c. xxiv. v. 30.) In order more fully to explain, and confirm the foregoing parabolical repreſentations, our Lord next ſpake one of the moſt intereſting and ſublime paſſages, which we meet with, even in the holy ſcriptures; and it is matter of ſurpriſe, that any perſon can read it, and yet ſuppoſe the Speaker to be no more than a man; when there is ſuch a divine authority, and dignity in it, as we may venture to ſay could never have with propriety been aſſumed by any mere creature, or ſervant of God. Having previouſly drawn the attention of the diſciples to the great ſeaſon of retribution, he here ſpake upon it openly in the character of the ſovereign Judge. The time will come, when the Son of man, even He, who then appeared among them in human nature, will appear in his divine glory, attended by all the holy angels, as his ſervants, and worſhippers; (c. xxi. v. 41. c. xxvi. v. 64—66;) and then he will ſit upon the throne of his glory, as the Judge of the world. (*Rev.* c. xx. v. 11—15.) Then will be gathered before his tribunal, not only his diſciples, or the Jews, but all nations, all the inhabitants of the earth, being raiſed from the dead, for that purpoſe: and he will ſeparate the immenſe multitude, with as much eaſe, and exactneſs, as a ſhepherd divides the ſheep from the goats: for he will not be in any danger of miſtaking any man's character, motives, or ſtate; there will be no poſſibility of any oppoſition, or eſcape; or of any man's being overlooked by, or remaining diſguiſed before, Him. What leſs than omnipotence, and omniſcience can effect ſuch an exact ſeparation of the whole human ſpecies? This being done, He will ſet the ſheep, (the proper emblem of his harmleſs, gentle, uſeful, and holy people,) on his right hand, in token of their acceptance, and honour; and the goats, (the emblem of the unholy nature, and character of unbelievers,) at his left hand, as rejected, and expoſed to condemnation.

V. 34—40.] Then the King, not only of the Jews, or of the church, but of the whole world, (as our Lord on this occaſion, called himſelf,) will addreſs the company at his right hand, as "the bleſſed of his Father;" his choſen, redeemed, regenerate, adopted, and beloved children, whom he hath determined to render moſt bleſſed for evermore: he will bid them "come to Him," that they may be with Him to behold, and ſhare his glory, and to concur with him in the judgment about to be given upon the wicked; (1 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 2, 3;) and that they may "inherit the kingdom," or that confluence of all honours, riches, felicities, and pleaſures, "which had been prepared for them, from the foundation of the world," in the counſels of God's everlaſting love, and mercy. To evidence them to be the perſons, for whom this inheritance was prepared, He will next ſhew their conduct, as the effect of their faith, and love: they had ſhewn themſelves His cordial friends, when they were on earth: inſomuch that they had given him meat, when he was hungry, and drink when he was thirſty; when he was a ſtranger, and deſtitute, they had hoſpitably entertained him; when in want of raiment, they had clothed Him; when ſick, they had viſited, and tended upon Him; and when in priſon, through oppreſſion, or perſecution, they had owned Him, and had come to enquire into his wants, and to adminiſter to his comforts. On hearing this, the righteous are repreſented, as enquiring when they had ever ſeen him in ſuch circumſtances, and relieved him in this manner? For they will not be conſcious of having done any thing of the kind, or any ſervice worthy of his notice, or acceptance. To which the King will anſwer, that "inaſmuch as they did it to the leaſt of *theſe his brethren,*" pointing to the poor, afflicted chriſtians, whom they relieved for his ſake, who will be preſent to bear grateful teſtimony to their labour of love, and expenſive kindneſs; and whom the King of Glory will condeſcend to own as his brethren; "they did it unto him," and he will recompenſe it as abundantly, and honourably, as if they had done it to Him in perſon. It is impoſſible, that human language can expreſs greater encouragement to ſelf-denying, aſſiduous, laborious, and expenſive charity to poor chriſtians, for the ſake of our common Lord, than is contained in this declaration. We are not however to ſuppoſe, that acts of liberality, by whomſoever perform-ye have done *it* unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not.

44 Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or a-thirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee?

45 Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying, Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal.

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ed, or from whatever motive, will conſtitute a man's title to eternal felicity. This is by no means the caſe; nor can there be a more fatal deluſion, than the too common groundleſs inference from this, and ſimilar paſſages. The matter may thus be ſtated: there is no ſalvation for a ſinner, but by the free mercy of God; no mercy but through the mediation, and merits of his beloved Son; no intereſt in Chriſt, (at leaſt for thoſe who hear or might hear, or read the goſpel, after they are capable of underſtanding good from evil,) except by faith in him; no juſtifying faith, but that which worketh by love; no love to Chriſt, which doth not imply love to his people, his example, and his precepts; no genuine love to his people, &c, which doth not influence a man to do good to them, as he hath ability, and opportunity, and as he ſees them in difficult, and neceſſitous circumſtances. But whenever a man is habitually induced to ſelf-denying beneficence to others, eſpecially to ſuch, as he deems diſciples of Chriſt, out of love to his name, and gratitude for the bleſſings of redemption; he gives an unequivocal proof, that he is a true believer, a juſtified perſon, united unto Chriſt, a member of his myſtical body, and intereſted in all his purchaſed bleſſings: at the ſame time it is impoſſible, that this man ſhould be proud of, or truſt in his beneficence; that he ſhould be liberal out of oſtentation, or to compenſate for indulged iniquities, or to atone for former ſins: for theſe things would prove him an abſolute ſtranger to true faith, and every evangelical principle of obedience. So that theſe actions will be produced, as ſo many evidences of the excellency, and efficacy of juſtifying faith, and the love of Chriſt; of a man's having been a real believer, and not a mere profeſſor; and to ſhew that there is a propriety in the Lord's honouring him in heaven, who ſo proved himſelf his zealous friend on earth. (2 *Theſ.* c. i. v. 5. *Heb.* c. vi. v. 10.)

V. 41—46.] The Judge next ſhews us the awful reverſe of the proſpect. He declares, that he will addreſs all thoſe on his left hand as “curſed,” lying under the curſe of the broken law, ſtrangers to the bleſſings of the goſpel, and juſtly deſerving of the final wrath and vengeance of God: he will bid them “depart from Him,” the only Author of ſalvation to ſinners, and the Fountain of life and felicity to all creatures; for many of them had in their hearts bid him “depart from them, as they deſired not the knowledge of his ways:” He will doom them “to fire,” the awful emblem of the wrath of God, and the cauſe of the moſt excruciating pain, of which we have any conception; This fire will be everlaſting, and unquenchable; which would be an unmeaning addition, if they were not to continue in it eternally: it was indeed prepared originally for “the devil, and his angels” thoſe firſt apoſtates from, and rebels againſt God; but as the wicked held with them, and would not ſeparate from their ſervice, it muſt be their portion alſo. No doubt the wicked of every age, and nation will then be condemned, but they are chiefly concerned, to whom the ſcriptures are ſent; and therefore our Lord repreſents nothing more, than the ground on which falſe profeſſors of Chriſtianity will be condemned. It will therefore be proved againſt them, that they had no love to Chriſt, and therefore no true faith in Him; ſeeing they refuſed to relieve Him, when they ſaw him in neceſſity, and diſtreſs, and had ability, and opportunity of doing it. Theſe perſons will be as ready to deny, or palliate their guilt, as the others to diſclaim all merit in their ſervices: but the Judge will prove his point, and ſtop their mouths, by ſhewing their ſelfiſh neglect of his poor diſciples, and their refuſal to relieve them in their diſtreſſes. This alone will be enough to prove them unbelievers, even if no injuſtice, ſecret licentiouſneſs, or other groſs wickedneſs ſhould be adduced againſt them. Being therefore demonſtrated to be impenitent ſinners, under the condemnation of the law, and entitled to no benefit from the goſpel; nay expoſed to deeper condemnation for their hypocritical profeſſion of it, and abuſe of their privileges; they will be left without plea or power of reſiſtance, or eſcape, and be conſtrained to go away into everlaſting puniſhment; whilſt the righteous will be received into everlaſting life, and felicity. The word is the ſame in the original in both clauſes, and he muſt be blinded indeed by ſatan, who will riſque his ſoul on interpreting the ſame word “temporary” in one clauſe, and “eternal” in another, of the ſame verſe: and if the *puniſhment* be eternal, there can be no place for annihilation, or for final reſtitution.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is moſt important for us all continually to be reminded of the approaching ſeaſons of death, and judgment; and of that diſcrimination of characters, which

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Contains 1ſt. Jeſus predicting his own crucifixion within two days, and the chief prieſts conſulting to apprehend him, 1---5. *2d. A woman anointing his head with precious ointment; the diſciples objecting to the expence, and Jeſus commending her, &c,* 6---13. *3d. Judas bargaining to betray him,* 14---16. *4th. Jeſus eating the Paſſover with his diſciples; pointing out Judas as the traitor; inſtituting the Lord's Supper; and predicting, that the diſciples would forſake him, and that Peter would deny him,* 17---35. *5th. Chriſt's agony in the garden, and his exhortations to his diſciples to watch and pray,* 36---46. *6th. His being apprehended, through Judas's treachery, and what paſſed on that occaſion,* 47---56. *7th. His arraignment, and condemnation before Caiaphas, and the inſults put upon him,* 57---68. *8th. Peter repeatedly denying him, and made ſenſible of his guilt, &c.* 69---75.

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will ſoon be made. Not only immenſe multitudes of infidels, profligates, phariſees, licentious profeſſors, and evident apoſtates, are thronging the broad road to deſtruction: even a large proportion of thoſe, that appear to be followers of Chriſt, and are admitted to, and outwardly continue in, the communion of the ſaints, will be found fooliſh virgins; having indeed the lamp in their hands, but no grace in their hearts. With what ſeriouſneſs, diligence, and fervent prayer, ſhould we then examine ourſelves whether we really be in the faith, or not? How afraid ſhould we be of being deceived, where ſo much is at ſtake, and ſo many come ſhort of eternal life! How earneſtly ſhould we ſeek for heavenly wiſdom, and deſire to be found upright in the ſight of God, rather than to be approved by our ill-judging fellow-ſinners! It is indeed to be lamented, that whilſt the heavenly Bride-groom tarries, even true chriſtians are too apt to be drowſy and inattentive: yet, notwithſtanding all defects on the one hand, and all fair appearances on the other; there is an eſſential difference between the weakeſt believer, and the moſt ſpecious hypocrite. This ſometimes appears even in this world: the unexpected ſummons of death may throw the chriſtian into an alarm: but proceeding without delay, to trim his lamp, the grace that before lay dormant often ſhines forth more bright; and his ſerious ſelf-examination, and fervent prayer bring humility, faith, hope, patience, love, gratitude, and every holy affection into ſuch lively exerciſe, that all around him, perceive him to be ready for, and meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. On the other hand the mere profeſſor, in ſuch circumſtances, often detects his conſciouſneſs of hypocriſy, and impreſſes the minds of beholders with a gloomy fear, that "his lamp is going out," and about to be extinguiſhed in utter darkneſs. We may compaſſionate ſuch perſons, but we can give them little help: we ſhould direct them to Him, who ſells all the bleſſings of ſalvation without money, and without price: but the hour is unſeaſonable, and the time is ſhort; nor can they well know that their prayers are not mere ſelfiſhneſs, and their repentance conſtrained, and unſincere. How dreadful then will be their caſe, who ſeek not thoſe things which accompany ſalvation, till the time is paſt; and begin not to knock, till the door is finally cloſed! However it may appear at death, aſſuredly no one will partake of the marriage ſupper of the Lamb, who hath not in this world waſhed his robes, and made them white in his atoning blood, and who is not a partaker of his ſanctifying Spirit. Let us then make no delay, but be earneſt in our preparation for the feaſt; and let us ever be upon our watch; for we cannot know, either the day, or the hour, when our Lord ſhall come.

But there are alſo outward expreſſions, by which the ſtate of a man's ſoul may in ſome degree be decided on: in this reſpect "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man, travelling into a far country, and delivering his goods unto his own ſervants." Whatever any man poſſeſſes is entruſted to him by the great Lord of all, who will at length call him to an account for the uſe, that he hath made of it. The holy law requires us to devote our all, in perfect love, to the ſervice of God, and to the benefit of our neighbour; and denounces its awful curſe on every one, who in any inſtance, or at any time fails of ſo doing: but the goſpel inwardly teaches, and diſpoſes the true believer, to attempt this ſincerely, though feebly, from the time, when he begins to experience the joy of God's ſalvation. He believes the word of the Lord, reſpecting the future judgment, and it's important conſequences; and he gives implicit credit to his promiſes, and threatenings. By faith he perceives his danger as a condemned ſinner, and fears, and flees from it; and at the ſame time he diſcovers his Refuge, and in hope repairs to it. Having obtained peace with God, and peace of conſcience, through the atoning blood of Chriſt; his faith works by love, and his language is, what ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? This humble love, and gratitude, uniting with hatred of ſin, contempt of the world, love to the brethren, and compaſſion for periſhing ſinners, impels him, to devote himſelf, and all his abilities, and advantages, to the ſervice of Chriſt; and to do good in his church, and the world, according to his opportunity, and in exact proportion to the vigour of his faith, and hope. Obedience of this kind diſtinguiſhes the real diſciple of Chriſt from every other man in the world: the ſelf-righteous Phariſee, the ſelf-wiſe infidel, the careleſs ſinner, the looſe profeſſor of goſpel truth, are alike unacquainted with theſe evangelical principles of devoted diligence in the ſervice of a crucified Saviour. It is the real chriſtian's liberty, privilege, honour, intereſt, and ſatisfaction, to be employed as the Redeemer's ſervant, and as his inſtrument in promoting his glory, and the benefit of his people: and the love of Chriſt even conſtrains him to live no longer to himſelf, but to Him, that died for him, and roſe again. According to the number of his talents, he will become a bleſſing to others, by his example, influence, converſation, and labours; by the uſe, that he makes of his time, money,

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AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had finiſhed all theſe ſayings, he ſaid unto his diſciples,

2 Ye know that after two days is *the feaſt of* the paſſover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

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abilities; by his relative conduct in his family; and by ſerving the Lord, as a miniſter, magiſtrate, or private chriſtian: and whether he hath had five talents, two, one, or only a ſmall portion of one; he will not be aſhamed, but have confidence before Chriſt at his coming. Nay he may now humbly rejoice in the teſtimony of his conſcience; and, giving the Lord all the glory, both of his talents, and of the grace, by which he is enabled ſucceſsfully to trade with them, he may take the evidence and the comfort of them; and look forward to death, and judgment, aſſured of being then received, with, “well done, good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt “been faithful in few things, I will make thee ruler “over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy “Lord.” Let us not then be weary of well-doing; for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not. But let every one dread the doom of the unprofitable ſervant: it is not enough, that men do not ſpend their Lord's goods upon their luſts, or waſte their time, and talents in ſin: they alſo, who bury them in the earth, will be left without excuſe. Whatever they may pretend, they diſlike the character, and work of the Lord; they deem his ſervice irkſome, and unprofitable; they dare not truſt his promiſe, and they are diſſatisfied with his providence; becauſe they may not be chief, and have matters their own way, they ſit down in ſullen diſcontent; and will do nothing, becauſe they cannot do every thing. But many of thoſe excuſes, and objections, paſs current here which will be refuted, and ſilenced at laſt: and every unfruitful profeſſor will be condemned out of his own mouth; and conſigned to outer darkneſs, where is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. For whatever elſe men may poſſeſs, who are deſtitute of ſanctifying grace; they will ſoon be deprived of it, and only have the additional condemnation of having abuſed, and been ungrateful for ſo many mercies. But the moſt indigent believer is rich, and ſhall have abundance; and his felicity will be for ever increaſing. Let not ſuch then envy ſinners, or covet any of their periſhing, and dangerous poſſeſſions.

In this view of the ſubject, we ſhould look continually unto Jeſus: He once was humbled unto the death of the croſs; now he reigns the Sovereign of the world; and ere long he ſhall appear in glory, attended by all his holy angels, to judge the nations of the earth. Before his tribunal we muſt all appear; and every effort to eſcape, to conceal, to reſiſt, or to prevaricate, will then be unavailing: with infinite eaſe, and exactneſs he will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and develope the ſecrets of every heart; he will ſhew the real motives of every action, and the true character of every individual; and he will infallibly ſeparate each of his true diſciples from all other men in the world. In that deciſive hour the King of glory will not be aſhamed to own, as his brethren, his ſiſters, or his mother, the leaſt and meaneſt of his choſen flock. And if we would have a good hope, that he will then addreſs us as “bleſſed of “His Father, and bid us come near to him, that we “may inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the beginning of the world;” we muſt now recognize our Saviour, and future Judge, as diſguiſed under the mean attire of theſe his beloved brethren. When we ſee one, whom we have reaſon to think a believer, hungry, thirſty, a ſtranger, or in want of proper clothing; we ſhould ſuppoſe that Chriſt ſtands before us, requires us to own our relation to him, and calls upon us to give him food, or raiment, or to provide him lodging, or entertainment; and we ſhould aſk ourſelves, whether we can find in our hearts to drive him from our door? And when we hear of ſuch perſons being ſick, or in priſon, and wanting advice, attendance, or other relief; we ſhould ſuppoſe that Jeſus is in theſe circumſtances, and ſends to us, to come and miniſter unto him. For though our inheritance be all of grace: yet we can have no proof that we are children, and heirs, unleſs we love, and delight in doing good to our poor brethren, for our Redeemer's ſake. We ſhould then renounce our own eaſe, intereſt, convenience, indulgence, and decoration, that we may ſhew our gratitude for a free ſalvation, by abounding in this work of faith, and labour of love: and ſhould we even be miſtaken in the character of thoſe, for whom we thus deny ourſelves from love to Chriſt; he will certainly accept, and recompenſe our ſervices. But alas, how little do we ſee of “theſe fruits of the “Spirit” even among profeſſing chriſtians? Who does not think that he ſhould have deemed it an honour, to have entertained Chriſt, when here on earth? Yet who, almoſt, is willing, to retrench greatly from his unneceſſary expences, to relieve theſe his repreſentatives, and brethren? However, this is the only part of our ſubſtance, that is put out on good ſecurity, and at good intereſt. Indeed many will occaſionally part with their money, who will not put themſelves to the hardſhip, and inconvenience, of viſiting the ſick, and ſuch, as are in priſons, or other receſſes of miſery, and diſtreſs: by which means their bounty is diſtributed at random, does comparatively little good, and will be ſhewn to ſpring rather from an eaſy temper, than from a diſintereſted ſelf-denying love of others for the ſake of Chriſt. But whilſt we have time, let us lay ourſelves out in doing good to all men, eſpecially to them, that are of the houſhold of faith: and even if we have but little in our power, let us endeavour by that little to ſhew our good-will, and what we would do, if we had more. Indeed, they, who moſt abound in ſuch good works, will be the leaſt apt to glory in them: and they will be, as it were, ſurpriſed at the gracious mention, which will at laſt be made of them: yet thoſe ſervices, that the humble believer thought nothing of at the time, and ſoon entirely forgot, as well as thoſe that were concealed from men, will all be brought to light, and graciouſly recompenſed by our King: not a cruſt of bread, or a cup of water given for his ſake to a poor brother, ſhall paſs unnoticed; but every inſtance of this kind will be adduced as an evidence, that the giver was a faithful friend, and a loyal

3 Then aſſembled together the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high prieſt, who was called Caiaphas,

4 And conſulted that they might take Jeſus by ſubtilty, and kill *him*.

5 But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt-*day*, leſt there be an uproar among the people.

6 Now when Jeſus was in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper,

7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaſter-box of very precious ointment, and poured *it* on his head as he ſat *at meat*.

8 But when his diſciples ſaw *it*, they had indignation, ſaying, To what purpoſe *is* this waſte?

9 For this ointment might have been ſold for much, and given to the poor.

10 When Jeſus underſtood *it*, he ſaid unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for ſhe hath wrought a good work upon me.

11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12 For in that ſhe hath poured this ointment on my body, ſhe did *it* for my burial.

13 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever

ſubject to the Lord of glory, and a proper perſon to be numbered with thoſe, whom he delighteth to honour, and to bleſs. But who can deſcribe the horror and deſpair of the wicked, when placed at the left hand of their omnipotent, and omniſcient Judge? Whilſt conſcious of their guilt, and calling in vain on the rocks, and mountains to fall on them, they ſhall behold his awful countenance clouded with an indignant frown; and hear his mouth, which uſed to invite the weary ſinner to come to him, ſternly bid them depart accurſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels! Then all their works will be produced againſt them, to prove the juſtice of the tremendous ſentence: and even their omiſſions, and ſelfiſh neglect of poor chriſtians, whom they ought to have loved for the Lord's ſake; whilſt they were indulging themſelves, or heaping up riches, will prove them unbelievers, and deprive them of every pretence to the mercy of the goſpel. They may pretend, that they would gladly have miniſtered unto Chriſt, had they ſeen him in his humiliation; but inaſmuch, as they refuſed to do it to his brethren, they did it not to him. If then this alone will prove a man, otherwiſe moral, and decent, to be an enemy of Chriſt, a child of the devil, and a veſſel of wrath fitted for deſtruction; where will oppreſſors, perſecutors, blaſphemers, and profligates appear? Let us then take warning by theſe things, and ſeek that faith in Chriſt, which produceth love of him, and obedience to his commandments, that we may abound in all the fruits of righteouſneſs here, and that, when the wicked ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, we may be numbered among his ſaints in glory everlaſting.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1—5.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 1, 2. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 1, 2.) Our Lord had cloſed his public miniſtry, when he left the temple; and he had afterwards given his diſciples many important warnings, and inſtructions. But at the concluſion of the ſublime repreſentation, that he had made of his future coming to judgment; he informed them of the immediate approach of his ſufferings. After two days, the feaſt of the paſſover would be celebrated; and he aſſured them, that then he ſhould be betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and put to death by crucifixion: for he had all along a perfect foreknowledge of the variety, and intenſeneſs of his approaching ſufferings; though he met them with the moſt entire calmneſs, and ſerenity. At the ſame time, the members of the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, the grand council of the nation, were met together, at the palace of the high prieſt, to conſult together, how they might get him into their power, in order to put him to death: and they agreed to attempt it rather by ſubtlety, or contrivance, than by open force, and that it would be better to defer it, till after the feaſt of the paſſover; leſt the people, whom they ſuppoſed to favour Him, ſhould make an inſurrection for his reſcue if he were apprehended, whilſt ſuch numbers from all quarters were aſſembled in the city. But it pleaſed God to defeat this their intention: as it was proper that Chriſt, the true paſcal Lamb, ſhould be ſacrificed for us at that very ſeaſon; and that his death, and reſurrection ſhould thus be rendered the more public.

V. 6—13.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 3—9. *John*, c. xii. v. 1—8.) St. John fixes the date of this tranſaction to ſix days before the paſſover: and, as it is utterly improbable, that it ſhould have occurred twice in ſo ſhort a time, and with exactly the ſame circumſtances; we muſt conclude that the other evangeliſts have related it out of the order of time, in which it happened. It was not at the houſe of Lazarus, and his ſiſters, that Jeſus was at this time entertained; though it was at Bethany, and Lazarus was a gueſt, and Martha one who waited on them: but it was at the houſe of Simon the leper, who probably had been cleanſed by our Lord. Mary the ſiſter of Lazarus was the woman, who anointed him; and the late extraordinary favour conferred on her, in the reſurrection of her beloved brother, doubtleſs excited thoſe fervent affections, which influenced her conduct. Having therefore procured an alabaſter-box, of very coſtly, and fragrant ointment, ſuch as was uſed about the perſons of the great; ſhe came in before the company; broke off the top of the box, and poured the ointment upon the head of Chriſt, as he ſat at meat; anointing his feet alſo with part of it: ſo that the houſe was filled with the fragancy of the ointment. When the diſciples ſaw this action, and adverted to the great expence, that was thus incurred; they were diſpleaſed, and enquired what end had been anſwered by ſuch a waſte of the ointthis goſpel ſhall be preached in the whole world, *there* ſhall alſo this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iſcariot, went unto the chief prieſts,

15 And ſaid *unto them,* What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of ſilver.

16 And from that time he ſought opportunity to betray him.

17 Now the firſt *day* of the *feaſt of* unleavened bread the diſciples came to Jeſus, ſaying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the paſſover?

18 And he ſaid, Go into the city to ſuch a man, and ſay unto him, The Maſter ſaith, my time is at hand; I will keep the paſſover at thy houſe with my diſciples.

19 And the diſciples did as Jeſus had appointed them; and they made ready the paſſover.

20 Now when the even was come, he ſat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, that one of you ſhall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding ſorrowful, and began every one of them to ſay unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he anſwered and ſaid, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, anſwered, and ſaid, Maſter, is it I? He ſaid

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ment, that might have been ſold for a conſiderable ſum of money, (three hundred denarii, or near ten pounds ſterling;) which would have done much good, if it had been given in alms to the poor? We find that Judas, from bad motives, ſtarted this objection: but the other diſciples, knowing that their Lord did not uſe ſuch indulgences, joined in it, in a manner, that was not only diſcouraging to Mary, but diſreſpectful to Chriſt. But he, knowing the ſimple, humble, thankful, and fervent love, and reverential regard to him, from which this action ſprang, was pleaſed to vindicate her from their unmerited cenſures. She had rightly judged, that nothing could be too coſtly, to be uſed in honouring Him; nor any thing waſted, that was uſed in his ſervice: and though in general he was to be honoured by their doing good to men for his ſake, yet the preſent circumſtances juſtified a deviation from this rule. Chriſt therefore forbad them any further to diſquiet the woman, who had done a good, and acceptable work, in thus honouring Him by ſuch means, as ſhe had in her power, at a time when others were about to inſult, and deſpiſe him. He reminded them, that they would always have poor perſons among them, whom they might relieve whenever they would, and thus expreſs their love to him: but his perſonal preſence was not long to be continued with them, ſo that ſuch opportunities of honouring him would ſoon ceaſe: and though ſhe knew it not, yet he was about to be put to death; and this might be regarded, as the anointing for his burial; performed a little before-hand, (for they would have no opportunity of performing it afterwards:) In which laſt expences, as a teſtimony of reſpect to beloved friends, men were not uſed to be very penurious. Notwithſtanding therefore this hard cenſure, our Lord aſſured them, this action was ſo acceptable to him, that he would take care that it ſhould be reported, as a memorial of her faith and love, to all future ages, and in all places where his goſpel ſhould be preached. This may be conſidered as a very remarkable prophecy: He knew, that he ſhould influence the evangeliſts to record this incident, which might appear trivial among the important actions of his public life; and that it would never be eraſed, to the end of time; and the completion of it hath been equally remarkable.

V. 14—16.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 10, 11; *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 3—6.) Judas, notwithſtanding his profeſſion, plauſible conduct, and apoſtolical office, was all along a hypocrite, and a covetous diſhoneſt man; and all that he had ſeen, heard, and been favoured with, had made no ſuitable impreſſion on him. Knowing therefore, that the chief prieſts, &c: wanted to get Jeſus into their hands without any diſturbance; he framed the deſign of conducting their meſſengers to him, in the abſence of the people. Perhaps he hoped to ingratiate himſelf with them by this ſervice, and to obtain further advantages; beſides the gratification of his avarice, by a preſent recompence. Some ſuppoſe, that he expected, that Jeſus would miraculouſly liberate himſelf, and ſo no bad conſequence would enſue from his treachery: but this is uncertain. However he ſeems to have made ſome heſitation about entering out his infamous buſineſs: but the reproof implied in our Lord's commendation of the woman's conduct, which from vile motives he had condemned, ſeems to have exaſperated him; and thus ſatan found acceſs, to hurry him forward to the execution of his baſe deſign. Accordingly he went to the chief prieſts, and propoſed to betray his Maſter to them, demanding what they would give him for that ſervice: and they, (loving the treachery, though they probably deſpiſed, and deteſted the traitor,) were glad of the opportunity, and offered him 30 pieces of ſilver, ſuppoſed to have been ſhekels, in value about £.3 15*s*. This was the ſum appointed by the law to be paid for a ſlave, that had unto him, Thou haſt ſaid.

26 And as they were eating, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the diſciples, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins.

29 But I ſay unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had ſung an hymn,

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been ſlain by accident. (*Exod.* c. xxi. v. 32. *Zech.* c. xi. v. 12:) but though the ſum was ſo paltry; yet Judas bargained to take it, and thenceforth watched for an opportunity to betray Him! This circumſtance, ſeems to have altered their reſolution, concerning the time, when they intended to apprehend Chriſt.

V. 17—19.] *Mark*, c. xiv. v. 12—16. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 7—13.) The perſon here mentioned, was probably a concealed friend, and diſciple of Chriſt, who knew would be glad to accommodate him, and his apoſtles. The circumſtances of the tranſaction will be more properly conſidered hereafter.

V. 20—25.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 17—21. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 14—18. 21, 22.) Without doubt our Lord eat the Paſſover, at the time appointed by the law, and which was cuſtomary amongſt the Jews; as well as according to the divine inſtitution in other particulars, (Notes, &c, *Exod.* c. xii:) what is therefore elſewhere ſpoken, concerning the prieſts eating the Paſſover on the next day, (*John*, c. xviii. v. 28,) muſt be underſtood of the ſacrifices, and unleavened bread, on which they feaſted at that ſeaſon. In the evening therefore, He, and the other diſciples, went to the houſe, where he had ordered every thing to be got ready; and there he celebrated his laſt Paſſover with the twelve apoſtles. Whilſt he was attending on this inſtitution, (which was a memorial of Iſrael's departure out of Egypt, and a type of ſpiritual redemption through his blood, ſhed and ſprinkled, &c;) He aſſured the diſciples, that one of the company would betray him into the hand of his enemies. Thus he gave Judas to underſtand, that he was acquainted with his deſign; and prepared the diſciples for the ſcene, which was about to open: (*John*, c. xiii. v. 18—30.) This afflicted the reſt of the apoſtles very much; as they were concerned that ſuch an event ſhould take place, and that any of them ſhould be capable of ſuch a wickedneſs: and each of them began to enquire whether He were the perſon meant? It does not appear, that any of them ſuſpected Judas; they had no reaſon to ſuſpect each other; and they could not ſuppoſe, that Chriſt ſuſpected them groundleſſly: and though they were not conſcious of ſuch a deſign, or diſpoſed to think themſelves capable of ſo baſe, and ungrateful a treachery; they put the queſtion reſpecting themſelves, as anxious to be aſſured that they were not concerned. Our Lord therefore gave a general intimation of the traitor, by obſerving that he was one, that dipped with him in the diſh: probably others of them did this from time to time, but Judas might be doing ſo, at that inſtant: however it was intended to expoſe the baſeneſs of his conduct, as well as to mark him out to the diſciples; and *afterwards, I apprehend,* he diſtinguiſhed him more plainly, by giving him a ſop. To this he added, that indeed the Meſſiah was about to be taken off, by a violent death, and that nothing would take place, but what had been determined, and predicted concerning Him: yet that would by no means excuſe the traitor's conduct, or leſſen the ſeverity of his puniſhment; for he would be doomed to ſuch miſery in another world, that it would have been good for him, if he had never been born. This could not have been the caſe, if he were ever to be liberated from puniſhment, and made partaker of eternal happineſs; for that would infinitely overbalance all poſſible *temporary* ſuffering, whatever its acuteneſs, and continuance might be; and would therefore prove his exiſtence upon the whole to be an invaluable bleſſing. At length Judas alſo enquired, whether he were the perſon intended? He probably feared, that his ſilence would excite ſuſpicion: or he meant to face the matter out, as if unconſcious of guilt. The anſwer of our Lord implied, that He was indeed the traitor: yet neither the awful ſentence denounced on him; nor had this additional proof of Chriſt's knowledge of his heart, any effect, to prevent him from ruſhing headlong on his own deſtruction!

V. 26—29.] The appointment of the Lord's ſupper was towards the cloſe of the paſſover, after they had eaten the paſchal lamb: this intimated, that the former ordinance would ſuperſede the latter, as the memorial of the purchaſe, and application of redemption; from the time, when that atonement had been made, which had been typified in that bloody inſtitution. Nothing can be more ſimple in it's nature, and uſe, than this chriſtian ordinance; yet nothing hath ever been more obſcured, perplexed, miſunderſtood, and perverted, than it hath been. Our Lord, juſt before his death, took bread, and bleſſed it, giving thanks to the Father at the ſame time: this he ſet apart for a ſacred purpoſe, as the repreſentation of his body; and he brake it, to ſhew that his body would be wounded, bruiſed, put to great pain, and undergo death, as the ſacrifice for ſins: He then gave it to his diſciples, that each of them might eat of it, as an outward expreſſion of their application of, and intereſt in the atonement of his death, and in remembrance of his love, and ſufferings for them. In like manner he took the cup, and having bleſſed it, and given thanks, as before, he gave it to them, and bade them all drink of it: for the wine, in that cup repreſented his blood, as ſhed to purchaſe the bleſſings of the new covenant; and to ratify it, as valid for their benefit, and eſpecially to a-

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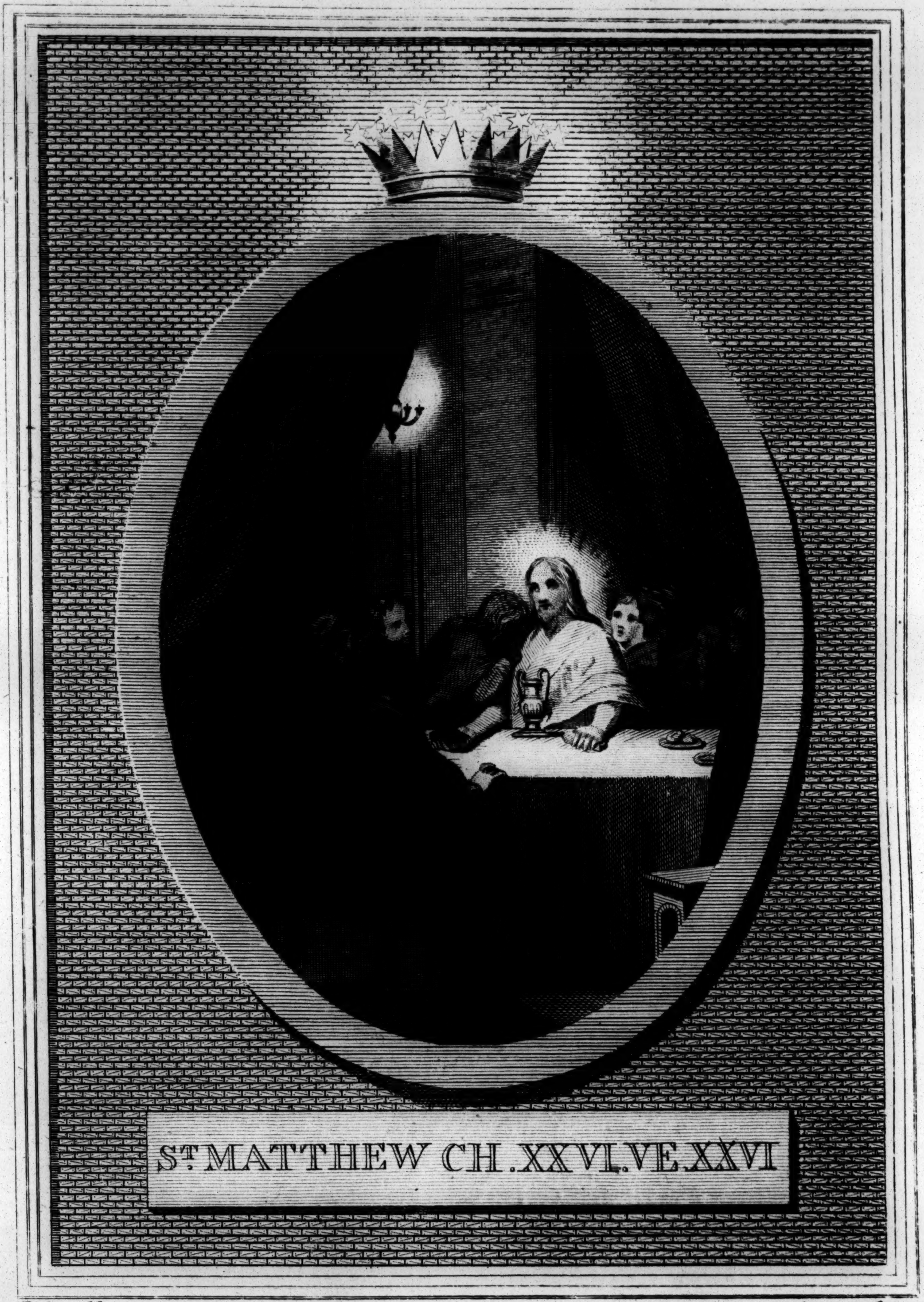

S^{T}. MATTHEW CH. XXVI. VE. XXVI

Richter del. *Angus sculp.*

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BRITISH
29 AP 92
MUSEUM

they went out into the mount of Olives.

31 Then ſaith Jeſus unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd,

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tone for, and obtain remiſſion of their ſins, and thoſe of many, even of all them, that ſhould believe in his name. The figurative language of the inſtitution, (which cannot be literally explained, unleſs we allow the cup itſelf to be literally the blood of Chriſt, nay the new covenant,) excites our greater aſtoniſhment at the abſurdity, or inſolence of thoſe, who required men to believe, the bread in the ſacrament to be changed into the real entire body of Chriſt: it might as properly be ſaid, that the rock, which Moſes ſmote, was literally the Perſon of Chriſt. But indeed here is no intimation of any thing difficult, or peculiarly myſterious. The plain account of the inſtitution ſeems this: Chriſt commanded his diſciples to meet together in his name; and with prayer, praiſe, and thankſgiving, to break, diſtribute, and eat bread, which is the moſt ſalutary and univerſal of all thoſe viands, by which life is ſuſtained; and to pour out and drink wine, the moſt valuable, and refreſhing of all cordials. This action was to be performed in remembrance of Him, and his love of, and ſufferings for, them; and as a repreſentation of his body broken, and his blood ſhed for their ſins, in order to purchaſe the bleſſings of the new covenant; and of the method, by which they were made partakers of this ſalvation, even by receiving and feeding upon Him, in their hearts by faith with thankſgiving. By his body, and blood we are doubtleſs to underſtand his human nature, as joined in perſonal union with the divine: and the ſeparation of the blood from the body, which was the immediate cauſe of his death, muſt be underſtood to include all his expiatory ſufferings. The ordinance ſeems to have been adminiſtered to them *ſitting*, and in the evening: yet no command was given about theſe things; and therefore the time, place, and poſture muſt be conſidered as mere circumſtances. The action of communicating ſeems to imply an open confeſſion of our guilt, and helpleſs miſery, as juſtly condemned criminals; who could have no hope of pardon, or ſalvation, from any thing we have done, or can do of ourſelves; a profeſſion of our faith, reſpecting the Perſon, undertaking, and atonement of Chriſt; and the neceſſity, reality, and ſuitableneſs of his ſacrifice, and vicarious ſufferings: an avowed dependance on, and cordial acceptance of this atonement, and the mercy of God, according to the covenant mediated thereby: an acknowledgment of our unſpeakable obligations to our gracious Benefactor, who laid down his life for us: a ſtrong, and open expreſſion of our love, and gratitude to Him; and a ſacramental engagement to ſubmit to, and obey Him, as our beloved Lord, and Saviour: and a public joining of ourſelves to him, and his people, to walk with them in chriſtian fellowſhip, and devotedneſs to the Redeemer's ſervice. No man can therefore ſincerely, and intelligently partake of this ordinance, who is not ſelf-condemned, and penitent; who does not believe the peculiar doctrines above-mentioned; who applies not in ſecret for an intereſt in the purchaſed ſalvation; who lives in allowed habitual ſin; whoſe heart is fraught with pride, malice, avarice, &c; who makes it *merely* a ſtep to preferment; who conſiders it as a compenſation for ſin, or a decent cover to his iniquity, or infidelity; or who makes it a ſelf-righteous ſervice, or an excuſe for licentiouſneſs: ſuch men are guilty of the body, and blood of Chriſt. But the humble penitent, the trembling believer, who relies on a crucified Saviour, and longs to live to his glory, need fear no ſnare in this inſtitution; it is his duty, and privilege to come to it, as often as he has opportunity; and he will find it to be admirably ſuited to increaſe humility, tenderneſs of conſcience, ſelf-examination, watchfulneſs, the life of faith, hope, love, gratitude, brotherly affection, and every holy diſpoſition, and conſolation. Theſe are obvious, and intelligible effects of ſerious, and frequent communicating; which ſhew it to be as well ſuited to ſtrengthen, and refreſh the ſoul, and its graces, as bread and wine are to nouriſh, and chear the animal life. They who are not prepared for this ordinance, cannot be fit for death, or heaven; nay acceptable prayer cannot be offered without ſomething of a ſimilar preparation of heart. It hath been much diſputed, whether Judas partook of the Lord's ſupper or not: but it ſeems not to be of great conſequence, which way the controverſy be decided. If he did, as ſeems probable, his preſence can give no encouragement to falſe profeſſors to intrude; but rather warns every man previouſly to examine himſelf as to the ſtate of his ſoul: it can give no ſanction to the admiſſion of openly wicked perſons to the ordinance; and no diſcipline can exclude ſpecious hypocrites. Some perſons have endeavoured to prove the Reſurrection of Chriſt, to be the chief doctrine of chriſtianity, the belief of which conſtitutes a man a chriſtian: but it is in fact rather the grand proof of all other doctrines, and the evidence that the atonement of his death was accepted. However the appointment of this ordinance, "to ſhew forth the Lord's death, till he come," abundantly evinces the belief of that doctrine to be moſt eſſentially diſtinguiſhing of a real chriſtian; and that a reliance on the atonement of Chriſt, for remiſſion of ſins, and all the bleſſings of ſalvation; and thus ſpiritually eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood, forms the great peculiarity of the life of faith in the Son of God. (*John*, c. vi. v. 47—57.) To this appointment our Lord added, that he ſhould no more drink of that fruit of the vine, till he drank it new in the kingdom of his Father! This ſome interpret to mean that he would no more join with the diſciples, in celebrating the Paſſover, at which they drank wine: for that inſtitution muſt give place to the New Teſtament uſe of wine in the ſacrament; which is as new wine, wine drank with a new intent, in the kingdom, which God hath ſet up on earth. Or it may ſignify, that Chriſt had done with all joy, and comfort, of which wine is an emblem, and had nothing but ſufferings before him, till after his reſurrection, and entrance into his glory. Then indeed he would celebrate a feaſt, in his Father's kingdom, with wine, ever new, and joy ever increaſing, to which in due time, the diſciples alſo would be admitted. Some reference may and the ſheep of the flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad.

32 But after I am riſen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter anſwered and ſaid unto him, Though all *men* ſhall be offended becauſe of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

34 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter ſaid unto him, Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewiſe alſo ſaid all the diſciples.

36 Then cometh Jeſus with them unto a place called Gethſemane, and ſaith unto the diſciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two ſons of Zebedee, and began to be ſorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then ſaith he unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me;

alſo be had to the ſpiritual communion, he meant to maintain with them, after his bodily preſence was removed from them.

V. 30—35.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 26—31. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 31—34. *John*, c. xiii. v. 36—38.) After they had finiſhed the Paſſover, and had ſung a hymn of praiſe, as was cuſtomary, (which ſome ſay conſiſted of certain pſalms, and others ſuppoſe might have been compoſed for the occaſion;) Jeſus departed from the houſe where he had been accommodated, and went with eleven of the apoſtles to the Mount of Olives; for Judas had before this left them. Previous to their ſetting out, and during their walk, he delivered a long and moſt intereſting diſcourſe, &c. (*John*, c. xiv—xvii.) And moreover he ſaid to them, that in that very night, they would all be ſtumbled, becauſe of thoſe things, which were about to happen to him, they would meet with ſuch temptations, as would ſtagger their faith, and cauſe them to fall into ſin through the fear of man; for the prophecy was about to be fulfilled, in which the Lord declared, that he would ſmite the Shepherd, and the ſheep ſhould be ſcattered: (*Zech.* c. xiii. v. ~~1~~7:) they might however be aſſured of his reſurrection from the dead, at which time he would go before them into Galilee. (c. xxviii. v. 7.) But Peter, inſtead of properly noticing this laſt expreſſion, in an ignorant ſpirit of ſelf-confidence, (as if he could have proved his Maſter miſtaken, and were ſo ſtrong in faith above all other men, that nothing could poſſibly move him,) declared "that he would never be offended," though that ſhould be the caſe of all others: upon which our Lord ſolemnly aſſured him, that before the uſual hour of cock-crowing that very night; and before the cock, that he ſhould hear would crow twice; he ſhould thrice deny all knowledge of him. Peter however, conſcious of his ſincerity; and not aware of the treachery of his heart, the force of temptation, and the fiery trial that awaited him, confidently declared, that he would ſooner die with him, than deny him; in which profeſſion he was joined by the other apoſtles, who were doubtleſs unwilling to be outdone in profeſſions of fidelity, and cordial attachment. As John relates a ſimilar warning, and proteſtation, previous to their departure from the houſe, where they had eaten the paſſover, ſome have ſuppoſed, that the ſame circumſtances occurred twice. This improper, and unbelieving ſelf-confidence was the firſt ſtep towards Peter's ſhameful fall.

V. 36—39.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 32—42. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 39—46.) The word Gethſemane ſignifies, "the valley of fatneſs;" and this ſeems to have been a pleaſant, and fruitful garden, to which Jeſus had acceſs, and frequently reſorted with his diſciples, for retirement, devout converſation, and religious exerciſes. When he came thither, he was pleaſed to leave the other apoſtles at a diſtance; and to take thoſe only as witneſſes of his agony, who had before witneſſed his transfiguration: and in their preſence "he began to be ſorrowful, and very heavy;" and he complained unto them, "that his ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful even unto death." The words uſed on this occaſion by the evangeliſts are the moſt expreſſive imaginable, and denote the moſt entire dejection, amazement, anguiſh, and horror of mind; the ſtate of one ſurrounded with ſorrows, overwhelmed with miſeries, and almoſt ſwallowed up with conſternation, and diſmay. He therefore bade the apoſtles watch with him to prevent interruption, whilſt he poured out his ſoul in prayer. (*Pſ.* xxii. v. 14. lxix. v. 13—15. lxxxviii. v. 6, 7.) In this frame of mind, he went a little way from them; and firſt kneeled down, and afterwards proſtrated himſelf on the earth, and prayed to his Father, that if it were poſſible, that cup might paſs from him. Some refer this to the preſent anguiſh, and horror, which he felt in his ſoul, and not to his approaching crucifixion: but whatever we underſtand thereby, it expreſſed the averſion of his holy human nature from ſuffering, ſave when the glory of God, and the good of man required it; and it ſhewed that He had all the innocent feelings of our nature, in the moſt exquiſite degree; that, had it been poſſible, conſiſtent with the juſtice, truth, holineſs, and mercy of God, to have had his ſufferings mitigated, or remitted, he would have deſired it, as much as we ſhould in ſimilar circumſtances: and therefore the retractation, in the ſubſequent clauſe, ſhewed his perfect reſignation, and willingneſs to bear that unſpeakable load, which muſt otherwiſe have ſunk us into everlaſting deſtruction. We find from St. Luke, that when Jeſus was at prayer, an angel was ſent to encourage, and ſtrengthen his mind for the conflict; and nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

40 And he cometh unto the diſciples, and findeth them aſleep, and ſaith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the ſpirit indeed *is* willing, but the fleſh *is* weak.

42 He went away again the ſecond time, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if this cup may not paſs away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them aſleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, ſaying the ſame words.

45 Then cometh he to his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take

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that, (though the night was cold,) his whole frame was agitated to ſuch a degree, "that his ſweat became as "great drops of blood falling to the ground." It therefore occurs to us here to enquire into the cauſe, or cauſes of our Lord's agony. He had doubtleſs a clear, and full view of all the ſufferings, which he was about to undergo, with all their various aggravations: but he had had the ſame all along; yet he had acted, and ſpoken with the moſt entire ſerenity, even to the very moment of this extraordinary ſcene: and many of his diſciples, in different ages, have met the moſt excruciating tortures, that human, or rather diabolical cruelty, or ingenuity could deviſe, without any ſuch perturbation; being ſupported by inward peace, conſolation, and joyful hope; and doubtleſs Chriſt was as much ſuperior to them all, in fortitude, and conſtancy, as the heavens are above the earth. We muſt therefore conclude, that there were ſome ingredients mingled in his cup, that were not in their's, and ſome in their's, that were not in his. To mention the treachery and fate of Judas, or the miſconduct of Peter, and the other apoſtles, &c, as cauſes of this ſurpriſing effect, muſt fail to give the reflecting mind any ſatisfactory view of the ſubject. We muſt alſo exclude from this caſe many of thoſe things, that cauſe the moſt exquiſite miſery to the human mind, of which it is capable, for there could be no horrors of a guilty conſcience, no conflict of ſinful paſſions, no deſpair as to final iſſue of his ſufferings. It is not indeed poſſible for us fully to underſtand, or explain this matter: yet we may point out the light, which the ſcriptures afford us upon it. Chriſt ſuſtained the character of our Surety, who undertook to be anſwerable for our ſins: accordingly our iniquities were laid upon him, and he was made ſin for us, and ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt; and the ſcripture aſcribes his heavieſt ſufferings to the immediate hand of God, "It pleaſed the "Lord to bruiſe him, he made his ſoul a ſacrifice for "ſin." The ſword of divine juſtice was commanded to "awake againſt the ſhepherd, and ſmite him;" "and "God ſpared not his own Son." We may from theſe, and ſimilar ſcriptures conclude, that the human nature of Chriſt was on this occaſion left wholly deſtitute of all conſolatory communications from the Holy Spirit; though ſupported by its union with the Deity, to endure the unknown anguiſh, without ſinking under it: that he had the fulleſt diſcovery to his mind of the infinite evil of ſin, and of that immenſity of guilt, which he was to expiate: that he had the moſt awful views of the divine juſtice, and holineſs, and the vengeance deſerved by the ſins of men; and that ſuch a ſenſe of the divine wrath oppreſſed his inmoſt ſoul; as no tongue can expreſs, or imagination conceive. At the ſame time "he ſuffered being "tempted," and probably all kind of horrible thoughts were ſuggeſted to his ſoul by ſatan and his angels, that tended to gloom, deſpondency, and every other dreadful concluſion; which would be the more intolerable, in proportion to the perfection of his holineſs. So that we may conclude, that he endured as much miſery, of the ſame kind with that of condemned ſpirits, as could poſſibly conſiſt with a pure conſcience, perfect love of God and man, and an aſſured confidence of a glorious event. Probably ſome degree of the ſame darkneſs, and horror oppreſſed his mind, during the whole ſubſequent ſcene, till on the croſs he ſaid, "it is finiſhed." Accordingly we read not that he vented any complaint about his outward ſufferings, but he moſt dolefully exclaimed, "My God, "my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?"

V. 40—46.] Notwithſtanding the confidence, and profeſſions of Peter, and his companions, and the injunctions of Chriſt in his extreme anguiſh, that they ſhould watch with Him; they were fallen aſleep, when he returned to them: which occaſioned Him to rebuke Peter eſpecially, as if ſurpriſed, that after all, he could not watch with him one hour! He therefore exhorted them to watch, and pray, not ſo much on his account, as on their own; leſt through neglect, and carnal ſecurity they ſhould be drawn into circumſtances of peculiar temptation, and overcome by it; for though being influenced by divine grace, they were inwardly, and ſincerely willing and ready, to adhere to him, even to ſufferings, and death, yet their fleſh was weak, and frail, and their natural averſion to, and dread of, pain and ſhame, would render them unable to ſtand their ground, in the time of trial, if they did not depend on, and ſeek for the powerful aſſiſtance of God, to uphold, and ſtrengthen them. Many expoſitors ſeem to underſtand the clauſe, as a kind excuſe, which the Lord made for their preſent conduct: but he was not uſed to *excuſe* any thing, that was wrong in them; and their ſleeping on this occaſion was peculiarly unſeaſonable, and criminal: it ſeems therefore more proper to conſider the paſſage, as a caution reſpecting the future; and a warning, that their ſelf-confidence, and neglect of watching, and prayer, would leave them defenceleſs in the time of danger, and that they would fall, notwithſtanding their moſt ſincere, and determined reſolutions to the contrary. Indeed it is evident, that Peter's confidence in the willingneſs of his ſpirit, and his overlooking the weakneſs *your* reſt: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners.

46 Riſe, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47 And while he yet ſpake, lo, Judas one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a ſign, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he; hold him faſt.

49 And forthwith he came to Jeſus, and ſaid, Hail, Maſter; and kiſſed him.

50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jeſus, and took him.

51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jeſus ſtretched out *his* hand, and drew his ſword, and ſtruck a ſervant of the high prieſt's, and ſmote off his ear.

52 Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Put up again thy ſword into his place: for all they that take the ſword ſhall periſh with the ſword.

53 Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then ſhall the ſcriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?

55 In that ſame hour ſaid Jeſus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves for to take me? I ſat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the ſcriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the diſciples forſook him, and fled.

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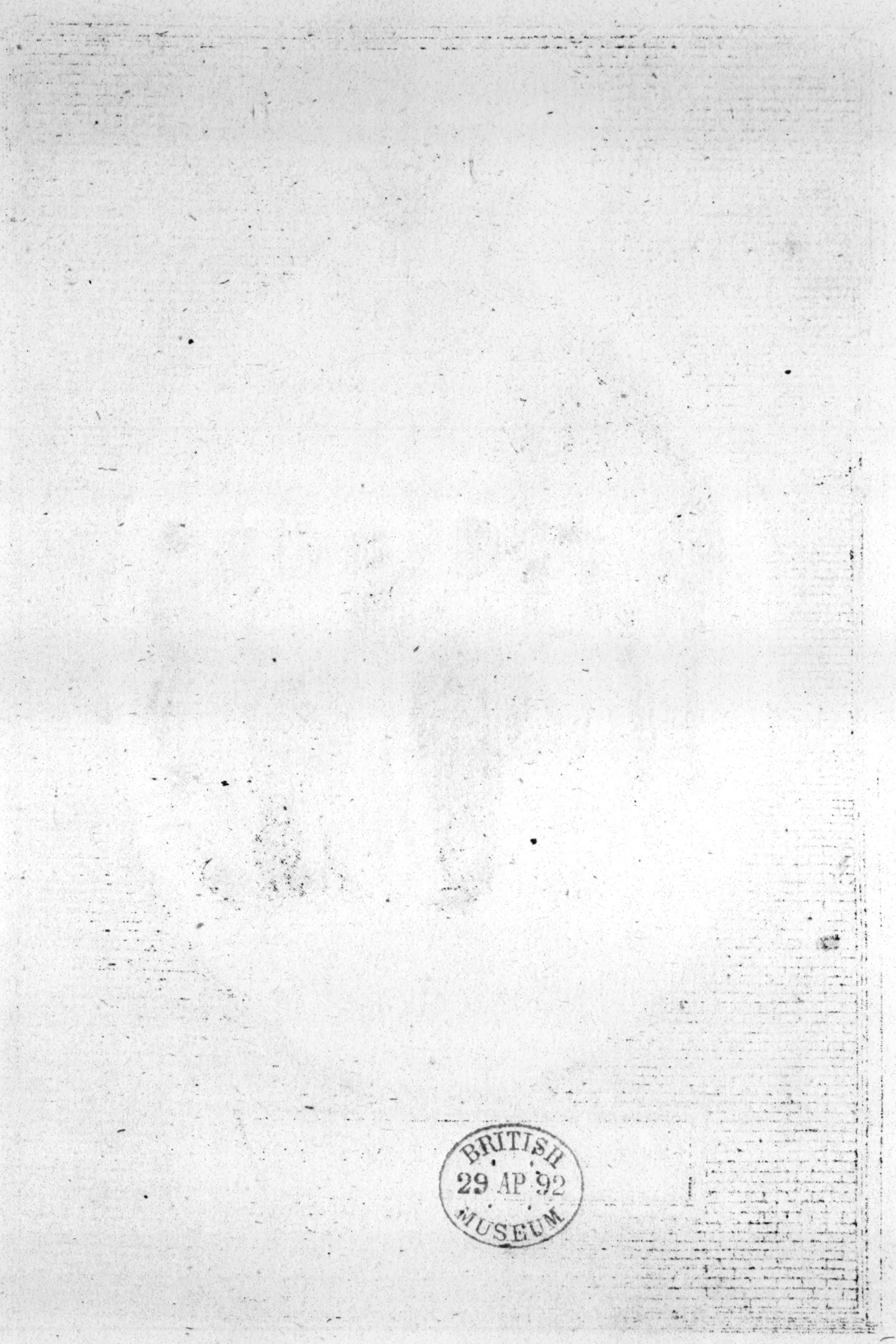
of his carnal nature, occaſioned his neglect of means, and induced him to thruſt himſelf into perilous circumſtances; and ſo made way for his awful fall. After this, Chriſt again left them, and prayed nearly as before; except that he expreſſed more entirely his reſignation to the will of the Father, in reſpect of the variety, and intenſeneſs of his ſufferings: but when he came again the ſecond, and the third time, he ſtill found them ſleeping; for their very ſorrow, at what they witneſſed, and expected, concurred in rendering them heavy for ſleep. But when he came the third time, he bade them "ſleep "on, and take their reſt;" that is, if they were able: for though his agonies, and exhortations failed to keep them awake; there were thoſe coming, who would do it effectually; as the hour was at hand, of which he had ſo often told them, when the Son of Man, the Meſſiah, was to be betrayed into the hands of the vileſt ſinners.

V. 47—56.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 43—52. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 47—55 *John*, c. xviii. v. 2—12.) Judas is always ſaid to have been one of the twelve, for this was the grand aggravation of his guilt. He had by this time got all ready for the execution of his baſe purpoſe; and knowing the place of Chriſt's retirement, he led thither an armed multitude from the chief prieſts, &c; who were alſo attended by ſome of the prieſts, and rulers themſelves. In order to diſtinguiſh Jeſus from the reſt of the company, Judas had agreed to go up to him, and ſalute him with a kiſs. Our Lord had probably been accuſtomed to welcome the diſciples into his preſence, in this condeſcending, and affectionate manner, when they returned to him, from any of their ſervices: and Judas agreed thus to mark him out to the officers, bidding them ſeize, and hold him faſt; which ſome think implies, that he expected, he would miraculouſly deliver himſelf. Accordingly he came up to Jeſus, with the utmoſt effrontery, and with an addreſs expreſſive of reſpect, and affection, he kiſſed him: and Jeſus, with a meek rebuke of his complicated hypocriſy, treachery, and ingratitude, calling him friend, or companion, as an aggravation of his guilt, demanded of him, why he came thus attended? The officers then approached, and apprehended him: and Peter, recollecting his promiſe, and purpoſing to ſhew his readineſs to fight in his Maſter's cauſe, drew a ſword, with which he was armed; and without waiting for orders, he aimed a blow at the head of the high prieſt's ſervant, and cut off his ear: probably he was one of the rudeſt, and moſt forward perſons in the company. John did not write his goſpel, till after Peter's death; he therefore recorded the names of both parties, which the other evangeliſts had concealed: this and various other circumſtances will more properly be conſidered hereafter. However Jeſus ordered Peter to put up his ſword again, "as all they, who "took the ſword would periſh with the ſword:" This intimated to the diſciples, that their warfare was to be of a ſpiritual nature, and not to be waged with ſuch carnal weapons: it meant, that they, who are ſo prompt to fight, and avenge their own cauſe, only bring miſchief and death upon themſelves: and perhaps it implied, that the Jews, who now uſed the Roman ſword againſt him, would ſoon periſh by it. He furthermore added, that he needed not their feeble help; for if he willed to decline his ſufferings; he could ſpeedily obtain from his Father, even more than twelve legions of angels; that is, more angels than there were legionary ſoldiers in the largeſt Roman armies, or more than 70,000 angels, to fight for him. The idea will appear moſt grand, and ſublime, to thoſe, who conſider the execution made in the army of the proud Aſſyrian, by one ſingle angel, in one night's time! But in this caſe he enquired how the ſcriptures could be accompliſhed, which predicted, that the Meſſiah, muſt be cut off, be numbered with tranſ-



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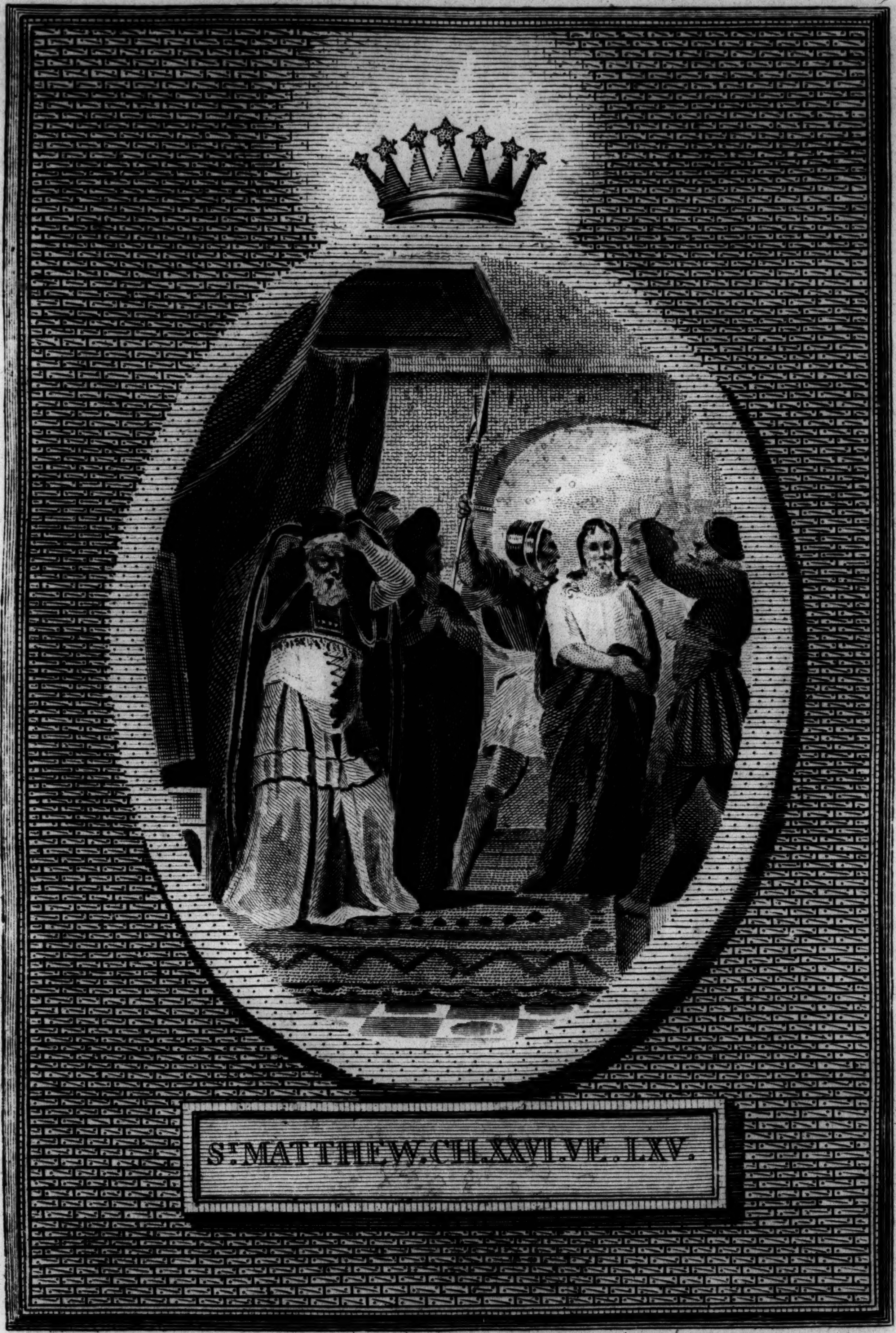

St. MATTHEW. CH. XXVI. VE. LXV.

Richter del. Taylor Sc.

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57 And they that had laid hold on Jeſus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high prieſt, where the ſcribes and the elders were aſſembled.

58 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high prieſt's palace, and went in, and ſat with the ſervants to ſee the end.

59 Now the chief prieſts, and elders, and all the council, ſought falſe witneſs againſt Jeſus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many falſe witneſſes came, *yet* found they none. At the laſt came two falſe witneſſes,

61 And ſaid, This *fellow* ſaid, I am able to deſtroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 And the high prieſt aroſe, and ſaid unto him, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what *is it which* theſe witneſs againſt thee?

63 But Jeſus held his peace. And the high prieſt anſwered and ſaid unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Chriſt, the Son of God.

64 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thou haſt ſaid: nevertheleſs I ſay unto you, Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high prieſt rent his clothes, ſaying, He hath ſpoken blaſphemy; what further need have we of witneſſes? behold, now ye have heard his blaſphemy.

66 What think ye? They anſwered and ſaid, He is guilty of death.

67 Then did they ſpit in his face, and buffeted him; and others ſmote *him* with the palms of their hands.

68 Saying, Propheſy unto us, thou Chriſt, Who is he that ſmote thee?

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greſſors, &c? Then addreſſing thoſe, that came to apprehend him, he enquired, why they came out againſt him, with ſo many warlike preparations, as if he had been ſome deſperate robber, at the head of a determined gang, who could not be ſeized without much danger, and difficulty? Whereas He had daily appeared among them as a teacher, unarmed, and unattended, except by a few fiſhermen, &c, and had acted in the moſt peaceable manner. Indeed they had before been ſecretly reſtrained from aſſaulting him: but now his time was come; and all this was ordered, and performed, that the ſcriptures might be exactly accompliſhed. When therefore the diſciples perceived, that he intended quietly to yield himſelf up to them, their courage and reſolution at once failed them, and they all forſook him, and fled to ſave themſelves. This conduct was not to be excuſed: but thus his words were fulfilled, that they ſhould all be offended, becauſe of him. It is remarkable, that our Lord ſo over-awed the ſpirits of the aſſailants, that they never attempted any violence even againſt Peter, nor offered to apprehend any of the company.

V. 57—62.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 53—59.) The grand council of the Jews was convened at the high prieſt's palace, at that late hour, waiting to have Jeſus brought before them; thither therefore they conducted him bound as a criminal. Peter likewiſe, having in part recovered from his fright, followed them at ſome diſtance (attended by John alſo,) to ſee how matters would terminate: and having got admiſſion into the high prieſt's palace, he aſſociated with the ſervants; as if he had been a ſtranger drawn thither from mere curioſity. This was another falſe ſtep, tending to his fall: by ſtriking the high prieſt's ſervant, he had rendered himſelf obnoxious, and afraid of being detected: and ſeeing he had not courage openly to attend Jeſus, as his diſciple; he ought by no means to have gone at all: for thus he got into the midſt of enemies, and was forced to hear with apparent approbation, all their ſcoffs, inſults, menaces, and blaſphemies: and ſo he entered into temptation. In the mean time, the council earneſtly ſought for perſons, to bear falſe witneſs againſt Jeſus; as conſcious, that they could procure no other; and as deſirous of giving their proceedings an appearance of law, and juſtice; and that a capital ſentence having been denounced againſt him, they might apply to the Roman governor to have it put in execution. But whilſt many appeared to bear witneſs againſt him, they could find no two perſons agreeing in any one teſtimony; without which the law forbad them to put any man to death. At length two perſons concurred in charging him, with having declared himſelf able to deſtroy the temple, and to build it again in three days: the words, which Chriſt had uttered were widely different from this ſtatement of them; (*John*, c. ii. v. 19;) ſo that their teſtimony was falſe, though it had the ſemblance of truth: yet even theſe two did not ſo agree, as to give any ground to a regular ſentence againſt our Lord. Indeed it does not readily appear, in what reſpect they would have inferred any thing capitally criminal from ſuch words, if they had actually been ſpoken. However the high-prieſt aroſe from his place, in great commotion, as if ſome great crime had been proved; and demanded, whether he had nothing to ſay in his own behalf, when ſuch things were witneſſed againſt him?

V. 63—68.] Our Lord remained ſilent before this iniquitous tribunal, not merely from perfect meekneſs, and patience, but as our Surety, that we might have an effectual plea before the tribunal of God. The high prieſt, therefore, not being able, by other means to extort an anſwer from him, ſolemnly adjured him by the living God, to declare, whether he was the Chriſt, the

69 Now Peter ſat without in the palace: and a damſel came unto him, ſaying, Thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before *them* all, ſaying, I know not what thou ſayeſt.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* ſaw him, and ſaid unto them that were there, This *fellow* was alſo with Jeſus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto *him* they that ſtood by, and ſaid to Peter, Surely thou alſo art *one* of them; for thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then began he to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the words of Jeſus, which ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Son of the living God? This ſeems to have been the method then in uſe, for putting men upon their oath; which has ever been deemed iniquitous, when employed in requiring perſons to accuſe themſelves: the high prieſt ſuppoſed that Jeſus, claiming to be the Meſſiah, applied to himſelf the title given to him of the Son of God, (*Pſ.* ii. v. 7;) and he worded his queſtion accordingly. When the matter was thus propoſed, our Lord ſaw good to anſwer, that indeed he had therein declared the real truth; and that, notwithſtanding his preſent deſpiſed condition, they would ſee him as the Son of man, ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (*Dan.* c. vii v. 13.) Some reference may here be had to his exaltation at the right hand of the Father; the pouring out of the Spirit on his diſciples, and the vengeance executed by his power on Jeruſalem: but his final coming to judgment muſt principally be intended; and they were warned that they would at length be conſtrained to ſtand before his awful tribunal. (c. xxiv. v. 30, c. xxv. v. 31, 32.) This declaration was evidently what the high prieſt wanted; and therefore he rent his clothes, as if in deteſtation of blaſphemy; enquiring of the reſt of them, what need they had to examine any more witneſſes, as they had all heard this blaſphemy? In conſequence, they without delay, and unanimouſly, brought him in guilty of a capital crime, and paſſed the ſentence of death upon him. And when this was determined, the attendants began, by the allowance of the rulers, to inſult, buffet, and ſpit upon him, with the greateſt diſdain imaginable. And having covered his eyes, they ſmote him with their rods, or the palms of their hands, demanding of him a ſpecimen of his prophetical gift, in declaring the names of thoſe, who one after another, ſmote him. (*Luke*, c. xxii. v. 63—65.)

V. 69—75.] (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 66—72. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 54—62. *John*, c. xviii. v. 15—18. 25—27.) Every thing, which Peter had ſeen and heard, from his entrance into the high-prieſts' palace, muſt have tended to diſmay his mind: and whilſt he was in this ſituation, ſurrounded with terrors, and dangers on every ſide, and doubtleſs aſſaulted by ſore temptations from ſatan, a young woman challenged him, as a follower of Jeſus; and the dread of immediate detection, and all its imagined conſequences, made him forget all his promiſes, and reſolutions. He was ready to fight for his Maſter; but he had not before thought of the ignominious death of a criminal: he was therefore ſurpriſed into a denial of Chriſt; and to declare, that he knew not what the woman meant by ſuch an aſſertion. Mark informs us, that at this time the cock crowed; yet Peter paid no regard to it. When he was gone out into the porch, or portico, belonging to the palace, perhaps with ſome thoughts of departing; another female ſervant ſaw him, and ſaid to thoſe around her, that he certainly had been an attendant of Jeſus: accordingly they charged him with it; and he again denied it, declaring with an oath, that he did not ſo much as know him. This probably prevented him from attempting to go away; and in conſequence after another hour, they who ſtood by came to him, with a relation of Malchus, whoſe ear he had cut off, and with greater confidence declared, that he aſſuredly was one of them; for they had ſeen him with Jeſus in the garden, and his Galilean dialect betrayed him, as one of his followers: and Peter, now filled with extreme terror, began to curſe, and to ſwear, or to anathematize himſelf as accurſed of God, if he ſo much as knew the man: which was indeed the way to convince them, that he was none of Chriſt's diſciples. Whilſt he was uſing this horrid language the cock again crowed; and Jeſus, being come into ſight, turned and looked upon him: and thus he was brought to recollect the words of Jeſus, and his own raſh engagements. His whole guilt therefore ruſhed into his mind; and he immediately left the place, full of the deepeſt ſhame, anguiſh and remorſe, and wept bitterly, at the remembrance of his profaneneſs, treachery, cowardice, and ingratitude. Peter was left thus to fall, in order to give him a deeper acquaintance with his own heart, to abate his ſelf-confidence, and to render him more modeſt, humble, and compaſſionate: and his whole ſubſequent conduct ſhewed, that he had exceedingly profited by the painful leſſon. The event hath alſo proved moſt inſtructive in various ways to believers ever ſince; and if infidels, phariſees, and hypocrites, will ſtumble at, or abuſe it, they do it at their peril.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Amidſt the apparently confuſed, caſual, and diſtreſſing events, that take place in the world, through the treachery, avarice, ambition, or impiety of mankind; we ſhould always advert to the "determinate counſel, and fore-knowledge of God," as bounding, directing, and over-ruling all, for the purpoſes of his own glory, and the benefit of thoſe that truſt in him. There are many devices in the heart of man; and ungodly politicians

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Contains 1ſt. Jeſus delivered up to Pilate, 1, 2. *2d. Judas's remorſe, reſtitution of the pieces of ſilver, deſpair, and ſelf-murder; and the manner in which the money was diſpoſed of,* 3---10. *3d. Jeſus arraigned before Pilate, and at length condemned to be crucified; notwithſtanding Pilate's conviction of his innocence, and his wife's monitory dream; through the clamours of the people preferring Barabbas to him,* 11---26. *4th. The in-*

form their plans with profound ſagacity, and conceal them with deep diſſimulation: yet, contrary to their intentions, they are led to arrange, or alter them into a conſiſtency with, or ſubſerviency to, the ſecret counſel of the Lord! The enmity of the carnal heart, againſt the law, truth, and image of God is irreconcileable, and mortal; it rages with greater violence in hypocritical profeſſors, than in other men; but moſt of all in covetous, and ambitious church-men. Thus power, and policy have ever combined againſt the Perſon, and cauſe of Jeſus; but they have not been able to prevail againſt them. But there have always been a remnant of another character: theſe are humble, penitent, and believing; they reverence, and love the glorious excellencies of the Redeemer's Perſon, and character; they deem themſelves under infinite obligations to Him; they long to expreſs their love, and gratitude, and their zeal for his glory; and they deem nothing too valuable to be renounced for his ſake, or employed in his ſervice. Theſe principles operate differently, as circumſtances vary; but they will always produce ſuch actions, as honour Chriſt, and as he will accept, and commend: for He judges of men's conduct by their motives, and will not reject a well-meant ſervice, ſpringing from humble faith, and love, though it may appear to us informal. But covetous hypocrites are ready to exclaim, "to what purpoſe is this "waſte?" when they ſee others liberal in honouring Chriſt: and even the fraudulent, and unjuſt will plead for charity, when they can thereby diſcredit the pious effuſions of a believer's fervent love: and too often their plauſible pretences ſeduce injudicious, or leſs zealous diſciples, to cenſure, and expreſs indignation againſt thoſe ſervices, which Chriſt accepts, as honourable to him. But he will plead the cauſe of his humble followers; and he will frown upon, and rebuke thoſe, who trouble them for their good works, that they have wrought for his name's ſake. Indeed it is his plan, that there ſhould, in every age, and place, be poor perſons in his church, to be his ſtated repreſentatives, in order to make trial of the faith and love of his diſciples; that, whenever they will, they may relieve them, for his ſake. This is the ordinary method; but extraordinary expreſſions of our love, and gratitude, are ſometimes proper; and they will not be found inconſiſtent with each other. Upright perſons, when betrayed into a miſtake, will take proper reproof in good part: but it often proves the detection of hypocrites; and the diſcovery of their ſecret deſigns, and the commendation of thoſe, whom they diſlike; exaſperate them, and puſh them forward to ſtill baſer attempts: and ſo, whilſt thoſe whom they cenſured, are had in perpetual remembrance, themſelves ſink into final infamy, and miſery! But with what ſcrupulous exactneſs ſhould every one guard againſt the firſt workings of avarice, and ſhun the moſt minute deviations from equity? For when leſſer inſtances of diſhoneſty have rendered the conſcience callous, and given energy to temptation, men become capable of the moſt ſhameleſs injuſtice without heſitation; and the common queſtion is, "What will ye "give me?" Then the moſt endeared, or ſacred ties will be broken, for paltry filthy lucre, by men, who ſet their conſciences, and their ſouls to ſale! And by theſe means, ſcheming villains, who were at a loſs how to accompliſh their intended iniquities, are furniſhed with inſtruments as deteſtable as themſelves; and they mutually aſſiſt, and yet abhor and deſpiſe, each other.

But let us follow the ſteps of our divine Maſter, whatever man may deviſe againſt us. His diſciples may enquire of him, when, where, and with what preparation, he would have them to attend on his inſtitutions: but they ſhould take it for granted, that he will not countenance them in neglecting any of them; as he himſelf attended on all, that were then in force. Every heart is in his hands: He knoweth thoſe hidden ones who favour his cauſe, and will graciouſly viſit all, that are willing to receive him; and he will take care to procure from them entertainment for his diſciples alſo. But divine ordinances are ſeldom adminiſtered, even to a few perſons, without the intruſion of ſome concealed traitor: and his cauſe is often moſt betrayed by ſome of thoſe, who ſeem moſt entirely to belong to Him. This conſideration may often make us exceeding ſorrowful; and it ſhould always render us exceeding diligent in ſelf-examination. When a few perſons are met for ſocial prayer, religious converſation, or at the Lord's table; it may properly occur to each of them to ſuppoſe, that their heart-ſearching Saviour is ſaying to them, "Verily I ſay unto you, that "one of you ſhall betray me;" provided, they do not look round on others, to fix a ſuſpicion on them; but look within, and look upwards, ſaying "Lord is it I?" We ſhould be the more earneſt in this inveſtigation, becauſe the doom of ſuch domeſtic enemies, will be moſt dreadful; ſo that it may be ſaid of them eſpecially, that it would have been good for them, if they had never been born: and indeed this is the ſureſt, and readieſt way, in which upright believers can obtain, and preſerve the full aſſurance of hope, and that peace which is connected with it. This heart-ſearching ſelf-examination, and theſe fervent prayers are peculiarly proper, previous to the Lord's ſupper; in order, that, as Chriſt our Paſſover is now ſacrificed for us, we may keep this commemorative feaſt, not with the old leaven of malice, and wickedneſs, but with the unleavened bread of ſincerity, and truth; and that we may, every time that we partake of it, renew our repentance, our faith in his blood, our conſent to his covenant, our exerciſe of love to him, and his people, and our ſurrender of ourſelves to his ſervice, as "bought with a price to glory Him with our "bodies, and our ſpirits, which are his." Whilſt we contemplate the outward ſigns of his body broken, and his blood ſhed for the remiſſion of our ſins; let us re-

ſults, and cruelties attending his crucifixion; various circumſtances relating to it; his death, the miracles conſequent on it; and the confeſſion of the Centurion, &c, that he was the Son of God, 27--54.

5th. The women, who witneſſed his crucifixion: his honourable interment by Joſeph of Arimathea, and the precautions uſed by the chief prieſts, &c, to prevent any pretended reſurrection, 55---66.

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collect, that the feaſt was as expenſive to Him, as if he had literally given us his fleſh to eat, and his blood to drink: that there muſt be real, (though a ſpiritual,) participation of Him, and appropriation of his ſalvation to our ſouls; or elſe we ſhall have no benefit from his ſacrifice: and that by a continued reliance on him, in the exerciſe of lively faith, we muſt be ſtrengthened, and recruited for our conflict, our work, and the race, that is ſet before us. Let no humble believer then neglect the obedience of faith, and love, in reſpect to this command of his dying Saviour; as ſafety, and comfort ſhould be ſought in the way of his precepts. Whilſt multitudes profane this ſacred ordinance by a proud, phariſaical, infidel, or licentious attendance; and numbers, by ſtatedly abſenting themſelves, confeſs their conſciouſneſs, that they have no part, or lot in the bleſſings of ſalvation; even many true chriſtians are guilty of ingratitude, and hard ſuſpicions of the gracious Redeemer, and do great harm to their own ſouls, by refuſing this profeſſion of their faith, and love, or by ſo ſeldom joining with his people in thus remembering Him. It may be apprehended that ſome are alarmed by the caſe, and doom of Judas; and the conſcious hypocrite may well be called upon to pauſe and tremble at the thought: but the feeble chriſtian ſhould remember, that all the apoſtles were offended during that very night, in which they had both eaten the Paſſover, and the Lord's ſupper; and that Peter fell in a more dreadful manner: yet their guilt was not unpardonable, nor their fall irrecoverable. Our communicating indeed ought to excite us to redouble our watchfulneſs: but the fear of afterwards being overcome by temptation ſhould never induce any man, to neglect obedience to the expreſs command of Chriſt.

Whilſt we with thankfulneſs take this cup of ſalvation, and rejoice in the loving-kindneſs of the Lord; let us never forget that cup of wrath, which the Redeemer drank off to the very dregs, for the remiſſion of our ſins: if we were not ſurpriſingly drowſy in ſpiritual things, we never could read, or meditate on Gethſemane, without the moſt lively affections, and moſt inſtructive recollections. Here let us look attentively, that we may learn to diſtinguiſh between the ſufferings of a martyr, and thoſe of our atoning Sacrifice. View a poor frail ſinner, under the ſmiles of his reconciled Father, ſerene, and chearful in the proſpect, and endurance of every poſſible torture: then behold the incarnate Son of God, the holy, undefiled, well beloved of the Father, in whom He was well pleaſed, proſtrate on the earth, exceeding ſorrowful even unto death, and ſweating great drops of blood, rolling to the ground; and with this ſcene before our eyes, let it be determined, whether he was not then enduring the wrath, and tremendous frown of God, as our Surety, and the vicarious ſacrifice for our ſins! And let the careleſs, and impenitent aſk themſelves, did God's own hand inflict theſe inſupportable ſtrokes, in fulfilment of his ancient prophecies, on his beloved Son, who was more valued by Him, than the whole viſible creation? And will he break his word, in order to ſpare a determined rebel, and enemy, who takes encouragement to ſin from the very perſuaſion of his being merciful? Moſt vain, and deſtructive preſumption! And did the load of imputed guilt ſo weigh down the ſoul of Him, concerning whom it is ſaid, that he upholdeth all things, by the word of his power? Into what an abyſs of miſery unknown muſt they then ſink, whoſe iniquities are left upon their own heads, a burden far too heavy for them to bear? How then will they eſcape who neglect ſo great ſalvation? What a forlorn hope muſt that of the phariſee, or the infidel be; who expect happineſs in their own way, in contempt of that, which infinite wiſdom hath deviſed, and infinite love effected, and at a price, which baffles the powers of computation itſelf? Aſſuredly it will iſſue in black deſpair, with that of every one, who abuſes the doctrine of a free ſalvation, as an excuſe for indulged wickedneſs. But the ſame ſcene diſcovers a chearful dawn of hope, to the trembling deſponding penitent: here we ſee God's infinite hatred of ſin, and his infinite love of ſinners: his determination to ſatisfy his juſtice, and his delight in exerciſing mercy: in ſhort, we muſt reſort to Gethſemane, to learn repentance, hatred of ſin, humility, hope, love, patience, meekneſs, and ſelf-denying obedience; and to find comfort under dejections, and temptations: here we ſee our pattern, our motives, our encouragements. Here we ſee the vanity of the world, the evil of ſin, and our obligations to live, and ſuffer for his glory, who agonized, and died for our ſalvation. Whilſt here we tarry, we ſhould beware of drowſineſs; when our ſouls are ſorrowful, we ſhould pour them out in prayer; and when nature would ſhrink from ſuffering, and would ſay, "if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from "me," we ſhould learn to add, "nevertheleſs, not as "I will, but as thou wilt." We ſhould alſo remember, that even our merciful High-Prieſt will rebuke thoſe, whom he loves: and if we promiſe great matters, and come evidently ſhort in little things, He will, as it were, ſay to us, "what, could ye not watch with me, one "hour?" We muſt all indeed be tempted: yet we ſhould be much afraid of *entering into temptation*, by being drawn into ſuch circumſtances, as give our enemies an opportunity of cloſing with us, and obtaining their advantage againſt us. To be ſecured from this, we ſhould watch, and pray, without ceaſing: for though we be regenerate, and the ſpirit be willing for ſervice, or ſuffering; yet we carry about with us the remains of a carnal mind, our hearts are deceitful above all things; we are weak through the fleſh, and ſhould continually be looking to the Lord, to hold us up that we may be ſafe. But, after repeated warnings, and rebukes how dull, and inattentive do we often remain? This cauſes our compaſſionate Lord to employ other means, and in-

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WHEN the morning was come, all the chief prieſts and elders of the people took counſel againſt Jeſus to put him to death.

2 And when they had bound him, they

ſtruments, to rouſe us from our fatal lethargy: and when ſharp afflictions or perſecutions come upon us, He will, as it were, ſay to us, "ſleep on now, and take "your reſt, if you are able:" yet if even then we ariſe, and follow him, he will preſerve us from all real evil.

Whilſt we contemplate the inſolence, and enmity of thoſe, who aſſaulted the Prince of Peace, and the treachery of Judas, with abhorrence: let us not forget, that ſuch are we by nature, and ſo ſhould we have done, if we had been left to ourſelves: for thus our deteſtation of vice, will be joined with humility, gratitude, and compaſſion. Yet we muſt allow, that no enemies deſerve ſuch decided execration, as thoſe profeſſed diſciples, who betray Chriſt with a kiſs. It behoves us to copy the meekneſs, and patience of Chriſt; and to avoid the raſhneſs, and cowardice of Peter, and the other apoſtles. Whatever provocations we meet with from avowed adverſaries, or falſe friends, or however we may be tried by the infirmities of inconſiſtent believers; we ſhould learn of Jeſus to poſſeſs our ſouls in patience, and to uſe no weapons, except ſound arguments, mild expoſtulations, kind actions, and fervent prayers. Thus we ſhall be kept in peace; whilſt they who take the ſword will periſh by the ſword. If it be neceſſary for us, the prevalent interceſſion of our heavenly Advocate will procure for us the protection of legions of angels: but when our appointed time is come, we muſt be removed hence; yet the ſcriptures muſt needs be fulfilled in us alſo; and all the promiſes belong to us, if we are indeed believers in Chriſt. Happy then are they againſt whom their moſt malicious enemies can alledge nothing, except by falſe witneſſes! Perſecutors will indeed often be more aſſiduous in doing miſchief, than the moſt diligent chriſtian in doing good; and they will be ſometimes watching to execute their vile purpoſes, even when he is neglecting to watch, and pray: they will find falſe witneſſes, and invent ſlanders, to give a colour to their cruel hatred; and they will pervert the words of thoſe, who plead God's cauſe, to a quite contrary meaning: by theſe methods Jeſus has been perſecuted in his followers, in every age. But whilſt ſuch men pretend to execrate the imagined crimes of thoſe, whom they condemn; their own conſciences often proteſt againſt the ſentence, and they feel that their proceedings are iniquitous: how then will they abide the coming of the Judge, when they ſhall ſee him at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven? Let then thoſe, who have the honour to ſuffer for his ſake contemplate his calm behaviour before the council, and his intrepid confeſſion of his true character; and let them conſider the crimes alledged againſt him, the condemnation paſſed on him, and the contempt, indignity, and inſult, which he moſt patiently endured: for the chriſtian cannot reaſonably expect ſo much tenderneſs, and compaſſion, when ſuffering for the truth; as a thief or murderer might, when puniſhed for his crimes: and if he look to the ſcene we are conſidering, he will perceive that diſdain, cruel mockings, and every expreſſion of abhorrence, are the ſure portion of the true diſciple, from ſuch men, as ſpit in the face of Chriſt, and as buffeted and derided the Lord of glory. Yet let us boldly confeſs his name, and bear the reproach; and he will confeſs us before his Father's throne; whilſt thoſe, who pretend to do God ſervice, by murdering his ſaints, will be covered with ſhame, and everlaſting contempt.

But let us beware of vain confidence, and ſelf-preference: it becomes not us to boaſt, or reſolve what we will do: rather let us decline temptation, as much as we can, and truſt in the Lord alone to uphold us. Let us alſo avoid raſhneſs, and pray for victory over the fear of man. In all theſe matters we need much forbearance from our gracious Lord: though we be not traitors, we are prone to ſhift off ſuffering: though we do follow Chriſt, it is commonly at a great diſtance; and it is not unuſual for us to be afraid of being known to belong to him. But when ſelf-confidence induces men to thruſt themſelves, uncalled, into perilous circumſtances; we may expect to hear of lamentable conſequences. Little do we know how we ſhould act in very difficult ſituations, if we were left to ourſelves: the ſnow doth not more naturally melt before the fire, than our reſolutions vaniſh, when we are entered into temptation. Then who can ſay, what he will, or what he will not do? The way of ſin is alſo down-hill; every ſtep makes way for another ſtill more fatal; and there is nothing ſo falſe, impious, or atrocious, to which we might not gradually be tempted, if the Lord wholly left us to ourſelves. Let him therefore, that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall: and let us all diſtruſt our own hearts, and rely wholly on the Lord. If any have fallen, let them think of Peter's recovery, and not deſpair; and let them recollect the words of Chriſt, as well as their own ſins; that their tears, confeſſions, and humiliations may be mingled with hope. And let us all frequently remember our paſt follies, and manifold inſtances of ingratitude; that we may learn watchfulneſs, humility, caution, and compaſſion for the tempted, and fallen, by the experience of our own blunders, ſins, and recoveries.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1, 2.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 1. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 66—71. c. xxiii. v. 1. *John*, c. xviii. v. 28.) The night muſt have been far advanced, before the events recorded in the foregoing chapter were finiſhed: and it was early in the morning when the chief prieſts, &c, delivered up Jeſus to the governor. It is not agreed whether they adjourned for a little while, or whether they continued together all night: but it is probable, that only a part, or a committee, of the Sanhedrim were aſſembled at the high prieſt's palace the preceding night; and that the whole council was convened in the accuſtomed place early in the morning: therefore they ſeem, according to St. Luke's account, to have renewed the examination of Jeſus, and to have ratified the ſentence of the foregoing night, before they led him away to Pilate. If they had not "taken counſel againſt him to led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief prieſts and elders,

4 Saying, I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they ſaid, What *is that* to us? ſee thou *to that*.

5 And he caſt down the pieces of ſilver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himſelf.

6 And the chief prieſts took the ſilver pieces, and ſaid, It is not lawful for to put them into the treaſury, becauſe it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counſel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury ſtrangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

9 (Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying, And they took the thirty pieces of ſilver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Iſrael did value;

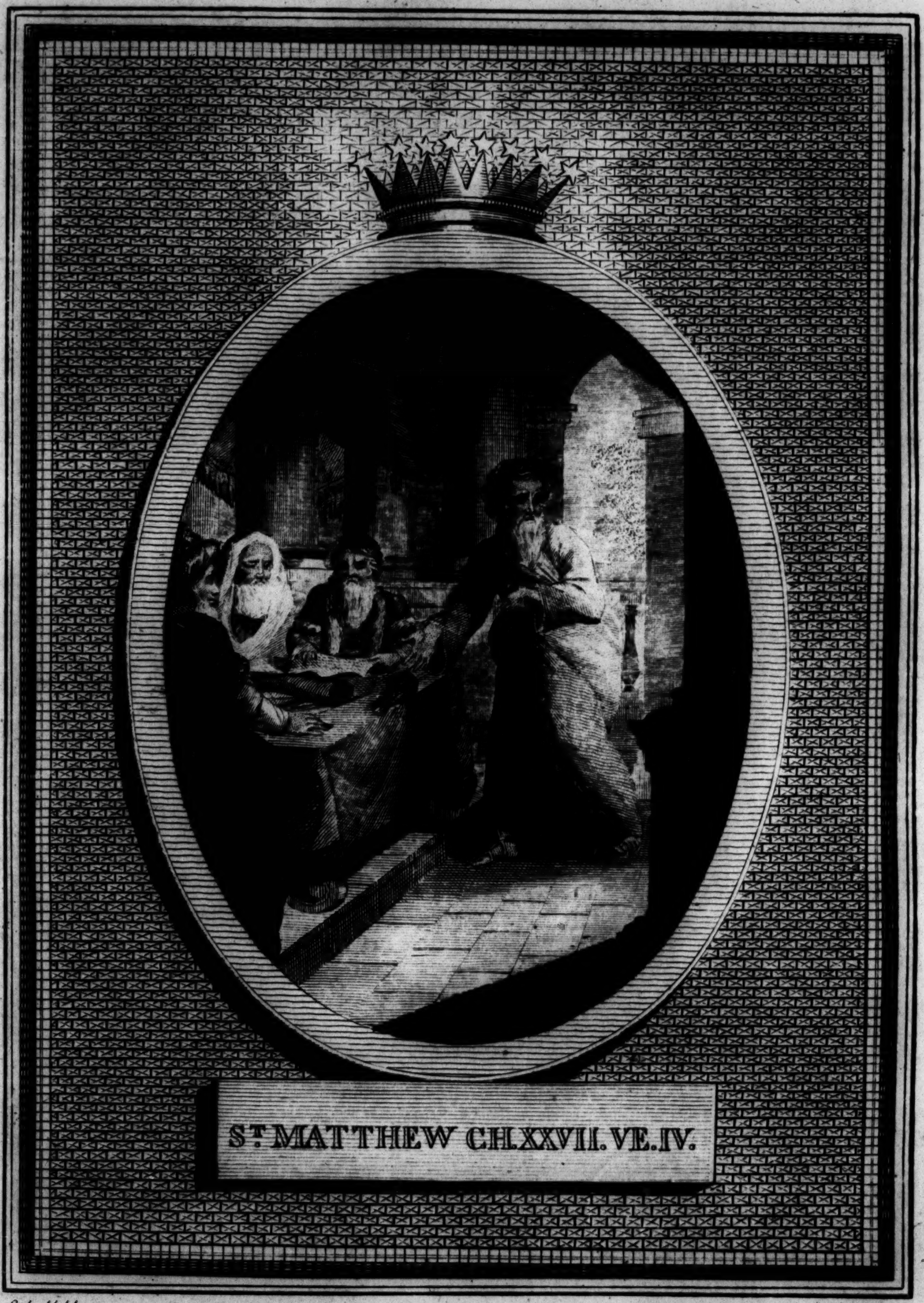
10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.)

11 And Jeſus ſtood before the governor;

“put him to death;” they would have had no occaſion to apply to him; for they had ſtill the power of executing lighter puniſhments: but they were not allowed to put any one to death, without the conſent of the Roman governor. Yet they were probably the more willing to deliver Jeſus up to him; becauſe the Roman puniſhment of crucifixion was more ignominious, and excruciating, than their method of ſtoning; and therefore better ſuited to gratify their envenomed malice, and cruelty. They therefore bound Jeſus again, having perhaps looſed him during his examination; or they confined him more cloſely than before, as a condemned malefactor; and delivered him up to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea, in order that he might be put to death by his authority, as a ſeditious perſon.

V. 3—10.] (*Acts*, c. i. v. 15—20:) Whatever Judas's views, and expectations were, when he betrayed his Lord; he ſaw his own conduct in a very different light, when he found that he was condemned to die, and was about to be crucified as a malefactor, and a ſlave. Then “he repented himſelf;” yet not with a gracious repentance, conſiſting of humiliation, fear, faith, hope, love, godly ſorrow, ingenuous confeſſion, and renunciation of all ſin, &c: but he was ſorry that he had committed this one crime; his conſcience was filled with horror, and remorſe, and his heart with anguiſh, and terror. He could not but be ſenſible of the excellency, and holineſs of the character of Jeſus; he probably was convinced in his judgment, that he was the promiſed Meſſiah; the miracles, that he had witneſſed, and the miraculous powers, which he had received, muſt occur to his memory; and the wiſdom, knowledge, condeſcenſion, and love of his gracious Lord, together with his peculiar kindneſs to himſelf, muſt on this occaſion ruſh into his mind. Thus his guilt, in betraying ſo excellent, and honourable a perſon into the hands of his enemies, to be by them put to a cruel, and ignominious death, appeared to his mind in all its horrid colours: and, being left of God, ſatan, who before had tempted him to preſumption, now led him to conclude his crime, unpardonable, and urged him to deſpair. However, previous to his laſt fatal determination, perhaps hoping to obtain a reverſal of Chriſt's condemnation, that he might be preſerved from the guilt of that moſt atrocious murder, he went to the chief prieſts, &c, to return them the wages of his iniquity. They were at that time, in the precincts of the temple; whether they held their council there, and had not yet delivered up Jeſus to Pilate; or whether they had gone thither after he was delivered up to be crucified, in order to perform ſome hypocritical taſk of devotion. However before them Judas acknowledged, that he had ſinned, in that he had betrayed an innocent perſon into their hands, who was by that means likely to be put to death; and that he was now fully ſenſible that his conduct had been peculiarly baſe, and criminal. This was a moſt honourable teſtimony to Chriſt's character: but though this crime lay with intolerable weight on the conſcience of Judas, and he confeſſed it to man, and dared not to keep the wages, he had ſo infamouſly earned: yet he ſeems not to have confeſſed it to God, or to have been at all ſenſible of the guilt of all his hypocriſy, and other wickedneſs committed during the whole courſe of his paſt life. But the rulers were too malignant, and hardened, to be any ways affected by this intereſting circumſtance; and they coldly declared, that the opinion and conduct of ſo vile a wretch as he was, concerned not them; let him look to that himſelf, for they were determined to put Jeſus to death. This completed Judas's deſpair; and caſting down the money, he departed, and immediately went, and hanged himſelf. Without doubt he was his own executioner, by ſtrangling himſelf: being utterly deſtitute of faith in God's mercy, and not being able to endure the horrible remorſe of his conſcience, the feeling and terror of divine wrath, and the anguiſh of deſperation, which conſtituted an anticipation of the pains of hell: and this account may be reconciled with that of Peter, as recorded by St. Luke, by ſuppoſing that he ſuſpended himſelf in ſuch a place, and manner, that the rope, or wood, to which it was faſtened, brake; and that he fell from a great height, and ſo burſt aſunder, &c; this coming to paſs by the will of God, to render his body a more terrible ſpectacle to all beholders, and to cauſe his death to be the more remarked. It admits of little doubt, but that Judas's death preceded that of his injured Lord; ſo ſpeedily did divine vengeance overtake him! Yet the rulers took no notice of this alarming circumſtance! (*Pſ.* cix. v. 5—20.)

THE REVD. MR. SCOTT's BIBLE.



ST. MATTHEW CH.XXVII. VE.IV.

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and the governor aſked him, ſaying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt.

12 And when he was accuſed of the chief prieſts and elders, he anſwered nothing.

13 Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Heareſt thou not how many things they witneſs againſt thee?

14 And he anſwered him to never a word; inſomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15 Now at *that* feaſt the governor was wont to releaſe unto the people a priſoner, whom they would.

16 And they had then a notable priſoner, called Barabbas.

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate ſaid unto them, Whom will ye that I releaſe unto you? Barabbas, or Jeſus, which is called Chriſt?

18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19 When he was ſet down on the judgment ſeat, his wife ſent unto him, ſaying, Have thou nothing to do with that juſt man: for I have ſuffered many things this day in a dream becauſe of him.

20 But the chief prieſts and elders perſuaded the multitude, that they ſhould aſk Barabbas, and deſtroy Jeſus.

21 The governor anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I releaſe unto you? They ſaid, Barabbas.

22 Pilate ſaith unto them, What ſhall I do then with Jeſus, which is called Chriſt? *They* all ſay unto him, Let him be crucified.

23 And the governor ſaid, Why? what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, ſaying, Let him be crucified.

However when they had leiſure, with a ſcrupuloſity worthy of them, they conſulted what was to be done with the money, which Judas had reſtored, and determined it to be unlawful to put it into the ſacred treaſury; having been the price paid for Jeſus's blood, and proving eventually that of Judas's alſo. Yet they deemed it proper to lay it out in ſome way, that might appear charitable; and therefore they purchaſed with it a piece of waſte ground, which had been dug up for clay by a potter, and was of ſmall value; that it might be appropriated to the burial of ſuch perſons of other nations as died at Jeruſalem: on which account that field was called Aceldama, or the field of blood, even to the time, when Matthew wrote his goſpel. This fulfilled an ancient prophecy, which is here ſaid to have been ſpoken by Jeremiah; but which we have already conſidered in the prophecy of Zechariah, (c. xi. v. 10—14.) Various conjectures have been formed on the ſubject: but it is moſt natural to admit that a trivial error hath crept into the text; for the change of a ſingle letter, in the abbreviated manner, in which names are written in the old manuſcripts, would ſuffice to occaſion the miſtake. The paſſage is quoted ſomething different, than it ſtands in the prophecy: but the meaning is, that the thirty ſhekels, the vile price at which the Jews valued, and bargained for the Shepherd of Iſrael, as if he had been a ſlave, came into the hands of a potter: this was foretold, and exactly accompliſhed.

V. 11—23.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 2—14. *Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 2—26. *John*, c. xviii. v. 29—40.) Many circumſtances recorded by the other evangeliſts will require a ſeparate conſideration, and the narration of Matthew will be expounded apart; except as it may be proper to point out the way, in which the harmony amongſt the ſacred writers may be adjuſted. The rulers of the Jews did not at firſt accuſe Jeſus of having ſaid, that he was the Son of God, &c; being aware that Pilate would not have regarded ſuch a charge: but, knowing how jealous the Romans were of their authority, they accuſed him of advancing claims to the kingdom over their nation. Pilate therefore aſked him, whether he were the king of the Jews? To which he anſwered in the affirmative: yet as he had doubtleſs heard of the inoffenſive demeanour of Jeſus, and his few followers; he dreaded no bad effects from ſuch a king; whoſe claim he probably deemed more worthy of deriſion, than of oppoſition. His proſecutors therefore, fearing that they ſhould not carry their point, were earneſt in laying many things to his charge, tending to prove him to be a dangerous perſon; but which only convinced Pilate that they envied his authority and reputation among the people, as eclipſing their own. But when Pilate enquired, whether Jeſus had nothing to ſay, in refutation of all theſe accuſations? He remained entirely ſilent? He had no guilt to confeſs; yet he would not exculpate himſelf, for he purpoſed to ſubmit to this condemnation, that he might die as a ſacrifice for our ſins. This ſilence, which doubtleſs was diſtinguiſhed by a mild, and ſedate dignity of aſpect, the reverſe of the ſullenneſs of an obſtinate criminal, aſtoniſhed Pilate. He believed him to be perfectly innocent; and yet he would neither uſe arguments, nor intreaties to reſcue himſelf from that terrible death, with which he was threatened! However he was deſirous to preſerve him, knowing that the rulers had not delivered him up out of any regard to the Roman authority, or the public peace; but from malignant motives. As it had therefore become a cuſtom to pardon ſome condemned Jew, at the feaſt of the paſſover, as an act of grace, to pleaſe the people; Pilate ſuppoſed, that this would give him the deſired occaſion of releaſing Jeſus; and he concluded that the multitude favoured him. So that when they required him to indulge them as uſual, he propoſed to them none but Jeſus, and Barabbas, that they might chooſe which of the two they

24 When Pilate ſaw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and waſhed *his* hands before the multitude, ſaying, I am innocent of the blood of this juſt perſon; ſee ye *to it*.

25 Then anſwered all the people, and ſaid, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

26 Then releaſed he Barabbas unto them: and when he had ſcourged Jeſus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

27 Then the ſoldiers of the governor took Jeſus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band *of ſoldiers*.

28 And they ſtripped him, and put on him a ſcarlet robe.

29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail, king of the Jews!

30 And they ſpit upon him, and took the reed, and ſmote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

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would have ſpared, and which executed. As Barabbas was a noted criminal, who had been guilty of murder, as well as robbery, he doubtleſs concluded, that they would all prefer Jeſus to him. But whilſt this was in agitation, another circumſtance occurred, which increaſed Pilate's perplexity, and his deſire to ſave Chriſt from the rage of his enemies: for his wife ſent to caution him by no means to have any hand in the death of that righteous Man, whom he was ſolicited to condemn; for ſhe had endured much miſery, by terrifying dreams reſpecting him; which made her conclude, that his death would be avenged in an awful manner, upon all concerned in it. In the mean time the rulers were uſing all their influence with the people, to induce them to demand the releaſe of Barabbas, and the crucifixion of Jeſus: and when Pilate renewed his propoſal to them, he was ſurpriſed to find, that the releaſe of Barabbas was unanimouſly choſen; and that they were clamorous in demanding the crucifixion of Jeſus, whom they had called their promiſed Meſſiah; though they could lay no crime to his charge. On other occaſions the condemnation of a Jew, who was not a ſlave, to this ignominious and cruel death, would have hazarded an inſurrection: but the people had been diſappointed in their expectations of a temporal kingdom; and agreed that a Meſſiah of his character was only worthy of contempt, and crucifixion.

V. 24, 25.] Pilate's reluctance to paſſing ſentence of death on Chriſt was very great: but the Jews were ſo bent upon it, that he concluded, it would be hazardous to ſtand it out againſt them; leſt they ſhould excite an inſurrection, or accuſe him to the emperor, as diſaffected to his authority: his government was alſo very odious to the Jews, and he was afraid of exaſperating them. But his ſtruggle on this occaſion ſhews the power of conſcience in the worſt of men, and the horror that it has of wilful deliberate murder. The whole proceſs more reſembled the examination of a ſacrifice, that it might be evinced to be without blemiſh, than the trial of a criminal for condemnation: and it is unprecedented in the annals of mankind, for a perſon condemned to ſo dreadful a death, to have been at the very time pronounced innocent, and righteous, by the perſon who betrayed him, and the judge, who paſſed ſentence upon him, and at length by the very officer, who ſuperintended his execution; whilſt they who clamorouſly demanded his death, could alledge no reaſon for their conduct: but the providence of God ſo ordered all theſe circumſtances, that it might be evident, that he ſuffered for no fault of his own, but merely for the ſins of his people. However, when Pilate had determined to yield to the deſire of the Jews; as a ſalvo to his conſcience, and a proteſtation againſt their injuſtice, "he took water, and "waſhed his hands before them:" This was probably a cuſtom among the Romans, as well as the Jews, in averring their innocence of any crime, that might be charged upon them. It was a moſt explicit teſtimony to Chriſt's innocency; yet his conduct implied contempt of him, as an inſignificant perſon, to preſerve whoſe life it was not worth while to riſque any thing. It was vain for him to expect thus to free himſelf from the guilt of the innocent blood of a righteous perſon, that was about to be ſhed; when he was bound by office to protect Him from his cruel enemies. Yet the Jews were more callous than Pilate; and whilſt he feebly attempted to get clear of the guilt; they by a moſt horrid imprecation willingly took it all upon themſelves, and their poſterity. This their imprecation hath been moſt awfully anſwered: as they were willing to take upon themſelves the guilt of the blood they were about to ſhed; ſo it actually was avenged on them in the ſiege, and deſtruction of Jeruſalem, when ſo many Jews were crucified, that wood could ſcarce be found for their croſſes; and doubtleſs ſome of theſe very perſons, as well as of their children, were of the number: and the nation hath ever ſince been expoſed to inceſſant injuries from man, and left as an anathema from God.

V. 26—31.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 15—20. *John*, c. xix. v. 1—16.) John expreſſly mentions Chriſt's being ſcourged, and crowned with thorns, &c, previous to Pilate's paſſing ſentence upon him: it is therefore conjectured that he had been ſeverely ſcourged by Pilate's orders ſome time before; in hopes that this diſgrace and torture would have appeaſed the rage of the multitude, or ſoftened them into compaſſion, and ſo have made way for his releaſe: upon this ſuppoſition, the paſſage before us ſhould be rendered, "having ſcourged Jeſus, he alſo "delivered him to be crucified." However it is known

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his croſs.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to ſay, A place of a ſkull,

34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had taſted *thereof*, he would not drink.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, caſting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots.

36 And ſitting down, they watched him there:

37 And ſet over his head his accuſation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

that the Romans uſed to ſcourge malefactors, juſt before they were crucified; ſo that poſſibly it might be twice repeated: and Matthew, &c, may mention the crowning with thorns out of it's proper place; or rather the ſoldiers after ſentence was paſſed, carried ſtill further the indignities, that they had before commenced. However Barabbas obtained his releaſe, by means of Chriſt's condemnation, of which otherwiſe he could have had no proſpect: he merited death, and was preſerved, whilſt Jeſus, who was perfectly innocent, ſuffered in his ſtead: this exactly correſponds to the method of a ſinner's ſalvation by the ſufferings of Chriſt; whilſt the conduct of the Jews, in preferring a vile murderer to the Lord of glory, aptly deſcribes the conduct of numbers, who ſpare their luſts, and reject the Saviour. At length however the bleſſed Jeſus was delivered up, without reſerve, to the inſults, deriſion, and cruelty of the ſoldiers; who collecting the whole cohort into the pretorium, clothed him with a ſcarlet, or purple robe, (perhaps a purple veſtment, with a ſcarlet robe over it;) ſuch as uſed to be worn by the Roman generals, &c, being probably ſome that Pilate had caſt off. Thus they arrayed him in the garments of royalty, in contempt of his claiming the title of "King of the Jews:" and then mingling cruelty with ſcorn, they platted ſome thorns into the form of a crown for his head; and put a reed, or cane, ſuch as were uſed to walk with, into his hand, inſtead of a ſceptre. Then they bowed their knee before him, and in mockery of his abject condition, (as they ſuppoſed it,) they paid homage to Him, as the King of the Jews: and at the ſame time they ſpit upon him, and ſmote the thorns into his temples, by taking the cane, and ſtriking him upon the head with it. We may form ſome conception of this ſcene, if we conſider the ferocity, haughtineſs, and impiety of the idolatrous Roman ſoldiers; and how they were let looſe on the mild, and holy Jeſus, to give full ſcope to their ſavage, and cruel contempt; and to divert themſelves with his ſufferings, till they were even weary of mocking him. When this took place, they took off from him the inſignia of royalty; and putting on him his own garment, they who were appointed to be his executioners, led him away to crucify him. Had he ſuffered as a murderer, they would not thus have inſulted him; but would have in ſome meaſure pitied his anguiſh, whilſt they executed the ſentence of the law upon him.

V. 32—38.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 21—28. *Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 26—34. 38. *John*, c. xix. v. 16—24.) It was cuſtomary for thoſe, who were ſentenced to crucifixion, to carry their croſſes, or at leaſt an heavy part of them, to the place where they were nailed to them. But Jeſus had been ſo harraſſed by the multiplied fatigues and miſeries, which he had already endured, that probably he appeared almoſt exhauſted: ſo that the perſons employed might fear, leſt he ſhould die under the burden, and eſcape their further cruelties, if they compelled him to bear the croſs, all the way to Calvary. Though it ſeems at firſt to have been laid upon him, yet they afterwards gave him ſome relief; and meeting with Simon, a native of Cyrene, who probably was ſuſpected of favouring him, they obliged him to bear the croſs after him. Perhaps he bare the whole, the reſt of the way; or he carried one end, whilſt Jeſus going before carried the other. This aptly repreſented the believer's conformity to his Lord, in bearing the croſs, the ſcorn, and hatred of the world; and the event ſhews, that he ſuffered far more himſelf, than he ever calls them to bear for his ſake. In this manner they proceeded to Mount Calvary, without the city, to a place called Golgotha, or the place of a ſkull; being probably ſo called from the ſkulls, and human bones, that were there in abundance; as it had long been the place of execution, and burial for malefactors. It was cuſtomary to give thoſe, that were to ſuffer this lingering and moſt painful death, a potion, to benumb their feelings, compoſed of wine mingled with myrrh, or ſpices: and probably ſome compaſſionate perſons had prepared ſome of this cordial, which they offered to Jeſus; but he would not taſte it, as his purpoſe was to ſuffer death in all its bitterneſs. But others, full of contempt and malignity, had mingled vinegar with gall, to render it moſt nauſeous, and offered it to him inſtead of the ſpiced wine; which having taſted he refuſed to drink off: thus an ancient prophecy of the Meſſiah was literally fulfilled. (*Pſ.* lxix. v. 21.) The ſoldiers then proceeded to crucify him. This was performed in the following manner: the ſufferer was ſtripped almoſt naked, and extended on the wood of the croſs, as it lay on the ground; his arms were then ſtretched out on the tranſverſe beam, and faſtened to it by ſpikes driven through his hands; and his feet were faſtened to the upright part of the croſs, by ſpikes driven through both of them together. Then the croſs was erected, and the foot of it, going into a hole made for that purpoſe, with a violent jerk, commonly diſlocated ſome of the bones of the crucified perſon; who

39 And they that paſſed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40 And ſaying, Thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt *it* in three days, ſave thyſelf. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the croſs.

41 Likewiſe alſo the chief prieſts, mocking *him*, with the ſcribes and elders, ſaid,

42 He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave. If he be the King of Iſrael, let him now come down from the croſs, and we will believe him.

43 He truſted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he ſaid, I am the Son of God.

44 The thieves alſo, which were crucified with him, caſt the ſame in his teeth.

45 Now from the ſixth hour there was darkneſs over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jeſus cried

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being ſuſpended in this dreadful poſture, hung in moſt exquiſite torture; till at length loſs of blood, and exceſs of pain ended his life. It is plain, that Jeſus hung in this manner for ſix hours, before he expired; yet it was wondered at, that he died ſo ſoon; as many were uſed to live a whole day, and night in this anguiſh, unleſs ſome method were taken to ſhorten their pains. When the ſoldiers, (four of whom were employed in it,) had completed the cruel buſineſs of ſuſpending Jeſus on the croſs; they proceeded to part his raiment among them, as the recompence of their labours: and finding his upper garment to be made of one piece, they amuſed themſelves by caſting lots for it. Thus the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah received their accompliſhment in Jeſus; (*Pſ.* xxii. v. 12—18.) After this they ſat down to watch him, that no one might reſcue him. Moreover, as it was uſual to affix the name, and the crime of the crucified perſon, in writing on the top of the croſs; Pilate had ordered that it ſhould be written in different languages, over his head, “This is Jeſus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews;” nor would he conſent to change it, or allow, that there was any thing falſe, or criminal in it, when requeſted by the rulers: for God over-ruled his mind thus to atteſt the truth concerning Jeſus, as the Meſſiah, the King of the Jewiſh nation, and of the whole Iſrael of God. Yet at the ſame time two malefactors were crucified with him, and he was placed between them, as if more criminal than either of them; which was intended to diſgrace him.

V. 39—44.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 29—32. *Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 34—43.) Whilſt the holy, and divine Saviour was ſuſpended in this moſt ignominious, and excruciating poſture; the multitudes, that paſſed by, knowing for what he was crucified, reviled, and derided him, in every way that they could deviſe; reproaching him, with having ſpoken of deſtroying the temple, and rebuilding it in three days; and calling on him in deriſion to break looſe, and come down, from the croſs, if he were the Son of God. From an untutored, and unprincipled rabble ſuch behaviour might the leſs be wondered at: but the very prieſts alſo, even the chief of them, and the learned men, and rulers of the nation, forgetful of their character, office, education, and authority; and ſuffering their diſdainful rage to overcome all regard to decorum, joined the multitude, and led them on, to inſult, and mock the meek, and bleeding Jeſus. They reproached Him with his miracles; allowing, that he ſaved the lives of others, yet deriding him as unable to ſave his own. It was indeed an important truth, that if he would ſave us ſinners from eternal miſery, he could not ſave himſelf from theſe exquiſite ſufferings, and this ignominious death; but they underſtood it not. They treated all other proofs of his being the Meſſiah with contempt, and called upon him, if he were indeed the King of Iſrael, to come down from the croſs, and then they would believe in him. Not that this would have convinced them, for his reſurrection had no ſuch effect: but aſſuring themſelves that he could not, they grew more hardened in their unbelief, and uſed this cruel ſarcaſm to increaſe his anguiſh. Nay they reproached him for his confidence in God, and challenged the Lord himſelf to deliver him, if he had any favour for, and delight in him; ſeeing he had called himſelf the Son of God. Probably they did not know, that in this their daring impiety, enmity, and blaſphemy, they uſed the very words, which the prophet had put into the mouths of the murderers of the Meſſiah, a thouſand years before. (*Pſ.* xxii. v. 8.) To complete this unparaleled ſcene, even the thieves, that were crucified with him, could find an heart in the midſt of their own agonies, and the horrid proſpect that lay before them, to join the general voice, and to upbraid the crucified Jeſus with his claim to be the Meſſiah, and the Son of God. Though they ſuffered for notorious crimes, they entirely eſcaped this obloquy and inſult, and were regarded as objects of compaſſion: and they could themſelves even look down on Jeſus with diſdain and deriſion! Matthew and Mark ſpeak, as if both of the malefactors had been guilty of this outrage: but whether more than one of them be meant, will hereafter be conſidered. We may here challenge univerſal hiſtory to furniſh another inſtance, in which any perſon, expiring under the tortures of a cruel execution, was treated with ſuch deriſion, contempt, and mockery, by all ranks and orders of men, and even by one, at leaſt, of his fellow-ſufferers. This was reſerved to be the uſage of the holy Jeſus, the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, God manifeſted in the fleſh: and this tranſaction is a full demonſtration of man's mortal, rancorous enmity to the holy Image, truth, and law of his Creator; and a ſufficient confutation of all the flattering repreſentations of proud moraliſts, and philoſophers, who know more of every thing, than of God, and of themſelves. Indeed prophets and martyrs, who have been renewed to ſome meaſure of the ſame Image, and ſtood up for the ſame truths, have met with a proportionable meaſure of with a loud voice, ſaying, Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani? that is to ſay, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?

47 Some of them that ſtood there, when they heard *that*, ſaid, This *man* calleth for Elias.

48 And ſtraightway one of them ran, and took a ſpunge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The reſt ſaid, Let be, let us ſee whether Elias will come to ſave him.

50 Jeſus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghoſt.

51 And, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent,

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the ſaints, which ſlept aroſe.

53 And came out of the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

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the ſame treatment. We ſhall ſee in its proper place, that we all have a meaſure of the guilt of thus crucifying the Lord of glory: whilſt his moſt perfect patience, and meekneſs, in the midſt of ſuch provocations, which he was well able to avenge, is worthy of our peculiar attention. (1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 21—24.)

V. 45—49.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 33—36.) It is here ſuppoſed, and it will hereafter be ſhewn, that Chriſt was nailed to the croſs, at the third hour, or by nine o'clock in the morning: but this darkneſs did not begin before the ſixth hour, or noon; and it laſted till the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. As the moon was in the full at that time, it could not be an eclipſe from a natural cauſe: probably it reached no further, than the Holy Land. The ſun ſeems to have been entirely obſcured, and his beams intercepted; whence aroſe a moſt extraordinary, and awful gloom. This was an apt emblem of the ſtate of the ſpiritual world, when the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and the Light of men, was under ſuch an eclipſe; his ſoul being full of darkneſs and horror, his character wounded with reproaches, and loaded with infamy, and his body ready to expire with tortures. It was alſo an awful indication of the frown of heaven upon that people: and their rulers, who were guilty of this moſt enormous crime; from which the ſun ſeemed to hide his aſtoniſhed face, refuſing his light to the land, where it was committed. Some infidels have had a great deal to ſay, becauſe Joſephus, and the Pagan writers have not mentioned this phenomenon: but none of them ever attempted to deny it, and every writer notices, and records what he ſees proper. Joſephus, and the Pagan authors, were as little diſpoſed to bear a favourable teſtimony to chriſtianity, as modern infidels are: the former could not but have heard of it; and his ſilence may be conſidered as the effect of his inability to deny the fact, and his unwillingneſs to admit the proper inference; but the heathen authors would probably treat the report with contempt, and neglect, as unworthy of their regard. And as the prophecies contained in the writings of the evangeliſts, and other internal evidences, demonſtrate their divine original; we might with as much propriety uſe a candle to aid the light of the ſun, as any human authority to give credibility to their teſtimony: and what is once proved true, cannot be diſproved by any objections that may be ſtarted againſt it; for hiſtory is full of authenticated facts, which are perfectly unaccountable *to us*. At the ninth hour, our Lord, (being probably oppreſſed with the ſame inward anguiſh, and horror, as when in the garden,) cried out aloud, "Eli, Eli, or Eloi, Eloi, lama, ſabachthani, that is to ſay, my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" (*Pſ.* xxii. v. 1.) The words are not exactly the ſame, as they ſtand in the original of the pſalm referred to; and they are ſuppoſed to be quoted in the Syro-Chaldaic dialect: but the meaning is preciſely the ſame. This doleful exclamation of Jeſus ſhewed, that the total want of the light and favour of God on his ſoul; and the ſenſe of his frown, and wrath againſt him as our Surety, were far more dreadful than all his complicated outward ſufferings; that his confidence in God his Father, together with his love, zeal, ſubmiſſion, and every holy affection were unabated, and moſt perfect, even in that dreadful hour; and that there was no cauſe in him, why he ſhould be thus forſaken; it being wholly through his willing anſwerableneſs for the ſins of his people. Some of the perſons preſent, who heard theſe words indiſtinctly, or who were not acquainted with the dialect, in which they were ſpoken, ſuppoſed that he called upon Elias, to come and reſcue him: for as it was underſtood that Elias was to be the fore-runner of the Meſſiah, they probably thought that he meant thus to aſſert his claim to that character, even to the laſt. About the ſame time he alſo ſaid, "I thirſt," being parched through exceſs of anguiſh, and torture: and, as a veſſel ſtood by filled with vinegar, (which being mixed with water, was commonly drunk by the Roman ſoldiers;) one of them filled a ſponge with vinegar, and putting it on a reed, or a ſtalk of hyſſop, in a contemptuous manner reached it to him, that he might drink: whilſt the reſt bade them let him alone, that it might be ſeen, whether Elias would come to reſcue him, or not; which ſeems to have been ſpoken in deriſion, and not from any expectation that Elias would come.

V. 50—56.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 37—41. *Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 44—49. *John*, c. xix. v. 25—37.) Perhaps the *outward* darkneſs continued, until Jeſus ſaid, "It is finiſhed:" when the *inward* darkneſs and horror ſeems to have been removed from his mind; and an inexpreſſible joy in the ſenſe of his Father's love, the near approach of his glory, and the bleſſed effects of his ſufferings, to have filled his ſoul. He therefore immediately after, "cried out with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." This has been generally

54 Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him watching Jeſus, ſaw the earthquake, and thoſe things that were done, they feared greatly, ſaying, Truly this was the Son of God.

55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jeſus from Galilee, miniſtering unto him;

56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joſes, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joſeph, who alſo himſelf was Jeſus' diſciple:

58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joſeph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which

ſuppoſed to be an indication, that his ſtrength was yet unbroken; and that when he yielded up the ghoſt, or reſigned his Spirit, he did it voluntarily, "having "power to lay down his life, and power to take it "again." So that his ſoul could have left the body, previous to his lingering agonies, had he ſo pleaſed; as they were only neceſſary for the expiation of our ſins. At that ſolemn time, the vail in the temple, which ſeparated the moſt holy place from the other part of the ſanctuary, was miraculouſly rent from top to bottom: this indicated, that the Moſaic diſpenſation was now virtually aboliſhed, the types of the Levitical prieſthood, &c, accompliſhed, the way into the holieſt laid open, and the diſtinction between Jew and Gentile terminated, through that oblation that had juſt been offered. As this was the hour of the evening ſacrifice, ſome of the prieſts muſt have been in the temple burning incenſe at the time, when it happened; and the reſt of them, and even Caiaphas himſelf, muſt afterwards have ſeen the vail, that had been rent. Yet this prodigy made no impreſſion upon their hardened hearts, any more than the other events of that ſurpriſing day. At the ſame time there was an earthquake, which rended the rocks in the vicinity of Jeruſalem, and even opened the ſepulchres, in a very extraordinary manner: and after the reſurrection of Chriſt, many of the bodies of departed ſaints, or holy perſons, who had fallen aſleep in the faith, aroſe, came forth out of their graves, entered into Jeruſalem, and appeared to many perſons, that knew them. Probably they were ſuch believers, as had died not long before, and now aroſe after Chriſt, as it were to grace his reſurrection: it would be wrong to indulge vain curioſity, by further enquiring who they were? or what became of them afterwards? Yet, as it was a real reſurrection, and they are only ſaid to have "appeared to many," and not to have continued with them; it ſeems probable, that they alſo went to heaven with, or after their aſcended Saviour. This was a moſt extraordinary event; and doubtleſs it was generally ſpoken of in Jeruſalem by thoſe, to whom they appeared. Moreover the earthquake, and the other wonders that attended the crucifixion of Chriſt; together with his mild, and patient behaviour under his ſufferings, and the chearful confidence, with which he commended his departing ſoul, into the hands of God, had a great effect upon the minds of the Roman ſoldiers; though the Jewiſh rulers remained unimpreſſed. Four only were employed in nailing Jeſus to the croſs: but a conſiderable number, commanded by a Centurion, watched him whilſt he hung there. Theſe were greatly alarmed at what they ſaw, and heard, leſt the judgments of God ſhould overtake them for their cruelty to ſo extraordinary a perſon; and they glorified God, perhaps by confeſſing their guilt, and deprecating his vengeance; and they acknowledged, that "Truly this was the Son of God." It is not to be ſuppoſed, that the Roman ſoldiers, who joined with the Centurion in this confeſſion, and who ſeem to have been the ſame perſons, that had crowned Jeſus with thorns, and mocked him, ſhould underſtand the full meaning of the words, which they uſed: yet we may reaſonably conclude, that this conviction terminated in the converſion, at leaſt, of ſome of them; and perhaps of the very perſons, who nailed him to the croſs: according to his prayer, "Father forgive them for they know not "what they do." If this proved the caſe, it was a glorious inſtance of his abounding grace, to the vileſt of ſinners! Some would interpret the words recorded by Mathew, "Truly this was the Son of God," by thoſe of Luke, "This was a righteous man." But in fact *that* expreſſion is explained by *this*, for as Jeſus was crucified for ſaying that he was the Son of God; ſo, if he were a righteous man, and unjuſtly condemned, he muſt alſo be the Son of God. Among the witneſſes of this melancholy, and intereſting ſcene, there were ſome women, who had followed him from Galilee, and had waited on him, ſupplying his wants from their ſubſtance. The names of two of them are here given; and ſome obſervations may hereafter be made concerning one of them. Anxious concern, and affection induced them to be preſent: and perhaps they ſtood afar off, for fear of the outrages of the multitude. Words cannot expreſs, nay imagination almoſt fails to conceive, the mixed emotions of love, reverence, gratitude, ſorrow, anguiſh, diſappointment, compaſſion, anxiety, &c, which muſt have agitated their minds on this occaſion. We find from St. John that Mary the mother of Jeſus was alſo a ſpectator of the diſtreſſing ſcene; when a ſword muſt indeed have pierced her heart and inmoſt ſoul.

V. 57—61.] (*Mark*, c. xv. v. 42—47. *Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 50—56. *John*, c. xix. v. 38—42.) Joſeph lived at Arimathea, or Ramoth, the city of Samuel. He was a rich, and honourable perſon, and a counſellor, or member of the ſanhedrim; and a pious good man, who had not conſented to their proceedings againſt Jeſus; for he probably abſented himſelf, when this matter was agitated. He alſo waited for the kingdom of God, expect-he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great ſtone to the door of the ſepulchre, and departed.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, ſitting over againſt the ſepulchre.

62 Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief prieſts and Phariſees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, After three days I will riſe again.

64 Command therefore, that the ſepulchre be made ſure until the third day, leſt his diſciples come by night, and ſteal him away, and ſay unto the people, He is riſen from the dead: ſo the laſt error ſhall be worſe than the firſt.

65 Pilate ſaid unto them, Ye have a watch; go your way, make *it* as ſure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the ſepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch.

ing the Meſſiah to be a ſpiritual Redeemer: and he had ſecretly become a diſciple of Jeſus; but being of a timid diſpoſition, moving in a high rank in ſociety, and knowing the malignity of the rulers, with whom he aſſociated, he had not openly confeſſed his faith in him: and it pleaſed God to leave him thus far under the power of his unbelieving fears; becauſe he intended him for a ſervice, from which he might have been precluded, if he had rendered himſelf very obnoxious to the ruling powers. But when the courage of our Lord's ſtated followers failed them, he found himſelf animated to a more decided conduct; and his faith being invigorated by the circumſtances attending the death of Chriſt, he determined no longer to conceal his opinion. He therefore went boldly to Pilate, and deſired leave to take the body of Jeſus, that he might give it an honourable interment, and that it might not be buried on the ſpot, as thoſe of malefactors generally were: accordingly when Pilate found that Jeſus was really dead, being convinced of his innocence, he heſitated not to order that his body ſhould be delivered unto him; though he muſt know that this would be very diſpleaſing to the Jewiſh rulers. Having obtained this permiſſion, (being aſſiſted by Nicodemus,) Joſeph went, and took the body of Jeſus from the croſs, wrapped it in linen cloth, with a quantity of myrrh, aloes, &c, which had been procured for that purpoſe; and immediately conveyed it into a new ſepulchre, which he had prepared for himſelf. This was ſituated in a garden near the ſpot, and had been hewn out of the ſolid rock; and there was only one entrance into it, which he cloſed with a large ſtone, when he had depoſited the body of Jeſus in it. The interment of Chriſt was thus haſtily performed, becauſe of the approach of the ſabbath: and probably Joſeph and his friend propoſed afterwards more carefully to embalm the body: at the ſame time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary witneſſed the tranſaction and formed their plan, for teſtifying their reſpect to the remains of their beloved, and honoured Maſter. This burial of Chriſt was an accompliſhment of a remarkable prophecy; (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. liii. v. 8, 9;) and it made way for the more complete proof of his reſurrection.

V. 62—66,] The day that followed the crucifixion of our Lord, was the ſabbath, and a very ſolemn day, by reaſon of the feaſt of the paſſover, which was then celebrated; and the day, on which he was crucified was obſerved as a preparation for it: yet the malicious zeal of the chief prieſts made them come, on that great ſolemnity, in a body to Pilate, to repreſent to him, that Jeſus, (whom they confidently called "that deceiver,") had ſaid repeatedly during his life-time, that he would riſe again on the third day: this had always been in connexion with predictions of his violent death; and by whatever means they had become acquainted with it, they ſeem to have paid more attention to it than the diſciples did. As his friends therefore had been permitted to bury him, they deſired that he would give orders to ſecure the ſepulchre, till the third day was ended, (which ſhews what they underſtood by the words "after three days;") leſt his diſciples ſhould come in a clandeſtine manner; ſteal away the body, ſpread the report that he was riſen, and thus ſeduce the people into a more fatal error, than ever. It was indeed very unlikely, that the terrified diſciples, who could expect no better uſage, than their Maſter had juſt received, would have either courage or inclination for ſuch an impoſture, if they had been wicked enough for it. However this was permitted providentially, in order to give the more indiſputable demonſtration of our Lord's reſurrection. Pilate in anſwer, obſerved to them, that they had a body of Roman ſoldiers, at their command, who were ſtationed near the temple, to keep watch there: of theſe they might take as many as they pleaſed, and ſuch as they could moſt depend on, and ſecure the ſepulchre as carefully as they could. Accordingly they went, and placed a ſtrong guard at the ſepulchre; affixing their ſeal to the ſtone, that cloſed the mouth of it, that there might be no colluſion between the ſoldiers, and the diſciples: ſo that they were themſelves ſatisfied, that they had made it ſure by every needful precaution.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt wicked men purſue their primary object with unwearied aſſiduity, and ſacrifice reſt, indulgence, and every other intereſt, in order to ſecure it; let none of the ſervants of God remain inactive, or ſhrink from difficulty, in their work, and labour of love. The advantages attainable by ſin appear in proſpect very deſirable; but they contain more bitterneſs than ſatisfaction, when actually poſſeſſed. Wicked men ſee but little of the conſequences of their crimes, at the time, when they commit them; but they muſt be anſwerable for them all: and the anguiſh, and remorſe of Judas, when he ſaw that Jeſus was condemned, may ſerve to impreſs our

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Contains 1ſt. Some circumſtances relating to our Lord's Reſurrection; the women firſt ordered by angels to inform the diſciples of that joyful event; and afterwards by Jeſus himſelf, who appeared to them, 1---10. *2d. The prieſts hiring the ſoldiers to ſay, that the diſciples had ſtolen the body, while they*

minds with ſome idea of what wicked men will feel hereafter; when they ſhall ſee the full extent of the fatal effects of their infidelity, impiety, licentiouſneſs, and iniquity, in the deſtruction of the ſouls of men. But whilſt we are in this world, there is hope in the worſt of caſes; and deeply convinced ſinners ſhould be reminded, that their chief danger ariſes from temptations to deſpair of God's mercy. When faith, and hope are totally wanting, repentance itſelf cannot be genuine: and the enemy, who before ſuggeſted that their ſins were ſmall, and that they had nothing to fear; will at length aggravate their guilt to their affrighted imaginations as abſolutely unpardonable, that he may drive them to deſperate wickedneſs, or to ſuicide. For though he cannot deſtroy them himſelf; he hath great influence in urging them thus to plunge themſelves beyond the reach of mercy: and God often gives up thoſe eſpecially into his power who have ſinned wilfully againſt much light, and conviction. Many things, attendant on true repentance, may yet be found, where that is wanting: a deep remorſe for ſome particular crimes, that have made dreadful inroads on the conſcience; an open confeſſion of ſin in ſome particulars; and a reſtitution of the wages of iniquity, will not prove him truly penitent, who is not humbled for all the ſin of his heart and conduct; who relies not ſolely on the mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt; and who does not learn to hate ſin, to love God, to ſubmit to his will, and to walk in newneſs of life. Let none then be ſatiſfied with ſuch partial convictions, as a man may have, and yet remain full of pride, enmity, and rebellion againſt God. But no warnings will withdraw hardened hypocrites from their purpoſe: they will treat ſuch accomplices as ſhew remorſe for their crimes, with the moſt diſdainful neglect, and concur with ſatan, in driving them to deſpair; and whilſt they are deliberately perpetrating the moſt atrocious iniquities, they will keep up the appearance of devotion, pretend to moſt exact conſcientiouſneſs, and affect the praiſe of beneficence! And God will perpetuate the memory of their crimes, and fulfil the prophecies of his word, by methods, which might appear to us very improper for the purpoſe. But of how ſmall eſtimation muſt true ſpiritual excellency be amongſt men; when even Iſraelites valued the divine Saviour at no more than the price of the meaneſt ſlave!

Which of us can think of the malice, envy, diſſimulation, and murderous rage of the Jewiſh prieſts, and rulers: or of the prevaricating, cowardly injuſtice of Pilate; or of the conduct of the multitude, in preferring a murderer, to the holy Jeſus, and in clamorouſly demanding his crucifixion; or of the inſults, and cruelty of the ſoldiers, without horror, and indignation? But let us not deem them any other, than a fair ſpecimen of human nature; let us not imagine that the Lord of glory would meet with better uſage, if he were now to appear on earth in diſguiſe, and to teſtify of his nominal diſciples, that their works were evil, in the ſame manner that he did of the Jews. Still he would be deſpiſed and rejected of men, and meet with decided abhorrence and oppoſition: ſtill numbers would purſue him with revilings, and cruel mockings; and others would be afraid, or aſhamed to acknowledge their relation to Him: ſtill there would be found chief prieſts, ſcribes, rulers, and phariſees, whoſe hypocriſy and ignorance he had expoſed, whoſe conſciences he had galled, and whoſe authority, and reputation he had undermined, to perſecute him with unrelenting malice, and revenge: ſtill there would be ungodly Pilates, who, being perſuaded of his innocency, and knowing that he was perſecuted from envy, would yet deem it impolitic to riſque any thing in his cauſe; and after ſome feeble efforts to ſtem the torrent, or to throw the blame on others, would proſtitute authority to ſanction the unrighteous decrees of his enemies: ſtill the unſtable multitude would to-day cry Hoſanna, and to-morrow crucify him: ſtill hardened ſcoffers would divert themſelves with his ignominy and anguiſh; and even wretches would be found, that would try to forget their own miſery by reviling him. But are we not all concerned? Alas how often is Barabbas preferred to Jeſus! When ſinners reject his ſalvation, that they may retain their darling ſins, which rob God of his glory, and murder their ſouls, they repeat the diſgraceful tranſaction: when the ſociety of pious miniſters and chriſtians is forſaken for the company of profligates and infidels, the preference is of the ſame nature: and even when this is not deliberately, and habitually our conduct; we are all apt in ſome inſtances, and in ſome meaſure to prefer the friendſhip, and intereſts of this evil world, to the commands, glory, and approbation of the Son of God. But we muſt alſo remember, that he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions: in fact we are all chargeable in this ſenſe with the guilt of his crucifixion; and our ſins were as the ſcourge, the thorns, and the nails, by which he ſuffered. When his profeſſed diſciples act contrary to their character, and cauſe his enemies to revile, or deride; they then deliver up the bleſſed Jeſus to be again mocked, ſpit upon, crowned with thorns, and loaded with every indignity: whilſt they, who treat his followers with cruelty, and contempt, act over again the part of the Roman ſoldiers, and the Jewiſh rulers, and people: and when profeſſors openly apoſtatize, they crucify the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame. Embittered perſecutors are often ſo hurried away by their furious zeal, that even infidels can diſcern the malignant principles, by which they are actuated: and the people of God may expect more favour from the moſt avowed profligates, than from falſe profeſſors. The warnings, which God ſends, by various means, to deter men from wickedneſs, will eventually leave many of them the more inexcuſable: but what will be their guilt and condemnation, who uſe authority, influence, and ingenuity, to ſet men againſt the goſpel, and thus ruin multitudes of immortal ſouls! Various, and irrational, are the means, by which men ſeek impunity, in acting contrary to their own conſciences: they ſometimes pretend neceſſity, or compulſion; when nothing but unbelief, fear of man, and regard to their worldly intereſts, compelled them: and they will often throw the blame on others; vainly hoping to have the *advantage* of iniquity themſelves, and to leave the *puniſhment* to be ſuffered by their tempters. But all the water in the ocean cannot waſh away the guilt of murder from thoſe rulers, who, even reluctantly, permit innocent blood to be ſhed, for political purpoſes; as it is their bounded duty at all hazards to protect the oppreſſed. Such as are bent upon evil, are commonly moſt clamorous when their conduct is moſt unreaſonable; perſecutors are generally moſt ready to call for the inſtruments of torture, or death, when it is enquired, “what evil have theſe perſons done?” And in every caſe, when arguments are wanting, men are prone to abound in vociferation, both to ſilence their opponents, and to ſtupify their own conſciences. But who can reflect without terror at the awful imprecation of the Jewiſh multitude, and its tremendous accompliſhment? What miſeries did they call for on themſelves! What a legacy did they leave to their remote poſterity! Yet there is mercy in reſerve for a remnant of that nation: let us then pray for them, that at length they may look to Him, whom they have pierced, and mourn for their ſins, in true repentance, and with living faith. Indeed all, who delight in anathemas and imprecations, will find them rebound upon them: let us then bleſs, and curſe not; but, in an oppoſite ſenſe, we may earneſtly ſay “let the blood of the Lamb of God, be on us, and our children, to cleanſe us and them from all ſin.”

Under trivial injuries, we worthleſs creatures are prone to complain bitterly, and even to retort, or retaliate upon thoſe, who offend us: but the holy, and divine Saviour endured the moſt complicated indignities, and cruelties, without a murmur, an angry word, or a menace. In the meekneſs, and genuine dignity of heavenly wiſdom, he heard unmoved the falſe accuſations, with which he was followed; the preference given to a murderer before him; the ungrateful people, whoſe diſeaſes he had healed, and whoſe wants he had ſupplied, demanding his crucifixion; the iniquitous ſentence paſſed upon him; and the ſarcaſms, and cruel deriſion of the ſoldiers, the people, the rulers, &c. Without the leaſt diſcompoſure, or impatience, he ſuffered his ſacred body to be torn with the ſcourge, his head to be wounded with the thorns, and his hands and feet to be pierced: and thus he met the horrors of the moſt excruciating death, and the ſhame of being numbered among the vileſt of criminals, with the moſt entire reſignation to his Father's will, the moſt ardent love and zeal for his glory, the deepeſt compaſſion even for his cruel murderers. He was alſo as much ſuperior to fear, as to anger, or impatience; and he ſupported his moſt complicated ſufferings, with a gravity, a dignity, a ſenſibility, and a fortitude; equally diſtant from the ill-timed diſguſting levity, which ſome have ſhewn in the proſpect of an immediate death, and the ſullen affectation of inſenſibility, which others have diſplayed: ſo that all, that hath been admired in the death of heroes, or philoſophers, is no more comparable to the ſetting of this Sun of Righteouſneſs, than the glimmering taper is to the clear light of the day. But though the other ſufferings of the bleſſed Saviour were endured in ſilent ſubmiſſion: yet his Father's frown, and wrath, that he bare for our tranſgreſſions, extorted the moſt doleful complaint, “My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me”? But even this was connected with perfect faith, hope, love, and reſignation: what then will be their miſery, who are for ever forſaken of God, and ſink under his wrath, in black deſpair, and determined rage, and enmity? The believer, who has taſted ſome drops of the cup, which the Saviour exhauſted in the garden, and on the croſs; when he hath loſt for a time the comfort of communion with the God, whom he loves, and fears coming finally ſhort of his favour; can frame a very feeble, and inadequate conception of this ſubject; and thence he learns to judge of the immenſity of the Saviour's love to ſinners: thence he alſo gets a deeper conviction of the malignity of ſin, of his own deſert of wrath, and of his obligations to him, who hath delivered him from the wrath to come: and in that word “Depart from me,” which unbelievers neglect or deſpiſe, he perceives more horror, than even in what he reads of the unquenchable fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. But let us eſpecially conſider this conduct of Chriſt, as our pattern: and remember, that all our fretfulneſs, peeviſhneſs, bitterneſs, and deſpondency under our little trials, are indeed acts of rebellion, which could not have been pardoned, but through the ſhedding of his precious blood: let us remember, that we are called to do good, and ſuffer evil in this preſent world: let us keep a guard over our ſpirits, and at the door of our lips, when we are injured, inſulted, and afflicted: let us conſider how light our afflictions are, and how mixed with conſolations, when compared with thoſe of our divine Surety: and let us never expect, nor deſire kind uſage, from ſuch perſons, as crucified the Lord of glory.

How muſt adoring angels have been filled with aſtoniſhment, when they witneſſed their incarnate Lord, and Creator, thus deſpiſed, and hated by ſinful men! When they obſerved the bloody rage, with which his death was demanded; when they ſaw the cruelty, and inſult with which he was treated! Nothing could more aſtoniſh theſe holy ſpectators, than the madneſs, and wickedneſs of his foes; except it were his patience in bearing with them, when his frown muſt at once have ſunk them into hell; his compaſſion for the ſouls of thoſe, who were of ſo malignant a nature, in thus agonizing and dying for them; and his power, and grace, in thus triumphing over the prince of darkneſs, and reſcuing ſome trophies of his victory from deſtruction, even in that deepeſt ſcene of his humiliation. Thus were the purpoſes, and prophecies of God accompliſhed; thus was his law magnified, his juſtice ſatisfied, and his holineſs diſplayed; thus was the way opened for us ſinners to the throne of grace now, and to the kingdom of glory here-

IN the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn towards the firſt *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to ſee the ſepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, and came and rolled back the ſtone from the door, and ſat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as ſnow.

4 And for fear of him the keepers did ſhake, and became as dead *men*.

5 And the angel anſwered and ſaid unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye ſeek Jeſus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here; for he is riſen, as he ſaid. Come, ſee the place where the Lord lay:

7 And go quickly, and tell his diſciples that he is riſen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there ſhall ye ſee him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the ſepulchre with fear and great joy, and did

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after. Yet never were the horrid nature and effects of ſin ſo tremendouſly diſplayed, from the creation of the world, to this time, nor ever ſhall be; as on that important day, when the beloved Son of the Father hung upon the croſs, ſuffering once for ſin, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God: ſo great was the wickedneſs then committed, that the ſun might well hide his aſtoniſhed head; the earth be clothed with ſable, and nature herſelf be thrown into convulſions, as in ſympathy with her expiring Lord.

Our God will not grant preſumptuous infidels thoſe proofs of the truth of his word, which they arrogantly require, and with which they would by no means be ſatisfied: but he will give all ſuch as are proper, in his own time, and manner; and he will deliver, and receive to himſelf all thoſe, who truſt in him, however men may deride their confidence, and their adoption to be his children: their trials may be ſharp, and appear tedious; and at ſome times, they may be ready to cry "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" But they will be enabled at laſt to ſay "Into thy hands I commend my ſpirit, for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord thou God of Truth." For our divine Saviour hath by dying, deprived death of his terrific ſting, and removed all obſtructions to our happineſs; provided his grace do but deliver us from unbelief, and the love of ſin. He hath conſecrated the grave as the quiet repoſitory of the bodies of his ſleeping ſaints, and hath prepared for its future opening again, to reſtore them immortal and glorious, by his reſurrection, as the firſt fruits of that glorious harveſt; that they may for ever inhabit the holy city above, where is fulneſs of joy at his right hand for evermore.

We may alſo reflect with comfort on the abundant atteſtations, that were given to the character of the calumniated Jeſus; in that all concerned in his death were conſtrained, in effect, to ſay "This was a righteous man," "this was the King of Iſrael," or "truly this was the Son of God," and we alſo, exerciſing ourſelves to have a conſcience void of offence, may leave it to the Lord to vindicate our reputations. (*Pſ.* xxxvii. v. 5, 6.) Let us at the ſame time ever keep our faith fixed on every illuſtration of that truth, that "where ſin hath abounded, grace much more abounds:" obſerving alſo, that profligate heathens are far more eaſily brought to glorify God, and confeſs faith in his Son, than proud Phariſees, and hypocrites. As God ſpared not "his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things." Hereby we know his love to ſinful men: may we then prove our love to him, by crucifying our luſts, and even by ſacrificing our beloved Iſaacs, and reſigning our deareſt earthly comforts, at his word, for his glory, or in ſubmiſſion to his providence. In ſhort, let us not only afar off, but as near as we can, contemplate this affecting ſcene; that our hearts may be melted with godly ſorrow, weaned from this world, encouraged in hope, animated by love, admiration, and gratitude, made to glory in the croſs of Chriſt alone, and induced to yield up ourſelves moſt willingly to his ſervice.

The Lord hath a choſen remnant amongſt various deſcriptions of men: and whilſt we find a Judas among the apoſtles, and a Joſeph in the Jewiſh ſanhedrim; we ſhould learn not to condemn whole ſocieties for the crimes, or to ſanction them for the good conduct, of an individual belonging to them. The heart-ſearching Saviour knows even his ſecret diſciples: and though we muſt not excuſe the timidity of ſuch, as for a time are afraid of confeſſing Him before his inveterate enemies: yet we ſhould make allowances for difficult ſituations, and approve of conſcientiouſneſs, and holy ſingularity, in men ſurrounded by the worſt of examples; nor muſt we deſpiſe the day of ſmall things. But we ſhould eſpecially adore the myſteries of divine wiſdom, in appointing men to, and fitting them for particular ſervices in his church; and the ſovereign power of his grace, which ſometimes gives courage to the fearful, when the moſt intrepid are intimidated. Thus he provides for the honour of his name, and the ſupport of his cauſe, and defeats the purpoſes of his moſt implacable and potent adverſaries. Let us then be willing to be accounted deceivers, and to paſs through evil, as well as good report, as our Lord did: for if we are upright in the ſight of God, all the ſuſpicions, and endeavours of man to diſgrace us, will tend to their confuſion, and the manifeſtation of our integrity: even as the precautions of the Jewiſh rulers, tended to prove the reſurrection of Jeſus, and to forward the ſucceſs of his goſpel.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1—8.] (*Mark*, c. xvi.

run to bring his diſciples word.

9 And as they went to tell his diſciples, behold, Jeſus met them, ſaying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worſhipped him.

10 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there ſhall they ſee me.

11 Now when they were going, behold, ſome of the watch came into the city, and ſhewed unto the chief prieſts all the things that were done.

12 And when they were aſſembled with the elders, and had taken counſel, they gave large money unto the ſoldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His diſciples came by night, and ſtole him *away* while we ſlept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will perſuade him, and ſecure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as

Luke, c. xxiv. *John*, c. xx, xxi.) The Lord Jeſus expired on the afternoon preceding the ſabbath: his body lay in the grave the remainder of that day, during all the ſabbath, and part of the day after, which began at ſun-ſet: ſo that he aroſe early in the morning on the third day. "In the end of the ſabbath, or after that the "ſabbath was ended," and the day dawned on the firſt day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, went to ſee the ſepulchre, and to examine whether it remained in the ſame ſtate, in which it had been left on the evening of his burial; knowing nothing of the guard, that had been placed there: probably the women, mentioned by the other evangeliſts, followed ſome time after with the ſpices, &c. But before this, moſt aſtoniſhing events had taken place: a mighty earthquake had firſt announced the approaching reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus, and probably thrown the ſoldiers into conſternation: and then an angel appeared, in a moſt glorious form; rolled away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre, and ſat down on it; which affrighted the ſoldiers, ſo that they became ſenſeleſs, as if they had been dead: but it is probable, that at length coming to themſelves, they recovered juſt courage enough to flee away from the terrifying ſcene. In the mean time the Lord aroſe from the dead; re-uniting his human ſoul to his body, by his own divine power, and leaving the ſepulchre, as a mighty conqueror over death, and the grave. When the women therefore came to the ſepulchre, they found the ſtone rolled from the door: and it ſeems, that Mary Magdalene immediately returned to the city, to inform the apoſtles; whilſt the other women examined the ſepulchre, and at length ſaw a viſion of angels, one of which addreſſed them, in this encouraging manner; bidding them not fear, for as they came to ſeek, and honour Jeſus, who had been crucified, they had abundant cauſe for confidence, and joy, ſeeing he was indeed riſen from the dead; and inviting them to examine more particularly the place, where he had lain; calling him the Lord, that is the Lord of angels as well as men. He then commanded them to go with all ſpeed to inform the diſciples of theſe particulars, that they might ſhare the comfort of ſuch glad tidings; and prepare to meet him in Galilee, where the whole company would have the ſatisfaction of beholding him: and as he, an angel of God, had expreſſly told them theſe things; they were not to doubt the truth of them, how extraordinary ſoever they might appear; or neglect to report them, for fear of being deemed credulous viſionaries. Upon this they immediately departed, with mixt affections of terror, and joy, but the latter was more prevalent; and they ran with haſte to carry word to his diſciples.

V. 9, 10.] As the women were going to the city, Jeſus himſelf was pleaſed to appear to them, and congratulate them on the arrival of that joyful morning; expreſſing his ardent good will, and affection for them: and after they had embraced his feet, and worſhipped him, with deep humility, profound reverence, and joyful love, yet not without ſome emotions of fear; he encouraged them, and ordered them to proceed on their way to inform his diſciples, (whom he graciouſly called his brethren, notwithſtanding their deſertion of him in his ſufferings;) aſſuring them, that the whole company ſhould have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing him in Galilee, at a time, and place appointed. It is obvious to every attentive reader, that there is great difficulty in arranging the various circumſtances, recorded by the Evangeliſts, into one compact narration: it is plain, that they did not write in concert, or ſuch appearances of inconſiſtency would not have been found: but the Lord was pleaſed to direct them thus to commit to writing thoſe incidents, which moſt impreſſed their own minds; that ſelf-ſufficient infidels, who hate the truth, and are glad of any frivolous objection to it, might be taken in their own craftineſs. When the different accounts of the evangeliſts have been ſeparately conſidered; a compendious view will be given of the moſt approved method, by which they have been ſhewn to be conſiſtent with each other: and that will be the proper place alſo, for a brief ſtatement of the complex demonſtration afforded us of this important event, on which the truth of Chriſtianity, and all our hopes depend.

V. 11—15.] The Roman ſoldiers ſeem to have been the firſt perſons, who gave any intimations of the Reſurrection of Jeſus. Probably ſome of them retired to their quarters, or into the city, and diſperſed ſome uncertain rumours of what had paſſed: whilſt their leader's went to make their report to the chief prieſts, &c. It is not conceivable, but that the latter muſt have been convinced, that the events were miraculous, and afraid that Jeſus was indeed riſen again, as he had predicted: but as they had engaged all their credit, and authority, in this unequal conteſt, they could not think of ſubmitting or receding; and there was no other way left them, but to attempt the concealment of what had taken place. They therefore deliberated on the ſubject, and could deviſe no better project, than to bribe the ſoldiers to deny the facts they were taught: and this ſaying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16 Then the eleven diſciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jeſus had appointed them.

17 And when they ſaw him they worſhipped him: but ſome doubted.

18 And Jeſus came and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt;

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they had reported, and to propagate an abſurd falſehood inſtead of them: and as the ſoldiers had no ſerious convictions, that they were any ways concerned in what had taken place; they bargained for a good round ſum of money, and agreed to accuſe the diſciples of having come, when they were aſleep, and ſtolen the body: and at the ſame time the rulers undertook to ſecure them from puniſhment, if Pilate ſhould be informed of their having ſlept when on duty, which was death by the Roman law. Accordingly they took the money and ſaid what they were deſired; and this report was circulated with ſuch diligence, and ſucceſs, that it was commonly current among the Jews, when Matthew penned his goſpel. Yet was it a falſehood, that confuted itſelf, and was the moſt effectual acknowledgement of their obſtinacy and malice, that can be imagined. Had the ſoldiers been all aſleep, they could not have known any thing, which paſſed: if any of them were awake to ſee, what was done, they would have alarmed the others, and prevented the removal of the body; as that muſt have been a work of time, and labour. Moreover, if they had *really* been aſleep, they would not have dared to mention it; and, if it had been diſcovered, the Jewiſh rulers would certainly have done their utmoſt to bring them to puniſhment for it. If there had been the leaſt ſhadow of probability in the accuſation, they would aſſuredly have proſecuted the apoſtles, with the moſt unrelenting vengeance; as their credit, and authority were ſo deeply concerned: ſo that this ſingle omiſſion was a full demonſtration that they did not believe one word of the report, they ſo induſtriouſly circulated. At the ſame time, it was improbable in the extreme, that the intimidated apoſtles, and diſciples ſhould attempt ſuch an action, which would have even been exceſſively raſh, in the moſt experienced ſoldiers; and if poſſible it would have been ſtill more improbable, that they ſhould have ſucceeded; and if they had, reproach, torture, and death were the whole recompence, that they could poſſibly have expected. But in fact the Jewiſh rulers were determined not to confeſs the truth: and as they knew not what to ſay, they were reduced to a ſort of diſtreſſing neceſſity of circulating one of the moſt fooliſh lies, that ever was deviſed.

V. 16, 17.] Several appearances of Chriſt are here paſſed over in ſilence; but his meeting with the diſciples by appointment in Galilee, is particularly mentioned. Moſt of them were inhabitants of that diſtrict; and probably this was the time when he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once. (1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 6.) The place appointed for this purpoſe was a mountain, perhaps Tabor, on which he had been transfigured. When the diſciples ſaw him, and were ſatisfied, that he was really riſen from the dead; they worſhipped him, as the Son of God, and the Lord of all. But there were ſome, who doubted at the firſt, but who were probably at length convinced. As the apoſtles had before this, all repeatedly ſeen him, and as even incredulous Thomas had been fully ſatisfied of his reſurrection; we cannot underſtand this of any of them; but of ſome of the five hundred brethren, that were gathered together on this occaſion.

V. 18—20.] It is not certain, whether what is here recorded took place in Galilee, or after the return of the diſciples to Jeruſalem, and juſt before our Lord's aſcenſion. However he came to them, and converſed with them of thoſe things that pertained to the kingdom of God; and informed them, that, in conſequence of his humiliation, he was now inveſted with all power, and authority in heaven, and earth; over angels and men; in regulating the courſe of providence, and in communicating all ſpiritual bleſſings, as Mediator, for the benefit of his church, and for the effectuating the purpoſes of his incarnation, and ſacrifice. He therefore ſolemnly commiſſioned the apoſtles, and his miniſters, to go forth, and propagate his religion, “among all nations, baptizing “them in,” or into, “the name of the Father, and of “the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, &c.” The apoſtles were ſtill ſo much under the influence of Jewiſh prejudices, that they did not underſtand this commiſſion, as authorizing them to preach to the Gentiles; or to admit them into the church, except they were previouſly proſelyted to Judaiſm: nay they did not perceive this, till a conſiderable time after the deſcent of the holy Ghoſt! There are two words in this paſſage, that are tranſlated “teach,” and “teaching;” but they are of a different meaning. The former is of the ſame import with that, which is rendered “diſciples;” and ſeems to imply, that general inſtruction, which was neceſſary to bring men to profeſs themſelves the diſciples of Chriſt: and the other relates to their more particular ſubſequent inſtruction, in all the various parts of chriſtianity. As the words might ſtand in the ſame order, if it had been a command to them, “to go, and proſelyte all nations to “Judaiſm, circumciſing them in the name of the God “of Iſrael, and teaching them to obſerve the law of “Moſes;” ſo no argument can hence be fairly adduced reſpecting the ſubjects of baptiſm. For in that caſe it would have been underſtood, that the adult males were to be circumciſed, upon a profeſſion of that religion, and their infant offſpring at the time appointed: and in like manner all adults muſt at that time have been inſtructed before baptiſm, who were admitted into the church from among the Jews, and Gentiles; though their infant offſpring might then, and afterwards be baptized alſo: and the caſe is the ſame ſtill. But whether infants ought or ought

20 Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

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not to be thus admitted to this initiatory ordinance, may be further conſidered hereafter. The general nature of baptiſm hath already been explained; (Note, c. iii. v. 6:) we have here an account of the appropriation of this inſtitution to the chriſtian diſpenſation. The apoſtles, and preachers of the goſpel, were ordered to baptize thoſe, whom they diſcipled, into the *name*, (not *names*,) of the Father, &c. This is a moſt irrefragable proof of the doctrine of the Trinity; that is, of the proper Deity of the Son, and of the diſtinct perſonality, and Deity of the Holy Ghoſt: for it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that a mere man, or creature, or a mere modus, or Quality of God, ſhould be joined with the Father, in the one name, into which all chriſtians are baptized. The man, that believes this, muſt have a very looſe idea of the peculiar honours of God, of which he is ſo zealous, that he will not give them to any other: for to be baptized into the name of any One, implies a profeſſed dependance on, and devoted ſubjection to Him; to be baptized therefore into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, implies a profeſſed dependance on theſe three Perſons jointly, and equally, and a devoting of ourſelves to them, as worſhippers and ſervants: this is proper, and obvious, upon the ſuppoſition of the myſterious unity of three coequal Perſons in the unity of the Godhead; but not to be accounted for upon any other principles. Chriſtianity is the religion of a ſinner, who applies for ſalvation from deſerved wrath, and from ſin, to the mercy of the Father, through the Perſon and atonement of the incarnate Son, and by the ſanctification of the Holy Spirit; and who in conſequence gives up himſelf to be the Worſhipper, and Servant of the triune Jehovah, in all his ordinances, and commandments; that according to the ancient and excellent doxology, “Glory may be to the “Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt: as it “was in the beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be.” Baptiſm is an outward ſign of that inward waſhing, or ſanctification of the Spirit, which ſeals, and evidences the believer's juſtification: when an adult is baptized he avows his acceptance of this ſalvation, and makes this ſurrender of himſelf to the ſervice of God his Saviour. When we bring our infant offspring to be baptized, we expreſs our earneſt deſire, that they may ſhare the ſame benefits, and be the redeemed worſhippers and ſervants of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: we renew our own profeſſion of faith in, and devotedneſs to this one God in three Perſons: and we pledge ourſelves to God, and his church, to uſe proper means, as far as we can, to bring up our children in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord; in hope of their being made partakers of the inward, and ſpiritual grace of baptiſm: and as far as theſe things are attended to, they have a moſt ſalutary tendency both to parents, and children; and this ordinance helps to keep up the remembrance of the principal doctrines of chriſtianity, in all places, where it is uſed. There can be no reaſonable doubt, but that the apoſtles, and primitive chriſtians always adminiſtered baptiſm, in this very form: and it would be ſtrange to infer their diſobedience to ſo expreſs a command of Chriſt, from the brevity, with which ſuch matters are recorded in the Acts of the Apoſtles, &c. Indeed it would be a moſt daring preſumption in any man to alter this ſacred form; as if he knew better than the Lord himſelf, in what manner to adminiſter the ordinance: though it would be conſiſtent enough for thoſe, who ſpend their whole lives, in degrading Chriſt, and exalting themſelves. When our Lord had appointed this ordinance, and directed the apoſtles in reſpect of the ſubſequent inſtruction of their converts; being about to depart from them as to his viſible preſence, he ſaid, “Lo, I *am* with you always, “even to the end of the world:” He ſaid not, to death, or to eternity; for that might have been reſtricted to the perſons of the apoſtles; but, “to the end of the world:” which includes all ſucceeding miniſters, congregations, and diſciples, in every age, and nation, even to the conſummation of all things. He is with us, in the power of his protecting providence, by the influences of his teaching, ſanctifying, and comforting Spirit, and in the communication of all ſpiritual bleſſings from the favour of his omnipreſent Deity; and we ſhould realize him with us, in ſecret, and in ſocial worſhip, and in our public aſſemblies. (c. xviii. v. 20.) To this precious aſſurance the word Amen is affixed; probably by the evangeliſt, as expreſſing his deſire, that it might be ſo; and perhaps to lead the reader to convert the promiſe into a prayer for himſelf, and every part of the church.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our God can with infinite eaſe accompliſh his promiſes, by methods that are beyond the expectations of his friends, as well as in defiance of all the oppoſition of his enemies. Let us with joy contemplate the divine Saviour burſting the barriers of the grave, and triumphing over the king of terrors in his glorious reſurrection! Thus he proved himſelf the Son of God, and the King of Iſrael; he evinced the ſufficiency, and acceptance of his atoning ſacrifice; and he became the firſt-fruits from the dead, and the Author of ſpiritual, and eternal life to his people. Vain were the precautions of the Jewiſh rulers; vain the ſtone, the ſeal, the guard of valiant ſoldiers! They only ſerved to render the illuſtrious event more inconteſtible. But if the earthquake, and one holy angel could ſo terrify theſe Romans, whoſe courage hath been renowned through every age, and nation: where will the wicked appear, when the ſame power ſhall raiſe the dead, deſtroy the viſible creation, and be diſplayed to judge the world? But the humble, weeping penitents, that in faith and love ſeek Jeſus, who was crucified, that they may be ſaved through his precious blood, and employed in his ſervice, and to the glory of his name, need fear none of theſe things. None can ſo accuſe them, as to compaſs their condemnation; for Jeſus, who died for them, is riſen again, and ever liveth to plead their cauſe: all holy angels are their friends, and guardians; and neither earth, nor hell, life, or death can hurt them. Whilſt they behold the place, where the dear Redeemer lay, they find themſelves gradually reconciled to the thoughts of death, and the grave; and inſpired with the hopes of a glorious reſurrection, and with the joyful expectation, that when he ſhall appear, then ſhall they alſo appear with him in glory. We are now called to rejoice with our riſen Lord; as we not long ſince were to ſympathiſe in his ſufferings, and attend his funeral; let us then delight to tell to all around us, that the Lord is riſen, and perfected, to be the Author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him. Yet the true believer, will not always be able to diveſt himſelf of all fear, even when he hath the moſt abundant cauſe for joy; and he may deem himſelf favoured in this preſent world, if hope, and chearfulneſs generally prevail. Whilſt we endeavour to obey the word ſent us by the ſervants of our Lord, He will manifeſt himſelf unto us, diſpel our fears, confer bleſſings, and cauſe us to worſhip him with adoring love, and joyful gratitude: for notwithſtanding his majeſty, and purity, and our meanneſs, and unworthineſs, he condeſcends to call us his brethren!

But the malice of proud perſecutors cannot be overcome by any demonſtration: even avarice will expend large ſums, to ſtifle the evidence of the truth, and to propagate error; policy will adopt the moſt fooliſh meaſures in ſuch a cauſe; and infidels will ſwallow the moſt abſurd falſehoods, with a ſtupid credulity. We muſt not impute ſuch things to the weakneſs of their underſtandings; but to the malice of their hearts, and to the judicial blindneſs, to which God hath given them up. Thus he leaves them to expoſe their own cauſe, and to give a conſtrained teſtimony to his truth. But they who are teachable, and impartially ſeek to know the ways of God, ſhall be admitted to clearer and fuller diſcoveries of the truth from time to time; and at length their perplexities ſhall be all removed, by what they ſee, hear, and experience in their own ſouls. Being then compaſſed with ſuch numerous witneſſes of our Redeemer's reſurrection; let us be ever ready to meet him in all his appointed ordinances, for the fuller eſtabliſhment of our faith, and hope: and let us often contemplate him, as now poſſeſſed of all power in heaven and earth, for the benefit of his church. He hath ſent his goſpel into this diſtant nation, to call us to be his diſciples; and moſt of us have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: let us then examine whether we really poſſeſs the inward, and ſpiritual grace of "a death unto ſin, and a new birth unto righteouſneſs;" by which the children of wrath become the children of God? Let us ſeek to experience more fully the ſalvation of our triune God, and to be more entirely devoted to his ſervice, and worſhip; and let us bring up our families, as thoſe who deſire more, far more, that they may be chriſtians, than that they may be rich, learned, or honourable in the world. Let miniſters alſo obſerve to act always under the commiſſion, and according to the inſtructions of the great Head of the church, and Lord of all: let them ſtill preach the goſpel to all around them, adminiſtering ſacred ordinances by the rule of God's word; and teaching the people, not only a few doctrines, but to obſerve all things, whatever Chriſt hath commanded them. He is not indeed now perſonally preſent with us, and miraculous gifts have ceaſed: but he is yet ſpiritually amongſt us, to aſſiſt and bleſs us in our ſtudies, and labours, public and private; and he is and will be with all his ſervants, and diſciples alway, even to the end of the world; and until he have gathered them all into his heavenly kingdom, to behold and ſhare his glory, and felicity. "Even ſo, Lord Jeſus, be thou with us, and all thy people; and cauſe thy face to ſhine upon us, that thy way, may be known on earth, thy ſaving health among all nations. Amen."

The GOSPEL according to St. MARK.

We frequently read in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and in the Epiſtles of St. Paul, of John ſirnamed Mark: and in the firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter, we read of Marcus, or Mark, whom the Apoſtle calls "his ſon," probably becauſe he had been converted under his miniſtry. (1 Pet. c. v. ver. 13.) *Theſe ſeem to have been different perſons; and the latter is ſuppoſed to have been the penman of this goſpel, which tradition reports to have been written under St. Peter's inſpection. It records more of the miracles, than of the diſcourſes of our Lord: and, though in many things it coincides with the Goſpel according to St. Matthew; yet it alſo contains ſome facts omitted by him, and records others more fully, at the ſame time, that it paſſes over many in ſilence. The inſtructions conveyed by it are nearly the ſame with thoſe, which we have already been deducing: but as it hath pleaſed God to confirm his truth to us by many witneſſes; we ſhould not deem this a mere repetition, but ſhould expect an adequate advantage from reviewing the ſame intereſting events, placed by each of the evangeliſts, in that point of view, which moſt affected his own mind.*

CHAP. I.

Contains 1*ſt. An account of John's miniſtry, and of Chriſt's baptiſm, and temptation,* 1---13. 2*d. John's impriſonment; and Jeſus's beginning to preach in Galilee, and calling Simon and Andrew, James and John to follow him,* 14---20. 3*d. His caſting out an unclean ſpirit; healing Peter's wife's mother, and many ſick perſons; retiring early for prayer, preaching in the ſynagogues of Galilee, and cleanſing a leper,* 21---45.

THE beginning of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight.

4 John did baptize in the wilderneſs, and preach the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confeſſing their ſins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a ſkin about his loins; and he did eat locuſts and wild honey;

7 And preached, ſaying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to ſtoop down and unlooſe.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt.

9 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that Jeſus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And ſtraightway coming up out of the water, he ſaw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove, deſcending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderneſs.

13 And he was there in the wilderneſs forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beaſts: and the angels miniſtered unto him.

14 Now after that John was put in priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom of God,

15 And ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the goſpel.

16 Now as he walked by the ſea of Galilee, he ſaw Simon, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the ſea: (for they were fiſhers:)

17 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fiſhers of men.

18 And ſtraightway they forſook their nets, and followed him.

19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he ſaw James the *ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who alſo were in the ſhip mending their nets.

20 And ſtraightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ſhip with the hired ſervants, and went after him.

21 And they went into Capernaum; and ſtraightway on the ſabbath-day he entered into the ſynagogue, and taught.

22 And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the ſcribes.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—11.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iii.) St. Mark, (writing, as is ſuppoſed, after Matthew,) paſſed over every thing that related to the birth of Jeſus, and began his hiſtory with a brief account of John's miniſtry: this was in fact "the beginning of the goſpel," the introduction of the new teſtament diſpenſation; the opening of the glad tidings relating to Jeſus Chriſt the anointed Saviour, the incarnate Son of God; according as it had been foretold by the prophets, (*Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 3—5. *Mal:* c. iii. v. 1.) It is not neceſſary to add any further Notes to thoſe, that have been copiouſly made upon John's miniſtry, Chriſt's baptiſm, &c.

V. 12—20.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iv.) The expreſſion "driven of the Spirit," may imply the energy of that impulſe on the mind of our Lord, by which he was inwardly conſtrained to retire from ſociety, and to go into the waſte howling wilderneſs, to be "with the "wild beaſts:" this additional circumſtance favours the opinion, that He went into that deſert, in which Iſrael formerly had wandered; and it ſhews the dreary ſituation, in which he choſe ſo long to continue, and the peculiar advantages, which ſatan would thereby poſſeſs, in pouring his horrid temptations into his mind.

23 And there was in their ſynagogue a man with an unclean ſpirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 And when the unclean ſpirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, inſomuch that they queſtioned among themſelves, ſaying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately his fame ſpread abroad throughout all the regions round about Galilee.

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the ſynagogue, they entered into the houſe of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay ſick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and ſhe miniſtered unto them.

32 And at even, when the ſun did ſet, they brought unto him all that were diſeaſed, and them that were poſſeſſed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were ſick of divers diſeaſes, and caſt out many devils; and ſuffered not the devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him.

35 And in the morning, riſing up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a ſolitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they ſaid unto him, All *men* ſeek for thee.

38 And he ſaid unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there alſo: for therefore came I forth.

39 And he preached in their ſynagogues throughout all Galilee, and caſt out devils.

40 And there came a leper to him, beſeeching him, and kneeling down to him, and ſaying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.

41 And Jeſus, moved with compaſſion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and ſaith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And as ſoon as he had ſpoken, immediately the leproſy departed from him, and he was cleanſed.

V. 23—28.] This miracle is not recorded by St. Matthew. As the poſſeſſed perſon was in the ſynagogue, we may ſuppoſe, that the unclean ſpirit did not at all times alike harraſs him; but perhaps took advantage of the paroxyſms of bodily diſorder, or other circumſtances, to renew his more violent aſſaults. He was accordingly ſeized with one of them, in the ſynagogue, and cried out with great vehemency, "let us alone, &c." (c. v. ver. 1—20;) the man being probably urged by ſatanic influence to fear immediate deſtruction to himſelf, inſtead of expecting the deſtruction of the power of the unclean ſpirits, and his own deliverance, from the preſence of Chriſt. No diſorder could poſſibly enable a man to know Jeſus to be "the Holy One of God," who came to deſtroy the works of the devil: this was doubtleſs the language of the unclean ſpirit, ſpeaking by the organs of the man; and probably intending to bring Jeſus into the ſuſpicion of a confederacy with ſatan, by this inſidious teſtimony. Our Lord therefore impoſed ſilence on him, and conſtrained him to quit poſſeſſion of the man; and though he ſhewed his malice, by tearing him, as much as he could, and cauſing him to call out aloud, as in extreme anguiſh, (which was expreſſive of the unclean ſpirit's reluctancy to depart, and of the torment he felt, at being deprived of doing further miſchief;) yet he ſo entirely left the man, that the people were exceedingly aſtoniſhed at the miracle, and it greatly increaſed the reputation of Chriſt.

V. 29—34.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 14—18.)

V. 35—39.] After a day ſpent in unremitted labour to a very late hour, our Lord next morning aroſe a great while before day, for retirement and prayer. After a time Peter and others of the apoſtles came to inform him, that all the people of the place ſought for him; and they were probably delighted at his increaſing popularity. But though he blamed no interruption of this kind; yet he ſaw not good to go amongſt the ſame people at preſent, but called the apoſtles to attend him to other places. Perhaps he knew the multitude to be meditating ſome improper deſign, in order to make him King over them.

V. 40—45.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 1—4. c. ix. v. 30, 31.)

43 And he ſtraitly charged him, and forthwith ſent him away;

44 And ſaith unto him, See thou ſay nothing to any man: but go thy way, ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing thoſe things which Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publiſh *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, inſomuch that Jeſus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in deſert places; and they came to him from every quarter.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Thoſe characters, and actions, which are for a time concealed, through obſcurity, or humility, are commonly far more excellent than thoſe, that are the ſubjects of extenſive human applauſe: but when the Lord's time comes, or his work requires it; he can bring forth thoſe, whom he approves, into notoriety, and render their eminence equal to their excellence. There muſt be a preparation wrought in the hearts of ſinners, before they can welcome the privileges, and perform the duties of the kingdom of God: and this is commonly effected by the miniſtration of the law, and the preaching of repentance, and converſion. Miniſters may outwardly do theſe things, and adminiſter divine ordinances; and thus men may be led to confeſs their ſins, to profeſs repentance, and to aſſume an appearance of religion: but without faith in *Him*, who is infinitely ſuperior to the moſt holy and excellent of mere men, and without being baptized by Him with the Holy Ghoſt, they cannot be accepted ſervants, or worſhippers of God. This, all faithful preachers will plainly declare; and they will be humble in their judgment of themſelves, and ſpeak honourably of Chriſt, in exact proportion to the degree of their ſpiritual diſcernment, and advance in the divine life: and when to this, they join an holy indifference to all worldly things, they are likely to be extenſively uſeful. Whilſt we rejoice in the perfection of our Surety's obedience for us; we ſhould copy his example: and by attending on all God's ordinances, we ſhall be in the way of receiving more abundant ſupplies of the Spirit of adoption, witneſſing with our ſpirits that we are the children of God, accepted through his beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleaſed. Then, ſhould we be expoſed to perſecutors fierce as wild beaſts, as well as to ſatan's temptations, during our continuance in this wilderneſs; we may confide in the divine protection, and conſolation, and expect that angels will delight in miniſtering to us, for our Redeemer's ſake. One inſtrument after another finiſhes his tranſient ſeaſon of uſefulneſs; but the divine Agent worketh hitherto, and will to the end, and for ever; and though apparent delays intervene, yet, "when the time is fulfilled," he will perfect what concerneth the church and every believer, according to his holy word. They, who are labouring in honeſty, and harmony, are more in the way of Chriſt's call to further ſerviceableneſs in his church; than they who are wrangling, or loitering, under pretence of ſtudy and preparation. The occupation of a miniſter, though deſpiſed by carnal men, might be deemed a high preferment, not only by ſuch as ſhould be called to it from the fiſhing boat, or the flock; but even by thoſe, that ſhould leave the higheſt employments in the community for the ſake of it: for the ſalvation of one ſoul is a far more important event, than the temporal proſperity of whole nations. But they, "who deſire "this good work," muſt be content to leave all their worldly intereſts, and expectations, that they may follow the example, the inſtructions, and the commandments of Chriſt; and give up themſelves wholly to learn his truth, and will, in order that they may teach them to others alſo. May his powerful word call forth many ſuch ſelf-denied, diſintereſted, laborious, patient, and ſkilful fiſhers of men: for though many have been, and are employed, and vaſt numbers of ſinners have been, and many ſtill are, brought forth from the courſe of this evil world, into his church! Yet far more continue in their natural eſtate, deſtroying each other, and falling a prey to that great leviathan, who takes paſtime in this work of deſtruction. Many Scribes indeed there have been, and are, whoſe human learning is their only qualification, and who make worldly preferment their leading object: but our prayer ought to be, that Scribes, well inſtructed unto the kingdom of God, may teach with authority all our congregations, in ſome meaſure after the manner of Chriſt, and to the conviction and aſtoniſhment of ſuch hearers, as have hitherto been taught in a mere formal manner: this would render our churches and chapels more frequented, than they now generally are. But there are too many in our aſſemblies, that are poſſeſſed by unclean ſpirits: theſe will quietly attend, whilſt only formal teachers officiate; but if the Lord come with his faithful miniſters, and his holy doctrine, and by his convincing Spirit, they begin to cry out, and are ready to ſay, "What have we to do with thee, Jeſus of Nazareth, "art thou come to deſtroy us?" Satan indeed knows Him to be "the Holy One of God?" but he very ſucceſsfully labours in our day to hide this truth from his ſervants, that he may maintain and extend his empire through their ignorance, and prejudice. However Jeſus can ſilence all oppoſition, and deliver ſuch, as have been moſt deeply enſlaved: yet when a poor ſinner is reſcued from this cruel oppreſſor, he often for a ſeaſon ſuffers from more diſtreſs, and horrid temptations, than he did, when he was in his peaceable poſſeſſion. The immediate, and perfect cure of frantic lunatics by a word ſpeaking would even in our days excite aſtoniſhment, and cauſe men to exclaim, "what thing is this?" Yet a work really greater is frequently wrought, and men treat it with ſupercilious contempt, and neglect! If this were not ſo, the evident converſion of a notorious profligate to a ſober, righteous, and godly life, by the preaching of a crucified Saviour, would cauſe all around to enquire "what new doctrine is this?" (new to them, though old in itſelf;) by which unclean ſpirits, are conſtrained to depart, and rebels are brought to the willing

C H A P. II.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Healing a paralytic, and juſtifying himſelf in forgiving his ſins, &c, 1---12. *2d. Calling Matthew; and anſwering thoſe, that blamed him for eating with publicans, and ſinners,* 13---17. *3d. Vindicating his diſciples, when blamed for not obſerving frequent faſts, and when accuſed of breaking the ſabbath,* 18---28.

AND again he entered into Capernaum after *ſome* days: and it was noiſed that he was in the houſe.

2 And ſtraightway many were gathered together, inſomuch that there was no room to receive *them,* no, not ſo much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one ſick of the palſy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the preſs, they uncovered the roof where he was: and, when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the ſick of the palſy lay.

5 When Jeſus ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy, Son, thy ſins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the ſcribes ſitting there, and reaſoning in their hearts.

7 Why doth this *man* thus ſpeak blaſphemies? who can forgive ſins but God only?

8 And immediately, when Jeſus perceived in his ſpirit that they ſo reaſoned within themſelves, he ſaid unto them, Why reaſon ye theſe things in your hearts?

9 Whether is it eaſier to ſay to the ſick of the palſy, *Thy* ſins be forgiven thee; or to ſay, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaith to the ſick of the palſy,)

11 I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine houſe.

12 And immediately he aroſe, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; inſomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, ſaying, We never ſaw it on this faſhion.

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obedience of children. Indeed it is in this way, that the fame of Jeſus, and the honour of the goſpel do ſpread abroad in this evil world: and if all, who profeſs the doctrines of grace, were but evidently thus diſpoſſeſſed and changed, they would gradually prevail againſt all oppoſition.

We ſhould apply to Chriſt for help in all our ſpiritual, and temporal maladies, for ourſelves and thoſe belonging to us; and we ought to uſe our health and ſtrength, in miniſtering to him, and his diſciples; diligently recommending him to others, as knowing that nothing is too large for his grace, or impoſſible to his omnipotence. But when did we ever ſpend a day, as Jeſus ſpent every one of his days? Were we like him, we ſhould riſe a great while before it be light, (if health permitted,) that we might have time for communion with our heavenly Father, if hindered at other hours by urgent engagements: and having had a good ſabbath, we ſhould be the more earneſt in prayer the next morning, leſt the good impreſſion ſhould wear off; and that we might obtain a bleſſing on thoſe eſpecially, who have heard the word of God from, or with us. Men may outwardly attend on inſtruction with diligence, and yet not be prepared to follow Chriſt fully: but it behoves us to uſe our opportunities, whilſt they are afforded us; that we may be eſtabliſhed in the faith, in caſe we ſhould be proved by loſing them for a ſeaſon. As Chriſt came to preach the goſpel in different places; we ſhould endeavour to ſpread it on every ſide, as we have opportunity: and let all, who are weary of the leproſy of ſin, and afraid of it's conſequences, wait on Chriſt to be cleanſed; for when he ſpeaks the word, (and he will ſpeak it, if we truly believe in him,) the moſt inveterate evil propenſities, will be brought under, and ſin ſhall no more have dominion over us. If this bleſſing be vouchſafed us, let us approve it in our conduct, to God's miniſters and people, by walking in all his ordinances and commandments, as witneſſes for Chriſt in this evil world. Nor ought we to conceal out obligations to the Saviour: for no reaſons now exiſt, why we ſhould heſitate to ſpread abroad his praiſes: and the more ſinners flock to him from every quarter; the greater is his honour, and the more complete his triumph and joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—12.] (Note, *Matt.* c. ix. v. 2—8. *Luke*, c. v. ver. 17—26.) We find from St. Luke, that certain Phariſees, and Scribes had come from all the cities and towns, far and wide, to watch our Lord; by hearing his doctrine, obſerving his miracles, and ſeeking for matter of accuſation againſt him. However, when he returned from his circuit unto Capernaum, and it was known, that he had entered into an houſe; ſuch great multitudes were ſoon collected, that even the court about the door could not contain them. Whilſt Jeſus was inſtructing them from the houſe, four perſons came, bringing on a bed, a man, who was ſo enfeebled by the palſy, that he could not be otherwiſe conveyed to him. Probably he deſpaired of a cure from any other quarter, and expecting it from Jeſus, he was deſirous of being thus carried to him; and his friends were equally willing to aſſiſt him, from the ſame believing expectation: though the buſineſs would be laborious to them, and painful to

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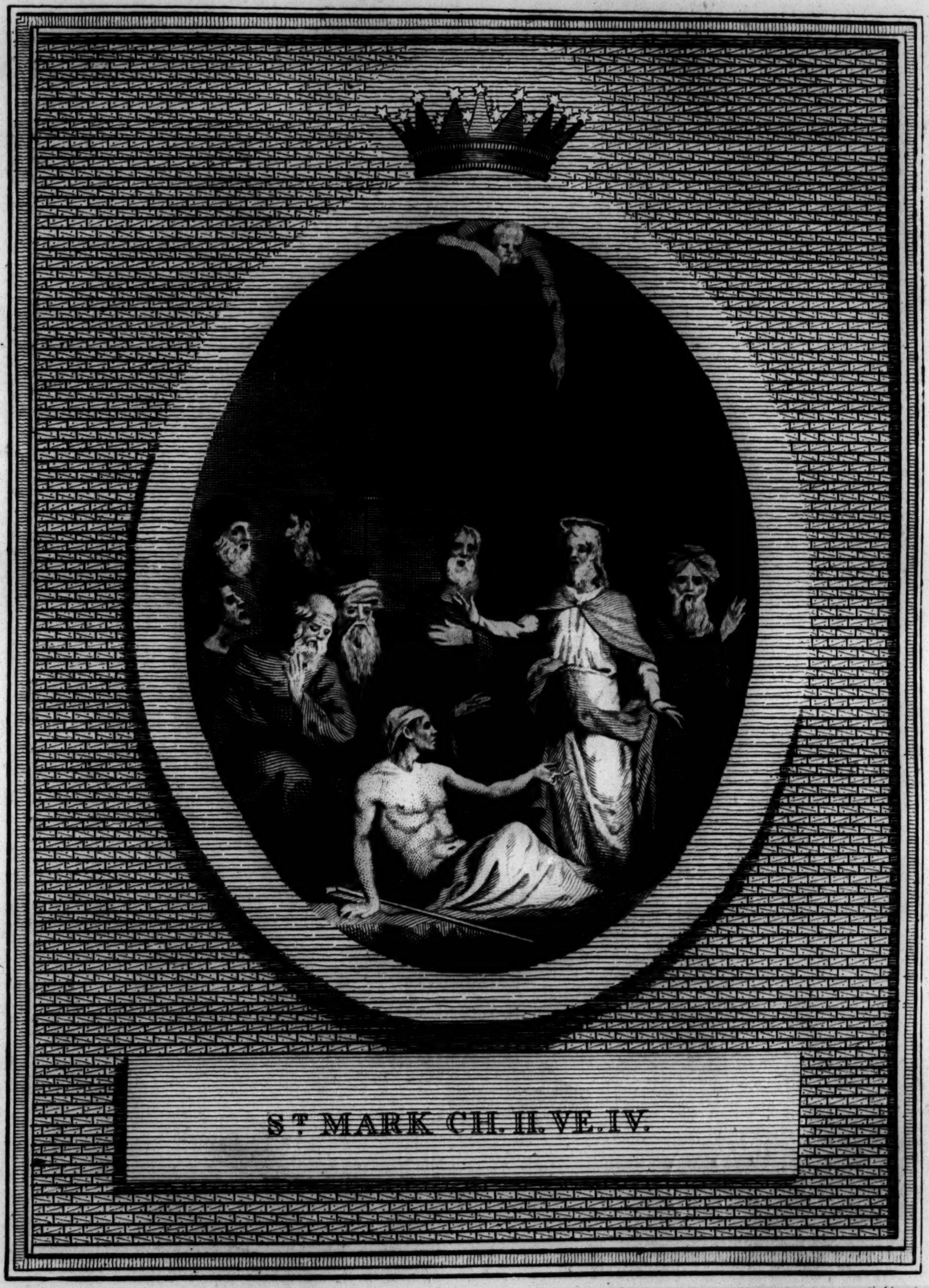

St. MARK CH. II. VE. IV.

Dayes del. Goldar Sc.

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13 And he went forth again by the ſea-ſide; and all the multitude reſorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 And as he paſſed by, he ſaw Levi *the ſon* of Alpheus ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, and ſaid unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe, and followed him.

15 And it came to paſs, that, as Jeſus ſat at meat in his houſe, many publicans and ſinners ſat alſo together with Jeſus and his diſciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the ſcribes and Phariſees ſaw him eat with publicans and ſinners, they ſaid unto his diſciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and ſinners?

17 When Jeſus heard *it*, he ſaith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the phyſician, but they that are ſick: I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

18 And the diſciples of John and of the Phariſees uſed to faſt: and they come and ſay unto him, Why do the diſciples of John and of the Phariſees faſt, but thy diſciples faſt not?

19 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber faſt while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot faſt.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days.

21 No man alſo ſeweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; elſe the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worſe.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; elſe the new wine doth burſt the bottles, and the wine is ſpoiled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine muſt be put into new bottles.

23 And it came to paſs, that he went through the corn fields on the ſabbath day; and his diſciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Phariſees ſaid unto him, Behold, why do they on the ſabbath day that which is not lawful?

25 And he ſaid unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need,

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him. When they arrived, they found, that they could not come into the preſence of Chriſt, becauſe of the multitude: but they were not diſheartened at this additional difficulty; and, being unwilling to poſtpone the matter, leſt his departure ſhould again deprive them of the opportunity, they conveyed the bed to the top of the houſe. Probably this was only one ſtory high, and there was ſome way up on the outſide: but though there might be alſo an opening in the roof; yet it ſeems not to have been wide enough to let the bed through. They therefore uncovered the roof, and even broke up what was in the way; and let him down through the tiling in his couch, and thus brought him into the preſence of Jeſus. When he therefore ſaw their faith, (in theſe evident effects of it, as well as by his intimate knowledge of their hearts;) he did not at firſt remove the man's diſorder; but addreſſing him, in the moſt condeſcending and affectionate manner, he authoritatively pronounced his ſins forgiven. This afforded the Scribes, who ſat by, the handle they ſought for; and though they did not openly declare their ſentiments, they inwardly deemed him guilty of blaſphemy, in preſuming to that, which was the prerogative of God only. But our Lord ſoon ſhewed them, that he poſſeſſed divine perfection, and authority; for "he perceived in his Spirit," or by his own inward knowledge of their hearts, the thoughts that wrought within; and called them to account for them: and he enquired, "whether it were eaſier to ſay to the ſick of the palſy, thy ſins be forgiven thee, or to ſay ariſe take up thy bed and walk?" It was eaſy to ſay either the one, or the other: but as divine authority was requiſite actually to forgive ſins; ſo omnipotence was needful for the immediate, and complete removal of that terrible diſorder. Having therefore put the matter upon that iſſue; he proceeded to prove his authority, as the Son of man, even on earth, in his ſtate of humiliation, to forgive ſins, by commanding the paralytic, to ariſe, and take up his bed, &c: and ſuch power accompanied his word, that the man was reſtored at once to perfect health and vigour, and was enabled to ariſe, and carry his bed, in the ſight of the multitude; ſo that they were all aſtoniſhed, gave praiſe to God on his behalf, and acknowledged that they had never ſeen it on this faſhion before. Thus the man, in his miraculous cure, poſſeſſed the fulleſt evidence, that his ſins were pardoned: every one, who ſaw him carry his bed, had a demonſtration of the divine power, and authority of Chriſt: others were thereby encouraged to apply to him for health, and ſalvation: God was glorified by, and in him; and the malignant Scribes were put to ſhame and ſilence.

V. 13—22.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. ix. v. 9—17.)

V. 23—28.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 1—9.) Our Lord here adds, "that the ſabbath was made for man, and not man for the ſabbath." The ſabbath was and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he went into the houſe of God, in the days of Abiathar the high prieſt, and did eat the ſhew-bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the prieſts, and gave alſo to them which were with him?

27 And he ſaid unto them, The ſabbath was made for man, and not man for the ſabbath:

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath.

CHAP. III.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Healing a man's withered hand, on the ſabbath day; and his enemies conſulting to deſtroy him, 1---6. 2d. Followed by great multitudes, healing their diſeaſes, &c; and appointing the twelve apoſtles, 7---19. 3d. Blamed by his friends for his great earneſtneſs; accuſed by the Scribes of caſting out devils by Beelzebub; convicting them of blaſphemy, and ſhewing them their

inſtituted for the good of mankind, conſidered as rational agents, living in ſociety, having many wants, and troubles; the creatures and ſubjects of God; preparing for an eternal ſtate of happineſs or miſery: and being ſinners under a diſpenſation of mercy: and man was not made for the ſabbath; as if his obſervance of it could be of any ſervice to God, or as if he were required to adhere ſtrictly to the letter of it, to his real detriment. Every regulation therefore reſpecting it is to be interpreted according to this general rule: and when a ſtrict obſervance of the reſt preſcribed would be injurious to the individual, or to others, in an enlarged, and complex view of the ſubject; the Lord of the ſabbath hath granted him a licence to diſpenſe with it: but not on any other account.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Violent ſickneſs, and the fear of death, when united to ſome hope of recovery, and an apprehenſion that the opportunity may ſpeedily elapſe, will render men willing to uſe various irkſome, and painful methods of cure; and the failure of one commonly renders them more eager to make trial of another. This indeed is not to be altogether blamed; on the contrary we ſhould put ourſelves to inconveniences, and hardſhip, in attempting the relief of the afflicted, and diſeaſed: but it is moſt to be deſired, that their affliction may bring them to apply to Chriſt, for the ſalvation of their ſouls, as well as for a bleſſing on the means uſed for the recovery of bodily health; for in that caſe their afflictions will certainly be either removed, or ſanctified. Forgiveneſs of ſins, being the forerunner of all other real bleſſings, is far more valuable than the removal of any ſickneſs; and the loſs of the ſoul is infinitely more dreadful, than the death of the body: but how very few act, as if they believed theſe things to be ſo? Alas, moſt men think themſelves whole, and feel no need of a phyſician; and therefore they deſpiſe, or neglect Chriſt, and the goſpel. But the convinced, humbled ſinner, who deſpairs of all help, except from the Saviour, will evince his faith, by applying to him with all earneſtneſs, and without delay; and difficulties will only ſerve to increaſe his diligence, and reſolution, in uſing every means of obtaining an intereſt in his ſalvation. He will not attempt to heal himſelf; or expect to become better, before he apply to his Phyſician: but when he receives the bleſſing of forgiveneſs, it will be accompanied by ſuch a powerful operation of renewing grace on his ſoul, that he will be "a new creature; old things will paſs away, behold all things will "become new!" Being enabled to overcome thoſe evils, to which he was before enſlaved, and to delight in thoſe duties, of which he had been utterly incapable, he will have the witneſs in himſelf, and demonſtrate to others, that he is pardoned and juſtified in Chriſt Jeſus: for He, who heals the diſtempered ſoul, muſt alſo have power to cleanſe the guilty conſcience; and the former is the ſeal, and atteſtation of the latter. Whatever proud Phariſees, and ſcribes may ſay in their hearts, or with their lips, againſt ſuch inſtances of our Redeemer's power, and grace; the happy change is often ſo evident, that it cannot be gainſayed: and all impartial judges muſt ſee and own, in the conduct of many profeſſors of the goſpel, a demonſtration of the excellency of the doctrines, and of the efficacy of the grace, that they have received. But if any deem their ſins forgiven, who ſtill remain under the power of their luſts, they deceive themſelves, and bring a ſcandal on the goſpel; for Chriſt is only glorified in thoſe, who glorify Him by their conduct, from the time, when they profeſs to believe in his name. Should any pretend to forgive ſins, who have no power to cure paralytics, and to bid them take up their bed, and walk; they would be juſtly chargeable with the moſt preſumptuous blaſphemy: but the feebleſt believer may attempt ſuch things, at Chriſt's command, as otherwiſe would be impoſſible to him: for His word is with power, and he will ſtrengthen the willing ſoul, to yield obedience to it. Whilſt the faithful ſervants of Chriſt, after his example, call upon publicans, and ſinners, to forſake all, and follow him, and meet with ſome ſucceſs in their labour of love; there are thoſe, that will accuſe them of encouraging vice, and being enemies to morality, and goodneſs: not underſtanding that Chriſt came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. He did not eſcape ſuch ſlanders: and we ſhould therefore be willing to bear them, as well as careful not to deſerve them. If we are blamed for omitting ſuch things, as are not needful, or ſeaſonable, or for doing that which is not ſinful: we may quietly leave him to plead our cauſe. But we ſhould attend to every part of our duty in its proper order, and ſeaſon: and miniſters ſhould be cautious in dealing with the weak, but conſcientious, that they may not diſcourage them; and they ſhould inſiſt upon the obſervance of the Lord's day, and attendance on all ordinances, in ſubſerviency to their real good, and that of others; and not be ſo exact in leſſer externals, as to interfere with the grand concerns of genuine piety, juſtice and charity; or with any thing, which may glorify God, or do good to men.

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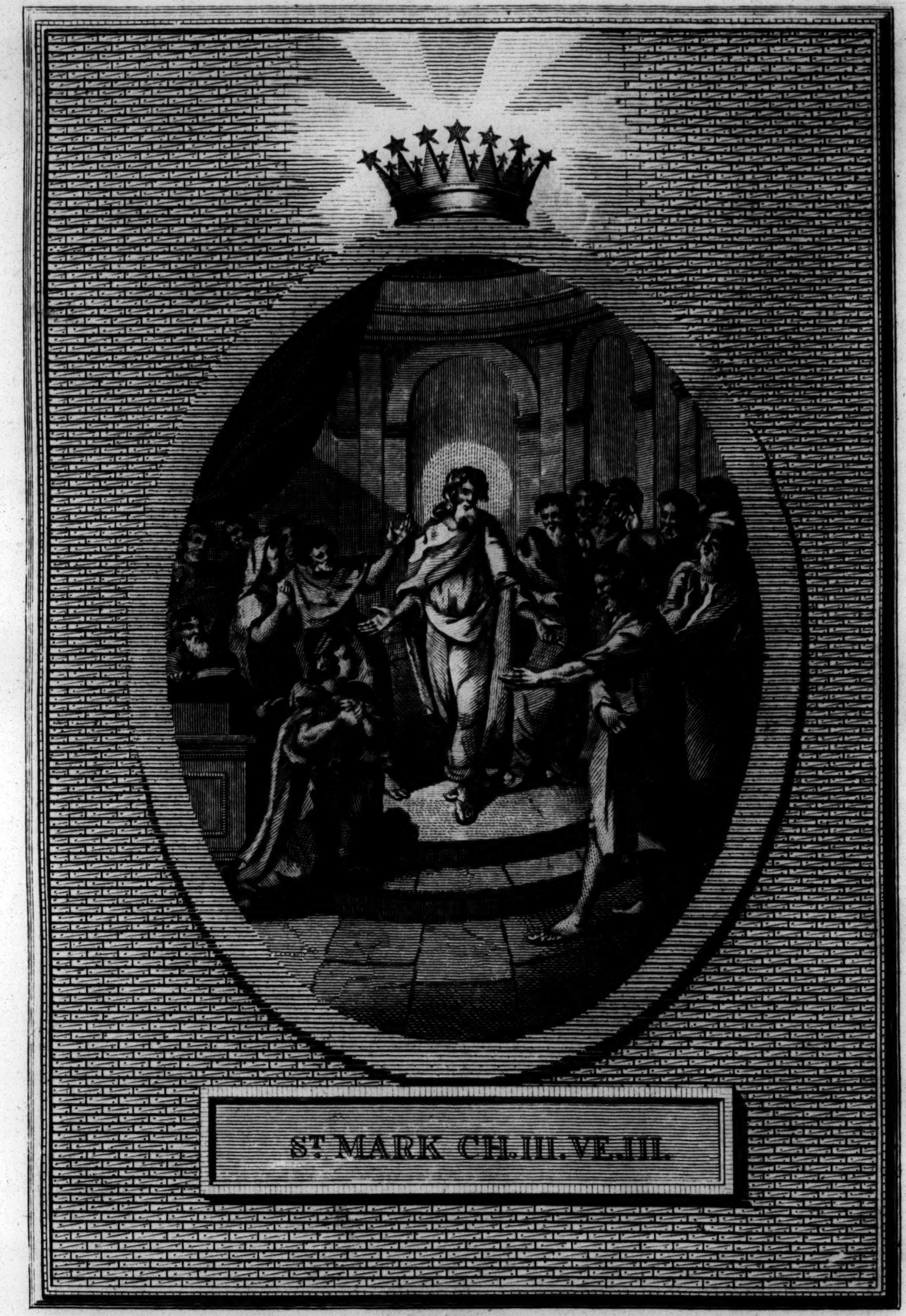

ST. MARK CH.III. VE.III.

Taylor del. et Sculp.

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extreme danger; and declaring his diſciples to be dearer to him, than any relations. 20---35.

AND he entered again into the ſynagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the ſabbath day; that they might accuſe him.

3 And he ſaith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he ſaith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the ſabbath days, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts, he ſaith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he ſtretched *it* out: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other.

6 And the Phariſees went forth, and ſtraightway took counſel with the Herodians againſt him, how they might deſtroy him.

7 But Jeſus withdrew himſelf with his diſciples to the ſea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea,

8 And from Jeruſalem, and from Idumea, and *from* beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he ſpake to his diſciples, that a ſmall ſhip ſhould wait on him, becauſe of the multitude, leſt they ſhould throng him.

10 For he had healed many, inſomuch that they preſſed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 And unclean ſpirits, when they ſaw him, fell down before him, and cried, ſaying, Thou art the Son of God.

12 And he ſtraitly charged them that they ſhould not make him known.

13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would: and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they ſhould be with him, and that he might ſend them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal ſickneſſes, and to caſt out devils.

16 And Simon he ſurnamed Peter;

17 And James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; (and he ſurnamed them Boanerges, which is, The ſons of thunder;)

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

19 And Judas Iſcariot, which alſo betrayed him: and they went into an houſe.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, ſo that they could not ſo much as eat bread.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—5.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 9—13.) When Chriſt demanded, "whether it was "lawful to do good, or evil on the ſabbath-days? To "ſave life, or to kill?" He referred to their ſecret intentions of compaſſing his death. Though they were framing ſuch projects in the ſynagogue, and on the ſabbath-day; yet they blamed him for doing good, and ſaving men's lives on that day; notwithſtanding that it was done in ſubſerviency to the ſalvation of their ſouls alſo! Their malice, and perverſeneſs therefore excited his holy indignation: but their expoſedneſs to miſery, through the hardneſs, and blindneſs of their hearts, cauſed him alſo to grieve *over them*, as well as *for* the miſchief they did to the people.

V. 6—12.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 14—21.) The time-ſerving Herodians cared not for religion, except in ſubſerviency to politics; yet they concurred with the ſuperſtitious Phariſees, in plotting the death of the holy Jeſus! The word tranſlated *plagues* ſignifies *ſcourges*, and implies that all afflictions are the effects of God's diſpleaſure againſt the ſins of men, and ſhould be received and improved as ſalutary corrections. When it is ſaid that "unclean ſpirits fell down before Him," it relates to the perſons poſſeſſed with them; and it forms an undeniable proof of the reality of the poſſeſſions, of the power of the evil ſpirits over theſe afflicted perſons, and of the abſolute authority of Chriſt over them.

V. 13—21.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. v. 1—4.) This appointment of the twelve apoſtles ſeems to have been ſome time before they were ſent forth to preach. (c. vi. v. 7—13.) The ſurname of Boanerges, or ſons of thunder, given to James, and John, doubtleſs related to the energy, and efficacy, with which they addreſſed men's conſciences, to awaken their fears, and to ſhew them their need of mercy, and ſalvation. After Chriſt had appointed the apoſtles, they went into an houſe: and the multitude aſſembled ſo ſpeedily, that they had no time to take any refreſhment; yet our Lord proceeded to inſtruct them. His friends therefore deemed him to be too

21 And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they ſaid, He is beſide himſelf.

22 And the ſcribes which came down from Jeruſalem ſaid, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils caſteth he out devils.

23 And he called them *unto him*, and ſaid unto them in parables, How can Satan caſt out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided againſt itſelf, that kingdom cannot ſtand.

25 And if a houſe be divided againſt itſelf, that houſe cannot ſtand.

26 And if Satan riſe up againſt himſelf, and be divided, he cannot ſtand, but hath an end.

27 No man can enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he will firſt bind the ſtrong man; and then he will ſpoil his houſe.

28 Verily I ſay unto you, All ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme:

29 But he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath never forgiveneſs, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30 Becauſe they ſaid, He hath an unclean ſpirit.

31 There came then his brethren and his mother, and ſtanding without, ſent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude ſat about him; and they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without ſeek for thee.

33 And he anſwered them, ſaying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which ſat about him, and ſaid, Behold my mother and my brethren!

35 For whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is my brother, and my ſiſter, and mother.

far tranſported by his zeal; and thoſe of them who did not believe in him as the Son of God, concluded that he was beſide himſelf, and that he exceeded all bounds of moderation, and prudence: they therefore ſought to lay hold on him, and either by importunity, or compulſion to prevail with him to deſiſt from his exceſſive labours. After all the objections, that have been made to this tranſlation, and interpretation; I cannot but think them the true ones. Some of Chriſt's relations, or acquaintance might deem him beſide himſelf, for the ſame reaſon, that Felix and others did St. Paul; and in their carnal regard to him, might purpoſe to uſe compulſion, if perſuaſions would not prevail with him to deſiſt: and even his more pious relatives might poſſibly be anxious for his health, and deem his labours indiſcrete, and ſo concur in the deſign; for it is conjectured, that He had watched all the preceding night, and been laboriouſly employed all the former part of the day. (*Luke*, c. vi. v. 12. *Acts*, c. xxvi. v. 24. 2 *Cor*. c. v. ver. 13.)

V. 22—30.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. xii. v. 22—32.) The expreſſion, "is in danger of eternal damnation," ſignifies "is expoſed to eternal damnation."

V. 31—35.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. xii. v. 46—50.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Acts of mercy and charity can never be unſeaſonable; for it is as lawful to do good to man, as it is proper to attend on the worſhip of God, on the Lord's day. But ſelfiſh, and malicious men, who are projecting wickedneſs in the midſt of their oſtentatious devotions, are moſt prone to cenſure thoſe good works, which they will not imitate; and they are eſpecially glad to find ſomething to cenſure in thoſe, who are labouring to promote the ſalvation of ſouls, and to ſhew the vanity of their formal, and inefficacious appearances of religion. Whilſt we go on ſteadily in our work, notwithſtanding their oppoſition, we may properly expreſs an indignant abhorrence of their wickedneſs; but it ſhould be connected with compaſſion for their perſons, and earneſt deſires of their ſalvation. We ſhall commonly find, that the rage and enmity of ſuch men will increaſe, in proportion as the power, and grace of Chriſt are glorified; and that unbelievers of the moſt oppoſite ſentiments, and characters will combine againſt the cauſe of evangelical godlineſs: but if we ſhould ever be compelled to retire from their perſecuting rage, we ought to ſeek for other ſcenes and opportunities of uſefulneſs. What multitudes thronged after Jeſus, to hear his word, behold his miracles, and ſhare the beneficent effects of them! Yet how few in compariſon were willing to avow their relation to Him, when the time of his ſufferings arrived! He knew that it would be ſo, and could form a proper eſtimate of their inconſtancy: but we ſhould be upon our guard; for ſuch popular applauſe and favour are very dangerous, and are no more to be truſted, than the deceitful calm of the unſtable ocean. All our ſickneſſes, and calamities ſpring from the anger of God againſt us for our ſins; and the removal of them, or the ſanctifying bleſſing on them for the good of our ſouls, was purchaſed for us, by the ſufferings of Chriſt. But the plagues, and maladies of our hearts are chiefly to be deprecated: he can cure them alſo by a touch, or a word; and unclean ſpirits, knowing him to be the Son of God, are conſtrained to obey him, as much at preſent, as in any former age. May increaſing numbers preſs to Him to be healed of theſe plagues, and delivered from theſe enemies: may He ſend forth more and more of ſuch, as have "been with him", and have learned of Him, to preach his goſpel, and to be his inſtruments in this bleſſed work: may all his miniſ-

CHAP IV.

Contains 1ſt. The parable of the ſower, and it's interpretation, 1---20. *2d. That of a candle ſet on a candleſtick, with exhortations to an attentive hearing of the word, &c.* 21---25. *3d. That of the ſeed ſown in the earth, inſenſibly ſpringing up, and ripening for the harveſt; and that of the grain of muſtard ſeed,* 26---34. *4th. Jeſus calming the ſtormy winds and waves, by his powerful command,* 35---41.

AND he began again to teach by the ſea-ſide: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, ſo that he entered into a ſhip, and ſat in the ſea; and the whole multitude was by the ſea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and ſaid unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a ſower to ſow:

4 And it came to paſs, as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way-ſide, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And ſome fell on ſtony ground, where it had not much earth: and immediately it ſprang up, becauſe it had no depth of earth:

6 But when the ſun was up, it was ſcorched, and becauſe it had no root it withered away.

7 And ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that ſprang up, and increaſed, and brought forth, ſome thirty, and ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred.

9 And he ſaid unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, aſked of him the parable.

11 And he ſaid unto them, Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *theſe* things are done in parables:

12 That ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not underſtand: leſt at any time they ſhould be converted, and *their* ſins ſhould be forgiven them.

13 And he ſaith unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

14 The ſower ſoweth the word.

15 And theſe are they by the way-ſide, where the word is ſown; but, when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was ſown in their hearts.

16 And theſe are they likewiſe which are ſown on ſtony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladneſs;

17 And have no root in themſelves, and ſo endure but for a time; afterward, when affliction or perſecution ariſeth for the word's

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ters be Boanerges, ſons of thunder, to ſpeak his word with energy, and efficacy; and may no Judas be found amongſt thoſe, who preſume to declare his truths. If we were as earneſt as our Maſter, and inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, in preaching the word, in prayer, and in every good work; we ſhould deem no hour improper, no ſituation inconvenient, for theſe labours of love: but we ſhould alſo find, that our carnal, or injudicious friends would be ready to deem us beſide ourſelves, and would uſe all their influence to moderate our ardour, and leſſen our diligence. Prudence indeed is not to be blamed: but it is extremely apt to degenerate into lukewarmneſs; and zeal like that of Chriſt will ſeldom eſcape the charge of being exceſſive, and indiſcrete, from the more decent part of mankind, who can ſcarce conceive, that inviſible, and future things require more earneſtneſs, than our moſt important temporal concerns. But proud, and malignant enemies will not ſtop here: for they will impute the moſt beneficial effects to the baſeſt motives or cauſes; and pretend that men are doing ſatan's work, and oppoſing every thing good, when ſinners are evidently brought to repentance, and to newneſs of life. But let men beware how they aſcribe the operations of the Holy Ghoſt to the power of ſatan; or how they deride, and revile them: for in ſo doing they may be guilty of ſuch blaſphemy, as ſhall never find forgiveneſs, but expoſe them to eternal damnation. Let the ſervants of Chriſt go on with their work, in dependance on his power, and avoiding all thoſe contentions with each other, that weaken the common cauſe: then they will find their Almighty Helper ready to overcome their ſtrong enemy, and to deliver ſinners from his hateful dominion. And let all thoſe, who hear, believe and obey the Saviour, according to the will of God the Father, rejoice and glory in their relation to Him, who will aſſuredly own every one of them, as his brother, his ſiſter, or his mother.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—20.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 1—23.)

ſake, immediately they are offended.

18 And theſe are they which are ſown among thorns; ſuch as hear the word,

19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches, and the luſts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

20 And theſe are they which are ſown on good ground; ſuch as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, ſome thirty-fold, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred.

21 And he ſaid unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a buſhel, or under a bed? and not to be ſet on a candleſtick?

22 For there is nothing hid, which ſhall not be manifeſted; neither was any thing kept ſecret, but that it ſhould come abroad.

23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he ſaith unto them, Take heed what ye hear. With what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you: and unto you that hear ſhall more be given.

25 For he that hath, to him ſhall be given: and he that hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which he hath.

26 And he ſaid, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground;

27 And ſhould ſleep and riſe night and day, and the ſeed ſhould ſpring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herſelf; firſt the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the ſickle, becauſe the harveſt is come.

V. 21—25.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 13—16. c. vii. v. 1, 2. c. xiii. v. 12.) Theſe verſes were intended to call the attention of the diſciples to the word of Chriſt. By thus inſtructing them, he meant to qualify them for inſtructors of others; as candles are lighted, not to be covered, but to be placed on a candleſtick, that they may give light to the room. The meaning of our Lord's parables, and diſcourſes, though at that time concealed from the people, was afterwards to be manifeſted, and ſpread abroad in the moſt extenſive, and perſpicuous manner. They were therefore exhorted to bow their ears, and apply their minds attentively to them: to take heed what they heard, and how they heard it; that they might receive the truth only, and all of it; and that they might impart it to others alſo, as well as adorn it by their own lives. For according to their faithfulneſs, and correſpondent conduct, as his miniſters, or the contrary; ſo would they at length be dealt with: and more knowledge, wiſdom, and ſpiritual gifts would be given to thoſe of them, who heard the word in faith, and with attention; according to that general rule of his kingdom, which we have repeatedly conſidered.

V. 26—29.] This parable, which we find not elſewhere, repreſents the manner, in which the kingdom of God gets ground in the world, by his bleſſing on the labours of his miniſters. In this reſpect the preaching of the goſpel may be likened to a huſbandman, who ſows his ſeed in the ground, and then leaves it; as knowing that he can do no more towards obtaining a crop. Accordingly he ſleeps by night, and riſes in the morning to attend on his other buſineſs, without being needleſſly ſolicitous about the ſeed, as if the increaſe depended on his conſtantly attending to it. In the mean time it ſprings up, and grows to maturity in an inſenſible manner; and he is ſo far from managing the proceſs, that he cannot comprehend it: for the earth, made fruitful by the Creator's power and goodneſs, and receiving the influence of the ſun, rain, and varying ſeaſons, as ordered by him, ſpontaneouſly produceth the increaſe. A ſmall blade firſt appears; and during the changes of the weather, it ſometimes is more flouriſhing, and at others it ſeems to wither: yet at length it ears, fills, and ripens; and the huſbandman gathers in the crop, which God hath given him, as the increaſe of his ſeed ſown. Thus miniſters ſow the good ſeed of the word, and uſe other appointed means of obtaining ſucceſs: but God alone can give the increaſe. No anxiety of man can cauſe any more ſucceſs to the word preached, than the Lord is pleaſed to give. The miniſter therefore ſhould diligently do his duty; but with reſignation, compoſure, and dependance on God to render means effectual; as far as He pleaſes to work, the ſeed will ſpring up, and grow, in a manner, which man cannot ſo much as comprehend. When a miniſter has opportunity of watching over the effects of his own labours, he will find his hopes and fears continually fluctuate; and he will meet with diſappointments, which he can by no means prevent, and ſucceſs where he had given up the hope of it: but much of the good done will generally be unknown to the inſtrument, and it often becomes viſible to others after his death. However *his* labour will not be in vain, who is faithful, and diligent: the ſeed will find ſome hearts prepared by the grace of God to receive it; and under the influences of the Spirit, and the encouragements of the goſpel, it will ſpring up; and from convictions of ſin, enquiries after ſalvation, and varying affections, it will grow up into a more ſolid judgment, greater experience, humility, and ſimplicity; and thus proceed to fruitfulneſs in good works. In this manner ſouls will be prepared for heaven; and when their meaſure of ſervices, and trials are completed, and they are made ready for the glory and felicity intended for them; the Lord will

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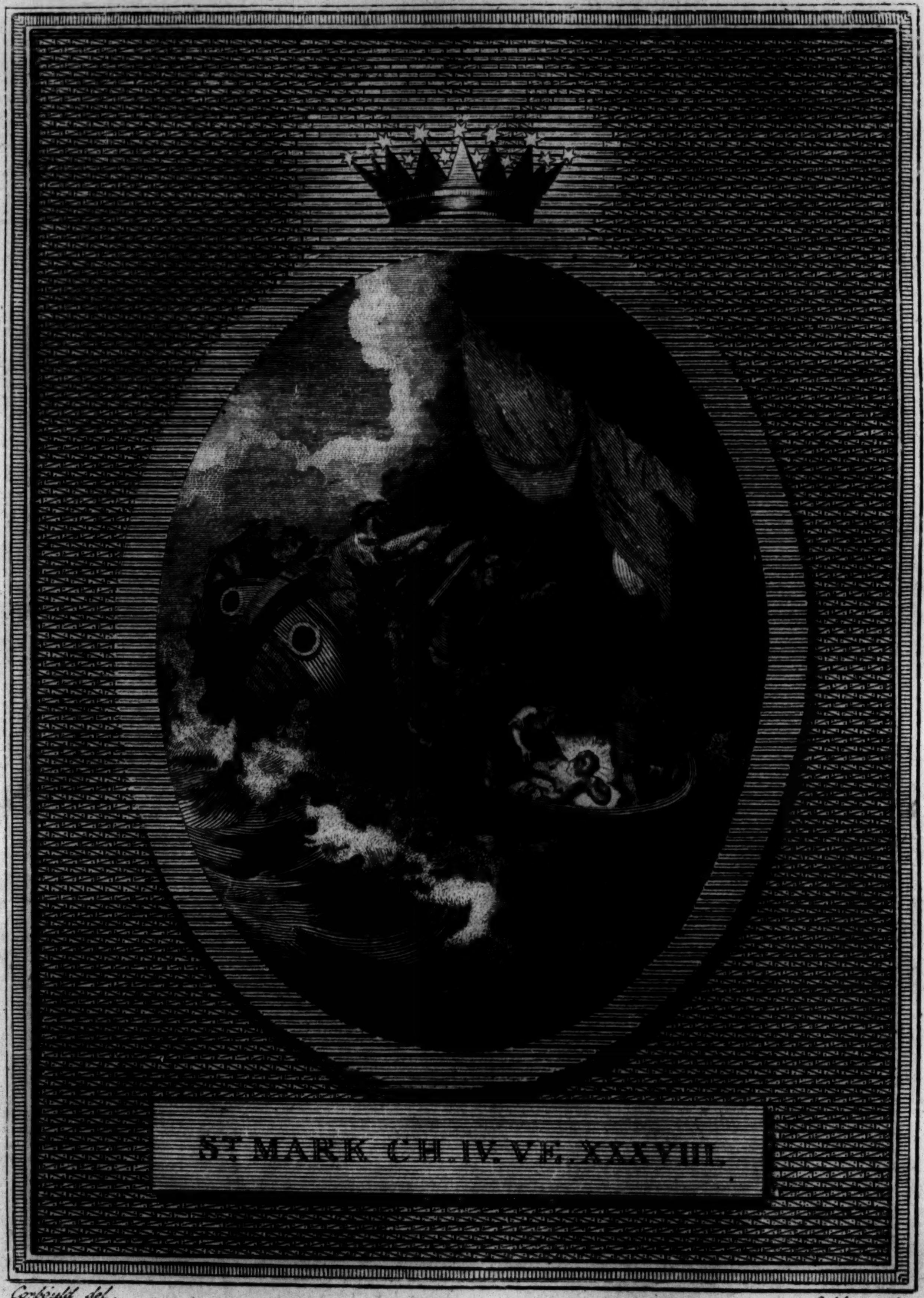

ST. MARK CH. IV. VE. XXXVIII.

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29 AP 92
MUSEUM

30 And he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what compariſon ſhall we compare it?

31 *It is* like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which, when it is ſown in the earth, is leſs than all the ſeeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is ſown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and ſhooteth out great branches; ſo that the fowls of the air may lodge under the ſhadow of it.

33 And with many ſuch parables ſpake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*.

34 But without a parable ſpake he not unto them: and, when they were alone, he expounded all things to his diſciples.

35 And the ſame day, when the even was come, he ſaith unto them, Let us paſs over unto the other ſide.

36 And when they had ſent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ſhip. And there were alſo with him other little ſhips.

37 And there aroſe a great ſtorm of wind, and the waves beat into the ſhip, ſo that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ſhip, aſleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and ſay unto him, Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh?

39 And he aroſe, and rebuked the wind, and ſaid unto the ſea, Peace, be ſtill. And the wind ceaſed, and there was a great calm.

40 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye ſo fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and ſaid one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the ſea obey him?

gather them as the wheat of his harveſt into his garner; and they, who have been the inſtruments of their converſion, and ſanctification, will at laſt ſee, rejoice in, and glorify God for the bleſſed increaſe of their patient labours, which perhaps at the time they concluded to be almoſt entirely unſucceſsful.

V. 30—34.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 31—35.)

V. 35—41.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 23—27.) All the parables contained in this chapter ſeem to have been ſpoken, during the remainder of that day, on which the friends of Jeſus were ſo diſſatisfied with his unwearied, and zealous labours: yet, having perſiſted in them until the evening, he put to ſea, even "as he was," in the ſhip whence he had preached, and without any peculiar attention to his health, eaſe, or indulgence, after ſuch great fatigues: ſuch an example did he ſet us of enduring hardſhip, and avoiding all needleſs regard to ourſelves, whilſt employed in doing good to the ſouls of men!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we lament that ſo few of the human ſpecies are inſtructed according to the pure goſpel of Chriſt; and that ſo large a majority of thoſe, who are thus favoured, derive no real benefit from it: let us chiefly look to ourſelves, and our own hearts, that they be not as fallow ground, or the way-ſide, through careleſsneſs and inattention. Satan is ever active, and vigilant, in preventing the ſucceſs of the goſpel: and if men do not *immediately* ſecure what they have heard by meditation, prayer, faith, and obedience; he will *immediately* take it away from their hearts, and memories. Nor will any impreſſions be durable, that are not deep: the heart, that is not broken, humbled, and changed, will not be made fruitful; and ſuperficial convictions, and affections, and that profeſſion which ſprings from them, will gradually vaniſh, and come to nothing; eſpecially when perſecution, and affliction ariſe becauſe of the word. We cannot be real chriſtians, if we "have not *that* root in ourſelves," which would withſtand the moſt ſcorching ſun of perſecution, if it ſhould dart upon us: but many prove, in the moſt quiet times, how they would act in ſuch trying ſcenes; whilſt "the cares of the world, the deceitfulneſs of riches, and the luſts of other things choke the word, and they become unfruitful;" notwithſtanding all their orthodox notions, plauſible tales of experience, apparent affections, and credible profeſſion of the truth. Let us then look to the Lord, that by his new-creating grace our hearts may become good ground; and that the good ſeed of the word may produce a large increaſe in our lives of all thoſe good words, and works, which are through Jeſus Chriſt, to the praiſe, and glory of God the Father. Thus will it appear, that to us it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God: whilſt numbers know it not, becauſe of the pride, unbelief, and carnality of their hearts; and ſo being given up of God, "they ſee but do not perceive, they hear but do not underſtand, leſt at any time, they ſhould be converted, and their ſins be forgiven them." Unleſs we underſtand this parable, which is ſo plain, and univerſally intereſting; how ſhall we underſtand all thoſe parables, under which divine myſteries are couched? Let us then attend more diligently to inſtruction, and pray more earneſtly for a humble teachable diſpoſition, and for the illumination of the Holy Spirit: for we are called to ſhine as lights in this dark world. And though our light is only as the feeble glimmering of a candle, compared with the ſplendour of the Sun of Rigteouſneſs; yet we may hope to receive from him, and to communicate to others, ſome rays of heavenly wiſdom, provided we do not put our candle under a buſhel, but endeavour to let it ſhine before men, in our profeſſion of the truth, and a converſation conſiſtent with it. Though no human teaching can make the natural man receive the

CHAP. V.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Caſting out a legion of evil ſpirits, and allowing them to poſſeſs, and deſtroy an herd of ſwine; with what paſſed on that occaſion, relative to the man that had been diſpoſſeſſed, and to the Gadarenes, 1---20. 2d. Healing a woman, that had an iſſue of blood, and reſtoring to life the daughter of Jairus, 21---43.

AND they came over unto the other ſide of the ſea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ſhip, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean ſpirit;

3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains;

4 Becauſe that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked aſunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himſelf with ſtones.

6 But when he ſaw Jeſus afar off, he ran and worſhipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, *thou* Son of the moſt high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 (For he ſaid unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean ſpirit.)

9 And he aſked him, What *is* thy name? And he anſwered, ſaying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many.

10 And he beſought him much that he would not ſend them out of the country.

11 Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of ſwine feeding.

12 And all the devils beſought him, ſaying, Send us into the ſwine, that we may enter into them.

things of the Spirit of God; yet it is our buſineſs, to make manifeſt, and ſpread abroad the great truths of the goſpel, which are hidden from the moſt wiſe and learned of unbelievers. But as ſo many jarring doctrines are propagated on every ſide; it is incumbent on us to take heed *what*, as well as *how* we learn. If we receive, believe, obey, and impart to others, the bleſſed truths of God's word; all bleſſings will be meaſured to us in great abundance: but woe be to thoſe, who reject, corrupt, abuſe, or attempt to ſtifle the light, that Chriſt came into the world to diffuſe amongſt mankind! For all their earthly poſſeſſions, admired abilities, and valuable opportunities ſhall be taken from them; and they will be left to eternal contempt, poverty, and miſery.

In endeavouring to promote the kingdom of God amongſt men, we ſhould reſt ſatisfied with having done our part; and wait in patient hope on God, that he may do his alſo: for he reſerves to himſelf the power of giving the increaſe; and he does it in an incomprehenſible manner, that he may ſecure the whole honour of it to his own great name. We ſhould therefore bear up againſt diſcouragement, though we do not perceive much ſucceſs to our labours: we ought indeed to redouble our diligence, and become more fervent in our prayers; but if we become ever ſo anxious, and intermeddling *out of our proper place*; we cannot make the ſeed grow, nor underſtand why it ſprings up in one caſe, and doth not in another. The effects we may indeed often ſee, but the cauſe, and method of operation we cannot comprehend. However it will in ſome inſtances ſpring up, and ripen into the harveſt; and probably many more will at length appear to be the faithful miniſter's crown of rejoicing, than he had any knowledge of, during his continuance on earth. Let us then go on with our work in chearful aſſurance, that in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not; and let us ſeek unto the Lord to give the increaſe, wherever the word is preached, and that all chriſtians may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus; that ſo they may be daily ripening for the glorious harveſt. We ſhould not deſpiſe feeble beginnings either in individuals, or in the diffuſing of the light of divine truth in dark places: as the kingdom of heaven is like the grain of muſtard-ſeed; and as great conſequences often ſpring from feeble, and deſpiſed cauſes, and inſtruments. Theſe things will not be obvious to others, but Chriſt will expound them all to his diſciples: and if we follow him more cloſely than the multitude around us, he will afford us his ſpecial preſence; and he will teach us ſelf-denial by his precepts, and his example. Storms may indeed aſſail us, and our fears may be great: but faith will apply to him for help, and meet no diſappointment. Even, when he ſeemeth to ſlumber, he reſtrains the violence of the winds, and waves, and the fury of wicked men, and apoſtate ſpirits: and when he awaketh for our help, he will ſpeak every tempeſt into a calm, and turn all our terrors into admiring, adoring love and gratitude. But while he careth for us, that we periſh not; we may expect his rebuke of our unbelief, which greatly diſhonours his name: and indeed our exceſſive fears in our little difficulties and dangers ſometimes ſeem to indicate, that we have almoſt no faith; notwithſtanding all, that we have heard, witneſſed, and experienced of his power, truth, and love, who is the mighty God, and the Prince of peace, and who never faileth thoſe who truſt in him.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—20.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 28—34. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 26—39.) St. Mat-

13 And forthwith Jeſus gave them leave. And the unclean ſpirits went out, and entered into the ſwine; and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, (they were about two thouſand,) and were choked in the ſea.

14 And they that fed the ſwine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to ſee what it was that was done.

15 And they come to Jeſus, and ſee him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and had the legion, ſitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

16 And they that ſaw *it* told them how it befel to him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and *alſo* concerning the ſwine.

17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coaſts.

18 And when he was come into the ſhip, he that had been poſſeſſed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jeſus ſuffered him not: but ſaith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compaſſion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publiſh in Decapolis how great things Jeſus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.

21 And when Jeſus was paſſed over again

thew gives a brief account of two demoniacs, who were diſpoſſeſſed on this occaſion: but St. Mark, and St. Luke omit the mention of one of them, (who was not perhaps ſo remarkable a caſe,) to record that of the other more fully. It is not neceſſary to repeat what was before advanced on the parallel ſcripture: but many circumſtances here require a further conſideration. Our Lord probably landed intentionally near the place, where the demoniac wandered, and was immediately met by him. He was poſſeſſed with "an unclean ſpirit," or a fallen ſpirit, impure and unholy, contrary to the nature, and an enemy to the authority; of God, in whoſe judgment all ſin is uncleanneſs, and filthineſs of fleſh, or of ſpirit. Though many of theſe evil ſpirits poſſeſſed the man, one is firſt mentioned, who may be conſidered as the head, or ruler of the company. The force, which they exerted by the limbs of the man, was ſo great, that his friends could by no means confine him: for he had repeatedly broken even the fetters, and chains, with which he had been bound; and was ſo fierce, that he could not be tamed: he was therefore left to wander, night and day, without clothes, among the ſolitary tombs, and on the mountains; where he cried hideouſly, as one in exceſſive anguiſh; and cut himſelf with ſtones, by running amongſt them, lying down naked upon them, or in a frantic manner. Thus was he moſt wretched in himſelf, the grief of all his friends, and the terror, and nuiſance of the neighbourhood: an apt emblem of the more deſperate children of diſobedience, in whom ſatan reigns, and works without controul! Yet as ſoon as Jeſus appeared, he came and proſtrated himſelf before Him; and the unclean ſpirit, that ſpake by him, earneſtly intreated, and adjured him by God, (who had reſpited them from torment for a time, and given them permiſſion to tempt and harraſs the ſinful race of men,) that he would not conſign them immediately to their place of puniſhment, nor even drive them out of that region; where they had it ſeems hitherto continued unmoleſted, and for which they had in ſome ſort a predilection. We have already conſidered the permiſſion craved, and obtained, of entering into the ſwine, (which being unclean animals, were the fit reſidence of theſe unclean ſpirits;) and the effects of that permiſſion, in the deſtruction of the ſwine, and the terror, and averſion of the Gadarenes, &c. But we here further learn, that our Lord demanded of the ſpirit, that ſpake to him, what his name was? To which he anſwered, that it was "Legion;" and that he had this name, becauſe "they were many." A legion is well known to have been a body of Roman ſoldiers, which at that time conſiſted of above 6000 men. This therefore gives us a moſt tremendous view of the ſubject; though we need determine nothing concerning the preciſe number of theſe fallen ſpirits, that were combined under one head, in the hoſtile deſign of harraſſing the man: and the queſtion was doubtleſs aſked, and the anſwer extorted, in order to diſplay to us, the number, power, malice, and combination of thoſe unclean ſpirits, which Sadducees, ancient, and modern, have denied, and which moſt men are apt too much to overlook. We have conſidered the ſucceſs of the ſtratagem of theſe evil ſpirits, to prejudice the covetous minds of the Gadarenes againſt Jeſus: but we muſt not overlook the contrary conduct of the man, who had been diſpoſſeſſed. He now was found ſitting, in proper clothing, compoſed, and rational, at the feet of Jeſus, (like Mary,) to hear his inſtructions: and when our Lord entered the ſhip to go away, according to the requeſt of the Gadarenes, he deſired leave to accompany him; being full of gratitude to his Benefactor, and deſirous of becoming his ſtated follower; and perhaps fearing the return of the unclean ſpirits, in caſe he were left behind. But Jeſus had another deſign in the tranſaction; and therefore he refuſed to grant his requeſt; ordering him to go home to his friends, and to inform them what great things the Lord, in his tender compaſſion had done for him. Accordingly he departed, and publiſhed in Decapolis, a region, in which were ten cities, what great things Jeſus, (whom he underſtood to be the Lord,) had done for him: and as they had been generally acquainted with his former miſerable condition, and now ſaw him perfectly rational, and in good health, they were exceedingly aſtoniſhed at hearing his thankful account of his cure. Thus this very man became the wiſeſt, happieſt, and moſt uſeful perſon, in the country, and a preacher of Chriſt to his friends, and neighbours;

by ſhip unto the other ſide, much people gathered unto him, and he was nigh unto the ſea.

22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the ſynagogue, Jairus by name; and when he ſaw him, he fell at his feet,

23 And beſought him greatly, ſaying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; *I pray thee,* come and lay thy hands on her, that ſhe may be healed, and ſhe ſhall live.

24 And *Jeſus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman, which had an iſſue of blood twelve years,

26 And had ſuffered many things of many phyſicians, and had ſpent all that ſhe had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worſe;

27 When ſhe had heard of Jeſus, came in the preſs behind, and touched his garment:

28 For ſhe ſaid, If I may touch but his clothes, I ſhall be whole.

29 And ſtraightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and ſhe felt in *her* body that ſhe was healed of that plague.

30 And Jeſus immediately knowing in himſelf that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the preſs, and ſaid, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his diſciples ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt the multitude thronging thee, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to ſee her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he ſaid unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 While he yet ſpake, there came from

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being at the ſame time a living demonſtration of his power, and mercy: and we may be ſure, that he was made the inſtrument of procuring a more favourable reception to him, and his diſciples, when they went amongſt them afterwards: (c. vii. v. 31—37.) Probably the other demoniac did not make ſuch proper returns for his deliverance; and therefore Mark and Luke paſs him by in their account of this miracle.

V. 21—24.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. ix. v. 18—26. *Luke*, c. viii. v. 40—56.) The two miracles contained in the remainder of this chapter, were briefly recorded by St. Matthew; but the conſideration of them was reſerved for this place. Our Lord being returned to Capernaum, was ſpeedily ſurrounded by a great multitude of people, who were glad to ſee him again; and he was with them by the ſea ſhore. From St. Matthew's narrative, it is ſuppoſed, that it was at this time, that he had been entertained by that evangeliſt, and had juſt left his houſe. However he was addreſſed by a ruler of the ſynagogue called Jairus, who ſeems to have been a perſon of ſome diſtinction, and authority in the city. He was at that time in deep diſtreſs; for his only daughter, who was twelve years old, lay at the point of death. He therefore approached Jeſus in the moſt humble manner: and caſting himſelf at his feet, he beſought him to accompany him without delay, as his daughter lay dying, and perhaps might even then be dead: yet he believed, that if Jeſus went to her, and laid his hands upon her, ſhe would recover. He does not ſeem to have expected that Chriſt could cure her at a diſtance, or that he could raiſe her from the dead; though this ſeems to have been ſubſequent to the reſurrection of the widow's ſon at Naim: nor does it appear whether he was previouſly a diſciple of Jeſus, or no. However our Lord readily granted his requeſt, and ſet off immediately to go with him to his houſe.

V. 25—34.] Whilſt Jeſus was walking to the houſe of Jairus, thronged by the ſurrounding multitude, he wrought another moſt remarkable miracle, the account of which comes in as a parentheſis. A woman who had been afflicted for twelve years, with an iſſue of blood, which both debilitated her frame, and rendered her ceremonially unclean, took that opportunity of applying for a cure. She had tried all other methods of recovery in vain: having applied to ſeveral phyſicians one after another; ſhe had ſuffered much, from the tedious courſes of medicine they had put her upon, and ſhe had impoveriſhed herſelf by the expence: yet inſtead of recovering her health ſhe continued gradually to grow worſe; ſo that ſhe had no proſpect, but of ending her life, by lingering ſufferings, unleſs ſhe could obtain a miraculous cure. When therefore ſhe heard that Jeſus was returned, and was walking in the ſtreet, with great multitudes around him; ſhe choſe that opportunity, as moſt ſuited to the method of applying to him, which ſhe had choſen. The nature of her diſorder made her reluctant to mention it to him; and ſhe hoped to be cured without: ſhe entertained the higheſt thoughts of Chriſt's power, and ſanctity; but her views of his knowledge, and of the manner in which he wrought his miracles were confuſed: ſhe therefore concluded that if ſhe did but touch his clothes, (even the border, or the fringe of his garment,) ſhe ſhould certainly receive a cure: as if this could have been done, by any natural efficacy, without his being conſcious of it! In purſuance of this deſign, ſhe joined the multitude; and coming behind him, ſhe touched his garment, with the expreſs purpoſe, and expectation of being made whole by his power: nor was the ruler of the ſynagogue's *houſe*, *certain* which ſaid, Thy daughter is dead; why troubleſt thou the Maſter any further?

36 As ſoon as Jeſus heard the word that was ſpoken, he ſaith unto the ruler of the ſynagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he ſuffered no man to follow him, ſave Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the houſe of the ruler of the ſynagogue, and ſeeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And when he was come in, he ſaith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damſel is not dead, but ſleepeth.

40 And they laughed him to ſcorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damſel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damſel was lying.

41 And he took the damſel by the hand, and ſaid unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damſel, I ſay unto thee, ariſe.

42 And ſtraightway the damſel aroſe, and walked; for ſhe was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were aſtoniſhed with a great aſtoniſhment.

43 And he charged them ſtraitly that no man ſhould know it; and commanded that ſomething ſhould be given her to eat.

ſhe diſappointed; for notwithſtanding, the miſapprehenſions, and infirmity, that were mixed with her faith, ſhe found immediately that her diſorder was removed; and her impaired vigour inſtantaneouſly, and completely reſtored; and not by ſlow degrees, as is commonly the caſe, after the removal of ſuch long-continued diſeaſes. Had the matter terminated here, ſhe would have come ſhort of the inſtruction, comfort, and advantage, which our Lord intended her; He would have been deprived of the honour of ſo extraordinary a miracle; and many thouſands would have been left without the encouraging leſſons, which they have learned from the knowledge of the tranſaction. Our Lord therefore, being conſcious of having exerted his power; and that virtue, or a divine energy, was gone forth from him to effect this cure, turned round, and demanded who had touched his clothes? When all, that were near him denied, that they had touched him with any particular intention, (for the woman ſeems to have retired to a little diſtance,) Peter, and the other apoſtles expreſſed their ſurpriſe, that he ſhould think of aſking ſuch a queſtion: for as ſuch numbers thronged him on every ſide, how could it be expected, but that ſome of them muſt touch him, without knowing of it, and intending any offence? But Jeſus ſtill inſiſted on it, that ſome perſon had touched him, with a different meaning; for he was ſure that virtue had gone forth from him to work a miracle in behalf of ſome one preſent. He then looked around, as if to diſcover the perſon, who had done this; and the woman, finding that ſhe could not be concealed, and being greatly alarmed, leſt He ſhould puniſh her for her intruſion, and for obtaining a cure, as it were, in a fraudulent manner; came trembling, and fell down before him, and in the preſence of all the people declared the whole of her caſe. But our Lord was ſo far from ſhewing any diſpleaſure, that he addreſſed her by the affectionate appellation of "daughter"; aſſured her that her cure might be conſidered as the evidence, and happy effect of her faith, whereby ſhe had been made whole; and exhorted her to be of good comfort, and to go away in peace with God, and her own conſcience; and to reſt aſſured that ſhe was now finally delivered from that tedious affliction, with which ſhe had ſo long been chaſtened.

V. 35—43.] The preceding tranſaction might occaſion ſome delay, and increaſe the anxiety of Jairus: but his trial was much greater, when meſſengers came from his houſe to inform him, that his daughter was dead; and to obſerve to him, that it was needleſs to give *the Teacher* any further trouble, as he could then be of no ſervice. When Jeſus heard this, he exhorted Jairus not to fear, or doubt of the recovery of his daughter; but to believe aſſuredly that he was able to reſtore her, and that he certainly would do it. He then thought proper to diſmiſs the multitude, and even all his own diſciples, except Peter, James, and John; that he might be attended by a competent number of witneſſes, and yet keep at the utmoſt diſtance from oſtentation, in that diſplay of his power, which he was about to make. When he arrived at the houſe, he found the family in great diſtreſs, and confuſion: the mourners and minſtrels were already called in, as was cuſtomary on ſuch occaſions; and whilſt ſome were playing mournful tunes on their inſtruments, others were venting the moſt doleful lamentations; thus feeding, and indulging ſorrow, as if it were right to be inconſolable. But Jeſus reproved them for ſo doing; eſpecially for giving up all hope, when He was come to reſtore her: enquiring wherefore they made ſuch a tumult? bidding them not weep, and aſſuring them, that ſhe was not dead, ſo as to continue long in that ſtate; but was only fallen into a ſleep, from which he was about to awake her. But they, knowing that ſhe was really dead, and having no hope of her revival, treated his words with contempt, and indecently laughed him to ſcorn; though they muſt often have heard of his miracles, and were well acquainted with the wiſdom, and holineſs of his character! He therefore deemed it proper to put them all out of the room, after he had drawn from them this atteſtation of the certainty of her death: and having none with him but the parents of the damſel, and his three apoſtles; he took hold of her hand, and ſaid aloud, as having power over death and the ſpirits of the dead, "Talitha Cumi," or "damſel ariſe;" and immediately her ſoul re-animated her body; the powers of life were reſtored, and the ſeveral parts of the animal frame began again to perform their regular functions; and thus ſhe ſtraightway aroſe, and walked, to the inexpreſſible aſtoniſhment of the ſpectators, and the exceeding great joy, and gratitude of her before afflicted parents. Our Lord then commanded them not to mention the manner of her recovery to any perſon; as it was ſure to be ſufficiently known, and in fact the fame of it ſoon ſpread abroad very widely. He alſo bade them give her ſomething to eat: by which it appeared, that ſhe was recovered to complete health; and it was intimated that her life was to be preſerved as before by ordinary means, being of the ſame kind as that of others here on earth, and not like that to which we ſhall be reſtored by the general reſurrection. It is worthy obſervation, that one of the three perſons, whom Chriſt is recorded to have raiſed from the dead, was the *only* ſon of an aged widow; another of them was this *only* daughter of Jairus, and the other the beloved brother of Martha, and Mary: ſo much compaſſion, and condeſcenſion doth he ſhew to the feelings of our natural affection!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This chapter calls us to contemplate the varied glories of our Redeemer's power, and love; and each of the three ſignal inſtances here ſet before us, may be conſidered, not only as a miracle, but alſo as an emblem of his gracious operations on the ſouls of men. But we muſt firſt meditate on the power, and malice of apoſtate ſpirits. If a whole legion of them were combined to harraſs one man; who can conceive the numbers, which there are in this wicked world, of which their great leader is the god, and prince? The intention, and tendency of all their unremitted efforts, are the deſtruction of mankind, both in body and ſoul; and to render them miſerable in themſelves, and miſchievous to each other. May theſe alarming thoughts warn every one of us to flee to, and keep cloſe within, that refuge, which God hath prepared for us, in the mediatorial kingdom of his Son! All unconverted ſinners are under a more fatal poſſeſſion of this kind, than that which diſtracted men's minds, and deſtroyed their health; (though it is owing to the reſtraining power of God, that we are preſerved even from theſe dire calamities:) but ſome wicked men ſeem to be poſſeſſed by a Demon, whoſe name is Legion, their evil propenſities, and actions are ſo varied, and numerous! Frequently we ſee perſons of this kind carried away by their own paſſions, and ſatan's temptations, into every place of pollution, and receſs of iniquity; ſo that they dwell with thoſe: "whoſe feet go down to death, whoſe ſteps "take hold on hell." Neither fear, ſhame, conſcience; nor regard to intereſt, reputation, or health can reſtrain them: neither the authority of parents, the counſel of friends, the requirements, and ſanctions of human laws, the feeling of preſent painful effects of their vices, or the dread of the wrath to come, can deter them from their deſtructive courſes. However they be bound, and fettered, their ſtrong corruptions, and evil habits break looſe from every reſtriction, and no man can tame them. Thus they reduce themſelves to miſery, penury, diſeaſe, a priſon, or an ignominious death; in the mean time they are the reproach, and grief of their friends, the terror, and nuiſance of the neighbourhood, and a miſchievous, and mortified part of the community. Yet if Jeſus be pleaſed to exert his power, he can ſoon bring the moſt abandoned, and hardened of them to tremble, and fall down before him; and thus effect a bleſſed change in his character, and conduct. But the poor ſinner, when this work is firſt begun, often fears, that the gracious Saviour means to torment, or deſtroy him; and under ſatan's influence, he is ready to cry out, "What have I "to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of the moſt high "God." This ariſes from the artifice of theſe malignant enemies, who are reluctant to quit their hold, or to leave thoſe places, or perſons, over whom they have hitherto reigned without a rival. But they dare not reſiſt the power of Chriſt, who can conſign them to the place of torment, whenever he pleaſes: and knowing this, they on ſome occaſions even become his ſupplicants, and earneſtly beſeech, and adjure him to reſpite their puniſhment, or continue their allowance to tempt, and harraſs the ſinful race of men. Nor can all the hoſts of hell, formidable as they are, deſtroy one frantic ſinner, or ſo much as poſſeſs one filthy ſwine, except he ſee good to give them permiſſion! This is an encouraging thought to the believer: but what comfort can ſatan's willing ſervants derive from it? Yet even in reſpect of them his power is limited: for the ſame agency, that hurried the ſwine into the ſea, would have been ſufficient for the immediate deſtruction of their avaricious poſſeſſors; had not the power of Chriſt reſtrained it. Long ſuffering, and mercy may therefore be recognized in ſuch corrections, by which men are deprived of their property, whilſt their lives are preſerved, and warning is given them to ſeek the ſalvation of their ſouls. However ſuch loſſes and alarms often terrify, and exaſperate ſinners, inſtead of promoting genuine humiliation, and repentance: and they, who are determined not to part with their iniquitous gains, or to mortify their luſts, are as averſe to the real goſpel of Chriſt, as unclean ſpirits themſelves are. But when the vileſt tranſgreſſor is delivered by the power of Jeſus from the poſſeſſion of ſatan, and the bondage of ſin; he will gladly ſit at the feet, and hear the word of his great Deliverer. Being come to himſelf, and to "his right mind"; he will now learn to love, and cleave to Chriſt, and long to be with, and like him. When theſe deſires grow very vigorous, and are accompanied with a lively, and aſſured hope of heavenly felicity, the man will even be willing to be abſent from the body, that he may be preſent with the Lord: no wonder therefore, that he chooſes rather to part with father, and mother, or the neareſt relations, and moſt valued poſſeſſions; than to forſake Chriſt, and loſe the benefit and comfort of his inſtruction, and of communion with him. Words cannot expreſs the bleſſed change, that takes place, when Jeſus delivers ſuch wretched ſlaves of ſatan, as have been before deſcribed, and numbers them amongſt his ſaints, and ſervants. Inſtead of their former abject miſery, they now enjoy a felicity before unknown to them, as it ſtill continues to be to all their companions in vice: they thenceforth become the ornament, and bleſſing of their families: they are made partakers of a heavenly wiſdom, and a glorious liberty; and they are rendered uſeful in thoſe communities, to which before they were a terror, or a temptation. They go among their friends, and neighbours, to bear teſtimony to Chriſt, ſhewing what great things He hath done for them, and hath had compaſſion on them: and whilſt their conduct evinces the reality, and excellency of the change, that hath been effected; they often excite great attention, and are made the inſtruments of inducing their more orderly neighbours to hearken to the goſpel, which before they deſpiſed. Nay the Lord ſometimes makes choice of theſe diſpoſſeſſed demoniacs, for his miniſters: and whilſt they publiſh through cities, and countries, what great things Jeſus hath done for them; their ſimple teſtimony confirmed by their characters, renders them extenſive bleſſings, perhaps in thoſe very places, where they were once moſt miſchievous: and indeed, we ſeem to be continued in this world of ſin, and ſorrow, after our converſion, chiefly to declare and diſplay by word and deed the Saviour's power, and grace, amongſt our fellow ſinners.

Our bleſſed Lord will not obtrude himſelf on thoſe, who are not diſpoſed to entertain him; nor refuſe his preſence, and ſalvation to thoſe, whoſe hearts are prepared to welcome him. The feeling of diſtreſs, for which men can obtain no adequate remedy from themſelves, or others, often is the means of bringing them to apply to Chriſt: and thus moſt ſevere family trials are ſometimes appointed in love, to ſhew thoſe in affluence and proſperity how vain their advantages are, as they cannot deliver them from anguiſh, death, or deſtruction; and thus to lead them to enquire after a better portion, and a ſpiritual ſalvation. They, who are in temporal diſtreſs, can readily find words to expreſs their meaning, and deſires; how is it then, that men experience ſuch difficulty in preſenting their ſupplications before God? We muſt allow, that they have not ſo diſtinct an underſtanding of their wants, nor ſo deep a feeling of their ſpiritual dangers, and miſeries. There are different degrees, and exerciſes of faith, where it is vital, and ſaving: but our higheſt apprehenſions of, and expectations from Chriſt moſt honour him, and will be moſt advantageous to us. The hiſtory of his life contains an account of his continuance in doing good, without wearineſs, or intermiſſion; ſo that we know not whether we ſhould moſt admire his divine power, or his beneficent uſe of it: whilſt then we derive encouragement from this reflection; let us learn to uſe our little ability in doing what we can to alleviate the miſeries, and promote the good of mankind. If we look around us, we ſhall ſee many of the objects of God's ſpecial love waſted by diſeaſe, pinched by penury, and lodged in cottages, cellars, garrets, or alm's-houſes: whilſt ſtately palaces are often ſcenes of riot, to infidels, profligates, and cruel oppreſſors! But the proſperity of fools deſtroys them, and the afflictions of the righteous, tend to, and iſſue in their everlaſting felicity. Men often prove inefficient helpers even in our temporal calamities, and only add to our ſufferings by their efforts to relieve us: yet the averſion of ſinners to ſeek help from God is very conſpicuous in this reſpect; for they will try every method of redreſs, and perſevere after reiterated diſappointments, in running to this and the other fellow creature; yet they will not apply to Him, who alone can render means, and inſtruments ſucceſsful; and who can help us, when all other helpers fail. In our ſpiritual concerns Chriſt is our only Phyſician: and when ſinners are brought to feel their need of deliverance from the burden of a guilty conſcience, or from the power of ſin; they ſhould be directed to go immediately to him for that ſalvation, which he died to purchaſe, and is exalted to beſtow. But many, through their own obſtinacy, or for want of wholeſome inſtruction, waſte their time, and ſtrength to no purpoſe, by applying to phyſicians of no value; from whom they ſuffer many things, and get no better, but rather grow worſe. Some run into diverſions, and gay company to pacify an uneaſy conſcience, or to relieve the dejection of their ſpirits: others plunge into a hurry of buſineſs, into abſtruſe ſpeculations, or even into intemperance for the ſame purpoſe: others go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, or torment themſelves by vain ſuperſtitions. Many periſh in theſe ways: but the man, whom God hath quickened by his grace will never find reſt to his ſoul, by ſuch devices. Happy then are they, who by many diſappointments are led to hearken to the report of the goſpel, and to expect help from Jeſus alone: if deſpairing of relief from all others they apply to him for his complete ſalvation; even their remaining ignorance, infirmity, and miſapprehenſions will not prevent their obtaining the deſired bleſſing. And the example before us may inſtruct us to receive and encourage thoſe, who ſeem humbly to rely on Chriſt for pardon, and grace; though much confuſion appear in their judgment, and many defects in their temper, and conduct. In proportion as our application to Chriſt brings peace into our conſcience, and deſtroys the love, and power of ſin from our hearts; it both evidences his power, and the reality of our faith: and the more ſingly we depend on, and expect great things from him; the more evidently we ſhall find in ourſelves, that he is become our Salvation. Thus He gradually, and effectually teaches his people by their own experience: he evinces to them his knowledge of their thoughts, their wants, and their difficulties; and he ſhews his power and love in relieving, and helping them. But whilſt we have the benefit, He will ſecure to himſelf the glory of all, that he does for us: and he will at length bring to light, in numberleſs inſtances, the virtue that hath gone forth from him to heal thoſe hidden evils of the heart, under which his people had groaned for years, before they applied to him. Even

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his diſciples followed him.

2 And when the ſabbath day was come, he began to teach in the ſynagogue: and many hearing *him* were aſtoniſhed, ſaying, From whence hath this *man* theſe things? and what wiſdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even ſuch mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary, the brother of James, and Joſes, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his ſiſters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own houſe.

5 And he could there do no mighty works, ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick folk, and healed *them*.

6 And he marvelled becauſe of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

7 And he calleth *unto him* the twelve, and began to ſend them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean ſpirits;

8 And commanded them that they ſhould take nothing for *their* journey, ſave a ſtaff only; no ſcrip, no bread, no money in *their* purſe:

9 But *be* ſhod with ſandals; and not put on two coats.

10 And he ſaid unto them, In what place ſoever ye enter into an houſe, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear you; when ye depart thence, ſhake off the duſt under your feet for a teſtimony againſt them. Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall

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the diſciples of Chriſt are to this very day, in many inſtances, apt to expreſs themſelves diſſatisfied with his words and works; with the diſpenſations of his providence, and grace. This is the effect of remaining pride, ignorance and unbelief: for no believer to this very hour ever could conceive of his compaſſion and love ſo highly as they deſerve; though he ſometimes conceal them under a frown, or a rebuke. Humble ſouls therefore, in applying to Him are apt to tremble, and fear, leſt he ſhould abhor or deſtroy them: whilſt his heart yearns with pity, and he is about to ſay to them, as to his children, "be of good comfort, go in peace, thy faith hath "ſaved thee." For though his merits, atoning blood, and ſanctifying grace be the alone cauſes of our ſalvation; yet he will honour that faith, which honours him, by applying to, and receiving from Him the bleſſings he hath purchaſed.

The Lord will not let one of thoſe who wait on him, be a loſer by his kindneſs to others: His delays are intended to render his favours more precious: He waits for our extremities, that he may manifeſt his glory, and encourage our faith, and hope. He regards no application to him as a trouble; no caſe can be deſperate, that he undertakes; we ſhould therefore not yield to fear, but deſire to be ſtrengthened in faith, in the moſt difficult circumſtances; and he will then fulfil his word, and all our expectations, that are grounded on it. No wonder that worldly men make a tumult with wailing, and lamentation, when bereaved of thoſe whom they love; for they have no proſpect, or a very gloomy one beyond the grave: but chriſtians ſhould not ſorrow as men without hope, for them who ſleep in the Lord; nor ſhould they indulge grief, or affect to be inconſolable for any loſs, as the Lord ſtill liveth to be their never failing Friend, and Comforter. Indeed death is but a ſleep to believers; and we ſhall ſoon join our deceaſed chriſtian friends in that world, where ſin and all its effects will be known no more. But our gracious Redeemer, whilſt he rebukes our exceſſive ſorrow, makes kind allowances to the feelings of nature and affection: and though we cannot now expect to have our deceaſed children, or relatives reſtored to us; yet we may hope to experience conſolations proportioned to our trials. Whilſt ſinners will ridicule the truths, and promiſes of Chriſt, and ſo exclude themſelves from witneſſing or experiencing their gracious accompliſhment; he hath the power over death, the grave, and the unſeen world; and he will ere long bring forth all the nations of the dead to appear before his awful tribunal, and to hear his powerful word, either calling them to inherit eternal felicity, or bidding them depart into everlaſting puniſhment. May he then raiſe our ſouls from the death of ſin, to the life of righteouſneſs; that we may now feed on his ſpiritual proviſions, and walk with him in his holy ways, as the trophies, and monuments of his grace: that when he ſhall at length appear, we may alſo appear with him in glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—6.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 53—58.) In this account of our Lord's laſt viſit to Nazareth, (as it appears to have been;) we find that the people aſked "Is not this the carpenter?" whence it hath reaſonably been concluded, that he had wrought with Joſeph, at this laborious buſineſs, during the former years of his life. We alſo find, that he performed a few miraculous cures, notwithſtanding their prejudice and unbelief; which were ſo unreaſonable, that he is ſaid to have marvelled at them.

V. 7—13.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. c. xi. v. 20—24.) We here find that the apoſtles anointed the ſick perſons with oil, and ſo healed them. Doubtleſs this was done by the orders of Chriſt, to be an outward ſign of his inward operation; which was itſelf an emblem of his heal-

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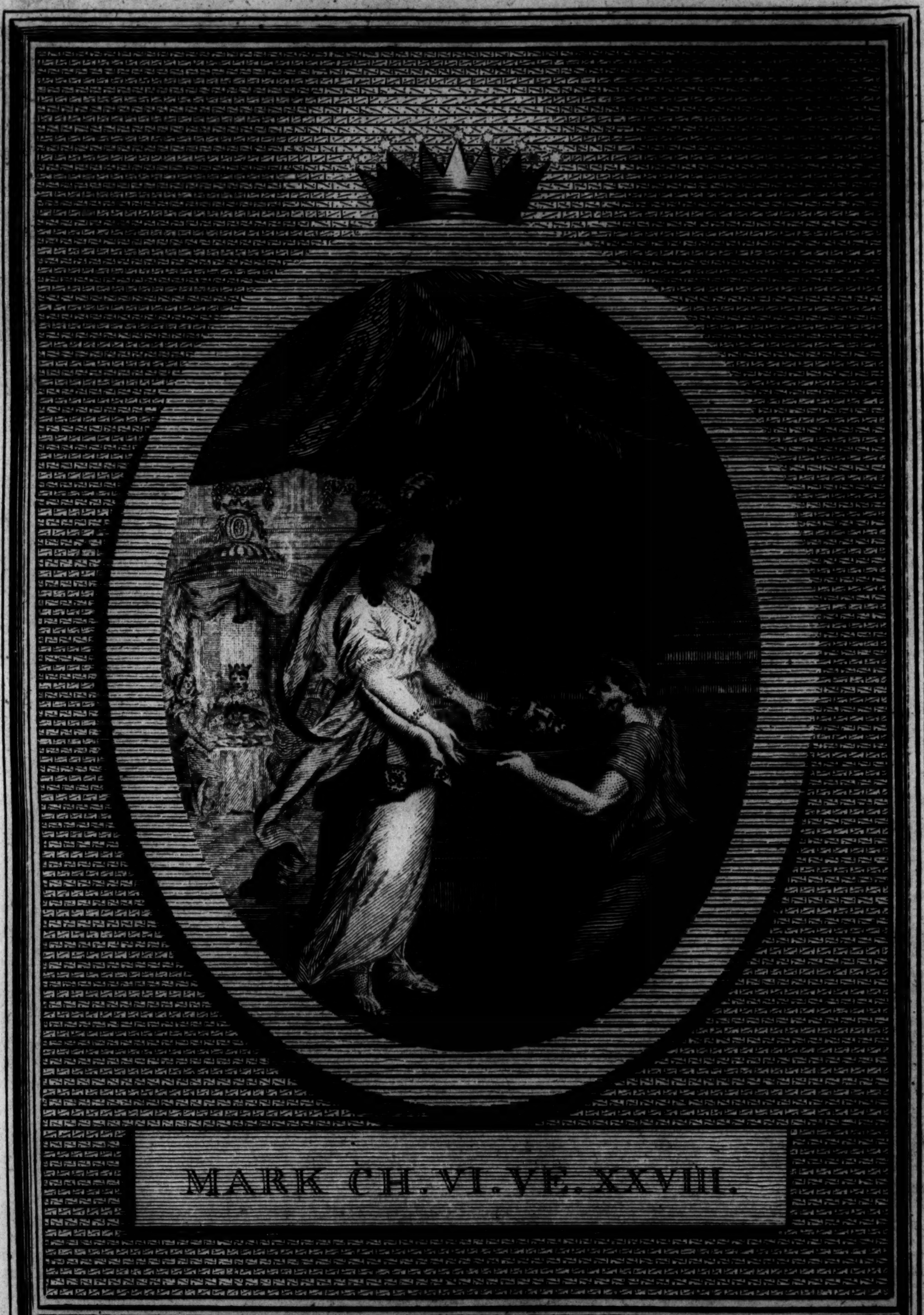
THE REV^D M^R SCOTT'S BIBLE.



MARK CH. VI. VE. XXVIII.

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be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men ſhould repent.

13 And they caſt out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were ſick, and healed *them*.

14 And king Herod heard *of him:* (for his name was ſpread abroad;) and he ſaid, That John the Baptiſt was riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him.

15 Others ſaid, That it is Elias. And others ſaid, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 But when Herod heard *thereof* he ſaid, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is riſen from the dead.

17 For Herod himſelf had ſent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in priſon for Herodias' ſake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

18 For John had ſaid unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel againſt him, and would have killed him; but ſhe could not.

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a juſt man, and an holy, and obſerved him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a ſupper to his lords, high captains, and chief *eſtates* of Galilee;

22 And when the daughter of the ſaid Herodias came in, and danced and pleaſed Herod, and them that ſat with him, the king ſaid unto the damſel, Aſk of me whatſoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

23 And he ſware unto her, Whatſoever thou ſhalt aſk of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And ſhe went forth, and ſaid unto her mother, What ſhall I aſk? And ſhe ſaid, The head of John the Baptiſt.

25 And ſhe came in ſtraightway with haſte unto the king, and aſked, ſaying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptiſt.

26 And the king was exceeding ſorry; *yet*, for his oath's ſake, and for their ſakes which ſat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And immediately the king ſent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the priſon;

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damſel: and the damſel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his diſciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpſe, and laid it in a tomb.

30 And the apoſtles gathered themſelves together unto Jeſus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 And he ſaid unto them, Come ye yourſelves apart into a deſert place, and reſt a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leiſure ſo much as to eat.

32 And they departed into a deſert place by ſhip privately.

33 And the people ſaw them departing, and many knew him, and ran a foot thither out of all cities, and out-went them, and came together unto him,

34 And Jeſus, when he came out, ſaw much people, and was moved with compaſſion toward them, becauſe they were as

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ing our ſouls, by the unction of the Holy Ghoſt. This was in uſe for ſome time in the church; (*James*, c. v. ver. 14;) as the token of a miraculous cure; but it was natural to leave it off, when miracles ceaſed: though the popiſh ceremony of extreme unction ſeems *abſurdly* to have been derived from it: for that is not uſed in order to a miraculous cure; but when all hope of recovery is paſt.

V. 14—29.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiv. v. 1—12.)

V. 30—56.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiv. v. 13—36.) We find from St. Luke, (c. ix. v. 10,) that our Lord retired with the apoſtles to a deſert belonging to Bethſaida: yet it is here ſaid, (v. 46,) that they were ſent away “to go to the other ſide before him, unto Bethſaida.” Probably the deſert, to which they had retired, was ſeparated from Bethſaida by an arm of the ſea, ſheep not having a ſhepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35 And when the day was now far ſpent, his diſciples came unto him, and ſaid, This is a deſert place, and now the time *is* far paſſed;

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themſelves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they ſay unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and ſee. And when they knew, they ſay, Five, and two fiſhes.

39 And he commanded them to make all ſit down by companies upon the green graſs.

40 And they ſat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fiſhes, he looked up to heaven, and bleſſed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his diſciples to ſet before them; and the two fiſhes divided he among them all.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baſkets full of the fragments, and of the fiſhes.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thouſand men.

45 And ſtraightway he conſtrained his diſciples to get into the ſhip, and to go to the other ſide before unto Bethſaida, while he ſent away the people.

46 And when he had ſent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

47 And when even was come, the ſhip was in the midſt of the ſea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he ſaw them toiling in rowing: (for the wind was contrary unto them:) and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the ſea, and would have paſſed by them.

49 But when they ſaw him walking upon the ſea, they ſuppoſed it had been a ſpirit, and cried out:

50 (For they all ſaw him, and were troubled:) and immediately he talked with them, and ſaith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

51 And he went up unto them into the ſhip; and the wind ceaſed: and they were ſore amazed in themſelves beyond meaſure, and wondered.

52 For they conſidered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

53 And when they had paſſed over, they came into the land of Genneſaret, and drew to the ſhore.

54 And when they were come out of the ſhip, ſtraightway they knew him.

55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was.

56 And whitherſoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the ſick in the ſtreets, and beſought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

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over which they were ordered to ſail: but being forced by the ſtorm into the ſea of Tiberias, they at laſt landed at Capernaum. (*John*, c. vi. v. 17.) The diſciples are alſo ſaid, (v. 51, 52,) "not to have conſidered the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened." Had they duly reflected on the miracle, that Chriſt had wrought in feeding the multitude; they would not have been ſo exceedingly amazed, at his walking on the waves of the ſea, and cauſing the tempeſt to ſubſide. But their minds were in part hardened, through remaining unbelief, and carnal prejudices; ſo that they did not ſteadily draw, and keep in mind the proper inferences from the miracles they beheld; and therefore they ſoon forgot their conviction of the divine power of their Lord; and this occaſioned their aſtoniſhment, at every renewed diſplay of it. Perhaps the report of the woman, that had been cured by touching the fringe of Chriſt's garment, (c. v. ver. 25—34;) gave encouragement to theſe perſons to apply to him, by his permiſſion, in this manner. (v. 56.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are here firſt taught by our Lord's example, to renew our endeavours for the ſpiritual good even of thoſe, who have already treated us with cruelty or contempt; and where danger and contumely are again to be expected. (*Luke*, c. iv. v. 16—30.) We are alſo reminded that induſtry in the meaneſt, and moſt laborious honeſt calling is far more honourable and beneficial, than indo-

CHAP. VII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Expoſing the traditions of the Phariſees, and ſhewing the origin, and nature of moral defilement, 1---23. *2d. Healing the woman of Canaan's daughter,* 24---30. *3d. Curing a man, who was deaf, and had an impediment in his ſpeech,* 31---37. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xv. v. 1---31.)*

lence, or diſſipation, eſpecially in youth: they therefore, who are placed in ſuch ſituations, ſhould chearfully go on with their employments; and if God have work of another kind for them, it will be no hindrance to their future uſefulneſs. Carnal men indeed will deſpiſe thoſe, whoſe wiſdom, excellence, or uſefulneſs are moſt undeniable, becauſe of their mean extraction, low occupations, or poor relations; or on account of their previous familiarity with, or external ſuperiority over them; for unbelief will always find ſome objection againſt the truth, and thoſe who are zealous for it: but whilſt their unreaſonable prejudices preclude them from the benefit; the ſervants of God will find others diſpoſed to hearken to, and profit by them. Indeed the inhabitants of villages are often more ready to welcome the goſpel, than thoſe of flouriſhing and populous cities: if therefore we fail of meeting acceptance in the latter, we ſhould be ſatisfied to go and teach the poor peaſants, and cottagers the way of ſalvation. The Lord Jeſus, the Fountain of all authority in his church, diſpenſeth to every man as he pleaſeth: and he will ſurely qualify, and aſſiſt thoſe whom he commiſſions to preach his goſpel. Where the truth hath hitherto been but little known, it is very deſirable that miniſters ſhould go forth at leaſt by two, and two; that they may have the comfort and benefit, of each others ſociety, counſel, and prayers. Whilſt faithful preachers deſire, and deſign to be a bleſſing to mankind; and being content with food and raiment however mean and ſcanty, ſeek "not their's but them," they often prove the occaſion of men's deeper condemnation; who conſtrain them to ſhake off the duſt of their feet for a teſtimony againſt them, by refuſing to hear, and receive their meſſage. How heinous a ſin muſt unbelief then be in thoſe, who have the adequate means of conviction; ſeeing a righteous God will render their final doom more intolerable, than that of Sodom, and Gomorrah! However the ſervants of Chriſt muſt go forth in his name, every where preaching, that men ſhould repent, turn to God, and do works meet for repentance; and enforcing their exhortations by the terrors of the law, and the encouraging truths, and promiſes of the goſpel. In this way they may hope to turn many from the power of darkneſs unto God, and be the inſtruments of healing their ſouls by the unction of the Holy Ghoſt.

When the truths, and honour of Chriſt are ſpread abroad, by the ſucceſsful labours of his miniſters; men will make their own obſervations on, or conjectures about the matter, according to their different humours, or prejudices: and then the ſecret remorſe, and horror of conſcience, which wicked men experience, will often be brought to light. No hardneſs of heart, or worldly grandeur can preſerve the enemies of God from terrors, and anxieties. They are ſeldom wholly exempt from convictions of their own guilt, and they are often unable to keep out the dread of the divine vengeance. They may impriſon or murder their outward reprovers; but this only increaſes the clamour of their inward monitor: and any perſon, who underſtands, and believes the bible, may predict the conſequence of a man's determining to mount, if poſſible, the ſummit of proſperity, by whatever means, and at any rate; for if he ſucceed, he will find his deſired eminence a moſt turbulent, anxious, and perilous ſituation; and unleſs he have the wiſdom and grace to come down ſpeedily into the valley of humiliation, he will ſoon be tumbled into the depths of hell. We may eaſily ſee the reaſon, why men cannot receive the meſſage of God's miniſters, and why they treat them with contempt and enmity: they feel their example and doctrine to be a reproach to them; their pride is affronted, their conſciences are diſquieted, and their darling indulgences are oppoſed by them; and thus they, and their aſſociates in iniquity, have an irreconcileable quarrel againſt the very perſons, whom they cannot but ſtand in awe of, as juſt and holy men; whom they have often heard with apparent ſatisfaction, and at whoſe inſtance they have done many things. But the frame of men's minds is very different, when they are hearing the word of God, as delivered by an heart-ſearching awakening preacher; than it is at thoſe times, when they are celebrating luxurious and joyous feaſts, indulging their appetites, ſurrounded with flatteries, and carouſing with their diſſipated companions. Such are ſatan's opportunities: he waits for them, in order to take his advantage, to puſh men forward into thoſe enormities, from which they were reſtrained by remaining ſcruples of conſcience, in their more ſober hours. Hence it hath often been known, that the moſt atrocious murders have been haſtily committed, as it were to grace a riotous banquet, or to gratify ſome worthleſs individual, who had contributed to the luxury or conviviality of the occaſion! Thus the great murderer of men carries his point, and employs them in the infatuated work of deſtroying each others lives, and ſouls. If the hiſtory of perſecutions, and martyrs could be penned under the guidance of inſpiration; it would be found, that thouſands of the moſt valuable lives had fallen a ſacrifice to the revenge of ſome ambitious, and licentious Herodias; or of ſome vile wretch, whoſe pride had been affronted, and whoſe ſucceſs in wickedneſs had been impeded, or endangered by their faithful reproofs. Yet, even they, who have been inſtigated by ſuch prompters, have pretended that their conſcience and honour were concerned in the buſineſs; and have deviſed to connect oaths, engagements, and regard to friends, to the public peace, or the good of the church, with the gratification of their iniquitous cruelty, and revenge! However they can at laſt do the faithful ſervants of God no real harm: He will graciouſly vouchſafe them another kind of recompence, than they received from men; and he will avenge their cauſe on thoſe, who repaid their friendly warnings with indignity, and cruelty. But what will be *their* doom, who have inſtigated their own children, and neareſt relatives to the moſt atrocious crimes, THEN came together unto him the Phariſees, and certain of the ſcribes, which came from Jeruſalem.

2 And when they ſaw ſome of his diſciples eat bread with defiled (that is to ſay, with unwaſhen) hands, they found fault.

3 For the Phariſees, and all the Jews, except they waſh *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they waſh they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, *as* the waſhing of cups, and pots, braſen veſſels, and of tables.

5 Then the Phariſees and ſcribes aſked him, Why walk not thy diſciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwaſhen hands?

6 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Well hath Eſaias propheſied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

in order to gratify their own vile paſſions? Whilſt the enemies of God are triumphing in their ſhort lived ſucceſs; and his friends are mourning over the loſs of thoſe, that have entered into their reſt; he will ſend forth other miniſters to ſpread his goſpel, and will protect them in their work, till it be finiſhed. Every miniſter muſt give an account of himſelf to Chriſt at laſt: and it behoves us now to do it continually before his throne of grace; both concerning all we have done, and all that we have taught. Thus we ſhall have the comfort of his gracious acceptance of that which hath been right, and obtain his bleſſing upon our labours: and thus we may ſeek his merciful forgiveneſs of what hath been wrong, pray that the effects of it may be counteracted, and learn to profit even by our own miſtakes, and offences. Our bleſſed Lord, knowing our frailty, will allow, and provide for us, ſeaſons of relaxation after our fatiguing exertions in his ſervice; that we may both be recruited for our work, recollect ourſelves reſpecting the ſtate of our own ſouls, and receive further inſtructions from him concerning our future conduct: and if he by ſickneſs, or any other providential hindrance, lay us aſide for a ſeaſon from our work; we ſhould not think the time waſted, but liſten more attentively to his teaching, and ſeek to profit by the viſitation.

They, who know the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, and his ſalvation, and have learned where he is to be found, will break through all hindrances, that they may apply to him; nor will he refuſe inſtruction, or aſſiſtance to thoſe, who deviate from ordinary rules, in their earneſtneſs to obtain the bleſſings of ſalvation from him. He has tender compaſſion for thoſe, who are as ſheep not having a ſhepherd: and they, who wait on him, take the beſt method of obtaining all things needful for ſoul, and body. If we "ſeek firſt his kingdom and righteouſneſs," he will add all needful things unto us: and as he died on the croſs, that he might feed our periſhing ſouls with the bread of life, he will not fail in his providence to give us food for our bodies alſo. Whilſt we therefore cheerfully, and thankfully depend on his power and grace for all temporal, and ſpiritual good: let us copy his example, in being acceſſible at all times to thoſe, who want our help; in compaſſionating the temporal afflictions of our neighbours as well as the loſt condition of their ſouls; and in being always ready to diſtribute, and glad to communicate to their neceſſities. In doing this, we ſhould endeavour to be frugal in our own expences, that we may have the more to expend in liberality to others; and we may truſt in the Lord to make up by his bleſſing whatever is neceſſary to our ſtate in life. We ſhould alſo learn to connect piety, and charity together; and to delight alternately in communion with God, and in doing good to men: and ſhould we meet with ſtorms, and difficulties in the path of duty, we may by faith behold our heavenly Advocate pleading our cauſe; and ready to come to our help, as it were walking upon the waves, and ſilencing the tempeſt as he pleaſes; and allaying our terrors by ſaying "be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." Did we duly regard even our own experience of his power, truth, and love, we ſhould not be ſo much alarmed at our renewed difficulties, or at formidable appearances: our expectations would then be raiſed higher; and though our amazement at his renewed interpoſitions might be leſs, our admiring gratitude and praiſe would be greater than they now are: but we loſe much of our comfort in the watchful care of our Lord, by our remaining unbelief, forgetfulneſs, and hardneſs of heart: may his grace then remove theſe obſtructions, which no means can reach. Did men value the health of their ſouls, as they do that of their bodies; and had they ſtrong faith in the Redeemer's power, and grace; they would flock to him from villages, and cities, ſparing neither trouble or inconvenience; and beſeeching him, that they might be enabled in faith to touch even the hem of his garment; for certainly, they who thus apply to him, will be made whole of their moſt inveterate diſeaſes. And here again let us learn to be doing good wherever we go; and to ſeek the ſalvation of Chriſt for others, as well as for ourſelves.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 3, 4.] St. Mark gives a more particular account of theſe traditional waſhings, than St. Matthew did. The Phariſees and other Jews, uſed not to eat, except they waſhed their hands oft, or diligently, "with their fiſt," or "to the elbow;" (ſome underſtand it in one way, and ſome in another;) being afraid of having inadvertently contracted defilement. When they returned from the markets, or places of public reſort, they would not eat, except they waſhed, or were baptized, (as it is in the original;) and they had received, and very tenaciouſly held many ſuch things, as the waſhing, *or baptiſms*, of cups, pots, &c, and even of their tables, or rather their beds, the couches on which they reclined to meat. If we ſuppoſe, that they *always* bathed their whole body, after they returned from the

7 Howbeit in vain do they worſhip me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aſide the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the waſhing of pots and cups: and many other ſuch like things ye do.

9 And he ſaid unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moſes ſaid, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoſo curſeth father or mother, let him die the death.

11 But ye ſay, If a man ſhall ſay to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to ſay, A gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me; *he ſhall be free*.

12 And ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many ſuch like things do ye.

14 And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he ſaid unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and underſtand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, thoſe are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the houſe from the people, his diſciples aſked him concerning the parable.

18 And he ſaith unto them, Are ye ſo without underſtanding alſo? Do ye not perceive, that whatſoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him:

19 Becauſe it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he ſaid, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs:

23 All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.

24 And from thence he aroſe, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an houſe, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid.

25 For a *certain* woman, whoſe young daughter had an unclean ſpirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet;

26 (The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation;) and ſhe beſought him that he would caſt forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jeſus ſaid unto her, Let the children firſt be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to caſt *it* unto the dogs.

28 And ſhe anſwered and ſaid unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he ſaid unto her, For this ſaying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when ſhe was come to her houſe, ſhe found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31 And again, departing from the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the ſea of Galilee, through the midſt of the coaſts of Decapolis.

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markets, &c, which is not very probable; yet we cannot conceive that they plunged their couches in water alſo. And as the Phariſees only blamed Chriſt's diſciples for eating with unwaſhen hands; ſo it is probable that by the words *baptize*, and *baptiſms* a partial application of water was intended in this, as well as in ſeveral other places.

V. 11. *If*, &c.] Some have ſuppoſed, that this might be eſpecially meant of a raſh vow made by a man in a paſſion, that he would do nothing any more for his parents, but would rather give all he could ſpare to the treaſury; which would be equivalent to curſing them: yet the blind Phariſees had determined that ſuch a vow was to be religiouſly obſerved!

V. 22. *Fooliſhneſs*, &c.] Every kind of inordinate, and ungovernable inclination, which leads men to act fooliſhly, and wickedly, ſeems to be meant in this concluding word. Even exceſs in eating, and drinking, whereby indeed a man is defiled by what goeth in at his mouth, muſt be conſidered as ſpringing from the ſenſuality of his heart, and its immoderate hankering after animal indulgence.

V. 31—37.] This miracle is not elſewhere recorded. The diſpoſſeſſed demoniac had declared through the region

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his ſpeech; and they beſeech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aſide from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he ſpit, and touched his tongue;

34 And looking up to heaven, he ſighed, and ſaith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And ſtraightway his ears were opened, and the ſtring of his tongue was looſed, and he ſpake plain.

36 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man: but the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed *it*:

37 And were beyond meaſure aſtoniſhed, ſaying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak.

of Decapolis what great things Jeſus had done for him. (c. v. ver. 20.) Some perſons had indeed long before attended on Chriſt from that Country, (*Matt.* c. iv. ver. 25:) but it is probable that the man's teſtimony had conſiderable effect in diſpoſing the people to attend on our Lord, when he went into thoſe parts. Accordingly they immediately brought unto him a man that was deaf, and could ſcarce ſpeak to be underſtood, intreating him to cure him by laying his hand upon him, as he frequently did: but he was pleaſed on this occaſion to vary his method to ſhew that he was not confined to any one. He therefore took the man aſide, put his fingers in his ears, and ſpit, and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, to denote that he acted by a divine power, in perfect union with God the Father; and ſighing, as ſympathizing with the man in his miſery, and in a view of the calamities to which men are expoſed by ſin, he ſaid with authority "be opened;" and an immediate cure enſued, to the exceeding great aſtoniſhment of the people, who acknowledged the power, goodneſs, and excellency of his works, in this, and other inſtances. And though he charged them as uſual not to publiſh the miracle; this only cauſed them the more to ſpeak of it; as they deemed it improper that his wonderful works ſhould be concealed, through his care in avoiding all oſtentation. How far they acted right, or the contrary, we need not determine.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Thoſe clean hands, and that pure heart, which Chriſt requires of, and beſtows on, his diſciples, are very different from the external decency, and ſuperſtitious forms and appearances of ſanctity, that have diſtinguiſhed proud Phariſees in every age. Their outward purifications, and ceremonies can neither purge the conſcience from guilt, nor the affections from avarice, ambition, ſenſuality, or hypocriſy: and if our hearts be purified by faith, and grace, we ſhall not need ſuch human inventions, but all things will be made clean unto us. Yet mere formaliſts are apt to find fault with Chriſt's diſciples, for not complying with their ſuperſtitions; and to ſeek or to pretend his authority for them, in order to run down his cauſe, and perſecute his people. But however zealous men may be for various plauſible, and burdenſome obſervances, and exact in attending to them; yet they may be ſtrangers to true religion, enemies of Chriſt, hypocritical worſhippers, and of that ſame generation of vipers, who were of old treated with ſuch marked ſeverity. This muſt be the caſe of thoſe zealots, of every denomination, who reject the commandments of God, and the doctrines of the goſpel, that they may keep their own traditions: and all vows, or engagements muſt be antichriſtian, and impious, which allow children to diſhonour, or neglect their parents; or which authorize men to violate the important, and immutable obligations of juſtice, mercy and truth. A ſpiritual underſtanding of the holy law of God, and of the evil of ſin; an acquaintance with the depravity of the human heart, and the defilement, which thence flows forth into the conduct, and converſation; and a diſcernment of the ſcriptural way of cleanſing a guilty conſcience, and a polluted heart, will effectually wean a man from theſe worthleſs inventions. Such a one will ſeek for the grace of the Holy Spirit to enable him to repreſs the evil imaginations, and affections, that work within; as he is aware that the very "thought of wickedneſs is ſin:" he will endeavour to mortify and purge out the ſenſual, unclean, malicious, revengeful, unjuſt, covetous, fraudulent, envious, proud, and ambitious deſires of his heart: he will ſeek deliverance from all enmity, and hard thoughts of God; from all ingratitude, ſelfiſhneſs, and inordinate love even of lawful things: he will pray to be cleanſed from every inclination, that is inconſiſtent with piety, equity, ſincerity, purity, and enlarged charity: and he will know, that if he be indeed purified from theſe, and ſuch like inward evils, that defile the man, he is certainly made partaker of that holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord: and his grand object will then be, to increaſe therein more and more, from day to day; as a proof that the guilt is purged away from his conſcience by the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus.

Whilſt proud Phariſees are left with decided diſapprobation, the bleſſed Saviour manifeſts his compaſſion, and love to poor humble ſinners of the Gentiles; and all, who allow themſelves to be unworthy of the crumbs that fall from his table, may confidently call upon him for the food of his beloved children. Still he goes about into every place to ſeek, and ſave the loſt: and neither the obſcurity of his miniſters, nor the oppoſition of his enemies, can prevent the diſcovery of his glory, and grace. In like manner it is our buſineſs to perſevere in doing good, privately, and in an unambitious manner; and our labour of love will not always be hid, or miſrepreſented. When ſinners apply to Chriſt, in behalf of themſelves, and thoſe that are dear to them, earneſtly deſiring deliverance by him from the oppreſſion of the devil; they may have their faith, and humility tried by delays, and

CHAP VIII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Again miraculouſly feeding the multitudes, 1---9. *2d. Refuſing to give the Phariſees a ſign; warning the diſciples againſt* their *leaven, and reproving them for their dulneſs of underſtanding,* 10---21. *3d. Giving ſight to a blind man at Bethſaida,* 22---26. *4th. Approving Peter's confeſſion; predicting his own ſufferings; rebuking Peter for objecting to them; and teaching ſelf-denial, and a willingneſs to ſuffer for his ſake, &c.* 27---38. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xv. v.* 32---39. *c. xvi.)*

IN thoſe days, the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jeſus called his diſciples *unto him,* and ſaith unto them,

2 I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat;

3 And if I ſend them away faſting to their own houſes, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his diſciples anſwered him, From whence can a man ſatisfy theſe *men* with bread here in the wilderneſs?

5 And he aſked them, How many loaves have ye? And they ſaid, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to ſit down on the ground: and he took the ſeven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his diſciples to ſet before *them*; and they did ſet *them* before the people.

7 And they had a few ſmall fiſhes: and he bleſſed, and commanded to ſet them alſo before *them*.

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left ſeven baſkets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thouſand; and he ſent them away.

10 And ſtraightway he entered into a ſhip with his diſciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 And the Phariſees came forth, and began to queſtion with him, ſeeking of him a ſign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he ſighed deeply in his ſpirit, and ſaith, Why doth this generation ſeek after a ſign? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall no ſign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ſhip again, departed to the other ſide.

14 Now *the diſciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ſhip with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, ſaying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and *of* the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have no bread.

17 And when Jeſus knew *it*, he ſaith unto them, Why reaſon ye becauſe ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither underſtand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, ſee ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thouſand, how many baſkets full of fragments took ye up? They ſay unto him, Twelve.

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frowns, and may be ready to conclude that the bleſſings are reſerved for others, and not to be vouchſafed to them: but patient and humble waiting on him by faith, and prayer will certainly prevail; nor ſhall any have cauſe to ſay, that they have ſought his face in vain. Thus one after another obtains the bleſſing, and declares the Saviour's love to others; and they too apply to him, in their trouble, and diſtreſs. And though we find a great variety in the caſes, the reception, and the manner of relief, of thoſe, who applied unto Chriſt when here below: yet in this we recognize no difference; in one way or other, they all obtained the help they ſought! Thus it ſtill is, in the grand concerns of our ſouls: the compaſſionate Saviour ſtill opens the deaf ear, and unlooſes the ſtammering tongue: and when he ſpeaks with divine authority, he opens the underſtanding, and the heart, to receive inſtruction; and the lips to ſhew forth his praiſe. (*Iſaiah*, c. xxxii. v. 3, 4. c. xxxv. v. 5, 6.) Whilſt we then admire the grace and excellency of his character, and the power of his works; let us proclaim to all around us, that he hath done all things well; as he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 12. *And*, &c.] This was an expreſſion of our Lord's holy indignation at the obſtinate unbelief, and hypocriſy of the Phariſees; as well as of his compaſſionate concern at ſeeing them in this manner bent on their own deſtruction, and deceiving the ſouls of the people. He ſeems to have left Dalmanutha, without either preaching, or working miracles among them: for the people probably were greatly prejudiced againſt him by their falſe teachers.

V. 17, 18.] Even the diſciples were in ſome degree infected with the ſame carnal prejudices, which had en-

20 And when the ſeven among four thouſand, how many baſkets full of fragments took ye up? And they ſaid, Seven.

21 And he ſaid unto them, How is that ye do not underſtand?

22 And he cometh to Bethſaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and beſought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had ſpit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he aſked him if he ſaw ought.

24 And he looked up, and ſaid, I ſee men, as trees, walking.

25 After that, he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was reſtored, and ſaw every man clearly.

26 And he ſent him away to his houſe, ſaying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

27 And Jeſus went out, and his diſciples, into the towns of Ceſarea Philippi: and by the way he aſked his diſciples, ſaying unto them, Whom do men ſay that I am?

28 And they anſwered, John the Baptiſt: but ſome *ſay*, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? And Peter anſwereth and ſaith unto him, Thou art the Chriſt.

30 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man of him.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed; and after three days riſe again.

32 And he ſpake that ſaying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 And when he had called the people *unto him*, with his diſciples alſo, he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.

35 For whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe

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tirely occupied the minds of the Phariſees, &c. Our Lord therefore "rebuked them ſharply, that they might "be found in the faith." He intimated that their ſtupidity was peculiarly marvellous, and inexcuſeable; when all their advantages were conſidered. Were their hearts alſo ſo hard, and their eyes ſo blind, that his continued inſtructions could not convince them, that he meant to lead their minds to ſpiritual, and eternal objects, and to guard them againſt falſe doctrines; and not to amuſe them with little outward diſtinctions, and peculiarities? And could *they* be ſo unbelieving, as to doubt his power to feed their bodies, after the miracles, they had ſo lately witneſſed?

V. 22—26.] St. Mark alone records this miracle. This blind man was conducted to Jeſus by his friends, when he was at Bethſaida: yet he ſeems not to have been an inhabitant of that city. They deſired our Lord to touch him: but he was pleaſed to reſtore him to his ſight in another method; perhaps in order gradually to increaſe his faith, and to raiſe his expectation: however it ſerved to illuſtrate the manner, in which he often enlightens the ſouls of men. He took the blind man by the hand, and vouchſafing to be his Conductor, he led him out of the town: not only, that he might work the miracle in a more private manner; but to mark his diſapprobation of the unbelief and wickedneſs of the inhabitants. Having then ſpit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him; (as intimating that the power came from him, whatever external ſign he uſed;) he enquired, if he were able to ſee any thing? At the ſame time the man had been gradually reſtored in part to the uſe of his eyes; and therefore he anſwered, that he ſaw men as "trees walk-"ing." He could ſee the people walking at a diſtance, and their motion ſatisfied him, that they were men; or he would not have been able to diſtinguiſh them from the trees, which he dimly ſaw at the ſame time. Our Lord having then again laid his hands upon his eyes, and made him look up, his ſight was completely reſtored: and he then bade him return home, and not enter into Bethſaida, or tell any one there of his being cured; as they were unworthy to receive any more atteſtations of his divine power and goodneſs, having already withſtood ſo many. (*Matt.* c. xi. v. 21.)

V. 34. *Called*, &c.] The preceding diſcourſe ſeems to have been delivered to the diſciples in the abſence of the multitude: but Chriſt having an exhortation of univerſal concernment to give, called to him the people, that were at ſome diſtance; that they alſo might hearken, and be inſtructed by it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our compaſſionate Lord will ſometimes require his followers to endure hardſhip, in attending on him; but he will relieve them, before they faint under their burdens: and we ſhould copy him, in attending to the outward difficulties, and wants of thoſe around us. But his love as much exceeds our's; as his power, and all-ſufficiency exceed our weakneſs, and indigence. He will feed his hungry diſciples with ſuitable proviſion; but the it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpel's, the ſame ſhall ſave it.

36 For what ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?

37 Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

38 Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

CHAP. IX.

Contains Jeſus, 1ſt. Transfigured on the mount, and ſhewing that John Baptiſt was the Elias, who was to come, 1---13. *2d. Caſting out an evil ſpirit from a young man; proving the faith of his father, who brought him; and rebuking him, the multitude, and the diſciples for their unbelief,* 14---29. *3d. Foretelling his own death, and reſurrection; reproving the diſciples for their ambition, and blaming them for prohibiting a man to caſt out devils in his name, &c.* 39---41. *4th. Shewing the guilt, and danger of offending weak believers; warning the diſciples to part with every occaſion of ſin; and ſpeaking moſt awfully of the future miſery of the wicked, eſpecially of hypocritical, and apoſtate profeſſors,* 42---50.

AND he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, That there be ſome of them that ſtand here, which ſhall not taſte of death, till they have ſeen the kingdom of God come with power.

delicate have no reaſon to expect being feaſted with luxuries: for ſuch fare often is laviſhed on the ſervants of another maſter. Yet many profeſſed chriſtians excuſe themſelves, on account of their poverty, from relieving the diſtreſſed, who would think it hard to dine with Chriſt and his company on thoſe proviſions, which he miraculouſly ſupplied! But the lively chriſtian, whilſt his ſoul is feaſted with the hidden manna, will eat his mean morſel with thankfulneſs, and the bleſſing of God upon it, and with a better reliſh, than unthankful worldlings do their royal dainties. Alas, what cauſe have we to groan, and ſigh, becauſe of thoſe around us, who deſtroy themſelves and others, by their perverſe, and obſtinate unbelief, and enmity to the goſpel of Chriſt! But we have great cauſe to be humbled, and thankful on our own account: for the Lord hath continual reaſon to reprove us alſo, for our remaining diſtruſt, and carnal apprehenſions. How is it, that we no more ſee the glory of his truths, the privileges of his kingdom, the ſecurity of his word, the ſpirituality of his precepts? How is it that we ſo often miſtake his meaning, diſregard his warnings, and diſtruſt his providence? Alas, theſe things ariſe from the remains of that ſame leaven, which wholly prevails in the hearts of unbelievers. Let us then watch againſt it; and let us beſeech the Lord to remove from us all hardneſs of heart, and blindneſs of underſtanding; that we may perceive, hear, and remember his truths, and precepts, and be thankful for all his multiplied kindneſſes to us.

He is commonly pleaſed to illuminate our minds gradually; and he works by means, which are often no more than external ſigns of his efficacious operation: thus he ſometimes takes a poor blind ſinner aſide from the multitude; gradually removes the darkneſs from his underſtanding, and leads him to ſome indiſtinct views of ſpiritual things. When this is his work, he will perfect it; and we ſhould wait his time: for he will at length fully enlighten ſuch perſons, and they ſhall ſee all things clearly. Let then all, that deſire this bleſſing, wait on Chriſt the Light of the world for it, in the uſe of the means appointed by him; and they ſhall not be diſappointed. But while the blind ſee out of obſcurity; the proud, who reject Chriſt's teaching, are given up to darkneſs and deluſion; and even the means of inſtruction are in righteous judgment withdrawn from them. The Lord will interrogate his followers, on their proficiency under his teaching: and his real diſciples are diſtinguiſhed by their honourable apprehenſions of, and large expectations from him. He will approve of what we are enabled to ſpeak or do in a proper manner: but we continually need to be taught further leſſons, concerning his ſufferings for us, and the ſelf-denial that he requires from us. Our carnal minds are very averſe to theſe humiliating, and ſpiritual leſſons: and even where there is ſome true knowledge, faith, and grace; there may be, and often is, much ignorance, error, and carnality. As our Lord ſo ſharply reproved Peter for objecting to his ſufferings, which the glory of God, and the ſalvation of his people required: ſo we ſhould remember, that they, who would ſet us againſt ſelf-denial, for the honour of our Lord, and the good of others, "ſavour the things, that "are of men, and not thoſe that are of God." All the people ſhould therefore be called to obſerve, that they, who would go after Chriſt to heaven, muſt deny themſelves, take up their croſs, and follow Him: and that they only are in the way of eternal happineſs, who are willing to venture all, even their very lives, rather than deny Chriſt, or be aſhamed of him, in this evil world. Did we duly conſider the worth, and danger of our precious ſouls; for which no ranſom could be found but the blood of Emmanuel: we ſhould count the whole world contemptible, if the gain of it endangered our ſouls; and the loſs of life our greateſt gain, if laid down for the ſake of Chriſt, and the goſpel. May we then continually think of the ſeaſon, when He will come in the glory of the Father with his holy angels; and eſtimate every earthly object, as we ſhall do on that important day.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—13.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xvi. v. 28. c. xvii. v. 1—13.) The apoſtles debated with each other, (v. 10,) what the riſing from the dead could mean; for they ſeem to have concluded, that it

2 And after ſix days Jeſus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themſelves: and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became ſhining, exceeding white as ſnow; ſo as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moſes; and they were talking with Jeſus.

5 And Peter anſwered and ſaid to Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias.

6 For he wiſt not what to ſay; for they were ſore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overſhadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son; hear him.

8 And ſuddenly, when they had looked round about, they ſaw no man any more, ſave Jeſus only with themſelves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what things they had ſeen, till the Son of man were riſen from the dead.

10 And they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the riſing from the dead ſhould mean.

11 And they aſked him, ſaying, Why ſay the ſcribes that Elias muſt firſt come?

12 And he anſwered and told them, Elias verily cometh firſt, and reſtoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he muſt ſuffer many things, and be ſet at nought.

13 But I ſay unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatſoever they liſted, as it is written of him.

14 And when he came to *his* diſciples, he ſaw a great multitude about them, and the ſcribes queſtioning with them.

15 And ſtraightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him*, ſaluted him.

16 And he aſked the ſcribes, What queſtion ye with them?

17 And one of the multitude anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, I have brought unto thee my ſon, which hath a dumb ſpirit.

18 And whereſoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnaſheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I ſpake to thy diſciples that they ſhould caſt him out; and they could not.

19 He anſwereth him, and ſaith, O faithleſs generation! how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you? Bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he ſaw him, ſtraightway the ſpirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming.

21 And he aſked his father, How long is it ago ſince this came unto him? And he ſaid, Of a child.

22 And oft-times it hath caſt him into the fire, and into the waters, to deſtroy him: but if thou canſt do any thing, have compaſſion on us, and help us.

23 Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou canſt believe, all things *are* poſſible to him that believeth.

24 And ſtraightway the father of the child cried out, and ſaid with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 When Jeſus ſaw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul ſpirit, ſaying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26 And *the ſpirit* cried, and rent him ſore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; inſomuch that many ſaid, He is dead.

27 But Jeſus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he aroſe.

28 And when he was come into the houſe,

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was ſpoken in ſome figurative ſenſe, and was to be underſtood very differently from its moſt obvious meaning.

V. 14—29.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xvii. v. 14—21.) The conſideration of this inſtructive miracle was referred to this place. When Chriſt, and the three apoſtles were came down from the mount; they found the reſt of the company ſurrounded with the multitude; for ſome of the

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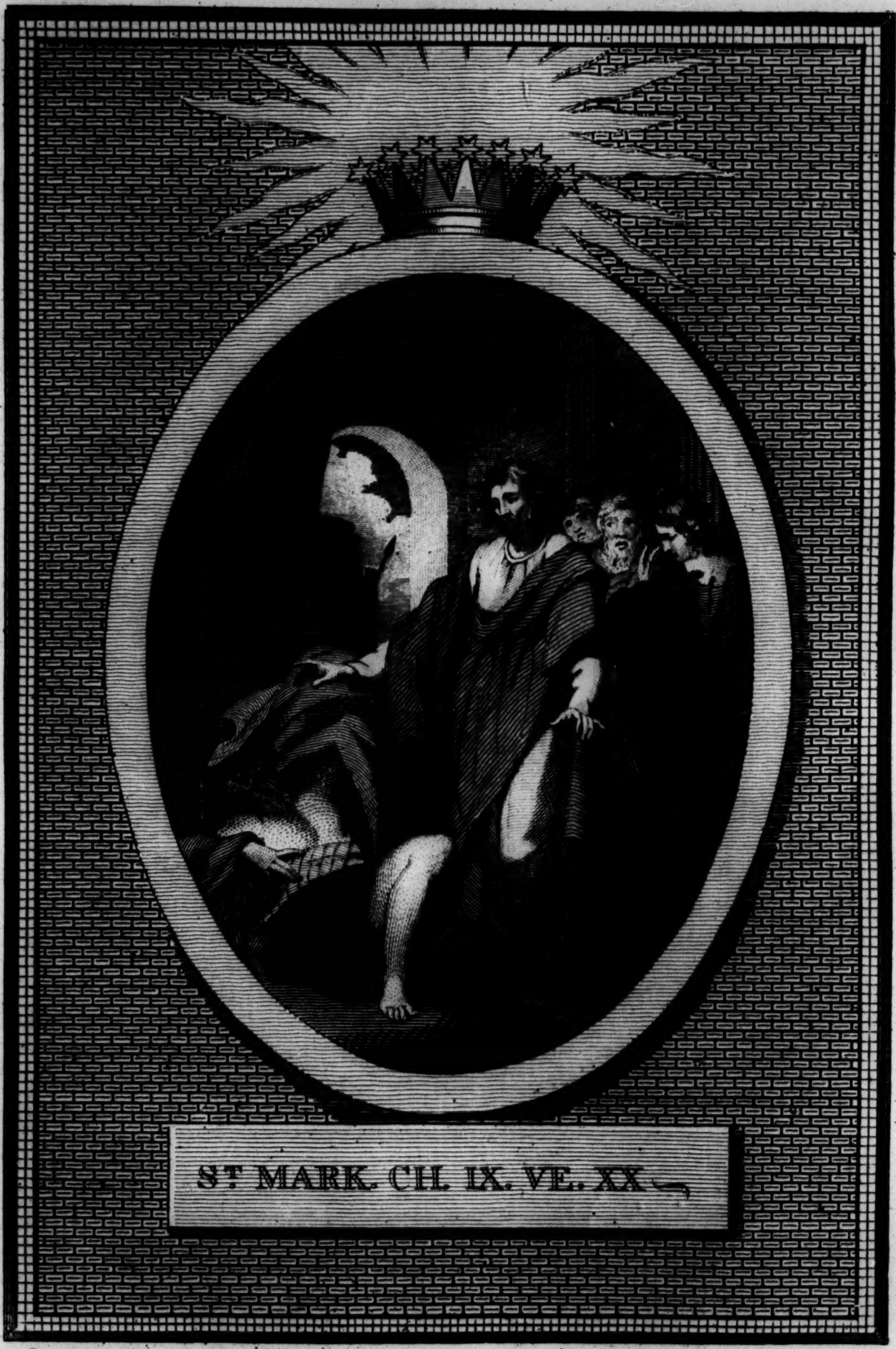
FOR THE REV^D. M^R. SCOTT's BIBLE.


S^T. MARK. CH. IX. VE. XX.

Westal del. *Skelton sculp.*

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his diſciples aſked him privately, Why could not we caſt him out?

29 And he ſaid unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and faſting.

30 And they departed thence, and paſſed

Scribes had taken that opportunity of queſtioning or diſputing with them; hoping perhaps to perplex them with their cavils, and objections, in the abſence of Chriſt eſpecially; as they had not been able to caſt out the evil ſpirit from the young man, whoſe Father had applied to them for that purpoſe. But when Jeſus appeared, the multitude, who had been liſtening to the debate, "were "greatly amazed," probably by ſome remains of luſtre, that was viſible in his countenance; and running to him, they ſaluted him, or expreſſed their moſt cordial joy, at ſeeing him again. Upon this He aſked the Scribes, on what ſubject they had been diſputing with his diſciples? But before they returned him any anſwer, one of the multitude addreſſed him in behalf of his ſon. Probably the Scribes had diſputed with the apoſtles, concerning their Maſter's power, and authority; and had made their inability to relieve this young man, an argument againſt his being the Meſſiah; and perhaps the father of the poſſeſſed youth was almoſt drawn over to their party, before Chriſt came to them. However he immediately obſerved, that he had brought to him his ſon, who was poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit, that deprived him of ſpeech, and hearing; and that often ſeized him with great violence, daſhing him upon the ground, and cauſing him to foam at the mouth, and gnaſh with his teeth in a moſt horrid manner; and that this deplorable calamity made him pine away, as with the moſt waſting ſickneſs. It hath often been obſerved, that this deſcription accords with the caſe of thoſe, that are afflicted with the epilepſy; and hence ſome have ventured to aſſert, that it was merely that diſorder, and no real poſſeſſion: but does it not better become our ignorance, concerning the real cauſes of ſuch dreadful maladies, to allow that at leaſt ſome of the ſymptoms are aggravated by diabolical agency; than to ſuppoſe, that Chriſt, by word and deed, gave the moſt explicit, and entire ſanction to a mere vulgar error; and taught men to aſcribe effects to the malice and power of apoſtate ſpirits, which they had no agency in producing? Such irreverence to God's word, and the Redeemer's ſacred character, is the fruit of pride, and determined infidelity, in which ſatan has far more influence, than theſe men are willing in any thing to allow him. In this calamitous condition of his ſon, the afflicted father had applied to the apoſtles to caſt out the evil ſpirit; and they had tried but without ſucceſs: and he was then tempted to conclude, that Chriſt himſelf would not be able to relieve him. Our Lord therefore anſwered *him*, yet with reference to the ſcribes, the multitude, and even to the diſciples, who in different degrees were chargeable with very criminal unbelief: and He reproved them as a faithleſs generation; becauſe they had not more enlarged apprehenſions of his power, and authority, notwithſtanding all the miracles, that he had wrought amongſt them: and he enquired how long he was to be with them, to diſplay his glory amongſt them; and how long he was to bear with their perverſeneſs, and incredulity, before they would be convinced of his being the Son of God, and that nothing was impoſſible to his omnipotence? This is the evident meaning of the interrogations, as they ſtand here connected. He then ordered the demoniac to be brought to him: but as ſoon, as he came into his preſence, the evil ſpirit exerted his utmoſt malice, and power, as if it would ſet Chriſt at defiance; and daſhed the young man on the ground, tearing him, and conſtraining him to wallow, or roll upon the earth, and foam in a dreadful manner. With this ſpectacle before his eyes our Lord enquired of the father, how long his ſon had been thus afflicted? This queſtion was probably intended to ſhew the inveteracy of the caſe, to put the faith of his father to a ſharp trial; and eventually to illuſtrate the greatneſs of his own power, in delivering the youth from the evil ſpirit. The father accordingly anſwered, that he had been ſo tormented from his childhood: and though he had hitherto been marvellouſly preſerved; yet he had often been caſt by the evil ſpirit into the fire, and into the water, apparently with the purpoſe of deſtroying him So that the caſe was indeed moſt difficult, and deplorable; and it had baffled every attempt, that had hithero been made for his relief: but if Jeſus could do any thing for them, he intreated him to have compaſſion on them, and exert his extraordinary power to help them. To this our Lord replied, by aſſuring him, that in caſe he could believe, and ſtedfaſtly expect help from his power, the reſt would follow of courſe; ſeeing all things were poſſible to him, that believed: and indeed all things, really conducive to our good, and to the glory of God are yet poſſible to thoſe, who rely on the power of Chriſt to work them in, and for them. The event being thus ſuſpended on the father's faith, ſo that the ſon could not fail of a cure, except through his default; the former, feeling a vehement ſtruggle in his own mind, between faith and unbelief; and fearing leſt he ſhould throw an impediment in the way, immediately cried out with great earneſtneſs, and with a flow of tears, "Lord I believe, help thou mine "unbelief:" he could ſcarce believe, that Jeſus could caſt out this powerful, and obſtinate evil ſpirit; and yet he concluded, that he could enable him to believe, and inwardly aſſiſt him againſt the incurſions of his unbelief: he in effect ſaid "Lord I do believe, and expect help "from thee alone; but ſo many have already been baffled by the dreadful poſſeſſion, that I am not able to "exclude all unbelief, or doubting about it: but do "thou firſt help me againſt my unbelief, and then deliver my afflicted child from his deplorable calamity." Where do we ever read of ſuch an addreſs to any prophet, or apoſtle? And who does not perceive that ſuch a requeſt muſt have been highly reprehenſible, if made to any mere man, or creature? By this time the multitude began to aſſemble, that they might witneſs the event; and our Lord was therefore pleaſed to rebuke the unclean ſpirit, whoſe malignity and obſtinacy had rendered him ſo formidable, and to charge him to come out of the young man, and to enter no more into him. This through Galilee; and he would not that any man ſhould know *it*.

31 For he taught his diſciples, and ſaid unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him; and after that he is killed, he ſhall riſe the third day.

32 But they underſtood not that ſaying, and were afraid to aſk him.

33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the houſe, he aſked them, What was it that ye diſputed among yourſelves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had diſputed among themſelves who *ſhould be* the greateſt.

35 And he ſat down, and called the twelve, and ſaith unto them, If any man deſire to be firſt, *the ſame* ſhall be laſt of all, and ſervant of all.

36 And he took a child, and ſet him in the midſt of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he ſaid unto them,

37 Whoſoever ſhall receive one of ſuch children in my name, receiveth me: and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that ſent me.

38 And John anſwered him, ſaying, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not us.

39 But Jeſus ſaid, Forbid him not: for there is no man which ſhall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me.

40 For he that is not againſt us is on our part.

41 For whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt, verily I ſay unto you, He ſhall not loſe his reward.

42 And whoſoever ſhall offend one of *theſe* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the ſea.

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off:

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command the demon was unable to reſiſt: but it filled him with rancour, and torment; ſo that crying out in a dreadful manner, he ſore tare the youth before he left him; inſomuch that the ſpectators ſuppoſed him to be dead: but when Jeſus took him by the hand he aroſe, and was found to be perfectly recovered. The other verſes have before been conſidered. (*Luke*, c. ix. v. 37—43.)

V. 30—32.] Our Lord choſe at this time to be retired, that he might with the more freedom converſe with his diſciples, about his approaching ſufferings, and the event of them. But though no words could be more explicit, than thoſe he made uſe of: yet they were ſo blinded by oppoſite prejudices, they could not underſtand him; and they were ſo aſhamed of their ignorance, that they were afraid to aſk him, leſt he ſhould reprove them. The following verſes ſhew what it was, that prevented them from underſtanding him.

V. 33—37.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xviii. v. 1—7.)

V. 38—42.] (*Luke*, c. ix. v. 43—50.) Our Lord's declaration, in the preceding verſe, reminded John of what he, and his brethren had done, on a former occaſion; and which he now ſuſpected to have been blameable. They had met with a perſon, who actually was enabled to caſt out devils in the name of Jeſus: but as he did not ſtatedly follow with them, and was not *regularly* ſent forth, as the apoſtles, and ſeventy diſciples had been; they forbad him to proceed. This was the reſult of wrong apprehenſions, and remaining ſelf-confidence. Had not Chriſt really favoured, and helped the man, he could not have ſucceeded in his attempt, to caſt out devils in his name: (*Acts*, c. xix. v. 13—17:) it was therefore wrong to prohibit him, eſpecially without ſo much as aſking their Lord's advice about it. But the apoſtles have had many followers *in this* part of their conduct, who have been very ready to ſilence ſuch men, as have ſucceſsfully preached repentance to ſinners, in Chriſt's name; becauſe they were not *regularly* appointed, and followed not with them: yet very few of them have been readily brought to ſuſpect themſelves to be in the wrong, in this part of their conduct. However our Lord blamed the diſciples for prohibiting the man: reminding them, that it was not likely, that he, who had wrought undeniable miracles in his name, would eaſily be induced to diſparage, and vilify him, or his cauſe; and ſhewing them, that all, who were not engaged againſt them, were in the preſent circumſtances, to be conſidered, as on their part: and indeed, inſtead of rejecting thoſe, who were ſo evidently friends to them; he would certainly recompenſe every one, that ſo much as gave them a cup of water, becauſe they belonged to him, the promiſed Meſſiah: on the other hand, whoſoever injured, grieved, or ſtumbled the leaſt of his diſciples, would commit ſo grievous a crime, and be in danger of ſo great a puniſhment, that the moſt terrible death ought to be deemed a leſſer evil than ſuch a conduct.

V. 43—50.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 13. 29, 30. c. xviii. v. 7—9.) Theſe ſolemn warnings, as they are here introduced, ſeem eſpecially to relate to the ambition, and carnal expectations of the apoſtles, which miſled them into ſo many miſtakes in judgment, and practice. Theſe evil propenſities muſt be mortified, and cut off, in order to their entering into life, however painful the operation might be. The expreſſions are here more ſtrong, and varied, than in any of the parallel paſſages. The hand, the foot, and the eye are ſeparately mention-it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched;

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be caſt into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched;

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be caſt into hell fire;

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt.

50 Salt *is* good: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſaltneſs, wherewith will ye ſeaſon it? Have ſalt in yourſelves, and have peace one with another.

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ed; as illuſtrative of the ſuppoſed value of the ſacrifices to be made, and of the reſolution, ſelf-denial, and wiſdom required, in order to make them. It is repeatedly ſaid “ *Their* worm never dieth;” as well as that “ the “ fire is never quenched.” Doubtleſs, remorſe of conſcience, and keen ſelf-reflection conſtitute this never dying worm: ſo that the expreſſion is alike contrary to the ideas of annihilation, and final reſtitution to happineſs; for on either of theſe ſuppoſitions, *their* worm would die, and their torturing conſciouſneſs would ceaſe: and as the fire is doubtleſs at leaſt, an emblem of the wrath of God; it's unquenchableneſs muſt denote, that his juſtice will never be ſatisfied, nor his anger turned away from thoſe, who are caſt into this fire of hell. The ſacrifices under the law were commanded to be ſalted with ſalt: this was primarily an emblem of grace, which renders the ſanctified ſoul meet for the enjoyment of its incorruptible inheritance: but it alſo repreſented that “ every ſacrifice” to the divine juſtice “ would be ſalted with fire;” the very nature of the puniſhment, or the righteous vengeance of God, will render the heirs of hell incorruptible: ſo that their miſery will be as endleſs, as the happineſs of the righteous. In concluding this ſolemn ſubject our Lord reminded the diſciples, that, as ſalt though valuable in itſelf, to ſeaſon and preſerve other bodies, was yet worthleſs, and irrecoverable, when it had loſt its ſaltneſs; ſo they would become more vile, and hopeleſs, than others, if they were not truly ſanctified; for they would be employed in converting, and preſerving others, and would have none to ſeaſon them, if they turned aſide. It would therefore be incumbent on them, to look to their own hearts, and to mortify their luſts, and laying aſide ambition, to live at peace with each other.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They will be highly favoured, and enjoy a great ſatisfaction, who ſhall hereafter live to behold the kingdom of God come with power, and ſet up in all parts of the world: but though we ſhall taſte of death before thoſe happy days arrive; yet we ſhall poſſeſs a ſtill more exalted felicity, if we are admitted into thoſe regions, where Jeſus continually diſplays far brighter glories, than even on the mount of transfiguration. The pleaſures of that divine viſion muſt be unſpeakably great; ſeeing the glimpſes, which we now behold, as through a glaſs darkly, ſometimes ſo raviſh our minds, that we are ready to cry out “ It is good for us to be here.” But we ſhould not expect ſuch conſolations to be abiding, in this our ſtate of conflict, and probation: we muſt here learn to hear, believe, love, and obey an unſeen Saviour; to walk by faith, and to wait in patient hope; we ſhould ſeek conformity to him in holineſs, and expect ere long to be with him, and like him in body and ſoul, where prophets, and apoſtles, yea, angels and arch-angels, vie with each other, who ſhall moſt honour, adore, and praiſe his glorious majeſty. In this hope, we may chearfully paſs through life, and death, though we be often under a cloud, and ready to queſtion what the meaning of his words, and his appointments can be: and if we conſider the way, in which Jeſus, and his ſervants have paſſed through this world to heaven; we ſhall be the leſs diſcouraged, ſhould we be called to ſuffer many things, or be ſet at nought, as the moſt contemptible of mankind; if ſo be, that we may by any means attain unto eternal life. The enemies of Chriſt will always watch their opportunities of perplexing, and diſconcerting his diſciples: and their cavils, and objections will create them much diſquietude, if they neglect to keep up a continual communion with their Lord: and ſuch opponents often attack the uneſtabliſhed, from a conſciouſneſs that they can make no impreſſion on thoſe, who are more confirmed, and experienced. But the Lord will interpoſe to plead for his friends, and to ſilence the objections of his adverſaries: yet many will ſeem zealouſly to welcome him, and his miniſters, who do not cordially believe, and obey his goſpel.

In what varied ways doth ſatan prevail to render mankind miſerable! Yet his ſucceſs amongſt thoſe, who are favoured with the goſpel, entirely ariſes from their unbelief: for if they had a clear apprehenſion of his power, and grace, who came to deſtroy the works of the devil, they would apply to him, and obtain deliverance. When our children or relatives are made wretched, uſeleſs, or miſchievous, through the deſtructive influence of ſatan; we ſhould bring them to Chriſt, by faith and prayer, earneſtly beſeeching him to have compaſſion upon us, and help us: we may do this for them, when they are incapable of receiving our inſtructions, or determined to diſregard all our counſels. Miniſters, and chriſtians may be applied to on ſuch occaſions; and their counſels, and prayers may be uſeful: but our dependance muſt be

CHAP. X.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Anſwering the Phariſees concerning divorce, 1---12. *2d. Receiving and bleſſing young children,* 13---16. *3d. Proving the rich young man; ſhewing the danger of affluence; and making gracious promiſes to thoſe, who forſook worldly objects for his ſake,* 17---31. *4th. Again predicting his own death, and reſurrection: reproving the ambition of James and John, and of the other apoſtles; and giving ſight to blind Bartimeus,* 32---52.

on Chriſt alone; and ſhould they conclude the caſe to be hopeleſs, we ſhould ſtill perſiſt in expecting help from his Almighty arm. Here indeed we are moſt likely to fail: for after all the diſplays, that he hath made of his power, and love, and after all his patient teaching of us by his word, and our own experience; we are prone to have low conceptions of, and contracted expectations from him. But the things, that to all others are impoſſible, are eaſy with him: even in the caſe of thoſe, who from their earlieſt years have been peculiarly under the power of ſatan, and contracting various bad habits and fatal connexions; by means of which they have, as it were, "often been caſt into the fire, and into the water," and have repeatedly been brought to the verge of deſtruction; we have abundant encouragement to expect help from the Saviour. He hath hitherto bounded the rage of the enemy, and borne with the provocations of the ſinner; and he can eaſily break the power of the former, and glorify himſelf in the ſalvation of the latter. Our chief danger, in every thing really good for us, ariſes from our unbelief; "if we can believe, all things are " poſſible to him, that believeth:" and as we ſhall certainly find a difficulty in exerciſing ſuch an unſhaken faith in the power and grace of Chriſt, on many occaſions; ſo we ſhould apply to him, as the Author and Finiſher of our faith, to ſtrengthen us againſt our unbelief; that we may not through our own default come ſhort of the bleſſings we ſeek, in behalf of ourſelves, or others. Indeed ſatan will be very reluctant to be driven out of thoſe, who have long been his ſlaves; and when he cannot deceive, or deſtroy the ſinner, he will cauſe him all the trouble, and terror, that he can: ſo that when a man is about to experience a moſt bleſſed deliverance, he is often more harraſſed, and diſtreſſed, than at any other time; and the beginnings of liberty, and life reſemble the very agonies of death. Miniſters would witneſs, and be the inſtruments of more of theſe remarkable converſions, if they were more ſtrong in faith, fervent in prayer, and mortified to earthly pleaſures, and purſuits: and if we enquire of Jeſus, why we have no more ſucceſs "in turning ſinners from the power of ſatan " unto God?" He will probably anſwer, "becauſe of " your unbelief; for this work can be done, by nothing, " but by faſting, and prayer."

But alas! whilſt he teaches moſt plainly thoſe things, that relate to his love, and grace, his ſufferings, and death, his preſent glory, and future coming to judgment; men are in general ſo blinded by their prejudices, that they underſtand not his ſayings; and by various hindrances they are kept from aſking him to explain them. Even diſciples are often more ready to diſpute with each other, "which ſhall be the greateſt:" than with humble ſimplicity to ſit at his feet, and learn the doctrine of the croſs, "by which the world muſt be " crucified to them, and they unto the world:" and we all need repeated rebukes, before we are made willing to ſeek wiſdom, by becoming as little children; and to aſpire after greatneſs by ſtooping to be the leaſt of all, and the ſervants of all. Yet ſuch diſciples are moſt dear to their Lord; and will be moſt honoured by him, as his meſſengers to mankind: and "whoſoever receiveth one of ſuch children in Chriſt's " name, receiveth both Him, and the Father that ſent " him." Pride, and bigotry are great hindrances to uſefulneſs: men often ſeem to think the intereſts of a party, or the credit of their order, of more importance, than the cauſe of godlineſs: they are ready, by their aſſumed, and preſumptuous authority, to forbid others to caſt out devils in the name of Chriſt, becauſe they follow not with them: and even to grieve when evident good is done, if it be not managed according to their narrow notions of regularity; and by men commiſſioned, and ſent forth in their way. Whereas all, that believe in, love, ſerve, and honour Chriſt, are of one ſide: he that, in this matter, is not againſt us, is on our part; and if ſinners are brought to repent; to believe in a divine Saviour, and to lead ſober, righteous and godly lives; we muſt perceive that the Lord works by the preacher, and who are we, that we ſhould attempt to ſilence him? Whilſt therefore we are encouraged to do good to others for his name's ſake, and eſpecially to thoſe that belong to Chriſt, from his aſſurance, that ſuch ſervices ſhall not loſe their reward; let us alſo favour all, who appear to be on his ſide in this evil world, and be glad to ſhew our concurrence with them; and let us dread, even worſe than death, any thing that can tend to injure, and grieve them, or hinder their uſefulneſs. Inſtead of acrimony againſt thoſe, who "follow not with us;" let us bend all our ſeverity againſt our own luſts; not ſparing one of them, though it hath been as an hand, a foot, or an eye unto us, or however painful we may find the mortification of it. Thus we ſhall be aſſured of entering into life, and be preſerved from the moſt diſtant fear of being caſt into hell, "where their worm dieth not, and " the fire is not quenched." And ſurely it would be infinitely better to undergo all poſſible pain, ſelf-denial, and hardſhip here, and ſo be for ever happy hereafter; than to enjoy all kind of worldly pleaſure for a ſeaſon, and then to be for ever miſerable! If then the difficulty, and pain of mortifying domineering luſts, and ſubduing bad habits, appear to any man very great; if the worldly advantages to be renounced appear very valuable: let him conſider the awful alternative. For eternity is before us: incorruptible in holineſs, and happineſs, or, in ſin and miſery we muſt be: either ſacrifices to God's juſtice to be ſalted with fire, or living willing ſacrifices to his honour, by the ſanctification of the Spirit of Chriſt, and through the redemption of his blood. We have in-

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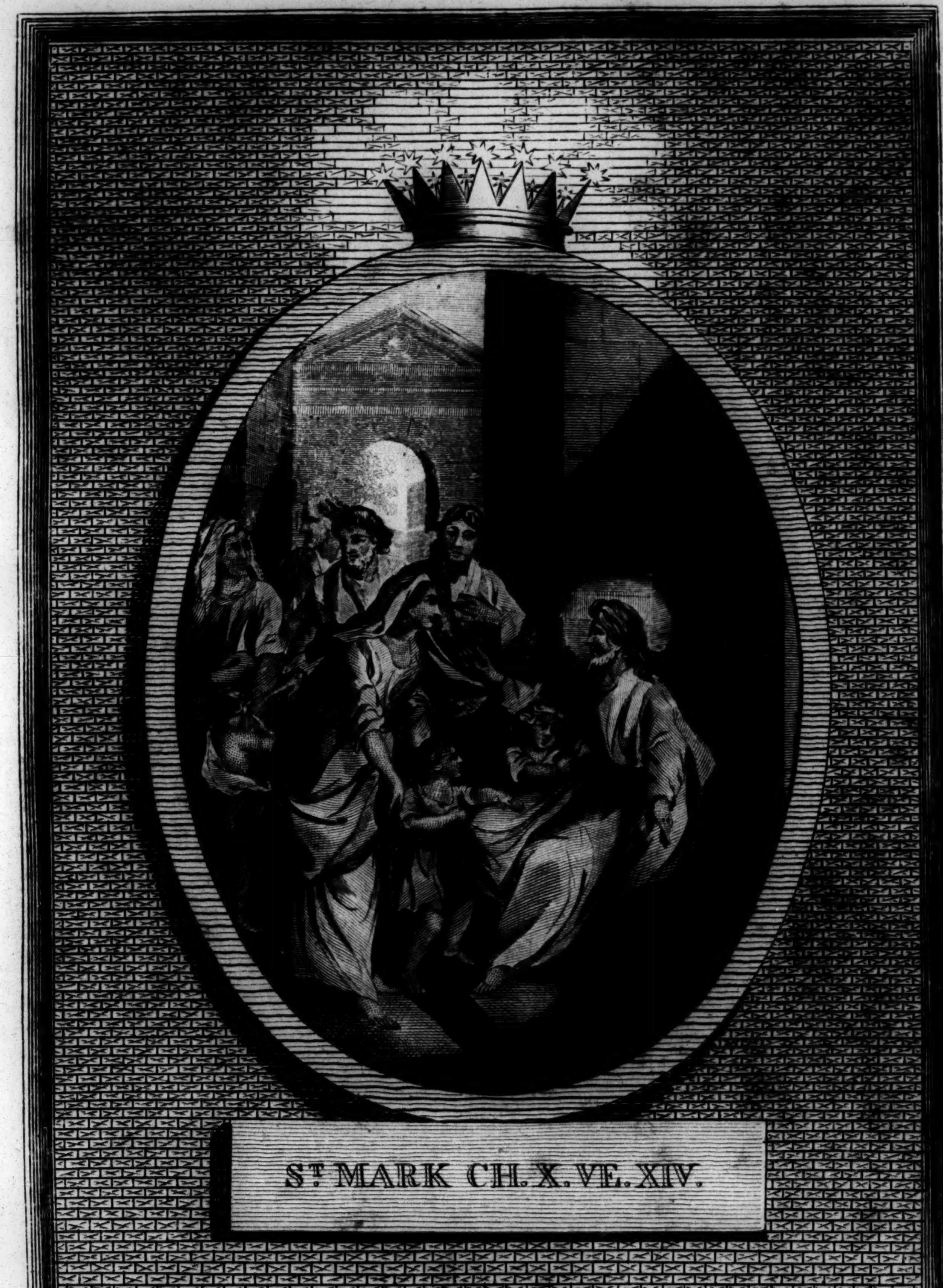

S^{T} MARK CH. X. VE. XIV.

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AND he aroſe from thence, and cometh into the coaſts of Judea, by the farther ſide of Jordan; and the people reſort unto him again: and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 And the Phariſees came to him, and aſked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him.

3 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, What did Moſes command you?

4 And they ſaid, Moſes ſuffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

5 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, For the hardneſs of your heart he wrote you this precept:

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

7 For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife:

8 And they twain ſhall be one fleſh: ſo then they are no more twain, but one fleſh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder.

10 And in the houſe his diſciples aſked him again of the ſame *matter*.

11 And he ſaith unto them, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery againſt her.

12 And if a woman ſhall put away her huſband, and be married to another, ſhe committeth adultery.

13 And they brought young children to him, that he ſhould touch them; and *his* diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought *them*.

14 But when Jeſus ſaw *it* he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and bleſſed them.

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and aſked him, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God.

19 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he anſwered and ſaid unto him, Maſter, all theſe have I obſerved from my youth.

21 Then Jeſus, beholding him, loved him, and ſaid unto him, One thing thou lackeſt: go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come, take up the croſs, and follow me.

22 And he was ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved: for he had great poſſeſſions.

23 And Jeſus looked round about, and ſaith unto his diſciples, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the diſciples were aſtoniſhed at his words. But Jeſus anſwereth again, and ſaith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that truſt in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to

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deed the name of chriſtians; ſome of us preach, and many profeſs the truths of the goſpel; and we are thus the ſalt of the earth: if we then anſwer to our character, we ſhall be uſeful here, and happy for ever: but if we remain deſtitute of the grace of God; our name, our profeſſion, or our ſacred function will only ſerve to aggravate our guilt, and increaſe our condemnation. Let us then lay aſide our carnal, and ambitious projects and purſuits: let us look diligently, that we none of us fail of the grace of God: and let us follow after peace, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—12.] (Notes, c. xix. v. 1—12.) It is here added "If a woman ſhall put away her huſband, and marry another; &c," (v. 12:) this caſe, the mention of which ſometimes occurred even among the Jews, ſerves to confirm the concluſion, that our Lord intended to put men and women exactly on the ſame footing, in this matter: ſo that the ſame conduct in the man is adultery *againſt his wife*; which in the woman is adultery againſt her huſband.

V. 13—31.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xix. v. 13—30.)

enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were aſtoniſhed out of meaſure, ſaying among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved?

27 And Jeſus, looking upon them, ſaith, With men *it is* impoſſible, but not with God: for with God all things are poſſible.

28 Then Peter began to ſay unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, There is no man that hath left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my ſake, and the goſpel's,

30 But he ſhall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houſes, and brethren, and ſiſters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with perſecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 But many *that are* firſt ſhall be laſt; and the laſt firſt.

32 And they were in the way going up to Jeruſalem; and Jeſus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things ſhould happen unto him,

33 *Saying*, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem; and the Son of man ſhall be delivered unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes; and they ſhall condemn him to death, and ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they ſhall mock him, and ſhall ſcourge him, and ſhall ſpit upon him, and ſhall kill him; and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

35 And James and John, the ſons of Zebedee, come unto him, ſaying, Maſter, we would that thou ſhouldeſt do for us whatſoever we ſhall deſire.

36 And he ſaid unto them, What would ye that I ſhould do for you?

37 They ſaid unto him, Grant unto us that we may ſit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, Ye know not what ye aſk: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with?

39 And they ſay unto him, We can. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Ye ſhall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptiſm that I am baptized withal, ſhall ye be baptized:

40 But to ſit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it ſhall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

41 And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much diſpleaſed with James and John.

42 But Jeſus called them *to him*, and ſaith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them; and their great ones exerciſe authority upon them.

43 But ſo ſhall it not be among you: but whoſoever will be great among you ſhall be your miniſter;

44 And whoſoever of you will be the chiefeſt ſhall be ſervant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his diſciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the ſon of Timeus, ſat by the high-way ſide begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jeſus of

V. 32—34.] Our Lord and his diſciples were on their laſt journey to Jeruſalem: and they, (being aware of the inveterate malice of his enemies, and of their deſigns againſt his life, and having heard many intimations from him of his approaching ſufferings,) were greatly amazed at the reſolution, and alacrity, with which he went before them; and they followed him with great fear of the dangers, to which they too were likely to be expoſed. (*John*, c. xi. v. 7. 16.) He was therefore pleaſed again, and more particularly to declare to the twelve apoſtles, the ſufferings, which he was ſhortly to endure; that witneſſing the calm intrepidity, with which he met them, they might be prepared for their ſhare of the trial, and be encouraged to expect an happy event. But it does not appear, that they properly attended to, or underſtood his words; though they were ſo plain, that they needed no interpretation.

V. 35—45.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xx. v. 20—28.)

V. 46—52.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xx. v. 29—34. *Luke* c. xviii. v. 35—43.) The conſideration of this miracle was referred to this place. Matthew mentions two blind men, who received ſight on this occaſion; proba-

Nazareth, he began to cry out, and ſay, Jeſus, *thou* ſon of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many charged him that he ſhould hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* ſon of David, have mercy on me.

49 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, ſaying unto him, Be of good comfort, riſe; he calleth thee.

50 And he, caſting away his garment, roſe, and came to Jeſus.

51 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? The blind man ſaid unto him, Lord, that I might receive my ſight.

52 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his ſight, and followed Jeſus in the way.

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bly the other was excited to apply by Bartimeus's example, and was not ſo remarkable a perſon. Both Matthew and Mark record the miracle, as wrought, when Jeſus went out of Jericho: but Luke ſays it took place, "when he was come nigh to Jericho;" and he records afterwards what paſſed in that city: but he ſeems only to mean that the miracle was performed near Jericho: and perhaps Jeſus ſtaid ſome days there; and this occurred, as he went out of the city during that time, though he returned again to it afterwards. Whilſt our Lord was attended by his diſciples, and ſurrounded by the multitude, he came to a place, where a man well known in thoſe parts ſat by the way ſide begging. This perſon had heard of Him and his miracles, and was enabled to believe, that he was the promiſed Meſſiah: enquiring therefore what the concourſe of people meant, he learned that Jeſus of Nazareth was paſſing by; and immediately the hope of recovering his eye-ſight, by his miraculous power, was excited in his mind. Accordingly he began, without delay or heſitation to cry out, "Jeſus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me:" but as our Lord might perhaps be then engaged in diſcourſe with his attendants, and as Bartimeus was a mean perſon, and his application rude, and clamorous; many preſent charged him to hold his peace. However he was too much in earneſt about the precious bleſſing, for which he ſought, to be ſilenced, or loſe his opportunity in this manner; on the contrary he cried out a great deal more earneſtly, and inceſſantly than ever "Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me". At length our Lord ſtood ſtill, and ordered the blind man to be conducted to him: upon which they, who informed him of it, bade him be of good courage, and expect a cure, as Jeſus called for him. Accordingly he caſt away his upper garment, as one in haſte, and that wanted to be rid of every incumbrance; and thus he came to Jeſus, who aſked him, "What he would that he ſhould do unto him?" He well knew what he wanted; but he choſe to hear it from his own lips, as the language of faith, dependance, and expectation. When therefore the man had anſwered "Lord, that I might receive my ſight;" Jeſus bade him "go his way," or depart in peace; for as his faith had induced him to apply to him, it had been the means of his being reſtored to ſight, and even of his ſalvation. Immediately he received ſight; but inſtead of departing, he joined the multitude, and followed Jeſus in the way, full of joy, and gratitude, and glorifying God for the mercy he had received; and all the people joined him in praiſing the Lord for what had been done.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our bleſſed Lord hath given his miniſters an example of being inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, in preaching the word, whenever, or wherever the people are diſpoſed to hear it; and notwithſtanding the perverſeneſs, and malice of thoſe, who watch for their halting. We ſhould expect to be frequently proved with enſnaring queſtions, from proud phariſees, and infidels: and we ſhould ſtudy to be expert in anſwering them pertinently, and in the meekneſs of wiſdom. In general our appeal muſt be to the plain teſtimony of God's word: yet in applying texts of ſcripture to particular caſes, an accurate attention to the deſign of the ſacred writer is abſolutely neceſſary; and many diſtinctions muſt be noted between temporary appointments, and allowances, "becauſe of the hardneſs of m[illegible]s hearts," or with reference to peculiar circumſtances; and thoſe truths, and precepts, which are of univerſal, and immutable importance, and obligation. For it is evident, in fact, that almoſt all errors, in doctrine, and practice, have been grounded on wrong inferences from detached texts, either miſinterpreted, or miſapplied to caſes, to which they had no reference. But a humble, teachable, and unprejudiced mind, that really loves the truths, and ways of God, and that depends on, and applies for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be conducted ſafe through ſuch difficulties as are abſolutely inſurmountable to thoſe, who lean to their own underſtandings. True religion will teach us our duty in every relation of life; and render us comfortable in ourſelves, and bleſſings to each other in them: ſo that even thoſe reſtrictions, which to carnal men appear intolerable, become eaſy, and pleaſant to the conſiſtent chriſtian; and he will deem the liberty, and indulgence, that they contend for, the ſource of confuſion, debaſement, and miſery. They, whom God hath joined together, and taught to be helpers and bleſſings to each other; as having one common inſeparable intereſt here, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; if they have children, will bring them, by their united prayers, to Jeſus, that he may impart his ſalvation to their ſouls: and He will be much diſpleaſed with thoſe, who would diſcourage them in ſo doing; for all ought to be exhorted to ſeek his bleſſing on thoſe, with whom they are connected. Even little children ſhould be ſuffered, and directed to go to the loving Saviour, as ſoon as they are capable of underſtanding his words; and they ſhould be aſſured

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Entering Jeruſalem, riding upon an aſs, 1---11. *2d. Curſing the barren fig-tree; expelling the buyers and ſellers from the temple; ſhewing the diſciples the power of faith, and directing them how to pray, &c,* 12---26. *3d. Anſwering the Phariſees, who demanded by what authority he acted,* 27---33. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxi. v.* 1---32.*)*

that he will regard their liſping petitions: and all his miniſters ſhould copy his condeſcenſion, and attentive regard to the lambs of the flock, the young, the newly awakened, the weak believers, the poor, or the diſcouraged; that they may be his inſtruments in gathering them to him, and in leading them to eſtabliſhment and comfort in his ways. Whilſt we conſider the caſe of children, and remember that “of ſuch is the kingdom of “God;” let us peculiarly attend to our Lord's declaration, that “whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of “God, as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein.” No learned ſcribe, or philoſopher, no man of the moſt diſtinguiſhed learning, or ſuperior abilities, can be a true ſubject of the kingdom of grace here, or an heir of the kingdom of glory hereafter; who doth not ſtoop to receive the inſtructions, and bleſſings of the kingdom, in the ſimple, teachable ſpirit, that a little child learns the firſt elements of knowledge, from its nurſe, parent, or teacher. If any man therefore be wiſe in this world; he muſt become as a fool, if he would be wiſe unto ſalvation: and as ſcarce any thing militates more againſt this ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding to the divine teaching, or the exerciſe of implicit faith in the word of God; and a willing dependance on, and unreſerved ſubjection to his will, in the appointments of his providence, and the diſpenſations of his grace, than the pride of human wiſdom; ſo not many of the wiſe, and learned, any more than of the rich, and noble, have hitherto been called to become the followers of Chriſt.

Indeed whatever increaſes pride, and an attachment to the world, muſt needs enhance the difficulty of a man's embracing the goſpel. If it were not God's determination that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence; the caſe of rulers, ſcribes, and phariſees would be more hopeful. Many of them will call Jeſus “good Maſter;” ſeem to have ſome thoughts about eternal life, and approve, and even pretend to a very exact obedience to, his commandments: but they have not underſtood the holineſs of the divine character, the ſpirituality and extent of his law, the evil of ſin, their own guilt, and depravity, the nature of ſalvation; nor their need of Chriſt's blood, righteouſneſs, and regenerating Spirit. A ſharp trial will often prove their moral goodneſs to be radically defective, and to be carnal ſelfiſhneſs in a more decent garb: ſo that ſelf-denying, impoveriſhing duties no more ſuit their love of this preſent world, than the doctrines of grace do their proud ſelf-admiration. They often ſeem to be ſorry, that they cannot reconcile God, and Mammon, and both obey Chriſt, and keep the world: but they cannot think of leaving an earthly treaſure, which they have in poſſeſſion, for the hope of an heavenly treaſure in reverſion; by taking up their croſs, and following Chriſt. All theſe evils are enhanced by increaſing wealth: few can poſſeſs riches, without loving, and truſting in them; and it is very hard to break the ſtrong bands, which hold a carnal mind to large poſſeſſions. So that Jeſus ſpeaks to us, as to children, when he reminds us, how hardly they, that have riches, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven! And inſtead of expreſſing our aſtoniſhment, or indulging our ſpeculations, let us learn contentment in a low eſtate, or to watch againſt the love of, and confidence in riches in a high one; let us pray to be enabled to part with every earthly object for Chriſt's ſake; and to uſe all, we are allowed to keep, in his ſervice: and let us be encouraged to pray for the rich, as well as for others, and to employ all means we can for their good, by remembering, “that with God all things are poſſible.”

But whatever our circumſtances are, we ſhall be called to prove the ſincerity of our faith and love, by renouncing ſome temporal advantage for Chriſt's ſake if we profeſs to be his followers. The trial in this caſe may be ſharp, but the recollection of having made the required ſacrifice, will hereafter turn unto us for a teſtimony; and to encourage us in ſo doing, we are aſſured of an immenſe compenſation in this preſent world, as well as of eternal life in that to come. If we have true faith, we ſhall be ſatiſfied with this ſecurity, and expect the promiſed bleſſing; and thus well regulated ſelf-love, will be reconciled to ſelf-denial, renunciation of worldly objects, and perſecution for Chriſt's ſake. But ſuch trials lay open men's hearts; and thus “the firſt become laſt, and “the laſt firſt.” Even true diſciples, are often more diſpoſed to be amazed at our Lord's contempt of the world, and patient endurance of poverty, hardſhip, contempt, ſuffering of death for them; than to conſider Him, as having left them an example, that they ſhould follow his ſteps: and though they do follow him, even when danger approaches; yet they do it too fearfully, and with too great heſitation, and reluctance. Indeed when we conſider, that the Holy Jeſus endured every indignity, and cruelty, from Jewiſh prieſts, and ſcribes, who delivered him up to the inſults of gentile rulers and ſoldiers, as a condemned malefactor we cannot expect exemption from reproach and ſuffering, however prudent, blameleſs, or benevolent our conduct may be: but the view of his glorious reſurrection may encourage our hope of a happy event to all our conflicts.

However it muſt be lamented, that honour, glory, and immortality in a future world; and obſcurity, poverty, contempt and perſecution here, are but ill ſuited to the deſires of moſt of thoſe, who are called chriſtians: nay ſanctification muſt be conſiderably advanced in us, before we ſhall be unreſervedly reconciled to them. If Jeſus would gratify all our deſires, it would ſoon appear, that we were aſpiring to reputation, authority, popularity, or eminence among our brethren; and that we were unwilling to taſte of his cup, or to have any meaſure of his baptiſm, if we could by any means avoid it: we ſhould often aſk for we know not what; and ſhould be effectu-

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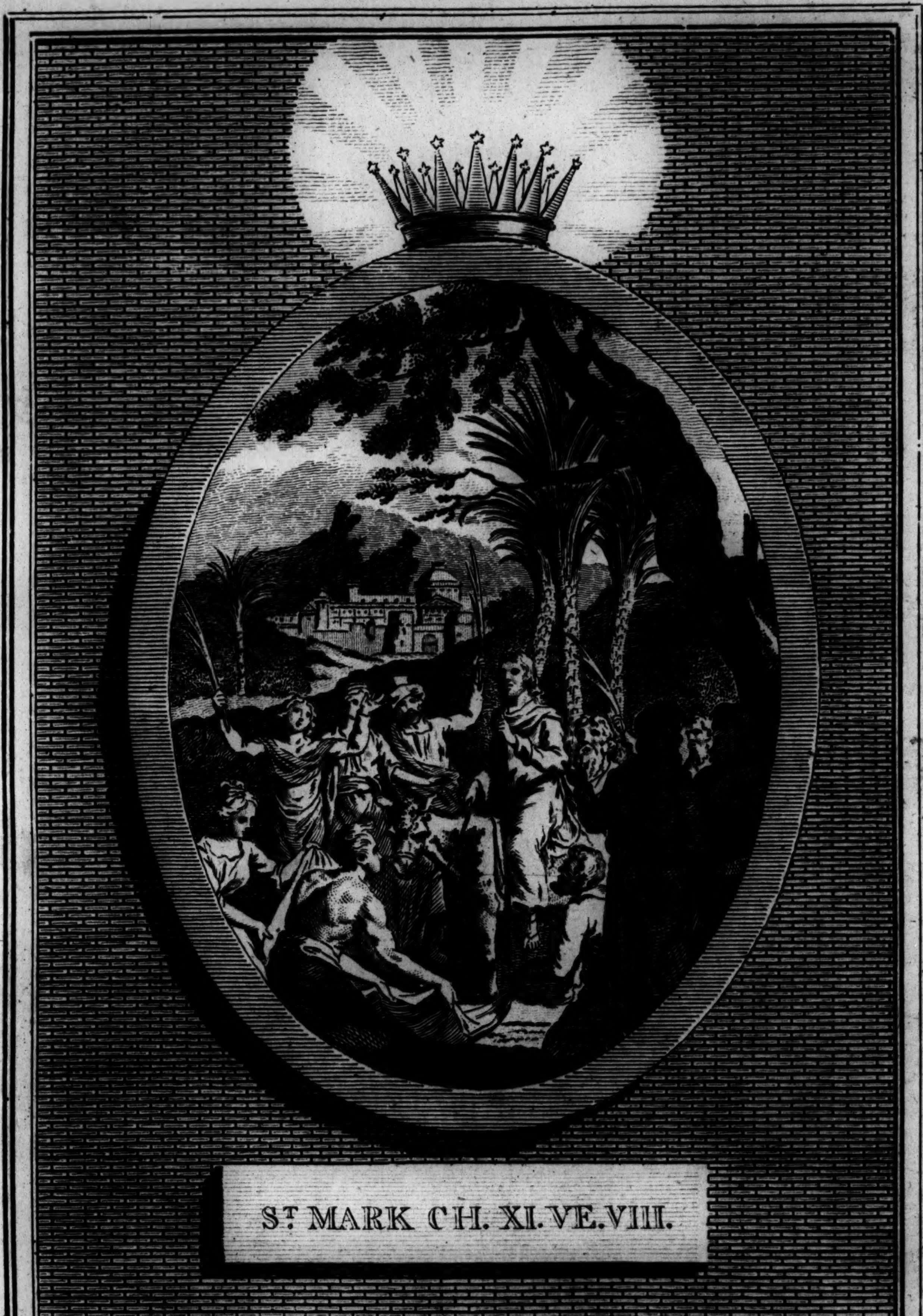

St. MARK CH. XI. VE. VIII.

Dayes del. *Guignion sc.*

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CHAP. XI.

AND when they came nigh to Jeruſalem, unto Bethphage, and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples,

2 And ſaith unto them, Go your way into the village over againſt you: and as ſoon as ye be entered into it, ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon never man ſat; looſe him, and bring *him*.

3 And if any man ſay unto you, Why do ye this? ſay ye, that the Lord hath need of him; and ſtraightway he will ſend him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they looſe him.

5 And certain of them that ſtood there ſaid unto them, What do ye looſing the colt?

6 And they ſaid unto them even as Jeſus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jeſus, and caſt their garments on him; and he ſat upon him.

8 And many ſpread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and ſtrawed *them* in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna; Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Bleſſed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hoſanna in the higheſt.

11 And Jeſus entered into Jeruſalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, he went out into Bethany with the twelve.

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 And ſeeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves: for the time of figs was not *yet*.

14 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his diſciples heard *it*.

15 And they come to Jeruſalem: and Jeſus went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves;

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ally ruined by having our own prayers anſwered. But he loves us more wiſely, than we love ourſelves: and he will give us what is good for us, not what we hanker after. We are indeed often keen-ſighted in diſcerning, and ſevere in reproving the vain glory, and ambition of our brethren; and at the ſame time prone to fall into the ſame faults, in our competitions with them: but our gracious Maſter gently rebukes, and gradually corrects our fooliſh deſires of pre-eminence. He teaches us to leave lordly authority, vain diſtinctions, and the praiſe of men, to Gentiles, and nominal diſciples; and to follow him, in aſpiring after true greatneſs by ſelf-abaſement, ſerviceableneſs, and a readineſs to labour, and ſuffer, in any way for the glory of God, and for the good of ſouls.

Whilſt enlightened believers are thus admoniſhed daily to behold the glory of their Lord, till they are more completely changed into his image: let ſinners be exhorted to imitate blind Bartimeus. If they have not had their eyes opened to behold the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, and the beauty of holineſs; they are ſhut up under a far more dreadful darkneſs, and precluded from far more delightful proſpects, and exquiſite pleaſures, in reſpect of the ſpiritual world, than any blind man, in reſpect of the natural. Indeed this blindneſs, and the moſt wretched poverty always go together: but where the goſpel is preached, or the written word vouchſafed, Jeſus is paſſing by, and this is the ſinner's opportunity: though he cannot underſtand the doctrine of Chriſt, nor ſee his glory; yet let him as a periſhing ſinner cry after him, "Jeſus, "thou ſon of David have mercy on me." And if any man attempt to diſſuade, deride, and reproach him, or to threaten him into ſilence: let him take occaſion from thence to cry the more earneſtly for ſalvation. In this way the Saviour will notice him; and his invitations and promiſes will, as it were, bid him to be called to him. We too ſhould delight in encouraging enquiring ſouls, and in bidding them be of good comfort, and ariſe to go to Jeſus, who calleth them by his word, and will not caſt them out. In going to him, all delay muſt be avoided, and every impediment laid aſide: and he will, as it were, enquire of us, what we would have; we ſhould therefore ſtudy to get acquainted with our own wants, and with his promiſes, that we may have our anſwer ready. Thus faith brings ſalvation from Chriſt into men's ſouls; and they join the company of his diſciples, in ſhewing forth his praiſes, and in walking in his moſt holy ways.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 13. *The time*, &c.] The time of gathering in the ripe figs was not then arrived; ſo that if any had been on the tree, that ſeaſon, they would have yet continued there: and therefore it was plain that the tree was unfruitful. This occurred probably in the month of April, at which time the ſeaſon was pretty far advanced, in that warm climate.

V. 16. *Would*, &c.] This was not mentioned in Matthew; and it favours the ſuppoſition, that Chriſt

16 And would not ſuffer that any man ſhould carry *any* veſſel through the temple.

17 And he taught, ſaying unto them, Is it not written, My houſe ſhall be called of all nations, The houſe of prayer ? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And the ſcribes and chief prieſts heard *it*, and ſought how they might deſtroy him : for they feared him, becauſe all the people was aſtoniſhed at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 And in the morning, as they paſſed by, they ſaw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter, calling to remembrance, ſaith unto him, Maſter, behold, the fig-tree which thou curſedſt is withered away !

22 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaith unto them, Have faith in God,

23 For verily I ſay unto you, That whoſoever ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea ; and ſhall not doubt in his heart, but ſhall believe that thoſe things which he ſaith ſhall come to paſs ; he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith.

24 Therefore I ſay unto you, What things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye ſhall have *them*.

25 And when ye ſtand praying, forgive, if ye have ought againſt any ; that your Father alſo which is in heaven may forgive you your treſpaſſes.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your treſpaſſes.

27 And they come again to Jeruſalem : and, as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders,

28 And ſay unto him, By what authority doeſt thou theſe things ? and who gave thee this authority to do theſe things ?

29 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo aſk of you one queſtion, and anſwer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do theſe things.

30 The baptiſm of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men ? anſwer me.

31 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven ; he will ſay, Why then did ye not believe him ?

32 But if we ſhall ſay, Of men ; they feared the people : for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they anſwered and ſaid unto Jeſus, We cannot tell. And Jeſus anſwering, ſaith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do theſe things.

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purged the temple two days ſucceſſively, and more completely the ſecond day than before. In order to vindicate the ſanctity of that holy place ; and to keep up the diſtinction between its ſacred ſervices, and all kinds of ſecular buſineſs ; he would not ſuffer any man to carry any veſſel, or burden through its courts, on any pretence whatever.

V. 22—26.] The apoſtles were exhorted to have "faith in God," or "the faith of God;" that is a firm confidence on his power, and truth, to enable them to effect thoſe things, that they undertook in his name. This was peculiarly applicable to the exerciſe of faith required in working miracles. "Theſe were generally "introduced by ſome ſolemn declaration, of what was "intended, which was in effect a prediction of imme-"diate ſucceſs. So Peter ſays, (*Acts*, c. iii. v. 6;) "*In the name of Jeſus Chriſt riſe up, and walk*; and, "(c. ix. v. 34,) *Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole.* "And in pronouncing this, the perſon ſpeaking pawned "all his credit as a meſſenger from God, and conſe-"quently all the honour, and uſefulneſs of his future "life, on the immediate miraculous energy to attend "his words, and to be viſibly exerted on his uttering "them. Hence it is, that ſuch a firm courageous faith "is ſo often urged on thoſe, to whom ſuch miraculous "powers were given." (Doddridge.) However ſuch exhortations ſhould alſo be regarded by us, in all our expectations and prayers grounded on God's promiſes, which will certainly be fulfilled to every true believer, in the proper meaning of them, and in due ſeaſon; and this we ſhould expect, notwithſtanding difficulties, and apparent improbabilities. Therefore, whatever we deſire, when we pray, we ſhould confidently hope to receive, and go on with our work, as though we had received it. But if we ſinners would thus have confidence in prayer before a holy God ; we muſt have an aſſured hope of his merciful forgiveneſs : in order to which we muſt fully, and heartily forgive all that have injured us. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vi. v. 12. 14, 15. c. xviii. v. 21—35.) Standing ſeems to have been a common poſture in prayer among the Jews, though kneeling is moſt ſanctioned by the example of Chriſt, and his apoſtles.

CHAP. XII.

Contains 1ſt. *The parable of the vineyard let out to wicked huſbandmen,* 1---12. 2d. *Jeſus anſwering the Phariſees, and Herodians, about paying tribute to Ceſar; the Sadducees concerning the reſurrection; and a Scribe, concerning the great commandment in the law,* 13---34. 3d. *His enquiry of the Scribes, whoſe ſon the Meſſiah was to be: his warning the people againſt their oſtentation and hypocriſy; and his commending the poor widow, who caſt two mites in the treaſury,* 35---44.

AND he began to ſpeak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and ſet an hedge about *it*, and digged *a place for* the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to huſbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And at the ſeaſon he ſent to the huſbandmen a ſervant, that he might receive from the huſbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and ſent *him* away empty.

4 And again he ſent unto them another ſervant; and at him they caſt ſtones, and wounded *him* in the head, and ſent *him* away ſhamefully handled.

5 And again he ſent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating ſome,

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould learn from our divine Maſter to meet ſufferings in a good cauſe with conſtancy, and alacrity; and to be bold, and open in our profeſſion of the truth, when it's enemies grow more virulent, and determined in their oppoſition to it. The undeniable proofs, which he gave, during his humiliation on earth, of his knowledge of all events, and his influence over all hearts, ſhould now inſpire us with implicit confidence in him, and excite us to an unreſerved obedience to him: for we ſhall find all his words true, and faithful; and he will carry us through all difficulties, and reproaches that we meet with in his ſervice. It is a peculiar honour and felicity to be inſtrumental, in any way to the diſplay of his glory. His kingdom is not of this world, and therefore its external appearance is often very mean; and its ſubjects, and miniſters muſt not affect worldly grandeur, or be aſhamed of appearing poor, and deſpiſed in the eyes of carnal men: but righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt are their privileges; and they are of more value than all earthly honours, and riches whatſoever. Theſe we ſhould *firſt* ſeek for ourſelves, and then aim to communicate to others; and we ought to welcome all thoſe, who come in the name of the Lord, to promote the peace and proſperity of his kingdom; rejoicing greatly for their ſucceſs in this good work. Whilſt we expect the great Head of the church, effectually to interpoſe, to purge it from all hirelings, and abuſes; that it may no more be reproached as a den of thieves, but may be indeed a houſe of prayer, and ſpiritual worſhip, to all nations: how active ſhould rulers, and teachers be, in doing what they can to promote the ſcriptural adminiſtration of his ordinances, the ſanctification of his holy day, and the faithful preaching of his word; and to eſtabliſh, and maintain a decided diſtinction between things ſacred, and ſecular! And at how great a diſtance ſhould all, who love, and preach the truth, keep from every appearance of turning their miniſtry into a lucrative trade!

Alas, that chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders ſhould ſo frequently, be the moſt inveterate oppoſers of reformation in the church; out of a miſtaken regard to their own intereſts, and reputation, which in fact they thus undermine, and deſtroy! Such men often ſet themſelves againſt the truth, for fear of the conſequences of it's getting ground, when they find the people attentive to, and impreſſed by it: thus they enter upon a conteſt, from which they cannot recede with credit, and in which they cannot perſiſt, without the moſt fatal conſequences; for though they ſhould for a time be ſucceſsful, they muſt in the event be cruſhed by the power of the exalted Redeemer. Theſe are barren fig-trees, covered with leaves, raiſing and diſappointing the expectations of thoſe, who ſeek fruit from them: and expoſing themſelves to the awful doom of withering, and remaining unfruitful under the awful curſe of the Lord, (*Jude*, v. 12:) but we ſhould fear this ſentence worſe than death; and ſhould reſt in no religion, that does not render us fruitful in good works. This will be the ſure effect of "faith in God," in proportion as it is vigorous, and lively. Thus our feeble attempts to do good may be rendered more ſucceſsful than we could have imagined, by the bleſſing of God on our labours of love: and though we neither poſſeſs ſuperior abilities or ſtation, influence, or authority; we may yet make an uſeful ſtand againſt the prevalence of impiety, and iniquity, by the ſilent efficacy of fervent, conſtant prayers; whilſt "we lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;" and whilſt our petitions are dictated by a forgiving, and loving ſpirit towards men; as well as by zeal for the honour of God, we may in this way, and by a chriſtian example, and converſation, by "words ſpoken in due "ſeaſon," and various other ſimilar attempts, be uſeful; without any one having a pretence to enquire "by what "authority we do ſuch things?" And ſhould we be called out to more public ſervices; whilſt we act by the commiſſion, and according to the inſtructions of Chriſt, we need not much regard, and ſhall not want a proper anſwer to perſons, who preſume to interfere in ſuch matters; though they are evidently ignorant of the moſt obvious, and important diſtinction betwixt thoſe, who act by authority from heaven, and ſuch as are *only* ſent forth by man.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—12.] Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxi. v. 33—43.)

and killing ſome.

6 Having yet therefore one ſon, his wellbeloved, he ſent him alſo laſt unto them, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon.

7 But thoſe huſbandmen ſaid among themſelves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance ſhall be our's.

8 And they took him, and killed *him*, and caſt *him* out of the vineyard.

9 What ſhall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and deſtroy the huſbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this ſcripture, The ſtone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they ſought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had ſpoken the parable againſt them: and they left him, and went their way.

13 And they ſend unto him certain of the Phariſees, and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words.

14 And when they were come, they ſay unto him, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and careſt for no man; for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men, but teacheſt the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Ceſar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or ſhall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocriſy, ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may ſee *it*.

16 And they brought *it*. And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription? And they ſaid unto him, Ceſar's.

17 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto them, Render to Ceſar the things that are Ceſar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

18 Then came unto him the Sadducees, which ſay there is no reſurrection: and they aſked him, ſaying,

19 Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother.

20 Now there were ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and dying left no ſeed.

21 And the ſecond took her, and died, neither left he any ſeed: and the third likewiſe.

22 And the ſeven had her, and left no ſeed: laſt of all the woman died alſo.

23 In the reſurrection therefore, when they ſhall riſe, whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of them? for the ſeven had her to wife.

24 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto them, Do ye not therefore err, becauſe ye know not the ſcriptures, neither the power of God?

25 For when they ſhall riſe from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead that they riſe; have ye not read in the book of Moſes, how in the buſh God ſpake unto him, ſaying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

28 And one of the ſcribes came, and having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, aſked him, Which is the firſt commandment of all?

29 And Jeſus anſwered him, The firſt of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Iſrael; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength. This *is* the firſt commandment.

31 And the ſecond *is* like, *namely* this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. There is none other commandment greater than theſe.

32 And the ſcribe ſaid unto him, Well, Maſter, thou haſt ſaid the truth: for there is

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V. 13—27.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 16—33.)

V. 28—34.] (Note, *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 34—40.) The conſideration of this ſubject was reſerved to this place. St. Matthew informs us, that this ſcribe, lawyer, or doctor of the law, was one of the company, that one God; and there is none other but He;

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to love *his* neighbour as himſelf, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices.

34 And when Jeſus ſaw that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durſt aſk him *any queſtion*.

35 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, while he taught in the temple, How ſay the ſcribes that Chriſt is the Son of David?

36 For David himſelf ſaid by the Holy Ghoſt, The LORD ſaid to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool.

37 David therefore himſelf calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his Son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 And he ſaid unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the ſcribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* ſalutations in the market-places,

39 And the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts;

40 Which devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers: theſe ſhall receive greater damnation.

41 And Jeſus ſat over againſt the treaſury, and beheld how the people caſt money into the treaſury: and many that were rich caſt in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and ſhe threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called *unto him* his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, That this poor widow hath caſt more in than all they, which have caſt into the treaſury:

44 For all *they* did caſt in of their abundance; but ſhe of her want did caſt in all that ſhe had, *even* all her living.

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convened together to conſult, in what manner they ſhould proceed againſt Jeſus; and that he aſked the queſtion, tempting him; at the ſame time, that he allowed he had ſatisfactorily anſwered the objections of the Sadducees. But though he was not exempt from the prejudices of the other Scribes and Phariſees againſt Chriſt: yet he had evidently deeper convictions, and juſter apprehenſions about religion, than the reſt of them. To prove Jeſus ſtill further, how he could reſolve difficult queſtions, and with ſome deſign of entangling him in his diſcourſe; he aſked him which was the firſt, or greateſt, commandment in the whole law? The Phariſees, and Jewiſh teachers had ſeveral frivolous diſputes on this ſubject, ſuited to the trifling ſuperſtitions of the age: but our Lord took no notice of their controverſies, and returned a direct anſwer to the queſtion; referring the Scribe to the ſummary of the firſt table of the law, which Moſes had given them, and which hath already been fully explained, (Notes, *Deut.* c. vi. v. 4, 5:) this he declared to be the "firſt commandment;" as it is of the higheſt poſſible importance and obligation; and as it virtually implies in it all other commandments. And he added, that the rule of loving our neighbours as ourſelves, was the ſecond in importance, and of a ſimilar nature: this too hath been explained, (Note, *Lev.* c. xix. v. 18.) He then declared, that there was no other commandment greater than theſe: as on them depended all the law, and the prophets. When theſe two precepts are properly explained, and underſtood, they are found to contain the ſubſtance of all, that was commanded in the law, or enforced by the prophets: unleſs theſe be properly received, and obſerved, nothing elſe can be of any value: in proportion as they are underſtood, all other parts of ſcripture are unfolded in their nature, uſe, and importance; and whilſt the types, predictions, and promiſes of Chriſt and the goſpel are thereby illuſtrated; the pardoned, and juſtified believer, loving, and obeying in his meaſure theſe great commandments, can not but attend to every other part of his duty to God, and man. This anſwer of Chriſt was ſo ſatisfactory, and convincing, that the Scribe could not but allow, that he had ſpoken the plain truth on that ſubject; and that all ſacrifices, however numerous, and coſtly, were comparatively of ſmall value. Theſe were all typical atonements for men's tranſgreſſions of the moral law; and they were of no efficacy, except as they were the expreſſion of repentance and faith in the promiſed Saviour, and as they led to moral obedience. When Jeſus therefore heard the Scribe anſwer ſo diſcreetly, and like a man, who knew ſomething of the nature of true religion, and of the ſpirituality, and excellency of the moral law; he declared that he was not far from the kingdom of God. For this knowledge of the law leads to conviction of ſin, to repentance, to a diſcovery of our need of mercy, and to an underſtanding of the way of juſtification by faith in Chriſt. Probably this man afterwards became a diſciple of our Lord. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xx.)

V. 35—37.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 41—46.)

V. 38—40.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiii.)

V. 41—44.] (*Luke*, c. xxi. v. 1—4.) Our Lord, being about finally to leave the temple, ſat down over againſt the treaſury, into which the people put money for the defraying of ſeveral expences, incurred by the ſtated ſervices of the ſanctuary. Whilſt he there beheld the Jews, who were making their oblations, he obſerved

CHAP. XIII.

Contains predictions of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the temple, and the ſubverſion of the Jewiſh ſtate, (as typical of the day of judgment, and the end of the world;) with declarations of the preceding ſigns, the circumſtances, and conſequences of thoſe events; and an intimation of their ſpeedy approach; and many ſuitable cautions, promiſes, and exhortations intermixed with them, &c. 1---37. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxiv.)*

ſeveral rich perſons contributing large ſums, probably in an oſtentatious manner: but at length a poor widow came and put in two mites, which at moſt did not amount to a farthing of our money; and He declared that ſhe had caſt in more than all the reſt: for their large donations were only a part of their ſuperfluities, and bare a ſmall proportion to the abundance, that ſtill remained for their own expences, and indulgence; but ſhe had in reality caſt in all her living, having nothing left to buy food for herſelf, ſave what ſhe might afterwards earn by labour, or procure in ſome other precarious manner. Doubtleſs our Lord ſaw her heart humble, and upright, devoted to God, and deſirous to expreſs her affection to his worſhip; and that ſhe did not caſt in this her pittance out of any affectation of ſingularity, or expectation of being recompenſed, or applauded for it; but in dependance on the promiſes, and providence of God, and out of love to his name. Others in ſuch circumſtances would have pleaded, that their pittance would be of no uſe, and that they could not ſpare it; and many would have derided this poor widow, or diſſuaded her from making any oblation: but our Lord approved, and commended her conduct, to teach poor people, that he expects them to ſhew their love to him, and his cauſe, by ſuch acts of charity, or piety, as they are capable of; that he deems himſelf more honoured by ſmall ſums, ſaved out of ſuch expences, as are generally deemed needful, and in offering which, men muſt fare meaner, work harder, and rely more entirely on providence for a future proviſion; than by the large donations of the wealthy, which put them to no real inconvenience, or ſelf-denial.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are all anſwerable for peculiar advantages, which are afforded us, in order to our becoming fruitful in good works. Our gracious Lord, the Proprietor of the vineyard, waits for the fruits, 'till the due ſeaſon; but he will by no means diſpenſe with us, for not rendering them at all: and as we are more favoured, than the Jews of old were; ſo our doom will be more dreadful, if we continue unfruitful. The ſacred ſcriptures in our hands, or in our houſes, and the labours of faithful preachers, are ſo many demands on profeſſed chriſtians, to render the due revenue of glory to God, by the holineſs of their lives: and the coming of the beloved Son of the Father, and all his miracles, doctrines, and purchaſed ſalvation were intended to ſupply us with motives, encouragements, and aſſiſtance for fruitfulneſs. But proud, and carnal men, though they profeſs themſelves the worſhippers of God, will be exceedingly offended at theſe truths, and warnings: and even rulers, and teachers, to whom the vineyard hath eſpecially been let out, have often been ready to abuſe, beat, and murder the ſervants of God, who have come to demand the fruits of the vineyard, in their maſter's name; and have ſhewn no reverence even to his Son, nay have acted with decided contempt of, and enmity againſt him, for the ſake of their own credit, authority, and ſecular intereſt. Thus have the builders rejected the Corner-ſtone of the temple, to their own ruin, and in ſecuring their preſent advantages, have come ſhort of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Let ſinners beware of this proud carnal ſpirit: and remember, that if they are offended by the faithful reproofs, and admonitions of the miniſters of the goſpel, they would have been far more irritated by thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt, had they lived when he was on earth; and would therefore have concurred with his crucifiers: if they are provoked to revile, or ridicule their teachers inſtead of profiting by their labours, they would eaſily be tempted to abuſe, or murder them, were the power in their hands: for when this diſpoſition prevails, the more plain, and convincing the truth is rendered, the greater rage, and enmity it excites. Let us then regard, and profit by the inſtructions of God's ſervants, as a proof that we really reverence his Son: and let us ſeek grace from him, to render us fruitful in the works of righteouſneſs to the glory of his name; that our privileges may be continued to us, and that our ſouls may be perfected, when wicked profeſſors ſhall be expelled, and deſtroyed.

Wiſdom, truth, and holineſs *muſt* excite oppoſition in this wicked world: for they are equally contrary to formal hypocriſy, proud infidelity, and the love of ſecular intereſt, and preferment; and they therefore naturally cauſe a ferment, and an efferveſcence whenever they meet with them. But whilſt ſuch men ſeek to entangle God's miniſters in their words: let them copy the firmneſs, meekneſs, and prudence of the Lord Jeſus; and endeavour to graft important inſtruction on inſidious queſtions, and frivolous or malignant objections. If profeſſors of the goſpel conſcientiouſly “rendered to “Ceſar, the things that are Ceſar's, and to God the “things that are God's,” according to the exhortations of all faithful teachers; and if all who preach the goſpel, approved themſelves true men, no reſpecters of perſons, but teachers of the way of God in truth: they would ſoon put to ſhame, and ſilence the ignorant cavils of their obſtinate adverſaries. For though truth, and holineſs be moſt offenſive to them; our errors, and miſconduct give them their moſt plauſible handle againſt us. We ſhould then ſtudy to walk with wiſdom towards them, that are without; as well as to avoid hypocriſy, which is always known to our heart-ſearching Judge. Thus we may paſs through this dying world, with a joyful hope of immortal happineſs, and of a glorious reſurrection; and may expect to be at length made *equal to the angels*; whilſt Sadducees can only hope at the moſt, to live and die, like *the beaſts that periſh*. We ſhould then get acquainted with the ſcripture, and endeavour to enlarge our apprehenſions of the power of God; that we may be preſerved from fatal errors, and have confidence in the God of Abraham and of all believers, as our everlaſt-

AND as he went out of the temple, one of his diſciples ſaith unto him, Maſter, ſee what manner of ſtones, and what buildings *are here*?

2 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, Seeſt thou theſe great buildings? there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.

3 And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, over againſt the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, aſked him privately,

4 Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what *ſhall be* the ſign when all theſe things ſhall be fulfilled?

5 And Jeſus anſwering them, began to ſay, Take heed leſt any *man* deceive you:

6 For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt*; and ſhall deceive many.

7 And when ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *ſuch things* muſt needs be; but the end *ſhall* not *be* yet.

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ing Portion, and Felicity; and that we may know how to anſwer every man in a concluſive manner, and to avoid all uſeleſs altercations, as well as to confute all vain objections.

By pertinent replies to one deſcription of oppoſers, we may ſometimes obtain a more candid hearing from others, that have hitherto been equally eſtranged from the truth: for we ſhall find ſome individuals more teachable, than the reſt of thoſe collective bodies, to which they belong. A careful attention to the ſcriptures will alſo convince us of the vaſt importance of a deep acquaintance with the ſpirituality, extent, reaſonableneſs, and excellency of the moral law: whilſt therefore many are diſputing about nice diſtinctions in ſpeculative points, or about external ceremonies, and obſervances; we ſhould peculiarly hearken to the voice of the ſacred word, calling us "to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, "our mind, our ſoul, and ſtrength:" and "to love "our neighbours as ourſelves." Did we thus love the Lord with all our powers, and faculties, and to the full extent of them: did we thus ſupremely admire, and delight in his infinite excellencies; did we wholly deſire his favour and love, as our felicity; were we thus filled with gratitude for his unſpeakable goodneſs to us; and were we completely actuated by zeal for his glory, as in reaſon and juſtice we ought to be; what ſpiritual worſhippers, and devoted ſervants of God ſhould we be! And in what ſhould we differ from the inhabitants of heaven? Did we love our neighbours as ourſelves, and in every thing ſeek their good, and value their comfort, and happineſs equally with our own; what perfect juſtice, truth, goodneſs, compaſſion, and peace would every where prevail! (*Luke*, c. x. v. 25—37.) This indeed would be far more, than all whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices. But becauſe we have not thus loved God, and man; becauſe our character and conduct have been, and are (as far as we are left to ourſelves,) the very reverſe of this bleſſed temper and behaviour: therefore we are condemned ſinners, we need repentance, and we need mercy, Chriſt, and his atoning ſacrifice; we cannot be juſtified by the works of the law, but muſt be ſaved by grace, by faith in the Saviour, and through the ſanctification of his Spirit unto obedience. Yet, if we are really intereſted in this redemption; we ſhall love, and obey theſe great commandments, as our perfect rule of duty; and ſhall daily mourn and be humbled, becauſe our obedience to them is ſo very defective. Thus a juſt apprehenſion of the holy law is generally the firſt ſtep towards a ſpiritual underſtanding of the goſpel, and a proper uſe of its glorious truths: and, though many, who contend for the doctrines of free ſalvation, might have been ready to reprobate the conviction of this Scribe, as legal, and ſelf-righteous; we may eaſily perceive, that it was in perfect wiſdom and propriety, that our Lord allowed him to have anſwered diſcreetly, and declared, that he was not far from the kingdom of heaven: and we may learn from his example to commend what is right, and to encourage what is hopeful, in thoſe, that differ from, and are prejudiced againſt, us.

But with this view of the holy law, a ſerious recollection of its awful ſanction, and a believing proſpect of the approaching day of judgment, we ſhall be prepared to attend properly to what the ſcriptures declare, concerning the perſon, and offices of Chriſt; and ſhall be led more unreſervedly to confeſs him to be our Lord, and our God; to welcome him as the End of the Law for righteouſneſs to every believer; to obey him as our exalted Redeemer; and to rejoice, that he is ſeated at the right hand of the Father, to perfect his people's ſalvation, and to put all enemies under his feet. If the common people hear theſe things gladly; whilſt the learned, and diſtinguiſhed in rank and authority oppoſe them: we may congratulate the former however deſpiſed and neglected, and pity the latter in the midſt of their renown, and ſplendour: for what will rich, or long clothing, ſalutations in public aſſemblies, or chief rooms in ſynagogues, and feaſts, avail thoſe that love ſuch parade; when the Judge ſhall prove their devotions to have been the maſk of their impiety, and iniquity, and ſentence them to receive the deeper damnation! Of ſuch perſons, and practices, let all beware, who value their own ſouls.

And let us not forget that Jeſus ſtill watches the treaſury, to obſerve how much, and from what motives, men contribute to it. He approves of liberality in the rich; and they ought to appropriate a much greater proportion of their wealth, to works of piety, and charity, than they generally do: but it ſhould be done in ſimplicity, and not out of pride, and oſtentation. And though their contributions ſhould be encouraged; they ought not to be flattered into an opinion that they are meritorious, or, that they will atone for their ungodlineſs, or licentiouſneſs, and prove a ſubſtitute for repentance, faith, and holineſs. Nor ſhould the poor be diſcouraged, or deſpiſed in their humble endeavours to ſhew the ſincerity

8 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom; and there ſhall be earthquakes in *divers* places, and there ſhall be famines and troubles: theſe *are* the beginnings of ſorrows.

9 But take heed to yourſelves: for they ſhall deliver you up to councils; and in the ſynagogues ye ſhall be beaten: and ye ſhall be brought before rulers and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them.

10 And the goſpel muſt firſt be publiſhed among all nations.

11 But when they ſhall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye ſhall ſpeak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatſoever ſhall be given you in that hour, that ſpeak ye: for it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Holy Ghoſt.

12 Now the brother ſhall betray the brother to death, and the father the ſon; and children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and ſhall cauſe them to be put to death.

13 And ye ſhall be hated of all *men* for my name's ſake: but he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

14 But when ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtanding where it ought not, (let him that readeth underſtand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

15 And let him that is on the houſe-top not go down into the houſe, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his houſe:

16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days!

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 For *in* thoſe days ſhall be affliction, ſuch as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither ſhall be.

20 And except that the Lord had ſhortened thoſe days, no fleſh ſhould be ſaved: but for the elect's ſake, whom he hath choſen, he hath ſhortened the days.

21 And then, if any man ſhall ſay to you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt; or, lo, *he is* there: believe *him* not:

22 For falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall ſhew ſigns and wonders, to ſeduce, if *it were* poſſible, even the elect.

23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

24 But in thoſe days, after that tribulation, the ſun ſhall be darkened, and the moon ſhall not give her light;

25 And the ſtars of heaven ſhall fall, and the powers that are in heaven ſhall be ſhaken.

26 And then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory.

27 And then ſhall he ſend his angels, and ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermoſt part of the earth to the uttermoſt part of heaven.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that ſummer is near:

29 So ye, in like manner, when ye ſhall ſee theſe things come to paſs, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

30 Verily I ſay unto you, That this generation ſhall not paſs till all theſe things be done.

31 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: but my words ſhall not paſs away.

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of their love: as their ſcanty oblations, ſpared from their hard-earned pittance, is in fact, and by compariſon, a far greater bounty, than the applauded generoſity of their ſuperiors. Let then the poor contribute their mite, to the relief of the diſtreſſed, or to promote the cauſe of God: and though men may deride, or cenſure them, the Lord will approve, and graciouſly recompenſe them; they will never be impoveriſhed by what they lend in this manner to him; and their believing, and thankful, though feeble efforts, to honour Him, and to do good to their brethren, will be mentioned with commendation in that day, when all the ſplendid actions of unbelievers, will be expoſed to deſerved contempt, as the reſult of pride, oſtentation, enmity to God, and diſlike to his holy, and humbling ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 9—13.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. v. 16—22.)

V. 32. *The Son*, &c.] The preciſe ſeaſon, either of the day of judgment, or of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, was no part of the Revelation, which the incarnate Son of God had received, to communicate to his church: it

32 But of that day, and *that* hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is,

34 *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his houſe, and gave authority to his ſervants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35 Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the maſter of the houſe cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;

36 Leſt coming ſuddenly, he find you ſleeping.

37 And what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

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was not made known to his human nature by the unction of the Holy Ghoſt. But we cannot underſtand many things, that relate to the myſterious union of his divine and human nature, and ſhould not further preſume to pry into them. (*Luke*, c. ii. v. 52. *John*, c. xxi. v. 17. *Rev.* c. i. v. 1.)

V. 33—37.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 14—30.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we behold the magnificence of flouriſhing cities, and ſtately palaces, or temples; we ſhould recollect how ſoon they will all be deſolated, and come to nothing, through the ſin of man; that we may be reminded how neceſſary it is for us to have a more permanent manſion in heaven, and to be prepared for it, by being made the temples of God through the ſanctification of his Spirit. If we duly conſider how ſoon all temporal things will paſs away, like an empty viſion, we ſhall find our deſires after wealth, grandeur, and proſperity abated; and we ſhall be leſs diſquieted *on our own account*, when we hear of wars, earthquakes, famines, and other dreadful judgments, however we be concerned for, and ſympathize with the ſufferers. Such reflections will tend to reconcile us to the thoughts of contempt, reproach, and perſecution: but they will render us alſo more careful, that no man may deceive us, or draw us into any error, to prevent our being partakers of Chriſt, and the bleſſings of the goſpel. Indeed we cannot profeſs and adorn his religion, without experiencing ſome effects of the world's hatred, and ſcorn: but if we are wearied by our trivial difficulties, what ſhould we be, if we were delivered up to councils, and treated with cruelty by them; or if we were betrayed by near relations, and expoſed to the ſentence of death, for our adherence to the truth? If then the hatred of men, and the fear of hardſhip and ſuffering, cauſe us to ſhrink, or complain; we ſhould remember, that "he that continueth unto the end, the "ſame ſhall be ſaved:" "but if any man draw back, "the Lord will have no pleaſure in him." It ſhould comfort us under our trials for the ſake of Jeſus, to hope that our teſtimony to his truth, and our patience, and meekneſs under the croſs, may perhaps be of uſe, even to our perſecutors, or revilers; and aſſuredly our light and momentary afflictions will work for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory. Should any of us even be called to appear before the princes of this world in ſo good a cauſe; we ſhould not be anxious about "what we ſhould ſpeak," nor ought we to premeditate, in a diſtruſtful, and diſquieting manner: for in ſuch extraordinary caſes we may expect peculiar aſſiſtance; and that the Spirit of God will teach us to plead the cauſe of his truth in a proper manner. The enmity and pride of man's heart, when inflamed by religious bigotry, and furious zeal, produce moſt fatal effects: this ſhould put us upon our guard, and inſtruct us, to pray for the Spirit of wiſdom, truth, and love, to dwell in our hearts, and to counteract our natural depraved propenſities, even in our religious purſuits, and controverſies. Indeed when we conſider, that brethren, and even parents and children, are capable of hating, betraying, and murdering each other; and that the vileſt abominations are often eſtabliſhed where they ought by no means to find admiſſion; we ſhall ſee more abundant cauſe to flee without delay, for refuge to Chriſt, from our own ſins, and thoſe of others; and to renounce every earthly object, to ſecure the ſalvation of our ſouls. We ſhould alſo deem every thing an evil *to us*, and pray againſt it, which tends to retard our courſe to heaven: for every unbeliever will ſoon be overtaken with ſuch miſery, as hath never been witneſſed on earth "from "the beginning of the creation, that God created, unto "this time, neither ſhall be." As Chriſt hath foretold us theſe things, we ſhould advert to his words: for as ſure as the predictions that related to Jeruſalem and the temple were exactly accompliſhed; ſo will all thoſe things come to paſs which are written concerning the eternal happineſs of the righteous, and the miſery of the wicked in another world. Ere long "heaven, and earth ſhall "paſs away," and all the things, that we behold will be diſſolved; but "the words of Chriſt ſhall not paſs "away." A firm belief of his truth will be our only preſervative againſt all thoſe ſeducers, and our ſure ſupport under all thoſe trials, which will occaſion the ruin of all, "but the elect, whom God hath choſen." At length we ſhall ſee "the Son of man coming in the clouds "of heaven, with power, and great glory," and then all his choſen people will be gathered from amongſt the wicked, into his heavenly kingdom. Inſtead therefore of curiouſly enquiring into the ſecret things, which belong to the Lord; let us carefully improve the revelation of his will, by giving diligence to make our calling, and election ſure. We know that the hour of our death cannot be very diſtant: our Lord, though not preſent to our ſight, beholds our whole conduct, and will ſhortly come to call us to an account for it. To ſome of his profeſſed ſervants he hath entruſted authority, to preach his goſpel, to preſide in his church, and to be his porters for the admiſſion of proper perſons into ſacred ſervices, and ordi-

CHAP. XIV.

Contains 1ſt. The chief prieſts plotting Chriſt's death, a woman anointing his head, and Judas bargaining to betray him, 1---11. *2d. Jeſus eating the paſſover with his diſciples; pointing out Judas as the traitor; and warning the apoſtles, that they would forſake him, and Peter that he would deny him,* 12---31. *3d. His agony in the garden, and his exhortations to his diſciples to watch, &c; the manner and circumſtances of his being apprehended; and his arraignment, and condemnation before Caiaphas, &c,* 32---65. *4th. Peter's denial of Chriſt, and his penitent ſorrow for his ſin,* 66---72. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxvi.)*

AFTER two days was *the feaſt of* the paſſover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief prieſts and the ſcribes ſought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

2 But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt-*day* leſt there be an uproar of the people.

3 And being in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper, as he ſat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaſter-box of ointment of ſpikenard, very precious; and ſhe brake the box, and poured *it* on his head.

4 And there were ſome that had indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, Why was this waſte of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been ſold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured againſt her.

6 And Jeſus ſaid, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? ſhe hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whenſoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what ſhe could: ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* alſo that ſhe hath done ſhall be ſpoken of for a memorial of her.

10 And Judas Iſcariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief prieſts, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard *it* they were glad, and promiſed to give him money. And he ſought how he might conveniently betray him.

12 And the firſt day of unleavened bread, when they killed the paſſover, his diſciples ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayeſt eat the paſſover?

13 And he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there ſhall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

14 And whereſoever he ſhall go in, ſay ye to the good-man of the houſe, The Maſter ſaith, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples?

15 And he will ſhew you a large upper-room furniſhed *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And his diſciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had ſaid unto

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nances, and to exclude ſuch as are unfit for them: and to every one of us he hath given his proper work; by attending to which we may approve ourſelves true believers, and both honour our Lord, and ſerve our generation. Happy therefore is that ſervant, who continues ſober, vigilant, and diligent in his proper work, without interfering with that of other men! He will be prepared for the coming of his Lord, whenever that may be: he will be found awake, in his proper place, and employed in his ſervice; and his gracious recompence will be ſecure. But it will be an awful ſurpriſe to a profeſſed chriſtian, or miniſter; ſhould he be found ſleeping, ſupine, ſelf-indulgent, and unprepared, by his Lord, at his coming: yet this will probably be the caſe, if at any time we relax our vigilance, or neglect our work. He therefore ſpeaks to us, and to all, and bids us to take heed to ourſelves, to our duty, or our miniſtry, and to watch, and pray always; leſt coming ſuddenly he ſhould find us ſleeping.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 13—16.] The circumſtances of this tranſaction are here more fully recorded, than in St. Matthew. Nothing could be leſs the object of any natural ſagacity, and foreſight, than the events here mentioned. (*Luke*, c. xxii. v. 10—13.) Had the two diſciples come to the place ſpecified rather ſooner, or later than they did; the man bearing the pitcher of water would either not have been arrived there, or he would have been gone paſt. But our Lord knew that the owner of a certain commodious houſe in Jeruſalem favoured him; he foreſaw that at a preciſe time of the day he them: and they made ready the paſſover.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And as they ſat and did eat, Jeſus ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, One of you which eateth with me ſhall betray me.

19 And they began to be ſorrowful, and to ſay unto him, one by one, *Is* it I? and another *ſaid*, *Is* it I?

20 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, *It is* one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the diſh.

21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 And as they did eat, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and ſaid, Take, eat: this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And he ſaid unto them, This is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many.

25 Verily I ſay unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

27 And Jeſus ſaith unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the Shepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered.

28 But after that I am riſen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 But Peter ſaid unto him, Although all ſhall be offended, yet *will* not I.

30 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.

31 But he ſpake the more vehemently, If I ſhould die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wiſe. Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethſemane: and he ſaith to his diſciples, Sit ye here, while I ſhall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be ſore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And ſaith unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were poſſible, the hour might paſs from him.

36 And he ſaid, Abba, Father, all things *are* poſſible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them ſleeping, and ſaith unto Peter, Simon, ſleepeſt thou? couldeſt not thou watch one hour?

38 Watch ye, and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation: the ſpirit truly *is* ready, but the fleſh *is* weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and ſpake the ſame words.

40 And when he returned, he found them aſleep again; (for their eyes were heavy;) neither wiſt they what to anſwer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* reſt: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners.

42 Riſe up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

43 And immediately, while he yet ſpake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with

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would ſend his ſervant for a pitcher of water; that the diſciples would meet with him juſt when they entered the city; that by following him they would find out the perſon he intended; and that by mentioning Him, as the Maſter, or Teacher, the owner of the houſe would readily conſent to accommodate them in an upper chamber. When the diſciples found all theſe circumſtances ſo exactly to accord to the prediction, they could not but be deeply impreſſed with a conviction of their Lord's knowledge of every event, and influence over every heart!

V. 31. *Vehemently*, &c.] The circumſtances of Peter's ſelf-confidence, and dreadful fall, are related with peculiar energy by St. Mark, who is ſuppoſed to have penned his goſpel under Peter's inſpection: but thoſe of his repentance are more ſlightly touched upon.

V. 36. *Abba*, &c.] A Syriac word ſignifying father, him a great multitude, with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he; take him, and lead *him* away ſafely,

45 And as ſoon as he was come, he goeth ſtraightway to him, and ſaith, Maſter, Maſter; and kiſſed him.

46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 And one of them that ſtood by, drew a ſword, and ſmote a ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his ear.

48 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Are ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and *with* ſtaves to take me?

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and *ye* took me not: but the ſcriptures muſt be fulfilled.

50 And they all forſook him, and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth caſt about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him.

52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

53 And they led Jeſus away to the high prieſt: and with him were aſſembled all the chief prieſts, and the elders, and the ſcribes.

54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high prieſt: and he ſat with the ſervants, and warmed himſelf at the fire.

55 And the chief prieſts and all the council ſought for witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death; and found none:

56 For many bare falſe witneſs againſt him; but their witneſs agreed not together.

57 And there aroſe certain, and bare falſe witneſs againſt him, ſaying,

58 We heard him ſay, I will deſtroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither ſo did their witneſs agree together.

60 And the high prieſt ſtood up in the midſt, and aſked Jeſus, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what *is it which* theſe witneſs againſt thee?

61 But he held his peace, and anſwered nothing. Again the high prieſt aſked him, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed?

62 And Jeſus ſaid, I am: and ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

63 Then the high prieſt rent his clothes, and ſaith, What need we any further witneſſes?

64 Ye have heard the blaſphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

65 And ſome began to ſpit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to ſay unto him, Propheſy: and the ſervants did ſtrike him with the palms of their hands.

66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high prieſt:

67 And when ſhe ſaw Peter warming himſelf, ſhe looked upon him, and ſaid, And thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, ſaying, I know not, neither underſtand I what thou ſayeſt. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

69 And a maid ſaw him again, and began to ſay to them that ſtood by, This is *one* of them.

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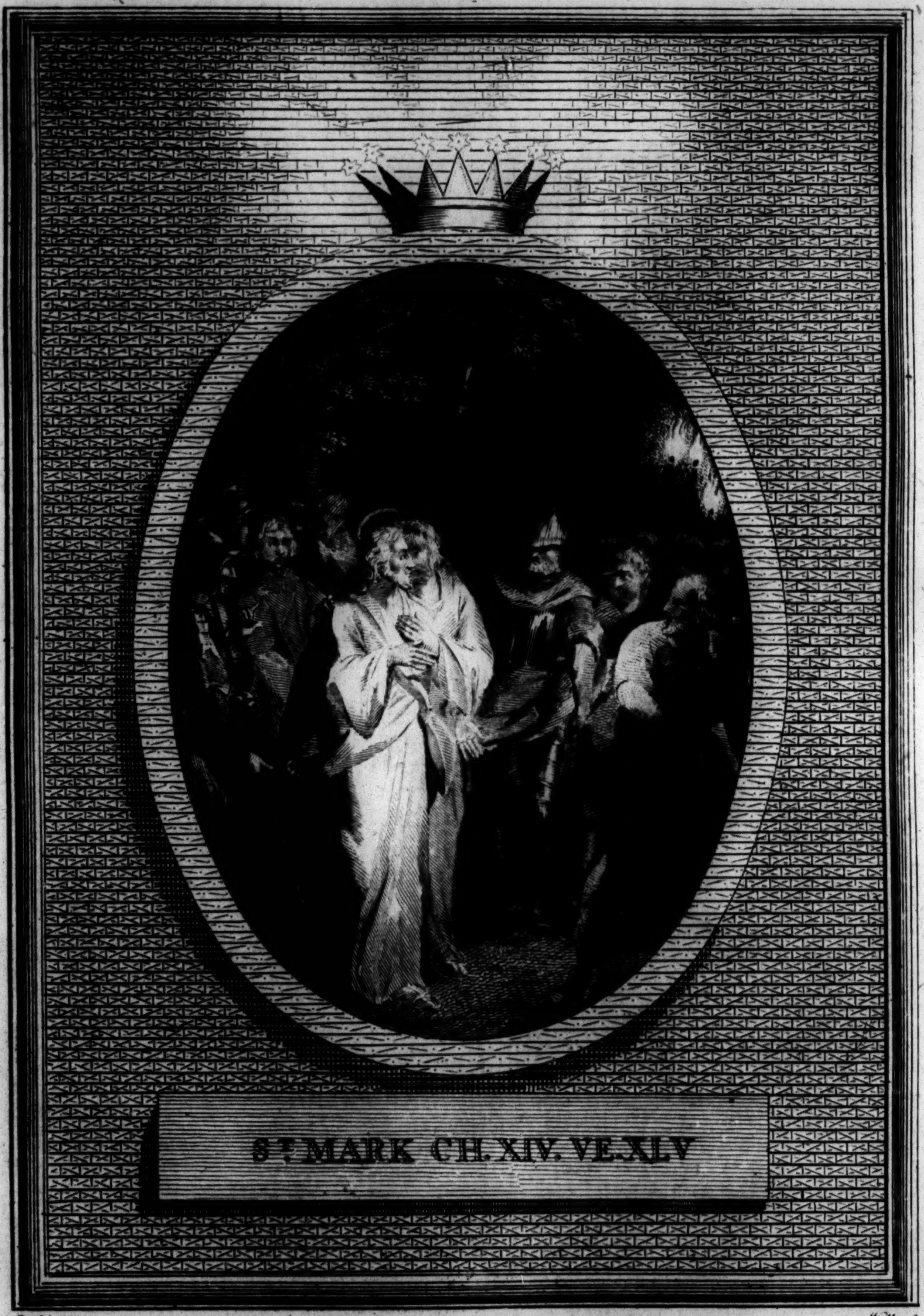
but in a way of peculiar affection, and confidence, (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 15.)

V. 51, 52.] It is not certain, whether this young man was one of Chriſt's follower's, or no: but being waked by the tumult, he ſeems to have left his bed, covered only with a ſheet, or ſome thing of that ſort; and to have followed the company, either out of curioſity, or affection to Chriſt: being therefore ſuſpected to be his diſciple, the attendants laid hold on him, and he was forced to flee away naked to ſave his life. But though matters were conducted with ſuch violence, the apoſtles had been permitted to eſcape, through their Lord's influence over the minds of thoſe, who apprehended him!

V. 56. *Agreed not*, &c.] Some underſtand this, that their accuſation proved no capital offence againſt Chriſt.

THE REVD. MR. SCOTT's BIBLE.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70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that ſtood by ſaid again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy ſpeech agreeth *thereto*.

71 But he began to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not this man of whom ye ſpeak.

72 And the ſecond time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jeſus ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow twice thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

V. 72. *He thought*, &c.] Some ſuppoſe the original word to relate to the vehemence, with which Peter left the place; others explain it of his covering his head; and others of his inward bitter reflections cauſing him to weep abundantly.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt numbers combine, with implacable enmity againſt Chriſt, and employ both power, and ſubtlety to run down his truth, and injure his people; there are a few, though generally in inferior ſtations, who ſpare no pains, or expence, to expreſs their love to him, and to promote his glory. But it is not uncommon for their fervent expreſſions of zeal and affection to be miſunderſtood and cenſured, even by their brethren, as well as by hypocrites: we ſhould therefore not be diſcouraged, if thoſe whom we love, ſhould deem our time, labour, or expence waſted, or miſapplied, when we are ſincerely deſirous of honouring Chriſt, and promoting his goſpel, and are really employed in ſome good work for him; and on the other hand we ſhould fear giving any moleſtation to thoſe, who are led to expreſs their love in a different manner, than we are. We have not Chriſt perſonally preſent with us, and may have little opportunity of promoting his cauſe: but we have always the poor with us, and whenſoever we will we may do them good; and if in this, or in any other proper way, we ſhew the ſincerity of our love and gratitude to our gracious Redeemer; He will accept our well-meant ſervices, and make them known to the whole world, for a memorial of us; when mercenary hypocrites, as well as avowed enemies ſhall ſink into ſhame, and everlaſting contempt. Our bleſſed Lord knoweth every circumſtance reſpecting us, before it comes to paſs: and if we carefully compare our experience with his words, we ſhall be more and more convinced, that He is ordering every thing relative to us, in perfect wiſdom, truth and goodneſs, according to the counſel of his own will; and that even the moſt painful diſpenſations will in the event conduce to the good of all, who truſt in Him. Whatever we poſſeſs, is then beſt employed, and moſt profitable to us, when it is moſt devoted to the Redeemer's ſervice: if we are diſpoſed to admit him, he will come, and dwell in our hearts, and will provide for us, that we may feaſt with him: (*Rev.* c. iii. v. 20:) and if we conſecrate our houſes to him, by family worſhip, and by hoſpitably entertaining his diſciples; he will there alſo manifeſt his preſence with us, and bleſs us.

Whilſt we conſider the Lord Jeſus, (the very paſchal Lamb, that was ſacrificed for us; and who hath given his body to be broken, and his blood to be ſhed, that we might live by faith in his name,) as attending on theſe divine inſtitutions, that he might fulfil all righteouſneſs: let us learn in copying his example to beware of hypocriſy, and to fear being counted intruders, or detected as traitors. To be preſerved from this we muſt ſhun avarice, and be diligent in ſelf-examination; not truſting to our own hearts, but ſtill enquiring, when we read of the guilt and miſery of hypocrites, and apoſtates, "Lord, is it I?" as more ready to ſuſpect ourſelves, than any of our brethren. Let us thus examine ourſelves, and then, as frequently as opportunity is afforded us, let us eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, which are the appointed ſymbols of the body, and blood of Chriſt, which were given for us, to purchaſe the bleſſings of the new-covenant for our periſhing ſouls. Thus we ſhall be frequently led to recollect our guilt, and danger, our hope, and our obligations; and our profeſſion of faith in, and love to our Redeemer, and his ranſomed flock: thus we ſhall receive renewed pledges of his love to us, and have our affections enlivened, and our ſtrength increaſed for his ſervice: thus we ſhall anticipate the bleſſed hour, when we ſhall drink of the fruit of our living vine, for ever new in the kingdom of God: and thus we ſhall alſo be prepared for bearing our croſs, for drinking of the cup of tribulation, and for taſting death, in our paſſage thither. But though the great Shepherd paſſed through his unſpeakable ſufferings, without one falſe ſtep; yet even the principal of his followers have often been offended, and ſcattered by the comparatively ſmall, meaſure of afflictions allotted to them: and this hath been exactly proportioned to the degree, in which they have confided in themſelves, and formed their reſolutions in their own ſtrength. Did we indeed properly contemplate the ſcene exhibited in Gethſemane; did we duly conſider the amazement, and anguiſh of the great Redeemer, when his ſoul was ſorrowful even unto death, through the load of our guilt which he willingly ſuſtained; did we advert to his ſtrong crying and tears, and to the victorious reſignation of his heart, when he ſaid, "nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt:" theſe reflections would fill our minds with ſuch convictions concerning the evil of ſin, the awful juſtice of God, the love of the Saviour, the vanity of the world, the impotency of men's malice, and the danger and helpleſs condition of our ſouls; as would have a powerful effect in rendering us humble, dependant, thankful, and ſtedfaſt in the hour of trial; and in exciting us to watchfulneſs, and prayer, leſt we ſhould be borne down by the force of temptation, or leſt we ſhould at laſt even fall under the inſupportable wrath of God. But, alas, whilſt unbelievers entirely diſregard this intereſting, and affecting ſubject; even believers are apt to contemplate it, in a drowſy manner; and inſtead of being ready to die with Chriſt, they are often unprepared to watch with him one hour! Thus, after repeated warnings, through their own negligence, they enter into temptation; and then through

CHAP. XV.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus arraigned before, and condemned by, Pilate, at the inſtance of the chief prieſts, and through the clamours of the people, who preferred Barabbas to him, 1---15. *2d. The Roman ſoldiers crowning Him with thorns, and cruelly mocking him, leading him away to mount Calvary, and crucifying him,* 16---25. *3d. The people, and rulers, &c, deriding and reviling Him; and the prodigies attending on his ſufferings and death,* 26---38. *4th. The Centurion confeſſing him to be the Son of God; mention made of the women who witneſſed his crucifixion; and an account of Joſeph's aſking for his body, and giving it an honourable interment, &c,* 39---47. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxvii.)*

AND ſtraightway in the morning the chief prieſts held a conſultation with the elders and ſcribes and the whole council, and bound Jeſus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate.

2 And Pilate aſked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he, anſwering, ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt *it*.

3 And the chief prieſts accuſed him of many things; but he anſwered nothing.

4 And Pilate aſked him again, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? behold how many things they witneſs againſt thee.

5 But Jeſus yet anſwered nothing; ſo that Pilate marvelled.

6 Now at *that* feaſt he releaſed unto them one priſoner, whomſoever they deſired.

7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made

the weakneſs of the fleſh, they fall into ſin; notwithſtanding the readineſs of the ſpirit, in their better moments! But let us not pretend to excuſe ſuch folly, diſobedience, and ingratitude: ſhould Jeſus call us to account for it, we ſhould not know what to anſwer him; and though he will not caſt off the true believer for theſe offences; he will yet rebuke, and chaſten him, and bring him to condemn himſelf on account of them.

But there is a great difference between the general character of faulty diſciples, and that of hypocrites: theſe often prove traitors, and deliberately join the enemies of Chriſt, in oppoſing his cauſe: having long carried on a trade of iniquity under the maſk of piety, and amidſt all the means of grace; they grow callous in ſin, and handle all religious matters with an unfeeling familiarity; they conceal their crimes by attending on ordinances and ſacraments; and whilſt they preſumptuouſly call Chriſt their Lord, and Maſter, and expreſs great affection for him, they betray him into the hands of his implacable enemies! Thus they haſten their own deſtruction: and it would have been better for them, had they never been born. Whilſt the enemies of Chriſt are actuated by the moſt outrageous malice, and ſeem to carry every thing their own way; they are under ſecret reſtraints, and can only fulfil the ſcriptures: nor can they move any faſter, or further, or touch one perſon more, than the Lord is pleaſed to permit them! The moſt enormous wickedneſs hath commonly been committed, under the forms of law and juſtice, and varniſhed over by a ſemblance of piety: and whilſt rulers have been ringleaders in the moſt aggravated perjury, bribery, venality, oppreſſion, and murder; they have often pauſed, and perplexed themſelves, in deviſing how to regulate their conduct by ſtatute, and cuſtom, and with the appearance of impartiality! Indeed, when we contemplate the whole body of the rulers and teachers of God's profeſſed people combined againſt his holy, and beloved Son, and determined at any rate to condemn him to death; and when we view him given up by them as a malefactor, to ſuch inſults, and cruelties, as the vileſt murderer would have been exempted from, we have the cleareſt demonſtration of man's extreme enmity to God, and of God's moſt free, and unſpeakable love to man. In the conduct of our ſuffering Lord we ſee the brighteſt pattern of meekneſs, patience, fortitude, holineſs, and compaſſion to ſinners, that ever the earth witneſſed; we here perceive alſo the deſert of ſin, the worth of our ſouls, the foundation of our hope, and the nature of our chriſtian calling; which is to do good with unwearied perſeverance, and to endure evil with fortitude, meekneſs, and patience after the example of our gracious Saviour. Thus may we look forward with comfort to the time, when we ſhall ſee the Son of man, ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven; and hope to be numbered with his victorious army of glorified ſaints, when all his perſecutors, and enemies will be driven away into everlaſting deſtruction. But when we hear Peter, after all his promiſes, and reſolutions, denying his Lord with oaths, and curſes; we may well tremble to reflect on the weakneſs and depravity even of believers, when left to themſelves; we may take occaſion from the reflection to admire the mercy and patience of the Lord; we may be excited to thankfulneſs, that we have not yet been left utterly to forſake him; and we may confeſs with ſhame our manifold inſtances of *partial* unfaithfulneſs to him. Finally let him, that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall: and let him, that hath fallen think of theſe things, and of his own offences, and return to the Lord with weeping, and ſupplication; hoping to receive forgiveneſs, to be reſtored to the joy of God's ſalvation, and to be henceforth eſtabliſhed by his free Spirit. (*Pſ.* li. v. 7—13.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 7. *Inſurrection*, &c.] Barabbas ſeems to have been in other reſpects a notorious depredator; but he was condemned for having excited or headed an inſurrection, and for murder committed in it. This was a crime, which could not but give umbrage to

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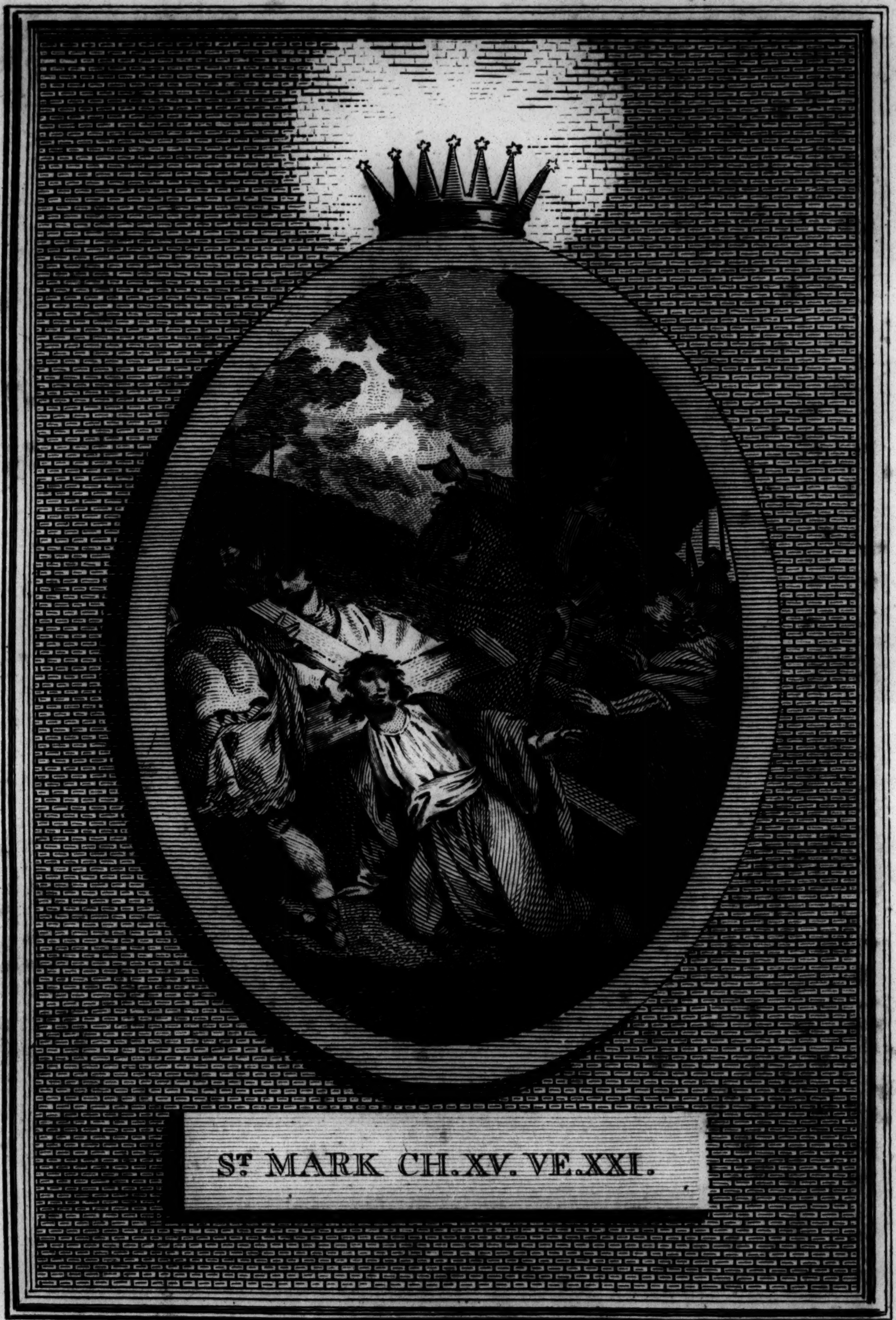
Engrav'd for the Rev.d Mr. Scott's Family Bible.



ST. MARK CH. XV. VE. XXI.

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30

inſurrection with him, who had committed murder in the inſurrection.

8 And the multitude, crying aloud, began to deſire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate anſwered them, ſaying, Will ye that I releaſe unto you the King of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief prieſts had delivered him for envy.

11 But the chief prieſts moved the people, that he ſhould rather releaſe Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate anſwered and ſaid again unto them, What will ye then that I ſhall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate ſaid unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 And *ſo* Pilate, willing to content the people, releaſed Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jeſus, when he had ſcourged *him*, to be crucified.

16 And the ſoldiers led him away into the hall called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*;

18 And began to ſalute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 And they ſmote him on the head with a reed, and did ſpit upon him, and bowing *their* knees, worſhipped him.

20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who paſſed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his croſs.

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a ſkull.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, caſting lots upon them, what every man ſhould take.

25 And it was the third hour; and they crucified him.

26 And the ſuperſcription of his accuſation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, And he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors.

29 And they that paſſed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and ſaying, Ah, thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt *it* in three days,

30 Save thyſelf, and come down from the croſs.

31 Likewiſe alſo the chief prieſts, mocking, ſaid among themſelves with the ſcribes, He ſaved others; himſelf he cannot ſave.

32 Let Chriſt the King of Iſrael deſcend now from the croſs, that we may ſee and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 And when the ſixth hour was come, there was darkneſs over the whole land until the ninth hour.

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the Romans; and the public demand of the releaſe of ſuch a criminal might have been conſidered as reſulting from a ſeditious temper in the people: however the extreme malignity of the Jewiſh rulers againſt Jeſus made them diſregard all conſequences, in ſtirring up the people to demand his crucifixion.

V. 25. *Third*, &c.] Or about nine o'clock in the morning. The rulers muſt have been at work very early, and have been very active in their proceedings, to have got through ſo much buſineſs, and to have ſurmounted ſo many difficulties by that hour. Indeed in John's goſpel, we read of the ſixth hour; but this is generally allowed, either to be an error of the tranſcribers, or to admit of another interpretation; and Chriſt is commonly ſuppoſed to have been nailed to the croſs about nine o'clock in the forenoon.

V. 28. *Tranſgreſſors*, &c.] (*Iſaiah*, liii. v. 12.) The original words both here, and in Iſaiah, are ſuppoſed to ſignify, lawleſs perſons, or criminals, who have violated the laws of men, as well as thoſe of God.

V. 39. *Cried*, &c.] It hath been ſuppoſed, that the vigour, with which Jeſus cried out juſt before he ex-

34 And at the ninth hour Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Eloi, Eloi, lama ſabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?

35 And ſome of them that ſtood by, when they heard *it*, ſaid, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And one ran, and filled a ſpunge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, ſaying, Let alone: let us ſee whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And Jeſus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghoſt.

38 And the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, which ſtood over againſt him, ſaw that he ſo cried out, and gave up the ghoſt, he ſaid, Truly this man was the Son of God.

40 There were alſo women looking on afar off; among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the leſs, and of Joſes, and Salome;

41 (Who alſo, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and miniſtered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jeruſalem.

42 And now when the even was come, (becauſe it was the preparation, that is, the day before the ſabbath,)

43 Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable counſellor, which alſo waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jeſus.

44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he aſked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joſeph.

46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a ſepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a ſtone unto the door of the ſepulchre.

47 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of Joſes, beheld where he was laid.

pired, (as it was contrary to what is generally obſerved in ſuch caſes,) tended to convince the centurion, that he was the Son of God: but the confidence, with which, in thoſe circumſtances, he openly addreſſed God as his Father, and committed his ſoul into his hands, ſeems to have had ſtill greater influence in producing this conviction. (*Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 46.)

V. 44. *And*, &c.] Although Jeſus hung ſix hours in torture on the croſs, Pilate marvelled that he died ſo ſoon! His care, in aſcertaining Chriſt's death, precluded thoſe objections, which the Jews would otherwiſe doubtleſs have ſtarted againſt the reality of his reſurrection, ſeeing his body was conceded for interment to his friends: we do not find, that ever they pretended that he had not really been dead. (*John*, c. xix. v. 31—38.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſufferings of our meek, and holy Redeemer are an inexhauſtible ſource of inſtruction to the lively believer; and are a ſubject, of which in his beſt hours, he cannot be weary. The conſideration, that no one was ever ſo univerſally hated, or ſo cruelly and contemptuouſly treated, by men of every rank, profeſſion, or religion, as the only perfectly wiſe, holy, and excellent perſon that hath appeared on earth; leads the ſerious mind into ſuch views of human depravity, and enmity to God, as, being applied to himſelf, by a recollection, that ſuch are we all by nature, muſt exceedingly ſubſerve humiliation and ſelf-abaſement before God: whilſt a view of His ſtupendous love, in delivering up his well-beloved Son, to this ignominious, and cruel death; not ſparing him but making his ſoul a ſacrifice for the ſins of ſuch rebels, and enemies, muſt needs cauſe the broken heart to overflow with admiration, and grateful joy. To believe that ſuch an atonement was neceſſary, in order, that a God of infinite mercy, might honourably pardon ſin, and ſave ſinners, muſt give the mind the deepeſt impreſſion of his juſtice, and holineſs; of the excellency of the law that was thus magnified; and of the evil of ſin, that was thus expiated: and it muſt at the ſame time deſtroy all expectation of being ſaved in any other way; for "if righteouſneſs had come by the law, then Chriſt "died in vain." The contemplation of the whole human ſpecies, however otherwiſe diſtinguiſhed, as all lying under deſerved condemnation, and expoſed to everlaſting miſery; except as Jeſus thus opened the gate of life, and ſalvation to believers, muſt fill our minds with compaſſionate concern for all around us, and lead us to look upon the moſt proſperous ſinners with a mixture of ſolemn awe, and tender commiſeration: at the ſame time it directly tends to crucify us unto the world, to reconcile us to its ſcorn and hatred, to mortify us to its friendſhip, intereſts, honours, or pleaſures, to cure us of envy, and competition, and to render us contented in poverty, and obſcurity. But with what earneſtneſs will the man, that firmly believes theſe truths, ſeek an intereſt in this purchaſed ſalvation? With what ardent gratitude will he receive the comfortable aſſurance, or even the dawning hope, of forgiveneſs, and eternal life, as purchaſed for him by the ſufferings and death of the incarnate Son of God? And with what godly ſorrow will he mourn over thoſe ſins, which he now looks upon as having crucified the Lord of Glory? Hence that attention to this one

CHAP. XVI.

Contains 1*ſt. The reſurrection of Chriſt declared by an angel to the women; his appearance to Mary Magdalene, and afterwards to two diſciples, as they went into the country; and their report of it to the apoſtles, &c,* 1---13. 2*d. His appearance to the apoſtles; when he upbraided their unbelief, commiſſioned them to preach his goſpel, declared the conſequences of believing, and of rejecting it, and promiſed them miraculous powers, and protection,* 14---18. 3*d. His aſcenſion into heaven; and their ſucceſsful preaching of the goſpel, through his powerful operation by them,* 19, 20. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxviii.)*

AND when the ſabbath was paſt, Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome, had bought ſweet ſpices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning, the firſt *day* of the week, they came unto the ſepulchre at the riſing of the ſun.

3 And they ſaid among themſelves, Who ſhall roll us away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they ſaw that the ſtone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the ſepulchre, they ſaw a young man ſitting on the right ſide, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

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thing needful, which ſubordinates all other intereſts, and employments: hence that devoted obedience to Chriſt, which neither danger, nor ſuffering can move: hence that abhorrence of ſin, which renders its indwelling, and occaſional prevalency, the great burden of a believer's life; and which induces him to the diligent uſe of every means, that may tend to weaken, and deſtroy all evil out of his heart: hence that endeared affection to all thoſe, who love, and reſemble Chriſt; that deſire to recommend him to all around; and that delight in ſpeaking, hearing, or reading of him, and his love, and ſuffering for ſinners: and hence that love to enemies, that patience under afflictions, and that meekneſs under injuries, and provocations, which diſtinguiſh the character of chriſtians from that of other men. And the ſame views of Chriſt crucified, gradually reconciles the believer to the thoughts of death; in order that he may behold, love, and praiſe as he ought, that dear Saviour, who was wounded, and pierced to ſave him from the wrath to come. Let us then frequently meditate on the intereſting ſcenes, which have ſuch a bleſſed efficacy, in producing theſe holy, and benevolent affections, and in forming our character into a conformity to Jeſus, and a meetneſs for heaven: and let us eſpecially adopt this method, when we are tempted to impatience under our trials, or peeviſhneſs under contempt and reproach; or when we grow anxious, or diſcontented about worldly things, or diſpoſed to hanker after ſinful indulgences. The conſideration of the ſilence, meekneſs, and patience of the Holy Jeſus, amidſt all his complicated ſufferings, and the varied contempt, and cruelty of his numerous enemies, muſt cauſe us to exclaim, "Did Jeſus thus "ſuffer, and ſhall I a vile ſinner, fret, or repine? ſhall "I indulge reſentment, or vent reproaches, and menaces, "becauſe of the troubles, and injuries I meet with?" With this object before us, we cannot think it too much to ſhed tears for thoſe ſins, for which the Son of God ſhed his precious blood: or to pour out our prayers for thoſe bleſſings, for which he poured out his ſoul unto death, and was numbered with the tranſgreſſors: or to bear hardſhip for him, who bare the wrath of God for us. Indeed all we can ſuffer muſt be light compared with his unknown agonies: yet how often are we weary, and faint in our minds under them; inſtead of being thankful, that we are not in the pit of deſtruction, as we juſtly might have been! But did we more conſtantly contemplate theſe ſcenes, we ſhould not only derive peace, and comfort from the Saviour's atoning blood; but we ſhould alſo tranſcribe his character into our lives, and learn more to dread and hate all thoſe evil diſpoſitions, which marked the conduct of his perſecutors; and we ſhould always find arguments, encouragements, and motives to live to the glory of him, who died for us, and roſe again. We alſo ought to remember, that the hiding of God's face from us is in itſelf more dreadful, than all that man can do unto us; that we may learn to cry earneſtly to him for help and comfort, when inſulted and contemned of men. He will not forſake thoſe, that truſt in, and call upon him: death, now deprived of his ſting, will ſoon terminate the believer's ſorrows, as it did the Saviour's: then the way into the holieſt will be open to his ſoul, as it was before to his prayers; and he will be out of the reach of all enemies: his dying words, and behaviour may leave a ſalutary impreſſion on the minds of thoſe who obſerve them: his memory may perhaps be honoured by thoſe, who deſpiſed him when living: the grave will be a quiet, and ſacred repoſitory to his body, till the joyful reſurrection: and thus he will be made more than a conqueror, through Him, that loved him, and waſhed him from his ſins, in his own blood. Lord viſit our ſouls with this ſalvation; and make us thankful for theſe thine ineſtimable gifts!

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 5—8.] (*Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 1—12.) St. Luke mentions two angels, whom the women ſaw on this occaſion; but St. Matthew and St. Mark take notice only of the one, that ſpake to them, and which they probably ſaw firſt. The angel appeared to them like a man, in the vigour and bloom of youth; and clothed in a long white garment, the emblem of purity and innocence: yet the women were affrighted, being aware that he was more than man. In his addreſs to them, we find that he eſpecially mentioned Peter, who might otherwiſe have deemed himſelf caſt off, for

6 And he ſaith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is riſen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his diſciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there ſhall ye ſee him, as he ſaid unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the ſepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither ſaid they any thing to any *man*: for they were afraid.

9 Now when *Jeſus* was riſen early, the firſt *day* of the week, he appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had caſt ſeven devils.

10 *And* ſhe went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been ſeen of her, believed not.

12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it* unto the reſidue: neither believed they them.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they ſat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen.

15 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.

his grievous offence, in denying his Maſter: and in the ſubſequent conduct of the women, their amazement, and terror are noticed, and not their joy; though the latter ſeems to have predominated.

V. 9—11.] We ſhall hereafter meet with a more copious account of this appearance of Chriſt to Mary Magdalene. (*John*, c. xx. v. 1—18:) It is here obſerved, that Jeſus had caſt out of her ſeven devils: this ſeems to refer to a real poſſeſſion, from which ſhe had mercifully been delivered, in the ſame manner as the man was, who had the legion: but whether this had been a viſitation appointed her, for the ſins of her former life, or not, is uncertain. Indeed all, that is generally taken for granted, of her previous bad character, and profligate conduct, reſts only on the credit of tradition, which reports that ſhe was the woman who was a ſinner, of whom Luke ſpeaks; (c. vii. v. 36—50:) however probable this may be, there is no ſcriptural proof of it; though much hath frequently been built upon it. Her ſurname of Magdalene, ſeems to relate to the place of her nativity, or abode: for the words tranſlated, Mary Magdalene, may be rendered Mary of Magdala, with as great propriety, as is uſed in the tranſlation of thoſe, which entitle our Lord "Jeſus of Nazareth." The mourning of the apoſtles, and their backwardneſs to believe Mary's report, ſhew how regardleſs they had been of Chriſt's repeated predictions of his reſurrection, and how little they expected that event. This muſt have occurred previous to the return of the other women from the ſepulchre: for Jeſus appeared to them alſo by the way. (*Matt*. c. xxviii. v. 9, 10.)

V. 12, 13.] (*Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 13—35.) Our Lord was pleaſed to alter his habit or appearance on this occaſion, that the diſciples might not, for a time, know who he was. We ſhall hereaſter have an opportunity of conſidering this tranſaction more fully: but we may now take notice, that it is here ſaid, the diſciples "believed them not;" that is, ſome of them did not fully credit them; though others had been before convinced of Chriſt's reſurrection: but in ſo extraordinary an event, and among a number of perſons, we need not wonder, that ſome were more deeply affected by what they heard, than others.

V. 14—16.] If we underſtand this of our Lord's appearing to the apoſtles, on the evening of the day, on which he aroſe, Thomas was not preſent; but they might be called the eleven, from the general number of the company, though one of them was occaſionally abſent. At this time Jeſus ſharply rebuked them for, yea upbraided them with, their unbelief, and hardneſs of heart. Their remaining ambition, and carnal prejudices prevented them from being ſuitably affected and influenced by his predictions of his death, reſurrection, and ſpiritual kingdom; and therefore they were ſo backward to believe the report of thoſe, who had previouſly ſeen him after his reſurrection. However he renewed his choice of them as his apoſtles, and commiſſioned them to "go into all the "world to preach his goſpel to every creature." Though they did not at this time underſtand the full import of theſe words, yet they certainly implied, that they were to preach his ſalvation and kingdom to all the nations of the earth, and to rational creatures of every deſcription, and character, as far as they were able: they were to propoſe the bleſſings of the goſpel indiſcriminately to all who came in their way; inviting them to apply to Chriſt for them, and calling them to ſubmit to his authority, as the ſubjects of his mediatorial kingdom. Theſe things they were to enforce, by promiſing ſalvation in it's full extent to all that believed, and were baptized; and by declaring the final, and dreadful condemnation of all unbelievers, whatever their character in other reſpects might be. Doubtleſs we muſt underſtand this ſolemn declaration, of that true faith, which receives Chriſt in all his characters and offices, and for all the purpoſes of ſalvation, and which produces a proper effect upon the heart and life; and not of a mere aſſent, a dead faith, which

17 And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; In my name ſhall they caſt out devils; they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues;

18 They ſhall take up ſerpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover.

19 So then, after the Lord had ſpoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with ſigns following. Amen.

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cannot profit. Baptiſm is both the outward ſign of regeneration, and the profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, which was required of thoſe, that were converted either from the Jews or the Gentiles; and in both reſpects was properly added to faith, in this place; (*Rom.* c. x. v. 9, 10.) But if men truly believe in Chriſt, profeſs faith in him, and partake of his ſanctifying Spirit, they will doubtleſs be ſaved; even ſhould they have no opportunity of being baptized with water, or ſhould they fall into any miſtake about the external mode of adminiſtering that ordinance: and if we both believe, and are baptized, it cannot be proved from the order of the words in the text, that the baptiſm is invalid, becauſe it was previous to the believing; for no ſet of chriſtians rebaptize thoſe, who have been baptized in *their* way, becauſe it afterwards appears, that they were not true believers at the time, though it was hoped they have ſince become ſuch: the text cannot therefore fairly be adduced in the controverſy concerning the ſubjects of baptiſm. Moreover unbelievers muſt be condemned: for they remain under the ſentence of the holy law, which they have broken; and they are alſo guilty of neglecting the ſalvation of the goſpel, and of deſpiſing all the divine perfections diſplayed therein, from their pride of heart, enmity to God, and love of ſin and the world.

V. 17, 18.] The Lord Jeſus was about to be removed from his apoſtles; and they were ſent forth into the world, to preach his goſpel, in the face of oppoſition, and perſecution: but to encourage them in this arduous and perilous undertaking, He aſſured them of miraculous powers, and protection. And not only ſo; but that when any perſons believed on him through their word, they too would be endued with power from on high, enabling them to caſt out devils, to ſpeak with tongues, and to take up ſerpents, without being injured by them, (*Acts*, c. xxviii. v. 3—6:) and at a time, when the art of poiſoning was almoſt cultivated as a ſcience, and it might be expected, that their enemies would endeavour in this way to diſpatch them, they were alſo aſſured, that if they drank any deadly thing it ſhould not hurt them: and that they ſhould be enabled to heal the ſick, by laying on of hands, both for the comfort of their friends, and to demonſtrate the truth of their doctrine.

V. 19, 20.] We ſhall have a future opportunity of conſidering Chriſt's aſcenſion, and exaltation, and the miniſtry of the apoſtles, &c. Wherever they went, the Lord, their riſen aſcended and exalted Saviour, wrought with them; both by the power of his Spirit upon the hearts of the people, and by confirming their word with ſigns following. The addition of the word, "Amen," may denote the Evangeliſt's earneſt deſire, that the ſame ſucceſs might ſtill attend the preaching of the goſpel in every place.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we put ourſelves to trouble, and expence, out of love to Chriſt, and to promote the honour of his name; we ſhall be accepted, though our endeavours ſhould prove unſucceſsful: and when we proceed in the path of duty as far as we can; thoſe difficulties, which we were ready to look upon as inſurmountable, will often be removed by means, of which we had no expectation. Believers, whoſe hearts are right before God, may yet be greatly miſtaken in their judgment, and purpoſes: and they will be often diſquieted, when they ſhould rejoice. Indeed they can have no good reaſon for diſtreſſing fears, or diſconſolate ſorrows, who believe in, love, and ſeek Jeſus, who was crucified, and is riſen from the dead. Evil men, and apoſtate angels cannot hurt them, and holy angels are their faithful friends, and delight to miniſter to their comfort, becauſe they are the objects of the Lord's ſpecial love and favour. Even after they have been overcome by temptation, and have acted inconſiſtent with their profeſſion; their gracious Saviour will mingle encouragement with their humiliation, leſt they ſhould be ſwallowed up of over-much ſorrow; and a trembling Peter ſhall be eſpecially mentioned, that he may not be tempted to deſpondency. But alas how ſlowly do we admit the conſolations, that the word of God holds forth to us! And how hard is it to believe that the Lord will ſpecially favour thoſe, over whom ſatan hath heretofore peculiarly domineered! Yet he ſometimes employs ſuch trophies of his victory over the powers of darkneſs, to bear tidings of his complete ſalvation and abundant grace to thoſe, who mourn and weep: that the very example of the meſſenger may evince the truth of the meſſage; and prove that Jeſus liveth and is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all them, that come to God through him. But in whatever way He is pleaſed to confirm his truth, our faith is apt to be weak, and wavering: and therefore, whilſt he comforts his people, by manifeſting himſelf to them, as he doth not to the world; he often ſees it needful to rebuke and correct them for their hardneſs of heart in diſtruſting his promiſe, as well as in not obeying his holy precept. Yet he will heal the backſlidings of his people, and love them freely, and again employ them in his ſervice.

But let us obſerve that the commiſſion of Chriſt's miniſters extends to every creature, throughout the world; ſo that wherever a human being is found, we are authorized, nay expreſſly commanded, to propoſe to him the goſpel of Chriſt, whatever reception he may give it. Our inſtructions alſo, as preachers of the goſpel, contain in them, not only truths, promiſes, encouragements, and precepts, but alſo moſt awful warnings, and ſanctions: ſo that we as much preach the goſpel, when we declare in God's name, that he that believeth not ſhall be damned, as when we proclaim, that whoſoever believeth in Jeſus ſhall be ſaved. However men may deſpiſe, or diſpute againſt ſuch ſolemn denunciations, or deride, and revile us for inſiſting on them; they will doubtleſs be fulfilled in their moſt tremendous meaning, upon all thoſe, who hear, and reject the goſpel. We do not now pretend to work miracles in confirmation of our meſſage: but the ſcriptures are irrefragably proved to be of divine original; and this will render all thoſe inexcuſable, who reject, or neglect them. Their effects alſo, where they are faithfully preached, and truly believed, in changing the tempers, characters, and converſation of mankind, form a conſtant proof, that the goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation: and indeed, they who truly believe in Chriſt, will be defended from, and made victorious over, all the aſſaults of the ſerpent and his ſeed; and be preſerved from the fatal effects of thoſe poiſonous, and dreadful hereſies, which he is continually propagating in the world. May then our aſcended, and glorified Redeemer ſend forth many faithful miniſters, every where to preach his goſpel; and may he work with them and confirm his word, by ſigns following; even "by opening men's eyes, and by turning them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of ſatan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and an inheritance amongſt all that are ſanctified by faith in him." Amen.

The GOSPEL according to St. LUKE.

Luke the phyſician, (Col. c. iv. ver. 14,) *the penman of this Goſpel, and of the Acts of the Apoſtles, was long the companion of St. Paul in his travels. Uncertain tradition reports him to have been a Gentile; but it is more likely, that he was either one of the ſeventy diſciples, or one of the firſt Jewiſh converts. His goſpel opens with a more particular account of the parentage and birth of John Baptiſt, and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and he records many miracles and parables, that were not in the preceding goſpels: but the inſtruction conveyed thereby is nearly the ſame.*

CHAP. I.

Contains 1*ſt. Luke's preface to his goſpel, and his inſcription of it to Theophilus,* 1---4. 2*d. An account of Zacharias and Elizabeth; and of an angel appearing to the former in the temple, predicting the birth of a ſon, and his character and work; with Zacharias's unbelief, and dumbneſs, and Elizabeth's ſupernatural conception,* 5---25, 3*d. The angel's appearance to the Virgin Mary, to aſſure her that ſhe would conceive, and bear a ſon, (by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghoſt;) who would, as the promiſed Meſſiah reign over the people for ever: with her humble faith, and acquieſcence,* 26---38. 4*th. The interview between Mary, and Elizabeth, and Mary's prophetical ſong of praiſe,* 39---56. 5*th. The birth, circumciſion, and naming of John Baptiſt; Zacharias reſtored to the uſe of his ſpeech; his prophetical ſong of praiſe; and an intimation of the manner, in which John paſſed his youth,* 57---80.

FOraſmuch as many have taken in hand to ſet forth in order a declaration of thoſe things which are moſt ſurely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witneſſes, and miniſters of the word;

3 It ſeemed good to me alſo, having had perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt, to write unto thee in order, moſt excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mighteſt know the certainty of thoſe things, wherein thou haſt been inſtructed.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—4.] Matthew and Mark are ſuppoſed to have written before Luke; but they could not be called *many*; and the former of them at leaſt wrote from his perſonal knowledge, as well as under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; but the perſons here mentioned, had written from report. We muſt therefore underſtand the evangeliſt, of ſome compilations, that have long been loſt: yet the perſons who made them, ſeem to have meant honeſtly; and we ſhould not underſtand him of thoſe he-

5 THERE was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain prieſt named Zacharias, of the courſe of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Eliſabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs.

7 And they had no child, becauſe that Eliſabeth was barren; and they both were *now* well ſtricken in years.

8 And it came to paſs, that while he executed the prieſt's office before God in the order of his courſe,

9 According to the cuſtom of the prieſt's office, his lot was to burn incenſe when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incenſe.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord ſtanding on the right ſide of the altar of incenſe.

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cal goſpels, which were propagated, during the primitive times. However ſeveral perſons had undertaken to publiſh orderly narratives of thoſe things, which were moſt ſurely believed by chriſtians, or moſt fully proved to them; (for the expreſſion may be explained either of the evidence by which they were atteſted, or the aſſurance with which they were credited;) according as they had collected them from the teſtimony of thoſe perſons, who had from the firſt, been eye-witneſſes of Chriſt's miracles, life, death, &c; and had become miniſters of the goſpel, to declare them unto others. But as theſe hiſtories had not been compiled with ſufficient accuracy, St. Luke, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, deemed it incumbent on him, to form a more exact and regular work of this kind: as he had accurately inveſtigated the ſubject, and acquired a complete acquaintance with it, from the beginning, or firſt riſe of the goſpel diſpenſation, in the conception, and birth of John the Baptiſt. The word rendered "*from the beginning*" ſometimes ſignifies "*from above*;" and ſome ſuppoſe, that Luke intended thereby to intimate, that he had his information from God, by immediate inſpiration. But, though we can entertain no doubt of the *ſuperintending* inſpiration of the evangeliſt: yet it does not ſeem, that much ſtreſs can be laid upon the word under conſideration; nor is it neceſſary for us to contend, that he had his knowledge from above, without the intervention of means, or ordinary methods of information. This hiſtory the evangeliſt thought proper to addreſs to Theophilus for his more full inſtruction in chriſtianity. Theophilus ſignifies "a lover of God:" he appears to have been a perſon of rank, and authority; for the title, "moſt excellent," is the ſame in the original, that is elſewhere addreſſed to the Roman governors, Felix, and Feſtus. (*Acts*, c. xxiv. v. 3. c. xxvi. v. 25.) The title was addreſſed to Theophilus with greater propriety: but St. Paul's uſing it to Feſtus, more fully proves, that chriſtianity doth not forbid us to give this kind of cuſtomary honour to perſons in authority, whatever their character, or religion may be. The word rendered "*inſtructed*, ſignifies "*catechized*:" and relates to the initiatory inſtruction in the firſt principles of chriſtianity, in which the converts were afterward to be more fully taught and eſtabliſhed. This Evangeliſt goes further back in his hiſtory, and records a greater number of facts, relative to the birth, life, miracles, ſufferings, reſurrection and aſcenſion of Chriſt, than the preceding evangeliſts: but it does not appear that he more exactly attended to the order of time in his narration, than they did.

V. 5—7.] (Note, *Matt.* c. ii. v. 1, 2.) St. Luke begins his hiſtory with the parentage, and birth of John. His father Zacharias was a prieſt, of the order of Abia, (1 *Chron.* c. xxiv. v. 10. Note, *Ezra*, c. ii. v. 3—67:) and his wife Elizabeth was alſo deſcended from Aaron. Moreover they were exemplary perſons; being "righteous before God," accepted of him, as true believers, and approving themſelves unto him by their conſcientious conduct in his ſight: ſo that they habitually walked in an upright, and regular courſe of obedience to all the moral commandments of the law, and in an attendance on all the ordinances of his inſtituted worſhip; and thus acted in a moſt blameleſs, and irreproachable manner, as to the general tenor of their conduct. Doubtleſs they were ſinners, as all others are, and were juſtified and ſaved in the ſame way; and their whole conduct was defective, as that of other godly perſons is: but they were perſons of eminent piety and integrity, and cordially concurred together in every part of the ſervice of God. But at the ſame time, they had no children: and as Elizabeth had been barren in her younger years, it was not to be expected, that ſhe ſhould bear children in her old age: and though this was deemed a very heavy affliction by the Jews, Zacharias did not give any countenance to the practice of polygamy, or divorce, by taking another wife: for though the latter eſpecially was common among the Jews at that time; yet godly men ſeem not to have deemed it reputable.

V. 8—10.] The prieſts attended in courſes, and by rotation at the temple; and it was at that time, Zacharias's turn thus to miniſter before God. According to the law, and cuſtom, he was employed to burn incenſe on the golden altar within the ſanctuary, either at the hour of the morning, or of the evening ſacrifice: and at the ſame time a great number of the people were without, in the courts of the temple, ſilently offering up their prayers and ſupplications. This was an apt, and conſtant type of Chriſt's interceſſion in heaven; through which the prayers of believers, in every part of the outer court of the church on earth, aſcend with acceptance before God. (Notes, *Exod.* c. xxix. v. 6—10. *Rev.* c. viii. v. 3, 4.)

V. 11—20.] Whilſt Zacharias was thus officiating alone within the ſanctuary, he was ſurpriſed by the appearance of an angel, probably in a ſplendid form, at the

12 And when Zacharias ſaw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel ſaid unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Eliſabeth ſhall bear thee a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name John.

14 And thou ſhalt have joy and gladneſs; and many ſhall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he ſhall be great in the ſight of the Lord, and ſhall drink neither wine nor ſtrong drink; and he ſhall be filled with the Holy Ghoſt, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Iſrael ſhall he turn to the Lord their God.

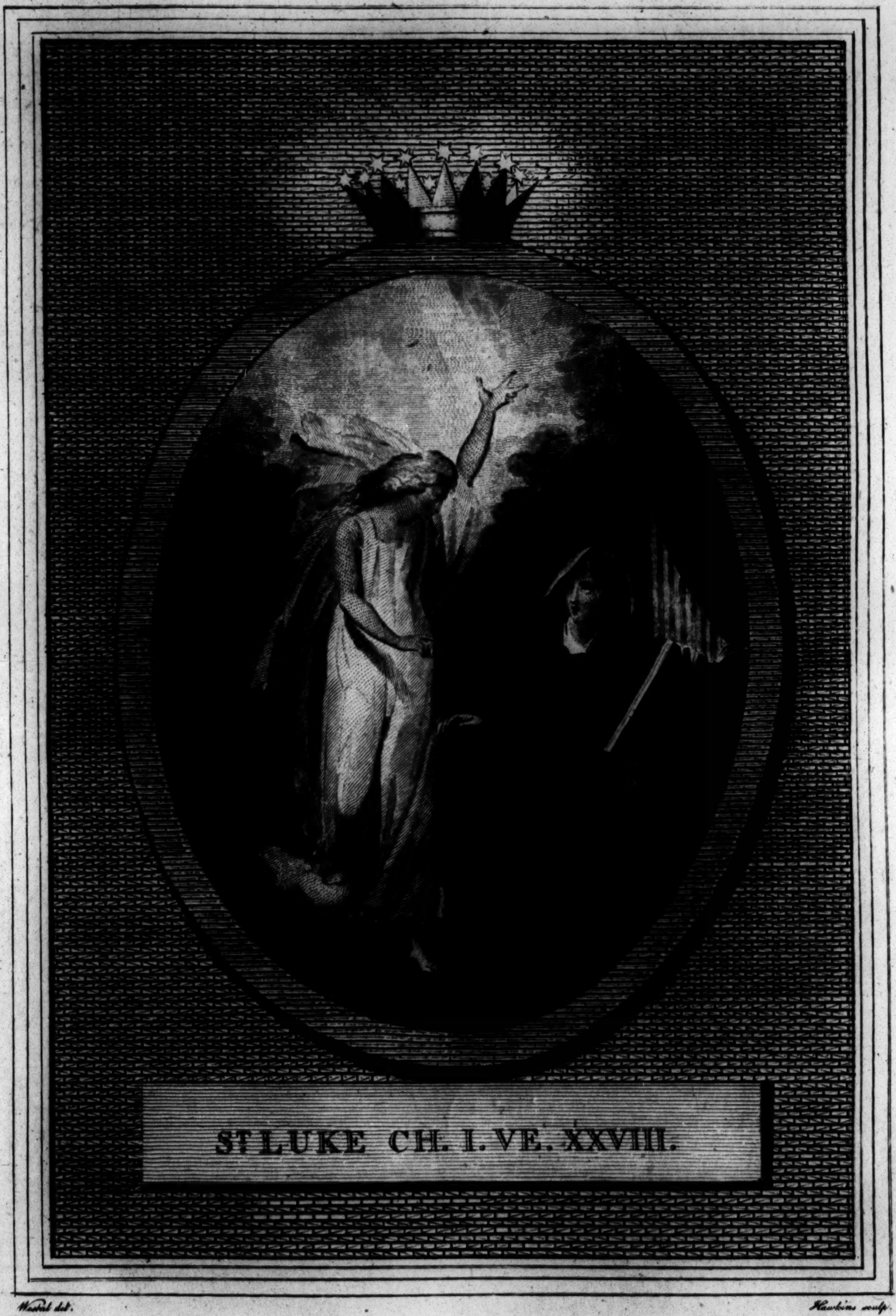
17 And he ſhall go before him in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias ſaid unto the angel, Whereby ſhall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well ſtricken in years.

19 And the angel anſwering ſaid unto him, I am Gabriel, that ſtand in the preſence of God; and am ſent to ſpeak unto thee, and to ſhew thee theſe glad tidings.

right hand of the altar of incenſe, and very near to him. This greatly alarmed him, though he was a man of ſuch approved piety, and his terror became very diſtreſſing; but the angel addreſſed him in an encouraging manner; bidding him not to be afraid, for he was come to aſſure him that his prayers were heard, and anſwered. Zacharias and Elizabeth had doubtleſs often prayed for children: but we may ſuppoſe that as they were both old, they had for ſome time given up the hope of having any, and had ſubmitted to the will of God, and concluded that their prayers would not be anſwered. Yet this may refer to the prayers which he had then been offering up, in behalf of himſelf, and his people: or in general his prayers were accepted, and would all in due ſeaſon be anſwered. As a proof of this, his wife Elizabeth, even in her old age would bear him a ſon, whoſe name he would call John, which ſignifies the grace, and favour of God: for he would be an honour, and bleſſing to him, a gracious anſwer to his prayers, and a pledge of the divine favour: ſo that he would have great joy and gladneſs in him; and many would rejoice at his birth, as anticipating the great uſefulneſs of his future life. For though he would be a plain, and mean perſon, in his outward appearance; yet he would be great in the ſight of the Lord, and according to his method of eſtimating characters; being eminent for wiſdom, piety, holineſs, and faithfulneſs, and a bleſſed inſtrument in promoting his glory. As a token of his entire devotedneſs to God, he was to be a perpetual Nazarite from his birth, (Notes, &c. *Numb.* c. vi:) and he would alſo be diſtinguiſhed from others, by being filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb: though he would be conceived in ſin, like other men, yet a ſaving change would be wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, even at, or before his birth, which would appear in his eminent wiſdom and piety, from his earlieſt youth. In due time he would be brought forth as a zealous preacher, and a ſucceſsful reformer, to be inſtrumental in converting many of the deſcendants of Iſrael from their formality, hypocriſy, impiety, or infidelity, to the true worſhip, and ſervice of *the Lord their God:* and he would go before HIM, in the ſpirit, and power of Elijah, with intrepidity, zeal, ſanctity, and a mind mortified to all earthly intereſts and pleaſures, like thoſe of that prophet: thus he would turn the "hearts of the fathers "*with* the children," or perſons of every age, and ſituation in ſociety, to lay aſide their party diſputes, or domeſtic conteſts, and to unite in repenting of ſin, and attending to the great duties of true godlineſs: (*Mal.* c. iv. v. 5, 6:) thus the diſobedient, and rebellious would be brought back to the wiſdom of their righteous progenitors, or rather induced to attend to the wiſdom of that juſt One, who was coming among them; that they might become a people, prepared by humiliation and genuine repentance to welcome the ſalvation, and become the ſubjects of the Lord, even of Jeſus Chriſt. John went before Chriſt, as his forerunner, to prepare the people for him; yet "the Lord their God" is the antecedent to the pronoun "Him," before whom John was to go: ſo that the angel's addreſs was evidently calculated to induce the belief, that Chriſt was the Lord God of Iſrael; and muſt have been improper, and ſuited to miſlead us, upon any other ſuppoſition. (v. 76.) When the angel had delivered this gracious meſſage, Zacharias, reflecting upon the great improbability of having a ſon by his wife, in their old age, and not duly conſidering the power of God, by which it was to be effected, ſtaggered at the promiſe through unbelief: he therefore required ſome further ſign, by which he might know that this would be performed; whereas the very appearance of the angel, whoſe preſence had ſo alarmed him, was a ſufficient ſign, that the promiſe ſent by him would be accompliſhed. The angel therefore informed him, that he was Gabriel, who ſtood before, and miniſtered unto God, and of whom he muſt have read in the prophecy of Daniel, (c. viii. v. 16. c. ix. v. 21;) and that he was ſent from heaven on purpoſe to declare to him theſe glad tidings. But as he had doubted the truth of his words, and had demanded a ſign in confirmation of them, notwithſtanding that ſo many eminent perſons had been born of parents, that had long been childleſs, (as Iſaac, Jacob, Joſeph, Samſon, Samuel, &c;) a ſign would be given him, that would at the ſame time be a rebuke of his unbelief: for he would thenceforth be no more able to ſpeak, till the promiſe had received it's accompliſhment; as that would certainly take place in it's appointed ſeaſon.

Engrav'd for the Rev.ᵈ M.ʳ Scott's Family Bible.



ST. LUKE CH. I. VE. XXVIII.

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20 And, behold, thou ſhalt be dumb, and not able to ſpeak, until the day that theſe things ſhall be performed, becauſe thou believeſt not my words, which ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried ſo long in the temple.

22 And when he came out he could not ſpeak unto them: and they perceived that he had ſeen a viſion in the temple; for he beckoned unto them, and remained ſpeechleſs.

23 And it came to paſs, that as ſoon as the days of his miniſtration were accompliſhed, he departed to his own houſe.

24 And after thoſe days his wife Eliſabeth conceived, and hid herſelf five months, ſaying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

26 And in the ſixth month the angel Gabriel was ſent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin eſpouſed to a man, whoſe name was Joſeph, of the houſe of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and ſaid, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: bleſſed *art* thou among women.

29 And when ſhe ſaw *him* ſhe was troubled at his ſaying, and caſt in her mind what manner of ſalutation this ſhould be.

30 And the angel ſaid unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou haſt found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou ſhalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a ſon, and ſhalt call his name JESUS.

32 He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called The Son of the Higheſt: and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he ſhall reign over the houſe of Ja-

V. 21—25.] The interview between the angel and Zacharias, as it is here related, would not take up much time: bnt probably the mind of Zacharias was ſo occupied, and agitated by a variety of reflections and emotions, that he continued in the temple a conſiderable time, after the angel left him; perhaps employed in devotional exerciſes of the heart. In the mean while the people waited for him, to diſmiſs them with the cuſtomary bleſſing, (*Num.* c. vi. v. 23—26;) being ſurpriſed on what account he continued ſo long in the temple: but when he came out, he was unable to ſpeak to them; and they perceived by his ſigns, that he had ſeen a viſion, though they could not learn the particulars of it. Thus he remained ſpeechleſs, or deaf and dumb, (for the word ſeems to imply both, and this was doubtleſs the caſe with him, v. 61—63.) However he was ſtill able to burn incenſe according to his office, and he continued at the temple, till the time of his appointed miniſtration was expired, when he returned to his own houſe; ſoon after which, Elizabeth finding herſelf pregnant, "hid "herſelf five months:" ſhe kept at home, and much alone; either that ſhe might be preſerved from contracting any ceremonial defilement, as the child to be born of her, was to be a perpetual Nazarite; or that ſhe might not ſeem to be lifted up with the favour conferred on her; or rather that ſhe might have the more leiſure for meditation, prayer, and thankſgiving, on this extraordinary occaſion. For ſhe obſerved as in admiration, that *thus*, in ſo unexpected a way of grace and favour, the Lord had dealt with her; at the time, when he was pleaſed to pay a peculiar regard to her, by taking away the reproach of barrenneſs, under which ſhe had hitherto lain amongſt her neighbours and acquaintance; in that he had promiſed to make her in ſo marvellous a way, the mother of a Son, of whom ſuch great things had been ſpoken. Doubtleſs Zacharias had by writing made known to her the purport of the angel's meſſage. The time of her cloſe retirement continued five months, for in the ſixth Mary went to viſit her: yet it is probable ſhe lived much at home and alone during her whole pregnancy.

V. 26—33.] The Evangeliſt next proceeds to give us an account of the miraculous conception of Jeſus. In the ſixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was ſent from God to Nazareth, to the Virgin Mary, whoſe eſpouſals to Joſeph, &c, have already been conſidered; (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c i. v. 18—25.) It is remarkable that the name Eliſabeth was the ſame with Eliſheba, the wife of Aaron; and that of Mary, the ſame with that of Miriam his ſiſter. (*Exod.* c. vi. v. 25. c. xv. v. 20, 21.) When the angel came to Mary in her retirement, (probably in a glorious form,) he addreſſed her by ſaying, "Hail thou that art highly favoured of the "Lord, &c." That is, "rejoice on account of the honour intended thee, and on which I now congratulate "thee: for thou art highly favoured of the Lord, not "only as an accepted believer, but as the mother of the "long expected Meſſiah: the Lord is therefore with thee "in a ſpecial manner, and thou art happy above, and "diſtinguiſhed among, other women." The Papiſts have unaccountably turned this ſalutation of the angel into an act of adoration: and tranſlating the word "highly favoured" "full of grace," they have thus addreſſed the Virgin Mary with idolatrous worſhip; and many of them do ſo to this day: nay this act of devotion, ſuch as it is, often precludes the uſe of cob for ever; and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.

34 Then ſaid Mary unto the angel, How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel anſwered and ſaid unto her, The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee; therefore alſo that holy thing, which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called The Son of God.

36 And behold, thy couſin Eliſabeth, ſhe hath alſo conceived a ſon in her old age: and this is the ſixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible.

38 And Mary ſaid, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 And Mary aroſe in thoſe days, and went into the hill-country with haſte, into a city of Judah;

40 And entered into the houſe of Zacharias, and ſaluted Eliſabeth.

41 And it came to paſs, that when Eliſabeth heard the ſalutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Eliſabeth was filled with the Holy Ghoſt.

42 And ſhe ſpake out with a loud voice, and ſaid, Bleſſed *art* thou among women, and bleſſed *is* the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mo-

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the Lord's prayer, or of any other prayer to God; or at leaſt is far more frequently repeated than any other! But there is no expreſſion in this addreſs, but what might properly be uſed by a ſuperior to an inferior, in Mary's ſituation; and doubtleſs it was thus intended: for a greater abſurdity can ſcarce be deviſed, than to ſuppoſe that the angel Gabriel came down from heaven to worſhip a poor ſinful mortal here on earth, as ſhe well knew herſelf to be! This extraordinary appearance, and ſalutation, diſquieted Mary's mind: ſhe was not only alarmed at the angel's preſence, but was greatly perplexed about the meaning and conſequences of ſo uncommon an addreſs. But the angel calmed her fears, and aſſured her, that ſhe had found favour with God, and would ſhortly conceive, and bear a Son, whom ſhe was directed to call Jeſus. He would be great, above all that ever appeared on earth, being called, or acknowledged to be, "the Son of the Higheſt," as being one in nature and perfection with the "Lord God," who would in due time exalt him, in his mediatorial character, to the throne of David, whoſe deſcendant he would be, as to his human nature; and on that throne he would reign over the houſe of Jacob, the true Iſrael of God, not only for a few years, as David and his ſucceſſors did, but for ever; ſo that of his kingdom there ſhould be no end. (*Pſ.* ii. v. 6—9. 89. v. 19—37. *Iſaiah*, c. ix. v. 6, 7. *Dan.* c. vii. 13, 14.)

V. 34—38.] Mary's queſtion ſeems to have been entirely the language of faith, and humble admiration: ſhe probably meant to enquire of the angel, what her conduct ought to be reſpecting her eſpouſals with Joſeph, and in what way ſhe was to expect the accompliſhment of the extraordinary promiſe. (*Judg.* c. xiii. v. 8—14.) She ſeems to have underſtood it, as implying, that ſhe was to conceive miraculouſly, continuing ſtill a virgin; but ſhe might deſire further information: however ſhe aſked no ſign for the confirmation of her faith, as Zacharias had done. The angel therefore anſwered her, without any mixture of reproof; and told her that ſhe would conceive by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghoſt deſcending upon her: in this manner the power of the moſt High would overſhadow her; and the Infant would be formed in her womb by his creating energy, and under his ſpecial protection. Thus he would properly be "made of woman," and bear our nature, without the pollution of ſin which is common to all others, who deſcend from fallen Adam. This Child might therefore be called, "that holy thing:" and even in reſpect of his human nature he ſhould be acknowledged to be the Son of God; as well as in his divine nature, and in reſpect of his conſtituted Perſon, as God manifeſt in the fleſh. The Man Chriſt Jeſus being called the Son of God, becauſe he was conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt, is a full proof of the Deity of that ſacred Agent. In order more fully to eſtabliſh Mary in her believing expectation of this great event, the angel informed her of Elizabeth's having conceived *a ſon* in her old age, and being at that time in the ſixth month of her pregnancy; though ſhe had been deemed incapable of bearing children during her younger years. (She was couſin to Mary, by her mother's ſide, though a daughter of Aaron in her father's line: for the families of David and Aaron frequently intermarried; and this affinity was typical of the union of the Kingly and Prieſtly office in the Perſon of the Meſſiah.) Indeed Mary's conception in her virginity would be more evidently miraculous, than Elizabeth's in her old age: but nothing was, or could be impoſſible to the power of God. When Mary heard this, ſhe did not in the leaſt waver in her belief of what the angel had told her: and though ſhe could not but fear, that her pregnancy would expoſe her to many ſuſpicions, or injurious reflections; ſhe humbly, and implicitly reſigned herſelf to the divine will, ſaying "behold here I am, the handmaid, and "ſervant of the Lord; let it be to me according to thy "word." Probably the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit immediately took place: and the angel, having executed his commiſſion, departed from her.

V. 39—45.] As-ſoon after this viſion, as ſhe conveniently could, Mary, as one in haſte to communicate experiences with Elizabeth, took a long journey from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea, perhaps to Heb-ther of my Lord ſhould come to me?

44 For lo, as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And bleſſed *is* ſhe that believed: for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary ſaid, My ſoul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my ſpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low eſtate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations ſhall call me bleſſed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name.

50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 He hath ſhewed ſtrength with his arm: he hath ſcattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* ſeats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath ſent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 As he ſpake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his ſeed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three

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ron, for that purpoſe. Being arrived there ſhe ſaluted Elizabeth; and probably congratulated her, on the unexpected favour conferred on her: and no ſooner did Elizabeth hear her voice, than ſhe felt the infant leap in her womb, in a very extraordinary manner; even as if he had been conſcious of her approach, who was to be the mother of that great Redeemer, whom he was appointed to precede. At the ſame time Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and under his prophetical influence, ſhe pronounced Mary, and the fruit of her womb, to be moſt bleſſed, or happy, as peculiarly honoured of and dear to the moſt high God: and though ſhe was the ſuperior in age, ſtation, and reputation; yet ſhe conſidered Mary as ſo diſtinguiſhed, by being choſen to be the mother of the Meſſiah, that ſhe was filled with admiration at being favoured with a viſit from *her*, in addition to all her other mercies; and ſhe acknowledged the child, that was to be born of her, as her Lord, and the Lord of all: declaring that the infant in her womb, exulted for joy, under the impulſe of the Holy Spirit, and as a kind of homage to his Lord. Indeed Mary was peculiarly happy, in that ſhe had ſo readily, and implicitly believed the divine meſſage; by which means ſhe had honoured God, and had received her mercies unmixed with rebukes: for the promiſe would ſurely, and exactly be accompliſhed. There was in this a tacit reference to Zacharias's unbelief, and the painful rebuke he lay under; but the ſubject was touched very gently, as was proper from the mouth of Elizabeth. It is remarkable, that Mary, though young and inexperienced, ſo readily believed a far more difficult promiſe, than that about which Zacharias, an aged prieſt, and an experienced believer, had heſitated. It does not appear, that Elizabeth knew the circumſtances of Mary's viſion, or her faith in the divine meſſage, except by the Spirit of prophecy: for it may be concluded from the narrative, that ſhe thus addreſſed Mary, before ſhe had time to inform her of theſe matters. The words of Elizabeth, and all the circumſtances of her interview with Mary, muſt have had a powerful effect in eſtabliſhing the faith, and enlarging the expectations of the latter: and the favour, and teſtimony of ſuch reſpected perſons, as Zacharias and Elizabeth, would powerfully operate to prevent any injurious reflections on her character.

V. 46—55.] (Notes, &c. 1 *Sam.* c. ii. v. 1—10.) Mary's heart being greatly animated, and enlarged with holy affections by Elizabeth's addreſs; and being alſo under the influence of the Holy Spirit, ſhe brake out, as in a tranſport of joy, admiration, and gratitude; declaring that her ſoul did moſt ardently extol, and praiſe the Lord, and dictate to her tongue, whilſt ſhe celebrated his perfections, and ſpake highly of his wonderful works: yea her ſpirit within her, exulted and rejoiced in God her Saviour. By this it is evident, that ſhe knew herſelf to be a ſinner, who needed a Saviour, and who could no otherwiſe rejoice in God, than as ſhe was intereſted in his ſalvation, through the promiſed Meſſiah. It is alſo generally ſuppoſed, that, "by God "her Saviour," ſhe meant that divine Perſon, who was about to receive his human nature from her. However ſhe added, that the Lord had graciouſly condeſcended to regard the low condition of his handmaid, who was very poor, obſcure, and deſpiſed in the world, though deſcended from the ſtock of David; when the Meſſiah might have been expected to aſſume his human nature from ſome one of more illuſtrious ſtation, and more honoured among men. It was therefore greatly to be admired, that ſo mean a perſon ſhould be ſo diſtinguiſhed, that all generations to the end of time would deem her happy beyond all other women: for the Almighty, and ſovereign God, who diſpoſeth of his favours as he ſeeth good, had done great things for her, ſuch as had never before been heard of, or experienced: and as his name was holy, and his perfections infinite; ſo ſhe could not doubt of his accompliſhing his promiſes, and fulfilling his work of mercy, purity, and righteouſneſs, which he had thus begun. Indeed his mercy had always been extended towards his humble, reverential worſhippers and ſervants, in every generation, and would be to the end of the world; and was only with-held from the proud, impenitent, and unbelieving. He had in former ages often ſhewn his power, in protecting, and delivering his people; and in ſcatter-

months, and returned to her own houſe.

57 Now Eliſabeth's full time came that ſhe ſhould be delivered; and ſhe brought forth a ſon.

58 And her neighbours and her couſins heard how the Lord had ſhewed great mercy upon her: and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to paſs, that on the eighth day they came to circumciſe the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother anſwered and ſaid, Not *ſo*; but he ſhall be called John.

61 And they ſaid unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made ſigns to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he aſked for a writing-table, and wrote, ſaying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *looſed*, and he ſpake, and praiſed God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all theſe ſayings were noiſed abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea.

66 And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, ſaying, What manner of child ſhall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with

ing the numerous armies, or formidable confederacies of his haughty enemies; confounding them even in thoſe ſagacious ſchemes, which they had framed according to the imagination of their hearts. Thus he had dethroned proud, and proſperous monarchs, (as Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belſhazzar;) and had exalted thoſe, who were of low eſtate, and of humble minds, (as Joſeph, David, Daniel, &c.) He had alſo been uſed to feaſt the poor and hungry with the bounty of his providence, whilſt the rich were impoveriſhed, and reduced to deep diſtreſs: which was an emblem of the methods of his grace, in abaſing the proud, and exalting the humble; and in feaſting, enriching, and comforting thoſe, who hunger and thirſt for ſpiritual bleſsings; whilſt the ſelf-wiſe, and ſelf-righteous are left deſtitute of all real good, and ſent away from his ordinances, without any communications of light, peace, or holineſs to their ſouls. Thus he had in former ages helped, and ſuccoured his people Iſrael, (the nation, whom he had choſen to ſerve him,) in their extreme diſtreſs, when they humbly cried to him: and thus he was about to help them at that time, by fulfilling his promiſes concerning the Meſſiah, when they were ſunk ſo deep in depravity, and in abject ſlavery to their enemies. This would be done, out of regard to his mercy, according to his former unmerited kindneſs to that nation; and in accompliſhment of his promiſes, which he had graciouſly made to their Fathers, eſpecially to Abraham, with relation to himſelf, and his poſterity; and that ſeed in particular, in whom all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. After this, Mary continued with Elizabeth till the time of her delivery drew near, and then returned home to Nazareth. Probably ſhe left the houſe of Zacharias at this time, that ſhe might not be in the way, or too much noticed, when ſo many perſons would be coming to ſee him, and Elizabeth, and to congratulate them on the birth of a ſon, in their old age: but we may be ſure that the communications between theſe two favoured, and pious women, would during this time, be peculiarly delightful, and edifying to each other. After Mary's return home, thoſe things ſeem to have occurred, which have already been conſidered, concerning the difficulties, and conduct of Joſeph, in reſpect of her.

V. 57—66.] The neighbours, and relations of Elizabeth had no doubt previouſly heard of her pregnancy: but when the Lord had magnified his mercy, in making her the joyful mother of a hopeful ſon, they rejoiced with her, and cordially congratulated her on ſo unexpected a bleſſing. On the eighth day, many of them met together to attend on the circumciſion of the child, according to the law: and as it was cuſtomary to give children their names at that time, (perhaps with reference to Abram's being called Abraham, when circumciſion was appointed;) ſome of them propoſed his being called Zacharias. We find no inſtance in ſcripture of any perſon, who was called after the name of his father; but it ſeems that it was then become cuſtomary: and they meant it out of reſpect to Zacharias, eſpecially as he was advanced in years. But Elizabeth would by no means agree to this, declaring that he ſhould be called John: at which they expreſſed their ſurpriſe, as none of the family bare that name. Zacharias, being deaf and dumb, probably ſpent his time in retirement, and devotion, patiently expecting the termination of his chaſtiſement: and having given Elizabeth ſome intimation of the heavenly viſion, he ſeems hitherto to have left the whole matter to her. But the difference of opinion between her and her friends cauſed them by ſigns to apply to him, to determine it; and he, in the ſame manner deſiring a writing tablet, wrote thereon, that the child's name was John; that being a ſettled point, which was by no means to be diſputed. At this they were aſtoniſhed, not having hitherto been acquainted with the particulars of Zacharias's viſion. But the time appointed for his correction being now expired, he immediately recovered the gift of ſpeech, and uſed it in praiſing God. Probably he returned thanks to him, for his goodneſs, and faithfulneſs in the birth of his ſon, acknowledging the righteouſneſs of the rebuke he had lain under, and praiſthe Holy Ghoſt, and propheſied, ſaying,

68 Bleſſed *be* the Lord God of Iſrael; for he hath viſited and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David;

70 As he ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been ſince the world began;

71 That we ſhould be ſaved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy *promiſed* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73 The oath which he ſware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear,

75 In holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, ſhalt be called the Prophet of the Higheſt: for thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of ſalvation unto his people, by the remiſſion of their ſins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us,

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ing his mercy, in reſtoring to him the uſe of his tongue: and it is ſuppoſed that the prophetical hymn, that follows, was ſpoken at the ſame time. He ſeems alſo to have made public all the circumſtances of the viſion that he had in the temple; whence a ſolemn awe, and fear fell on all the neighbours, reſpecting the event of theſe extraordinary tranſactions: and whilſt they were rumoured abroad through all the adjacent country; all who heard them, carefully obſerved, and remembered them, expecting great things from a child, whoſe birth had been attended by ſo many wonders. In the mean time John grew up under the immediate protection of God, and the powerful influence of his grace: ſo that his knowledge, and piety, far beyond his years, evinced that the Lord was with him in a peculiar manner.

V. 67—79.] When Zacharias recovered the gift of ſpeech after his ſon's birth, he was alſo filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and uttered the following prophecy concerning the kingdom, and ſalvation of the Meſſiah. He too began with bleſſing, and praiſing the Lord God of Iſrael; eſpecially in that he had again viſited his people in mercy, after having for a long time left them without the guidance and teaching of inſpired prophets; and had begun that work of redemption, which had ſo long been predicted, and expected, in the birth of the Meſſiah's fore-runner; and in His near approach, to redeem them to God with his blood, and to reſcue them from the power of their enemies. Of his great mercy, he had raiſed up an Horn of ſalvation for them; (for he ſpake of the Saviour as already come, and the ſalvation as already accompliſhed.) The Horn was the emblem of Dignity, Ornament, and Protection with annoyance of enemies; and all this Chriſt is to his people. This ſalvation was raiſed up for them, in the houſe of David; for he referred to the future Son of the Virgin Mary, and not to his own ſon. His birth, character, and ſalvation would accompliſh the predictions of his holy prophets, from the beginning of the world; all of whom, in one way or other, gave intimations of the promiſed Meſſiah, and aſſured the people of God, that by Him, they would be ſaved from their enemies, and protected againſt the power of all thoſe wicked men, and apoſtate ſpirits, who hated them, and ſought their deſtruction. So that the coming of this Saviour was intended to perform, or complete the mercy, which God had been beſtowing on their anceſtors for ages paſt; and to accompliſh the gracious, and faithful covenant, which he had entered into with believers, under different diſpenſations, from the firſt promiſe made to fallen Adam; and which he had ratified to Abraham by a ſolemn oath, in behalf of himſelf, and all his believing ſeed; the bleſſings of which were alſo ſhadowed forth under external ſigns, and advantages ſecured to his natural poſterity; (*Gen.* c. xxii. v. 16—18. *Heb.* c. vi. v. 13—18.) This promiſe, covenant, and oath, engaged to all that were intereſted in them, deliverance from the power of ſatan, ſin, the world, death, and every enemy; as well as redemption from the curſe of the holy law, and the righteous vengeance of God: that being ſafe under his protection, and partakers of his acceptance, and grace; they might worſhip and ſerve him, (without fear of being deſtroyed by their foes, or caſt off by Him,) in all righteouſneſs and holineſs during the remainder of their lives in this world, and ſo at length inherit eternal felicity in heaven. In token of the immediate approach of this ſpiritual redemption, John was born to be the Meſſiah's forerunner: and to him, though an infant, Zacharias addreſſed himſelf; declaring, that he had the ſingular honour allotted him of being that prophet of the moſt high God, who was to go before the face of the Lord, even of Chriſt, to prepare his ways. (v. 16, 17.) The grand object of his preparatory miniſtry would be, to give the knowledge, and aſſurance of complete ſalvation to the Lord's people, by the full remiſſion of all the ſins of every believer in Chriſt; and by this aſſurance to call men to repent, and accept of this ineſtimable bleſſing. All theſe benefits would indeed come to them through the tender mercy, or bowels of compaſſion of Iſrael's God; who pitying the miſery of periſhing ſinners, had cauſed this day-ſpring from heaven, to viſit them, uſhering in the appearance of the Sun of righteouſneſs, and the goſpel diſpenſation. Thus, light would be afforded to poor ſinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, whoſe ignorance, guilt, and miſery, reſembled the darkneſs of a dungeon, in which condemned criminals are confined; and whoſe dreary ſituation was like the dark ſhade of death, and hell. Then would

79 To give light to them that ſit in darkneſs, and *in* the ſhadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, and was in the deſerts till the day of his ſhewing unto Iſrael.

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their minds be enlightened, and their path marked out: they would ſee their danger, and their refuge: they would be inſpired with hope, and encouragement; and ſo they would be directed into the way of peace with God, and their conſciences, and with each other; and they would learn to walk in thoſe holy and happy paths, which lead to, and are an earneſt of, everlaſting peace and felicity. We may perceive that this was a very remarkable prophecy, deſcribing the nature, privileges, and effects of goſpel ſalvation, and foretelling the ſucceſs of chriſtianity both among the Jews, and Gentiles. Probably it was much circulated, and attended to amongſt Zacharias's friends, and the godly remnant of the nation.

V. 80. *And*, &c.] As John grew in ſtature, his underſtanding, and judgment matured, and he gave indications not only of ſtrong natural parts, (as we ſay,) but of ſtrong faith, vigorous holy affections, great fortitude, and reſolution in the cauſe of God; a ſuperiority to grovelling deſires and purſuits; and a victory over the fear, and love of the world. Thus did he ripen for uſefulneſs: but whether his parents died whilſt he was young, or whether they were ſpecially directed by God in the matter; he neither received an education from the Jewiſh Scribes, nor attended any ſacerdotal ſervices at the temple; but lived a private life, in the moſt retired, and unfrequented part of the country, being given up to meditation, devotion, and mortification, till the time when he openly appeared among the people, as the Meſſiah's forerunner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Thoſe things which we are required moſt ſurely to believe, are moſt abundantly proved to be of divine original; and if our faith were as ſtrong, as the truths and promiſes are certain, we ſhould continually rejoice in them. For the great tranſactions on which our hopes depend, have not only been recorded by ſuch as from the beginning were eye witneſſes and miniſters of the word: but by thoſe, who were perfected in their underſtanding of them, through divine inſpiration; which was atteſted by the miracles they wrought, and by the prophecies, that are interwoven with their hiſtories. We ſhould therefore endeavour to get acquainted with the certainty of thoſe things, which are moſt ſurely believed by chriſtians, and to obtain a more exact knowledge of them; and we ſhould alſo labour to bring our friends and acquaintance to an eſtabliſhed faith in them. This is the way to approve ourſelves to be indeed "Lovers "of God," and to fill up our ſtation in the community to his glory. Thus we ſhall approve ourſelves righteous, *before Him*, and not merely in the opinion of our fellow mortals: and an habitual tenor of conſcientious and blameleſs obedience to all God's commandments, and ordinances, forms the beſt proof of our gracious juſtification, and the beſt ornament of the doctrine of God our Saviour. This is peculiarly becoming in thoſe, who ſuſtain the office of miniſters: and it is a ſingular felicity, when married perſons are of one heart in the worſhip, and ſervice of God. Yet ſome croſs, or alloy to our comfort muſt be expected in every ſituation; and this conſideration ſhould reconcile us to our own trials; as we probably ſhould be no gainers, could we exchange condition with thoſe, whom we are apt to envy. But they, who grow in grace as they advance in years, and who ſteadily attend to their proper work, may hope for increaſing peace and comfort in the eve of life. Whilſt by faith we view our great High Prieſt in the temple above, continually preſenting the prayers of believers before his Father's throne, with the fragrant incenſe of his interceſſion; and we are encouraged to join our petitions to thoſe of multitudes all over the earth, who every hour are approaching the mercy-ſeat by this new, and living way: let us alſo recollect how terrifying, to our frail ſinful nature the appearance of viſitants from the world of ſpirits hath always been; that we may be thankful for the *inviſible* miniſtry of angels, and that the Lord ſends his meſſages to us by men like ourſelves, whoſe terror cannot make us afraid. However we need fear no evil, but may expect glad tidings from heaven, when we are found in the path of duty: and if our prayers are accepted, all bleſſings will in due time be communicated. Nor ſhould delays in this reſpect be conſtrued into denials: many prayers, that we have been offering for years paſt for ourſelves, and others, may be abundantly anſwered, after we are gone to heaven. We ought not indeed to be anxious about having children; for we know not whether they would be cauſe of joy, and gladneſs to us and to others, or the contrary: ſince it is obvious, that numbers ſeem to live only to render the world more wicked, and miſerable, than it would otherwiſe have been; and then they die in ſuch a manner, that we cannot but think it would have been better for them, if they had never been born. Yet it is a peculiar favour to have children, for whoſe birth many ſhall have cauſe to rejoice, as being inſtruments of God in doing others good, and being themſelves heirs of eternal life, and happineſs. In ſeeking ſuch diſtinguiſhed bleſſings for thoſe that belong to us, we ſhould carefully obſerve the difference between a great man in the world's eſteem, and one, who is great in the ſight of the Lord. The mighty conquerors, potentates, and ſtateſmen, and all that have been renowned as philoſophers, or men of exalted genius; as well as all the ſons of affluence, oſtentation, and magnificence, are mean obſcure perſons, compared with a poor prophet, who is filled with wiſdom, and zeal, who is ſuperior to the ſmiles and frowns of the world, who wants none of its honours, advantages or pleaſures, and whoſe only work and joy it is, to bring ſinners to repentance, to turn the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, and to call men to believe in Chriſt, and prepare for his coming to judge the world. Some meaſure of this kind of greatneſs we may deſire for our children; and with that view we ſhould early devote them to God, and bring them

CHAP II.

Contains 1ſt. The birth of Jeſus at Bethlehem, in a ſtable; an angel announcing it to ſome ſhepherds, with the praiſes of the heavenly Hoſt in their hearing, &c. 1---14. *2d. The ſhepherds finding Mary, and Jeſus, reporting the whole tranſaction, and giving glory to God,* 15---20. *3d. The cir-*

for him: and as ſome have been filled with the Holy Ghoſt from their mother's womb; we ſhould hope and pray that our's may thus be changed in their youth by divine grace; and we ought to inſtruct them in the truth, as ſoon as they are capable of knowing good from evil. Nor ſhould we forget that early and conſtant temperance, and indifference about worldly pleaſures, are proper indications of future eminence and uſefulneſs: that the increaſe of true godlineſs tends to the termination of contentions, in families, churches, and communities; and that nominal chriſtians need converſion to the real worſhip and ſervice of God, as much as heathens. Even real believers are not always alike ſtrong in the faith: when they loſe ſight of the power, truth, and love of God, and pore on difficulties, and impediments; they are apt to diſhonour Him by unbelief: thus the glad tidings, and precious promiſes of his word become the occaſion of their ſin, and correction; the very meſſengers of his mercy are conſtrained to give them intimations of his diſpleaſure; the accompliſhment of his promiſes are attended by rebukes; and their mouths are ſtopped in ſilence, and confuſion, when otherwiſe they would have been praiſing God with the voice of joy, and gratitude. However, even under divine chaſtiſement, it is good to go on with our work, as far as we are able: thus our afflictions may be mitigated and ſanctified, and returning mercies will be preparing for us. But when we are peculiarly favoured, we ſhould ſhun all oſtentation: and every interpoſition of the Lord to take away reproach or trouble ſhould remind us to court retirement, that we may meditate on his goodneſs and truth; pour out our thankſgivings before him, and ſeek his gracious teaching and aſſiſtance, in order to a due improvement of his mercies.

Whilſt we contemplate the peculiar honour, that was conferred on the Virgin Mother of our Lord; we ſhould remember that angels rejoice over every ſinner that repenteth; they deem thoſe highly favoured, in whoſe hearts Chriſt dwelleth by faith, and are ready to congratulate each believer on ſo important a bleſſing. Happy indeed muſt they be, among the ſons and daughters of Adam, to whom the Lord is graciouſly reconciled, and with whom he is preſent by his ſanctifying Spirit. They may indeed be troubled and perplexed by many things that they read, and hear; and they can ſcarce raiſe their hopes ſo high, as to expect the bleſſings intended for them: but they ſhould be encouraged againſt their fears, and aſſured of having found favour with God, and led to conſider themſelves as the brethren, ſiſters, or mother of the Lord Jeſus. Let us then rejoice in his perſonal, and mediatorial exaltation; for he now reigns not only over the houſe of Jacob, but over angels, principalities, and powers in heavenly places, as the Son of God, and the Son of David. Let us ſeek to be, and to approve ourſelves, the ſubjects of his kingdom, of which there ſhall be no end: and if we meet with ſufferings in our way to the full enjoyment of our privileges and felicity; let us remember how Jeſus was abaſed, impoveriſhed, reproached, rejected, and crucified, before he entered into his glory. We ſhould therefore entirely rely on the promiſes of God; carefully ſeek and obſerve his directions, and diligently keep his commandments: waiting on him in this manner, the Holy Spirit, by whoſe operation the human nature of Jeſus, the firſt born among many brethren, was formed in the Virgin's womb, will gradually renew his image on our ſouls, that we too in a ſubordinate ſenſe may be evidenced to be the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. In all our conflicts, and temptations we ſhould ſtill remember, that with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible; and as we read, and hear his promiſes, we ſhould turn them into prayers, ſaying "behold the willing ſervant of the Lord, let it "be unto me according to this thy word.

They, who are experienced in the things of God, will delight in each other's company; they will take pleaſure in ſpeaking together of what the Lord hath done for their ſouls, and in joining in grateful praiſes, or fervent prayers; they will value each others pious counſels, cautions and exhortations; and they will not grudge that labour, which is requiſite in order to this communion of the ſaints. The influences of the Spirit of God exceedingly counteract that emulation, and ambition, to which we are naturally prone, and through which we forget our own mercies, by repining at the ſuperior honour conferred on others. His holy conſolations raiſe us above the petty diſparities of external rank and ſtation: in proportion to his ſacred illumination we feel our own unworthineſs, learn thankfulneſs for every favour, and rejoice in the gifts, and graces beſtowed on others; and thus in honour preferring them to ourſelves, we deem ourſelves highly diſtinguiſhed by the company of thoſe believers, whom under another influence we ſhould have regarded as our inferiors. Indeed true honour conſiſts in our relation, and conformity to Chriſt; we ought therefore to rejoice in their company, who are evidently thus dignified; and we ſhould commend that faith, and obedience, which even tend in a meaſure to reflect diſgrace on our own leſs honourable conduct, or on that of ſuch as are moſt dear unto us. Yet humble believers will appropriate no glory to themſelves; but will take occaſion, from ſuch congratulations to magnify the Lord, and to rejoice in him as their God, and Saviour with their whole heart, and ſoul. Notwithſtanding every other diſtinction, they muſt have been for ever miſerable, without this ſalvation: their thankfulneſs will therefore always be connected with an humble ſenſe of their ſinfulneſs, and of his mercy, who hath looked down with pity on their low eſtate, and raiſed them to the hope of everlaſting happineſs. Indeed the Almighty God, whoſe name is holy, might have been expected to have done great things againſt us guilty, and polluted criminals: but he hath greatly glorified even his holineſs, in ex-

cumciſion of Chriſt, Mary's purification, his preſentation in the temple; with the prophecies of Simeon and Anna reſpecting him, 21---39. *4th. His growth in ſtature and wiſdom, &c; and an account of his hearing, and queſtioning with, the Scribes in the temple,* 40---52.

AND it came to paſs in thoſe days, that there went out a decree from Ceſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed.

2 (*And* this taxing was firſt made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joſeph alſo went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (becauſe he was of the houſe and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his eſpouſed wife, being great with child.

6 And ſo it was, that while they were

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tending mercy to all them that fear him, in every age, and nation. Proud infidels, and Phariſees, and preſumptuous ſinners of every deſcription, will be ſcattered by this powerful arm, and diſappointed in the vain imaginations of their hearts, and haughty potentates will be caſt down from their thrones, into everlaſting ſhame and miſery: but the broken-hearted ſinner, who abaſes himſelf before God, ſhall be exalted; and He will ſatiſfy the deſires of the poor in Spirit, who long for ſpiritual bleſſings; whilſt the rich, and ſelf-ſufficient ſhall be ſent empty away. This is the true reaſon, why ſo many frequent thoſe ordinances in vain, from which others go away, abundantly ſatiſfied with, and rejoicing in the goodneſs of the Lord. For he ſtill helpeth his true Iſrael, nor ſhall the believing ſeed of Abraham be aſhamed for ever.

We ſhould trace back every rill of comfort to the full fountain of the Lord's mercy, which he is continually magnifying. Delays often render the benefit doubly precious, by increaſing our admiration, and gratitude: and it is beautiful, when believers ſo behave, that all their neighbours cordially rejoice in the tokens of the divine favour towards them. When God's promiſes are performed, as well as when we are waiting for them, we ſhould keep cloſe to his ordinances; nor ſhould we be influenced by any counſels, expoſtulations or examples, to deviate in the leaſt from his commandments: and we ſhould ſtudy by every method to perpetuate the remembrance of his mercies to us. At the removal of our chaſtiſements, our mouths ſhould be open to ſhew forth the praiſes of the Lord: thus it will be known, that we approve the juſtice of the correction, as well as admire the mercy which terminated it; and that we have benefitted by our ſufferings. We ſhould alſo obſerve the dealings of God with our neighbours, and wait the event of his diſpenſations with attentive expectation: and when our children grow up healthy, and improve in the exerciſe of their faculties; we ſhould aſcribe it to the good hand of the Lord upon them, and take occaſion to intreat him to give them alſo his heavenly grace, and wiſdom.

What multiplied praiſes, in heaven and earth did the Saviour's advent occaſion! Shall not we alſo unite in bleſſing the Lord God of Iſrael, who hath thus viſited and redeemed his people? We are equally concerned in the raiſing up of this Horn of ſalvation, and in the redemption, which he made for ſinners with his blood, as the Jews of old were. The predictions of holy prophets, being fulfilled in Chriſt, confirm the truth of the ſcriptures to us, as well as to them: the covenant and oath of God to Abraham, were intended to give us a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us: even John Baptiſt's miniſtry ſtill calls on us to repent, and welcome our incarnate Prince and Saviour: the whole ſcripture gives aſſurance of ſalvation to all God's believing people, by the remiſſion of their ſins: and through the tender mercy of our God, this Day-ſpring from on high hath viſited theſe diſtant nations, to give light to us poor benighted pagans, who then ſat in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death. But let us remember, that this ſalvation implies a deliverance from our enemies, and from all that hate us; that being ſet at liberty from bondage, as well as from condemnation, we may ſerve God without fear, under the influence of the Spirit of adoption, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our future lives. Is this then the ſalvation we deſire? Do we experience its power in our hearts and conſciences? Do we uſe the light of the goſpel to guide us into the ways of peace, and purity? If this be our caſe, we may be thankful and joyful, and expect complete victory over ſatan, ſin and death, and an abundant entrance into heavenly felicity. Let us then take encouragement from the "knowledge of ſalvation," to repent of, and mortify every ſin: let us aſſert our goſpel liberty by being the diligent ſervants of God: let us fear nothing but ſin, and temptation, and their conſequences: let us pray that the light that ſhines around us, may ſhine into our hearts, and appear in our lives; and let us follow peace with all men, as well as ſeek peace with God, and our own conſciences. If it be the will of the Lord, that we ſhould live in obſcurity, let us the more diligently ſeek to grow ſtrong in the grace of Jeſus Chriſt: and let thoſe, who are preparing for public uſefulneſs, live retired from and mortified to the world; employing their time in reading, meditation, and devotion, till the Lord ſhall open their way to ſome proper ſervice for the benefit of his people.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—7.] It had been predicted many ages before, that the Meſſiah ſhould be born at Bethlehem; (Notes, &c. *Micah*, c. v. ver. 2. *Matt.* c. ii:) yet the mother of Jeſus reſided at Nazareth, at the diſtance of 60, or 70 miles from that city; and ſhe continued there till ſhe was far advanced in her pregnancy. Nor was ſhe ordered to go to Bethlehem, to be there delivered; indeed that would have appeared too

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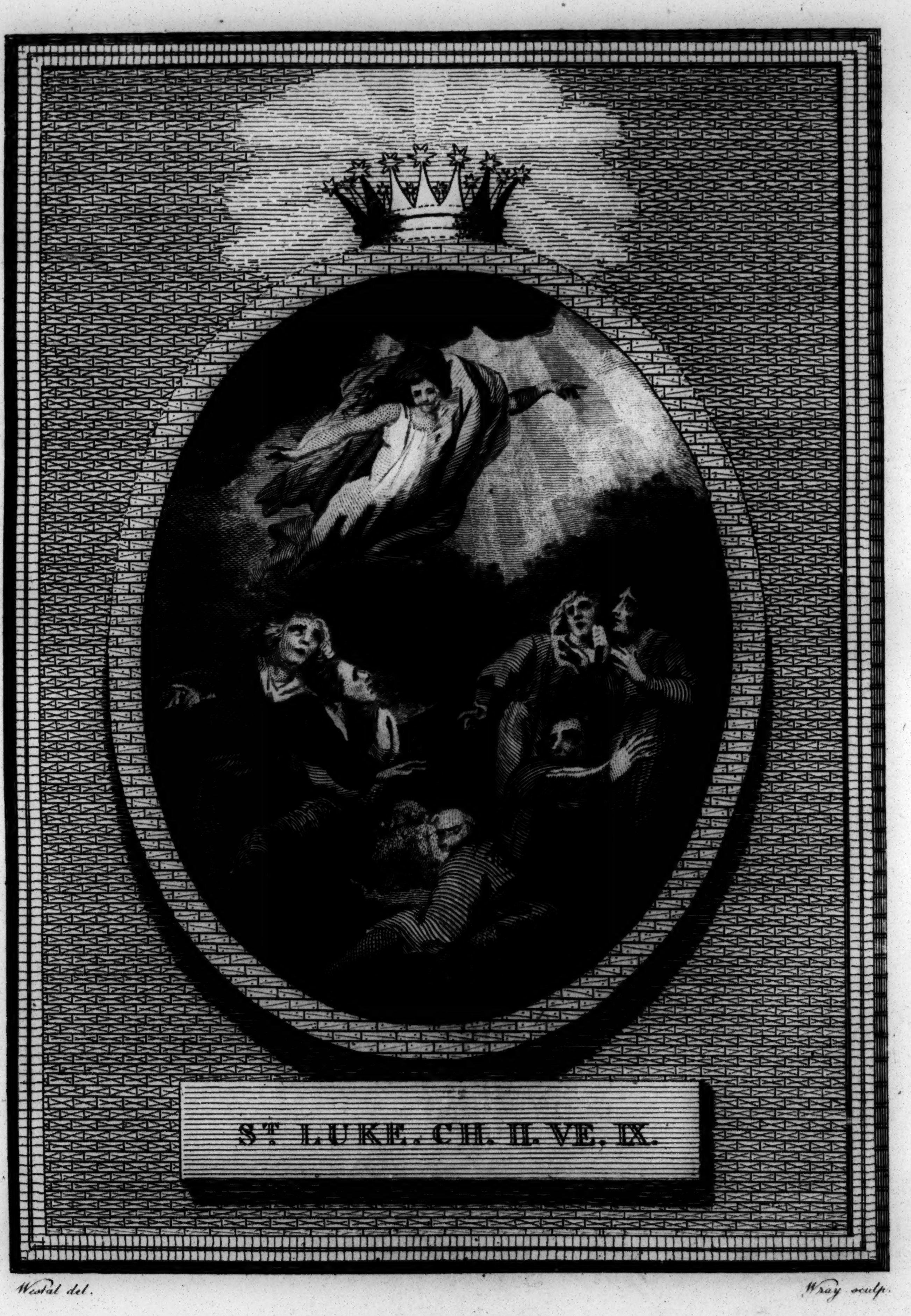
Engrav'd for the Revd. Mr. Scott's Family Bible.



St. LUKE. CH. II. VE. IX.

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there, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered.

7 And ſhe brought forth her firſt-born ſon, and wrapped him in ſwaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; becauſe there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the ſame country ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them; and they were ſore afraid.

10 And the angel ſaid unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt, the Lord.

12 And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto you, Ye ſhall find the babe wrapped in ſwaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And ſuddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing God and ſaying,

14 Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.

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much the effect of deſign. But Auguſtus Ceſar, the Roman emperor, being left to follow the dictates of his own pride, ambition, rapacity, or reſentment, iſſued an edict, that an account ſhould be taken of the number, and degree of all the ſubjects in his vaſt empire; which in a vain-glorious ſtyle was called "all the world," becauſe it contained all the moſt civilized, and beſt cultivated regions that were then known. Some interpreters indeed ſuppoſe, that only the whole land of Iſrael, which was then governed by king Herod, and which was ſoon after divided into ſeveral diſtinct provinces, was included in this edict; and that it was iſſued on account of ſome umbrage that Herod had given Auguſtus, as an intimation, that he intended to lay ſome further taxes on his ſubjects. But this ſeems a very reſtricted interpretation of the word tranſlated "the world:" however it is no part of our plan to diſcuſs ſubjects of this kind: but it is plain, from the land of Judea and Galilee, &c, being thus ſubjected to the Roman emperor, that the ſceptre was now at leaſt departing from Judah, and that the promiſed Shiloh was near at hand; (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 10.) It is added, "that this taxing was firſt made when Cy-"renius was Governor of Syria." This hath greatly perplexed learned men: for there was another enrollment, or taxation, when Cyrenius, or Quirinius, was governor of Syria, about twelve years after, that cauſed great diſturbances among the Jews; yet this ſeems to confound the two together. Probably the words mean, that this was the firſt taxing, which was previous to that under Quirinius, the governor of Syria; yet this too ſeems to have been conducted under his ſuper-intendency. But without pretending to ſolve all the difficulties, which may be expected in reconciling the different brief accounts of ſuch remote tranſactions: we may obſerve, that the Lord took occaſion, by this determination of a heathen prince, to accompliſh his own purpoſes and predictions in the moſt natural, and ſimple manner: for as perſons were required by this edict, to reſort to the city, to which their family had belonged; ſo it became incumbent on Joſeph, and Mary, being the lineal deſcendants of David, to go to Bethlehem for this purpoſe. And though Mary's ſituation might perhaps have been admitted as an excuſe for her abſence; yet ſhe had a ſufficient reaſon for repairing to Bethlehem, without any appearance of deſign; and probably ſhe was directed, by ſome divine intimation, to accompany Joſeph in his journey. Having therefore occaſion to wait there ſome time, before their turn came to be enrolled; ſhe was in the interval delivered of her firſt-born Son, (Note, *Matt.* c. i. v. 24, 25;) and ſhe was ſo ſtrengthened, and ſupported, as to be able herſelf to wrap him in ſuch mean clothes, as ſhe could there procure, and to lay him in a manger inſtead of a cradle. For as the city was then crowded with ſtrangers, many of whom were probably in ſuperior circumſtances; and as Joſeph and Mary were poor people; there was no room for them in any inn, nor was any perſon diſpoſed to give them an hoſpitable reception, notwithſtanding Mary's ſituation: and thus the Saviour of the world, the Lord of glory made his firſt appearance, (as man,) in a ſtable, and his firſt bed in a manger! This was an emblem of the reception he was to meet with on earth, and of the external poverty, and debaſement, in which he would paſs through life: and it was ſo appointed for very important purpoſes of inſtruction to all his diſciples.

V. 8—14.] Though the birth of our bleſſed Lord was attended with ſuch circumſtances of indigence, and meanneſs: yet it was alſo marked with a dignity, and majeſty, far ſurpaſſing all the pomp of kings, and the ſplendour of their palaces, and retinues; and which was ſuited to pour contempt on ſuch a mean parade of grandeur. It was proper that ſo important an event ſhould be announced with peculiar ſolemnity, and angels were to be the heralds of the new born Saviour: but they were not ſent to the rulers of the nation, or to their prieſts, Scribes, or Phariſees; on the contrary ſome poor, humble, pious, induſtrious ſhepherds were favoured with the firſt tidings of Emmanuel's birth. Theſe were ſpending the night, or part of it, in the field, keeping watch over their flocks, to defend them from robbers, and beaſts of prey; and probably there was a number of them, who thus watched by turns. Whilſt they were thus employed, an holy angel ſuddenly appeared to them, and a divine glory ſurrounded them: this threw them into a great conſternation; but the angel bade them not fear, for he was come to bring them good tidings, which would be the ſource of great, and laſting joy to them, and to all people: for *to them*, as men, as ſinners, and as

15 And it came to paſs, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the ſhepherds ſaid one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and ſee this thing which is come to paſs, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haſte, and found Mary and Joſeph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had ſeen *it*, they made known abroad the ſaying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at thoſe things, which were told them by the ſhepherds.

19 But Mary kept all theſe things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the ſhepherds returned, glorifying and praiſing God for all the things that they had heard and ſeen, as it was told unto them.

21 And when eight days were accompliſhed for the circumciſing of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was ſo named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moſes, were accompliſhed, they brought him to Jeruſalem, to preſent *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb ſhall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a ſacrifice according to that which is ſaid in the law of the Lord. A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

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believers, was born on that day, at Bethlehem, a Saviour from wrath, ſatan, ſin, and death, who was indeed the promiſed, and expected Meſſiah, Iſrael's anointed Prophet, Prieſt, and King; nay the Lord of glory, the eternal Jehovah, God manifeſt in the fleſh. (*Iſaiah*, c. ix. v. 6, 7.) This great, and precious bleſſing to mankind, this glorious new born Prince and Saviour, they might find "wrapped in ſwaddling clothes," and lying in a manger; and they might ſurely know him by this ſign, for no other babe could be found in ſo mean a ſituation. No ſooner had the angel finiſhed this addreſs to the poor ſhepherds, than he was viſibly joined by a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, or of the angelic armies; who, being filled with inexpreſſible admiration of the love of God, in this ſurpriſing tranſaction, and of the glory of all his perfections as diſplayed therein, audibly celebrated his praiſes with triumphant acclamations, ſaying "Glory, "to God in the higheſt, &c:" which implied, that this was the grand diſplay of the divine glory, and ſuperior to all that they had ever witneſſed. They therefore called upon all the inhabitants of the higheſt heavens, to praiſe God in their loftieſt ſtrains of adoration; for now peace was prepared for the earth, which had ſo long lain in a ſtate of rebellion, enmity, diſcord, and miſery: peace inward, and outward, with God, and each other, would be found on earth, through the gracious work of the divine Peace-maker; whom the Father, out of mere goodwill to fallen man, had provided, and ſent amongſt them. This ſeems the purport of theſe angelic praiſes; but the abrupt, ſententious manner, in which they were delivered, whilſt it rendered them more ſuited to their fervent acclamations, increaſes the difficulty of explaining the full meaning of every expreſſion.

V. 15—20.] When the angels had finiſhed their joyful adorations of God, and congratulations of mankind, on this moſt happy occaſion, the viſion diſappeared: and the ſhepherds conferring together on the wonders, which they had witneſſed, determined to go immediately to Bethlehem, that they might behold the things, that the Lord had thus graciouſly made known to them. Without any delay, they repaired thither, and were ſoon enabled to find Mary, &c, exactly in the ſituation, that had been deſcribed: and when they had ſeen it, they publickly reported the whole tranſaction, and the aſſurance given them by the angel, that this child was the Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. This excited the aſtoniſhment of thoſe, who heard it: but they ſeem in general to have ſpeedily forgot it. However Mary carefully obſerved, and meditated on all theſe wonderful incidents, which were ſo ſuited to enlarge her expectations, and enliven her holy affections: and the ſhepherds returned to their humble employment, with joyful thankful hearts; glorifying, and bleſſing God for his diſtinguiſhed favours to them.

V. 21. *And*, &c.] (Note, *Gen.* c. xvii. v. 11.) Our bleſſed Saviour was not conceived, or born in ſin, and did not need that mortification of a corrupt nature, or that renewal unto holineſs, which were ſignified by circumciſion. But he was made under the law, and, both as our Surety, and Example, he was ſubjected to all its inſtitutions. This painful ordinance was, *in his caſe*, a pledge given of his future perfect obedience to the whole law, in the midſt of ſufferings, and temptations, even unto death *for us*; it was an entrance on that vicarious work, which he finiſhed on the croſs. The name Jeſus hath already been explained. (*Matt.* c. i. v. 20, 21.)

V. 22—24.] (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xiii. v. 2. *Lev.* c. xii.) At the end of forty days, Mary went up to the temple, to offer the appointed ſacrifices for her purification: for though in her caſe, there were not all the ſame reaſons for that obſervance, as in that of other women: yet ſhe claimed no exemption. Joſeph alſo attended her, taking the holy child Jeſus; becauſe, being a firſt-born Son, he was to be preſented to the Lord, and redeemed, according to the law. The ſacrifice offered

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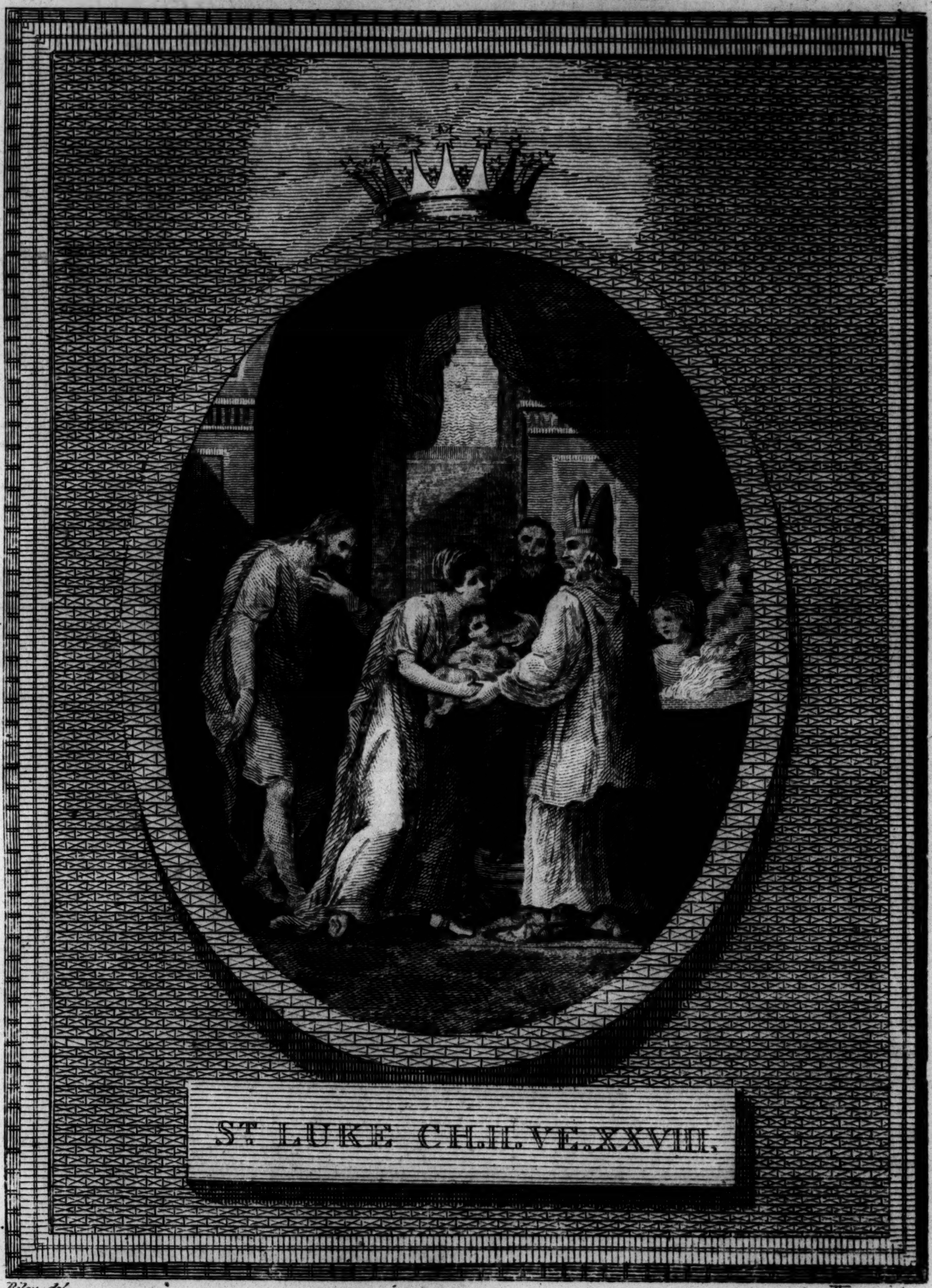
THE REV^{D} M^{R} SCOTT'S BIBLE.


S^{T}. LUKE CH.II. VE.XXVIII.

Riley del. Wray sculp.

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25 And, behold, there was a man in Jeruſalem, whoſe name *was* Simeon: and the ſame man *was* juſt and devout, waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael: and the Holy Ghoſt was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not ſee death, before he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law.

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and bleſſed God, and ſaid,

29 Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word;

30 For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation,

31 Which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people;

32 A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Iſrael.

33 And Joſeph and his mother marvelled at thoſe things which were ſpoken of him.

34 And Simeon bleſſed them, and ſaid unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is ſet for the fall and riſing again of many in Iſrael; and for a ſign which ſhall be ſpoken againſt;

35 (Yea, a ſword ſhall pierce through thy own ſoul alſo,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a propheteſs,

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by Mary on this occaſion, being the leaſt expenſive that was appointed, was a full proof of Joſeph's poverty: otherwiſe ſuch pious perſons would not have given it the preference.

V. 25—32.] The Jewiſh prieſts, and Scribes remained ignorant of the birth of their promiſed Meſſiah, till ſome time after this, (Note, *Matt.* c. ii. v. 9—12:) and indeed their religion was ſo formal, and their expectations were ſo carnal, that they were not prepared to form any juſt apprehenſions of that event. But there was a ſmall remnant among the people, who had more ſpiritual views, and hopes; and to them the Lord gave intimations of what had taken place. Amongſt theſe was Simeon, concerning whom many vain conjectures have been formed by thoſe, who want to repreſent the eminent believers mentioned in the Bible, as perſons that ſtood high in the world's eſteem; but of whom we know no more than is here recorded. We find that he was a man of remarkable equity, and piety; who expected the coming of the Meſſiah, as the conſolation of Iſrael, and the ſource of all their hopes, and comforts. Moreover he was endued with the Spirit of prophecy, (which had begun to be reſtored to them, after a ſuſpenſion of about 400 years from the days of Malachi:) by immediate inſpiration he was aſſured, that he ſhould not die, till he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt, or Anointed, the promiſed Meſſiah; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he came to the temple, at the very time when Joſeph and Mary preſented Jeſus there; and thus he witneſſed the firſt accompliſhment of a remarkable prophecy concerning him: (*Hag.* c. ii. v. 7—9.) Seeing therefore the infant Redeemer, and knowing him by the revelation of the Holy Spirit; he took him in his arms, and bleſſed God for his mercies to him, and to his people; expreſſing himſelf willing to die, ſeeing the Lord now let him depart in peace, having favoured him with the ſight of his Salvation. The Lord Jeſus was thus called, becauſe the whole ſalvation of a ſinner centers in his perſon, as God manifeſt in the fleſh; all the purpoſes and promiſes of ſalvation had reference to him; he purchaſed all the bleſſings of it by his blood; they are all treaſured up in him, and diſpenſed by him to believers; and they are all applied through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us through his interceſſion. Thus Simeon acknowledged Jeſus as God's Salvation, which he had prepared before the face of all people; as he meant to exhibit him publicly, before all nations by the preached goſpel: for as the Light of the world, he was intended to illuminate all nations by his doctrine, and grace; as well as to be the glory of his people Iſrael: the chief honour of that nation conſiſted in having given birth to this glorious Saviour; and all true believers deem their relation to him their grand diſtinction, and learn to glory in him alone.

V. 33—35.] Whilſt Joſeph and Mary marvelled to hear the words of Simeon, addreſſed to the Infant in his arms; he bleſſed them alſo, praying for them, and expreſſing his ſatisfaction in their felicity. He then aſſured his mother, that her Son was placed for the fall, and riſing again of many in Iſrael. Many of them would reject, deſpiſe, perſecute, and crucify him, becauſe of the pride and enmity of their hearts againſt the truth; thus they would fall into ſin, and under condemnation; and this would iſſue in the temporal ruin of the nation, as well as in the perdition of many ſouls: but at the ſame time many of thoſe, who had ſunk deep into error profligacy and impiety, yea many of thoſe who at firſt rejected, and perſecuted Him; would at length be brought to repentance, and by faith in him would obtain pardon, and ſo be raiſed up again to walk in newneſs of life. Yet He would be ſet for a ſign to be ſpoken againſt, and be the very butt of contradiction, and oppoſition, to all orders, and deſcriptions of men amongſt them. His external meanneſs, his holy character, his humbling doctrine, and his ſpiritual ſalvation, proved equally offenſive to the Phariſees, and Sadducees; and they interfered as much with the reputation, and authority of the hypocritical prieſts and ſcribes, as with the carnal prejudices of the nation in general. Notwithſtanding therefore the diſtinguiſhed honour conferred on Mary; ſhe muſt expect the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aſer; ſhe was of a great age, and had lived with an huſband ſeven years from her virginity:

37 And ſhe *was* a widow of about fourſcore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but ſerved *God* with faſtings and prayers night and day.

38 And ſhe coming in that inſtant, gave thanks likewiſe unto the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jeruſalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, filled with wiſdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jeruſalem every year at the feaſt of the paſſover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jeruſalem, after the cuſtom of the feaſt.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jeſus tarried behind in Jeruſalem; and Joſeph and his mother knew not *of it*.

44 But they, ſuppoſing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they ſought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they

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to witneſs ſuch things, from the cruelty, and enmity of the people and rulers exerciſed againſt her Son, as would, like a ſword, pierce her ſoul with moſt exquiſite anguiſh: this muſt have been emphatically the caſe, when ſhe ſtood by the croſs, on which he ſuffered. It is alſo probable that ſhe was expoſed to perſecution among the primitive chriſtians, and ſome of the ancients report that ſhe at length died a martyr; but this muſt be allowed to be uncertain. However the event of Chriſt's miniſtry, and the diſpenſation that he came to introduce, would be, "the detection of the thoughts of many hearts:" many plauſible characters would thereby be ſhewn to be full of pride, malice, covetouſneſs, and hypocriſy; whilſt the humility, faith, and piety of others, who had been diſregarded, would thus be brought forth, and made manifeſt.

V. 36—39.] The Lord was pleaſed to confirm Simeon's teſtimony to Chriſt by that of Anna. She was a propheteſs, and probably known to be ſo. She was the daughter of Phanuel, who ſeems to have been an eminent perſon of the tribe of Aſher. Having lived ſeven years with an huſband, who died when ſhe was yet young; ſhe lived all the reſt of her life a widow, and was at this time very old. Some think that 84 years had elapſed from the death of her huſband; others ſuppoſe her to have been 84 years of age: but the former opinion ſeems moſt conſonant with the text. However ſhe reſided cloſe to the temple, that ſhe might attend on all it's ſacred ordinances; and having no relative engagements to occupy her attention, ſhe ſpent her whole time in the worſhip and ſervice of God; and joining frequent faſtings, with her conſtant prayers, and ſupplications for herſelf, and her people, ſhe employed the day, and often part of the night alſo in theſe religious exerciſes; not deſiſting from them even on account of the infirmities of her advanced age. This devoted perſon came into the temple at the ſame time when Simeon was ſpeaking concerning Jeſus; and ſhe alſo returned thanks to God for ſending the promiſed Saviour, and for favouring her with a ſight of Him; and ſhe ſpake of him to all the pious remnant, with whom ſhe was acquainted, and who waited for a ſpiritual redemption in Jeruſalem; for moſt of the citizens were looking for a temporal prince and deliverer. After theſe remarkable occurrences, and the completion of all things reſpecting Jeſus, and Mary, according to the law, they left Jeruſalem; and it is ſaid that they returned to Nazareth: but as St. Luke paſſes over the coming of the wiſe men, and the flight of the holy family into Egypt; ſo it is evident that this return to Nazareth did not occur till ſome time after.

V, 40—52.] We find in theſe verſes, all that the Spirit of God hath ſeen good to record, concerning the younger years of the bleſſed Jeſus. We are firſt informed, that he grew in ſtrength and ſtature like other children; and at the ſame time that he waxed ſtrong in Spirit, (c. i. v. 80.) It was evident, that as the faculties of his human ſoul unfolded, all holy affections, and diſpoſitions became proportionably vigorous; he was alſo filled with, or complete in, wiſdom and knowledge, and all his words and actions were perfectly regulated by the grace of God, that reſted on him. As to the manner, in which the indwelling Deity gradually communicated knowledge, wiſdom, and holineſs to the human nature of Chriſt, we muſt confeſs that we know nothing. "Without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs, "God was manifeſt in the fleſh." That *as man*, his wiſdom, and knowledge, &c, could not be infinite, or incapable of increaſe, we know; but how the union was formed, or the communications imparted, we cannot in the ſmalleſt degree comprehend, or explain. To give us ſome general idea of the conduct of Jeſus in his youth, the following ſpecimen is recorded. Joſeph, his ſuppoſed father, and Mary his real mother, called by the evangeliſt "his parents," uſed to go up to Jeruſalem every year, at the feaſt of the paſſover. Perhaps Joſeph went up at the other great feaſts: but, though the women were not required to go up, yet Mary, and many others, who loved the ordinances of God, uſed to attend at the feaſt of paſſover. And when Jeſus was twelve years old, he went up with them; for it ſeems to have been the

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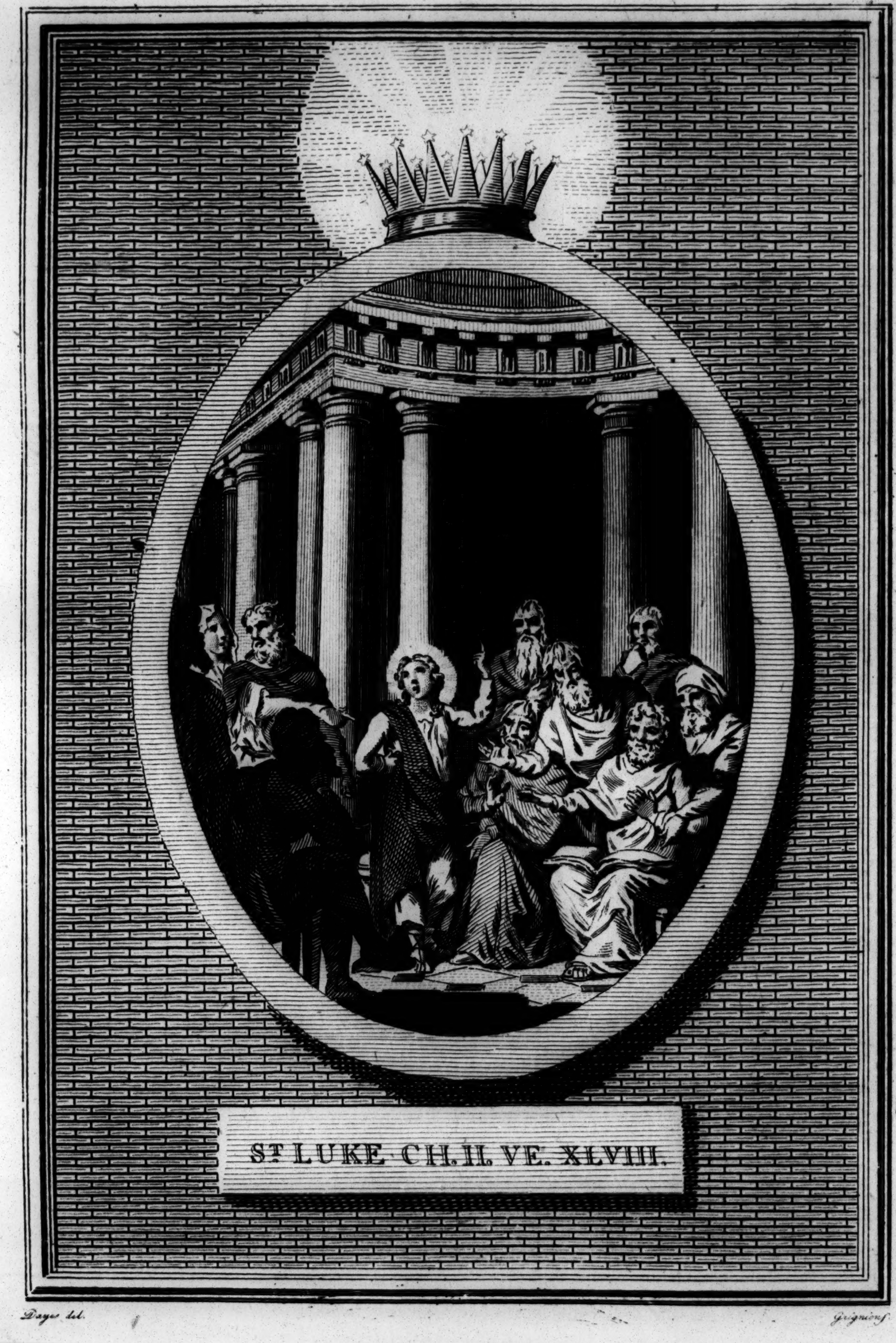
ST. LUKE CH. II. VE. XLVIII.

Dayes del. Grignion sc.

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turned back again to Jeruſalem, ſeeking him.

46 And it came to paſs, that after three days they found him in the temple, ſitting in the midſt of the doctors, both hearing them, and aſking them queſtions.

47 And all that heard him, were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers.

48 And when they ſaw him, they were amazed: and his mother ſaid unto him, Son, why haſt thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have ſought thee ſorrowing.

49 And he ſaid unto them, How is it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?

50 And they underſtood not the ſaying which he ſpake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them: but his mother kept all theſe ſayings in her heart.

52 And Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and man.

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cuſtom for young perſons to accompany their parents at that age. When the days of unleavened bread &c, were expired, they ſet out to return home: and as great numbers came up to Jeruſalem from every part of the country, they journeyed in a great company; ſo that they departed without the Child Jeſus, who tarried behind; being engaged with the ſacred ordinances, and converſation, that attended the obſervation of the feſtival. Perhaps there was ſome culpable inattention in Joſeph, and Mary, who took it for granted that he was in the company, amongſt ſome of their neighbours, and relations, who doubtleſs greatly delighted in his converſation; ſo that they travelled a whole day's journey, before they miſſed Him. But when they could not find him at all amongſt them, they returned back to Jeruſalem, doubtleſs with great anxiety, and under many apprehenſions about him: and at length after two days ſpent in journeying, and returning, on the third day, probably towards night, they found him, not in the houſe of any acquaintance, or in ſuch places as young people generally frequent; but in ſome court or chamber of the temple, ſitting amidſt the doctors, or teachers of the law; diligently hearkening to their diſcuſſions and inſtructions, modeſtly propoſing queſtions to them on various ſubjects, and pertinently anſwering ſuch enquiries, as were put to him; and this he did with ſuch wiſdom, and propriety, that all who heard him were aſtoniſhed, and delighted with him. Thus he was pleaſed to emit ſome beams of his heavenly light and glory, even in his early youth; both to raiſe the expectation of the Jews, and give a proper example to young people, for the regulation of their enquiries employments and behaviour. It may be proper juſt to ſay, that the common expreſſion relative to this incident, by which He is repreſented, as having "diſputed with the doctors," ſeems calculated to lead us to wrong ideas upon the ſubject, and very contrary to thoſe, that naturally preſent themſelves to the mind on reading this account of it. When Joſeph and Mary ſaw Jeſus thus engaged, they were exceedingly ſurpriſed; and his mother, (ſenſibly feeling the uneaſineſs that had been occaſioned her, and not aware of the reaſons that there were for his conduct,) in a way of gentle rebuke, enquired of him, why he had thus dealt with them; adding "behold thy father, and I have ſought "thee ſorrowing. To this he anſwered by enquiring, wherefore they ſought him? "Did they not know, that "he muſt be engaged in his Father's buſineſs?" In this he was then, and muſt at all times be employed; as they would have known, had they duly attended to the various prophecies, and to the words of the angel Gabriel, &c, concerning Him; and with this no regard to any earthly relation muſt be allowed to interfere. This expreſſion alſo intimated that Joſeph was improperly called his father; as he was in every ſenſe the Son of God. However they did not at that time fully underſtand his meaning; having many prejudices, and much darkneſs ſtill upon their minds as to thoſe ſubjects: yet Mary carefully remembered, and deeply meditated on all theſe ſayings of her Son. But though in this one inſtance he ſhewed the ſuperior obligation of his great work, to any authority, even that of a parent; yet he went down with them to Nazareth, and was in every thing elſe ſubject, not only to Mary, but to Joſeph alſo: and it is probably reported, that he earned his livelihood by working as a carpenter, in making ploughs, and yokes, till his entrance on his public miniſtry. And he ſtill continued to increaſe in wiſdom, as well as in ſtature; and was, (as man,) proporably more worthy of the divine favour, as well as more dear to all who knew him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord foreſees and permits the innumerable volitions of free agents, and over-rules them for the accompliſhment of his own righteous purpoſes: and thus he takes care to perform his prophecies, and confirm his truth, by means of the determinations even of wicked men, and by events, which ſeem to us moſt caſual. But who would have expected, that the Lord of glory, whom all the angels of God worſhip, when he became a child, and was made of a woman, would have been lodged in a ſtable, or laid in a manger? Yet this was but a ſpecimen "of his grace, who, though he were rich, yet *for* "*our ſakes* became poor, that we through his poverty "might be made rich." He well knew how wealth, and magnificence glitter in our eyes, and faſcinate our vain minds; how unwilling we are to be poor, and to be meanly lodged, clothed, or fed; how we deſire to have our children decorated, and indulged; how apt the poor are to envy the rich, and to repine at their own condition; how prone the rich are to diſdain the poor, and how backward they are to condeſcend to men of low eſtate: he was aware what deference would be paid even by his miniſters, and diſciples, to the wealthy and the

CHAP. III.

Contains 1*ſt. The date, and ſcope of John Baptiſt's miniſtry; with his general exhortations, and particular directions to different deſcriptions of men; his teſtimony to Chriſt, and his impriſonment by Herod,* 1---20. 2*d. Chriſt's baptiſm and age, and his genealogy traced back in Mary's line to Adam,* 21---38.

noble; and what an *improper* diſtinction would be made between them, and the indigent, even in religious ſocieties, and places of worſhip. Too much of theſe evils are every where to be ſeen: but they muſt have been much more predominant, had our Lord appeared on earth, attended with outward ſplendour, and magnificence. But his condition, from his birth in a ſtable, to his death upon the croſs, was ſuited to expoſe the vanity of outward diſtinctions, and to ennoble, and dignify poverty, and all its mean attendants. When we by faith view the incarnate Son of God lying in a manger, we cannot but feel a check given to our vanity, and ambition, our coveting and envying; our ſouls muſt in ſome degree grow more weaned from the world; we cannot, with this object before our eyes, "ſeek great things" for ourſelves or our children, nor diſdain the poor believer; we cannot flatter the rich or honourable, or refuſe reſpect to thoſe, who are the moſt apt repreſentatives of our poor, and ſuffering Redeemer: and we ſhould be more effectually delivered from ſuch errors in judgment, and practice, did we more fully ponder theſe things in our hearts. But whilſt, with admiring gratitude, we contemplate the Saviour's condeſcenſion, in thus enduring all, that ſin had expoſed us to, from his birth to his death; let us not forget to copy the meekneſs, and patience of his Virgin mother: ſhe willingly endured fatigue, contempt, and neglect, and contentedly was lodged in a ſtable; and met the pains of child-birth in that incommodious ſituation, without complaining of the unkindneſs of the citizens of Bethlehem. If any perſons, when performing the tender duties of the parental character, ſhould be ready to complain, that their beloved offspring are not provided for as they could wiſh; let them think of Mary, wrapping her holy babe in ſwaddling clothes, and laying him in the manger; this will ſilence the riſing murmur, or change it into admiring praiſes. And whilſt we contraſt her conduct with that of thoſe, who then ſhut their doors againſt the moſt excellent, and honoured perſons that ever viſited their city, that they might entertain the ſons and daughters of pride and affluence: let us learn to uſe hoſpitality without grudging, eſpecially to poor believers; and inſtead of feaſting the rich with oſtentatious expence, let us entertain Chriſt in the perſon of his poor diſciples. Thus we ſhall approve ourſelves followers of God as dear children, and enſure a gracious recompence at the reſurrection of the juſt. This will be to judge and act as holy angels do: they did not regard the holy Family a whit the leſs, for being lodged in a ſtable; nay the humility and abaſement, which veiled the Saviour's glory, as he lay in the manger, made it in their eyes more admirable; and he never appeared ſo honourable, and excellent, according to their judgment, as in that ſituation, except when he hung expiring upon the croſs for our ſins, and praying for his crucifiers. They were perfectly ſatisfied to announce his birth to poor ſhepherds in the field, rather than to thoſe, who inhabited palaces, or even to thoſe, who were lodged in the precincts of the temple; for humble, and ſimple piety, and honeſt induſtry are more approved by the inhabitants of heaven, than all the dignities, and wiſdom of the world. Theſe bleſſed angels delight in contemplating the myſteries of redeeming love, and in celebrating the praiſes of God, for thoſe diſplays of his glory, in which, they are not perſonally intereſted; and they ſtill as it were proclaim in our ears, that *to us* is born a Saviour, who is Chriſt the Lord. Theſe then ought to be glad tidings to all, who hear them, and they will give great joy to all, who believe them: for in them all our hopes center, and from them all our comforts flow. What an auſpicious morning then was that, which brought ſo great a bleſſing to loſt mankind! What a joyful day was that, which firſt conveyed the ſound of the goſpel to our ears! But moſt happy for us that hour, in which we were enabled to believe in Chriſt for the ſalvation of our ſouls. Without this be granted to us, we can have no reaſon to celebrate the nativity of Jeſus with rejoicings; for that event will enhance the guilt and condemnation of unbelievers: and if real chriſtians deem it proper to commemorate it, at a ſeaſon ſet apart for that purpoſe, they will not do it with bacchanalian revels, or luxurious feaſtings; but with more abundant thankſgivings to God, and liberality to the poor. They will join their feeble liſpings to the ſongs of angels, and with grateful acclamations will ſay "glory to God in the higheſt, peace on earth, good-"will towards men:" they will employ their prayers, examples and endeavours, to give glory to God, by ſpreading the goſpel, by ſeeking the peace of the church, and by copying his good-will to men: and thus they will ripen for the joys of heaven, by their worſhip, and ſervices here on earth.

When we are favoured with peculiar diſcoveries of the glory of the Lord, and of his love to us; we ſhould excite one another to a more unreſerved attention to his directions: we ſhould examine more fully thoſe things that he hath made known to us, and ſeek to have our faith confirmed by our experience, we ſhould endeavour to make known to others, what he hath taught us concerning the divine Saviour; and pondering ſuch things in our hearts, we ſhould endeavour to return from holy ordinances to our ſecular employments, glorifying God for all we have heard and experienced. Whilſt we truſt in the perfect righteouſneſs of our divine Surety, we ought to copy his example; ſeeking the true circumciſion of the heart, the genuine purification from the pollution of ſin, and the dedication of body and ſoul to God, which were ſhadowed forth, in theſe ancient types and inſtitutions. We ought alſo to preſent our children to the Lord, who gave them to us, deſiring that he would redeem them from ſin and death, make them holy to himſelf, and number them with the church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven: and ſuch poor

AND

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Ceſar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lyſanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high prieſts, the word of God came unto John the ſon of Zacharias, in the wilderneſs.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins;

ſervices, if they are the fruit of an humble and upright heart, will not be rejected. Depending on the ſalvation of the Lord, and waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael; juſtice truth and mercy, as well as piety ſhould adorn our conduct: and if the Holy Spirit reſt upon us, our attention will be turned to the Lord Jeſus, and our feet directed to the courts, and ordinances of the Lord. In this way we ſhall experience the fulfilment of God's promiſes: and if we embrace, as it were, the Saviour, in the arms of faith hope and love, we ſhall meet death bereaved of his ſting, and be willing to leave this world and go to heaven, provided as the Lord's ſervants our work be done, and he be pleaſed to diſmiſs us to his reſt. Bleſſed be God that this ſalvation is prepared before the face of all people; and that this Light hath lightened this Gentile land: may we become a part of the true Iſrael, who glory in Chriſt alone! But let us not look merely on one ſide of this ſubject. This bleſſed goſpel eventually occaſions the fall of many profeſſed chriſtians, who neglect, deſpiſe or abuſe ſo great ſalvation; as well as effects the riſing again of many, who were ſunk deep into guilt, and impiety. Still Jeſus, and his doctrine and people, are placed for a ſign, that is every where ſpoken againſt: ſtill his truth, and holineſs are contradicted, and blaſphemed: ſtill his preached word is the touch-ſtone of men's characters, and often brings to light the ſecret pride, enmity, and wickedneſs of their hearts: ſtill they, who are bleſſed by their relation to Jeſus, muſt expect to witneſs, and experience ſuch things in this evil world, as will wound, and diſtreſs their ſouls; and ſtill they muſt prepare to endure contradiction, reproach, and contempt, becauſe they reſemble their bleſſed Saviour. We ſhould be careful how we indiſcriminately condemn practices, or modes of life, becauſe many have diſgraced them: for who can refuſe a tribute of commendation to the pious Anna? When the relative, and ſocial duties have been attended to, or as far as conſiſts with a due performance of them, it is very proper to ſpend the decline of life eſpecially, in retirement and devotion: and to ſerve God with faſtings and prayers, day and night, when it is connected with deep humility, and a readineſs to welcome Chriſt and his Salvation, and to ſpeak of him to all that wait for his redemption, muſt be allowed to be vaſtly different from the proud auſterities and hypocritical devotions of ſelf-righteous Phariſees ancient and modern: but whether zeal againſt *the latter* hath not led many perſons to overlook and even deſpiſe *the former*; inſtead of conſidering them, *in ſimilar circumſtances*, as models for imitation, is a queſtion that ought ſeriouſly to be examined. However, they, who are moſt mortified to, and abſtracted from the world, or abundant in every good work from proper principles, will with one conſent bear teſtimony to Chriſt, as the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

But let us not paſs over unimproved the only authentic account, that we have of our Redeemer's conduct in his youth. When we read that he "waxed ſtrong in Spirit, "filled with wiſdom, and when the grace of God was "with him;" (alas, moſt of us may ſay, how contrary to my youthful years; in which I grew in ſin, and folly as I grew in ſtature, and as the powers of my mind unfolded!) We might expect to hear many extraordinary things concerning Him: yet nothing is tranſmitted to us of ſuch matters, as are commonly reported about promiſing children. We are however informed that the ordinances, and temple of God were his delight; and that in Jeruſalem nothing ſo much attracted his attention, as the inſtructions of the public teachers of the divine law. Theſe things we too ought to deem moſt worthy of our regard; in theſe we ſhould find our chief ſatisfaction: thus young perſons ſhould employ their early days, ſeeking the knowledge of divine truth; attending on the miniſtry of the goſpel; propoſing ſuch enquiries to their ſeniors, and inſtructors, as may tend to the increaſe of knowledge and ſtudying to be able, with pertinency, and propriety to anſwer ſuch queſtions, as may be put them. From the earlieſt youth, every one ſhould deem the ſervice of God his great buſineſs: and the glory of his name, and the duty owing to Him muſt be allowed a pre-eminence even above that of children to their parents; and muſt be attended to, even when it interferes with their inclination, and ſatisfaction. In all things elſe the bleſſed Saviour hath left an example to young perſons, of unreſerved ſubjection, not only to their own parents, but even to thoſe, who are by any means entruſted with a kind of parental authority, and he hath alſo taught them patient induſtry, and contentment in a mean condition. Theſe, when connected with piety and humility, are proper evidences of an increaſe of true wiſdom, and of having obtained favour with God; and they have a tendency to render the poſſeſſor dear to his fellow creatures alſo. Let us then endeavour to keep the ſayings of Jeſus in our hearts, and to tranſcribe his example in our lives.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iii. *Mark*, c. i. v. 1—11.) V. 1—3.] After the death of king Herod, his dominions were divided into four diſtinct governments, in ſubordination to the Roman emperors. Tiberius had, before the time here intended, ſucceeded Auguſtus in the imperial throne, and Pontius Pilate a Roman governed the land of Judea under him: Herod Antipas the ſon of King Herod, held the government of Galilee; his brother Philip that of Iturea and Trachonitis, to the weſt of Herod's diſtrict; and Lyſanias, (who ſeems not to have been of Jewiſh extraction,) held the govern-

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight.

5 Every valley ſhall be filled, and every mountain and hill ſhall be brought low; and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough ways *ſhall be* made ſmooth;

6 And all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God.

7 Then ſaid he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to ſay within yourſelves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I ſay unto you, That God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham.

9 And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and caſt into the fire.

10 And the people aſked him, ſaying, What ſhall we do then?

11 He anſwereth and ſaith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewiſe.

12 Then came alſo publicans to be baptized, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, what ſhall we do?

13 And he ſaid unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the ſoldiers likewiſe demanded of him, ſaying, And what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuſe *any* falſely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men muſed in their hearts of John, whether he were the Chriſt or not;

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ment of Abilene, to the north of Galilee, on the borders of Syria. Theſe were called tetrarchs, from a greek word ſignifying four governments, or governing a fourth part, i. e. of king Herod's dominions. At the ſame time Annas, and Caiaphas were the high prieſts: for the affairs of the Jews were fallen into great diſorder, and the high prieſthood was diſpoſed of at the will of the ruling powers, from ſecular motives, without much regard to the regular ſucceſſion. We muſt not however ſuppoſe, that they had, properly ſpeaking, two high prieſts at once: but Annas, and Caiaphas either held that ſacred dignity by turns; or Annas was the high-prieſt, and Caiaphas his ſon-in-law acted as his deputy, and ſo filled up the various ſervices of that diſtinguiſhed office. However it was plain, that the ſceptre was departing from Judah, and that Shiloh was at hand, at the time when the word of the Lord came to John, as to the prophets of old; and when by immediate inſpiration he was directed to go into the country about Jordan, and "preach the baptiſm of repentance for the re-"miſſion of ſins," and thus to announce the ſpeedy approach of Chriſt. By the words here uſed we may underſtand, that John preached the neceſſity of repentance, in order to the remiſſion of ſins; and that the baptiſm of water was an outward ſymbol of that inward cleanſing, and renewal of heart, which attend, or are the effects of true repentance, as well as a profeſſion of it: ſo that if they were really partakers of this inward humiliation and cleanſing, they would certainly receive forgiveneſs of ſins through the Saviour that was about to appear amongſt them; as they would then be prepared to welcome, and participate the privileges and bleſſings of his ſpiritual redemption, and kingdom.

V. 4—6.] (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 3—5.) The words of the prophet, declaring that "the glory of the "Lord ſhould be revealed, and that all fleſh ſhould ſee "it together," are here rendered, "and all fleſh ſhall "ſee the Salvation of God;" which ſhews, that in Chriſt the Lord's ſalvation, his glory is particularly diſplayed to mankind, and that the goſpel was intended in due time to be univerſally diffuſed.

V. 7. *Multitude*, &c.] This ſeems to have been principally addreſſed to the Sadducees, and Phariſees: though the people, being in general infected with their leaven, might be alſo in ſome meaſure included.

V. 10—18.] Whilſt the Phariſees, &c, generally neglected John's exhortations, the common people enquired of him what they muſt do "to bring forth fruits "worthy of repentance?" To this he anſwered in general, by inculcating a diſintereſted love to their neighbours: not only ought the rich amongſt them to be very liberal; but every one, who poſſeſſed two coats, when one would ſerve his preſent purpoſe, was directed to give the other to ſome poor man who had none; and he that had food for the preſent, was ordered in like manner to impart a portion of it to him that had none, without any ſolicitude about the future. If we are not to interpret ſuch rules ſtrictly, and literally; yet we muſt at leaſt allow, that they require a far greater degree of liberality, of the rich, and even of the poor, according to their preſent ability, towards their more indigent neighbours, than is generally practiſed. The whole ſcripture forbids us to conſider ſuch duties as a meritorious condition, or qualification for applying to Chriſt: but as none can, or will accept of his ſalvation, or become ſubjects of his kingdom, without true repentance: ſo the evidences and effects of this repentance are here marked out; and in the performance of ſuch duties the humble

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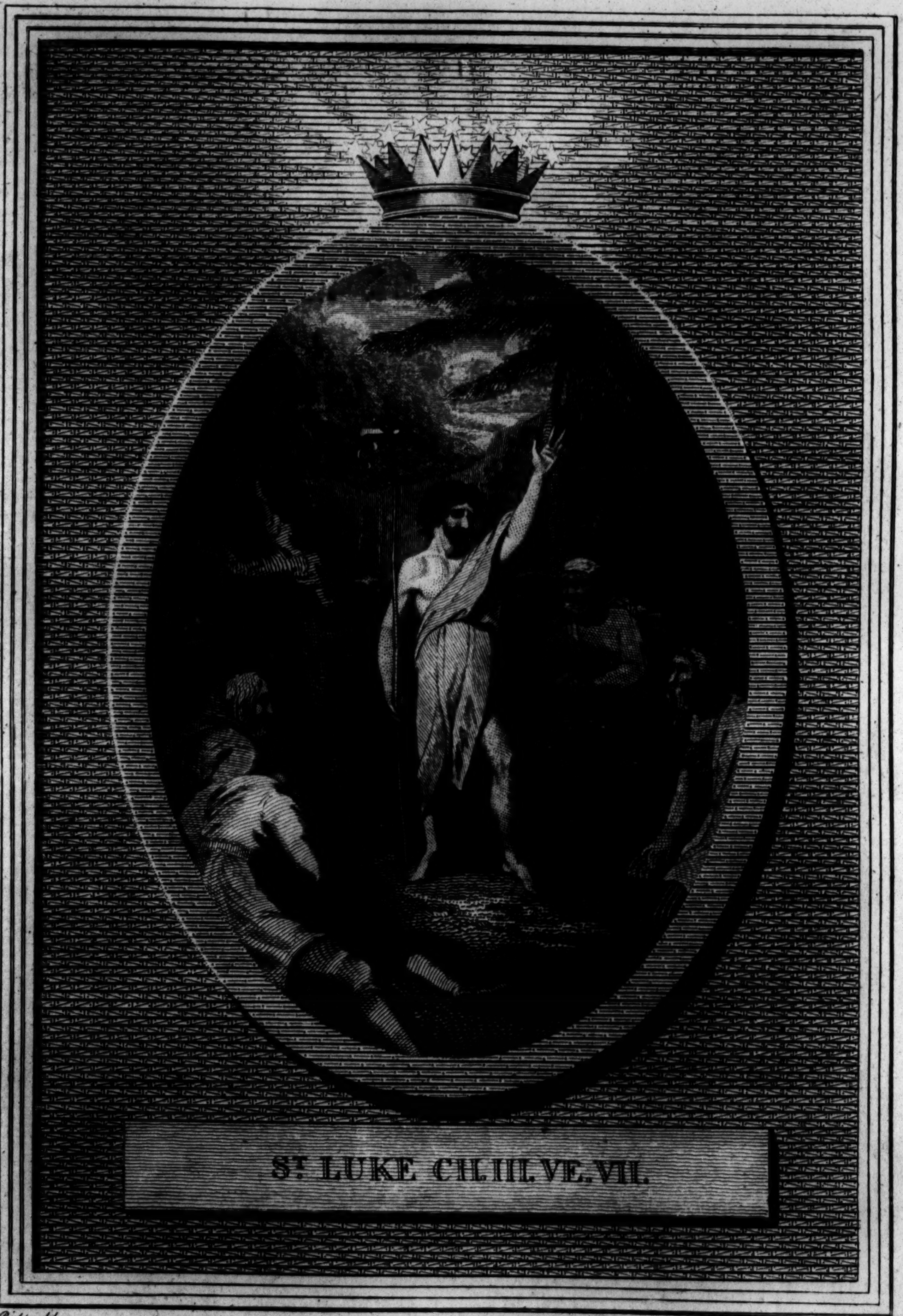

Sᵀ LUKE CH. III. VE. VII.

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16 John anſwered, ſaying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe: he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire.

17 Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife; and for all the evils which Herod had done.

20 Added yet this above all, that he ſhut up John in priſon.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to paſs, that Jeſus alſo being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened:

22 And the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily ſhape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which ſaid, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleaſed.

23 And Jeſus himſelf began to be about thirty years of age, being, (as was ſuppoſed) the ſon of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Heli,

24 Which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Janna, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph,

25 Which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Amos, which was *the ſon* of Naum, which was *the ſon* of Eſli, which was *the ſon* of Nagge,

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penitent muſt wait for the comforts, and bleſſings of a free ſalvation; and not in the neglect of them, or in the practice of his former ſins. John alſo anſwered more particularly the enquiry of the publicans, or the farmers of the public taxes: he did not require them to renounce their employment, but to act in it with ſcrupulous integrity; not uſing either force or fraud to enhance their profits, by exacting more than was their legal due. This implied, that many of them were guilty of ſuch exactions; but it ſeems alſo to allow, that they might be entirely avoided, and that the employment was not unlawful in itſelf. We muſt by no means ſuppoſe *that* to be true repentance, whereby reſtitution of iniquitous gain is not made, ſo far as a man hath ability, and opportunity: yet we do not find that John inſiſted upon it; for it is a ſubject that often involves complicated queſtions, and men muſt firſt ceaſe to do evil, and then learn to do well; and the ſame principle, which induced them directly to forego all unjuſt gain, in the conduct of their buſineſs, would at length lead them to reſtitution, as far as they could. There were alſo ſome ſoldiers, who, under convictions of ſin, enquired of him what they muſt do? There were in thoſe days Jews, who ſerved in the Roman armies; and John did not direct them to quit that enſnaring ſituation, which probably could not have been done without extreme difficulty, and cauſing much diſpleaſure to their rulers: but he ordered them to behave in a harmleſs, and quiet manner in their ſtation, not terrifying or injuring any one; and not bearing ſlanderous teſtimony againſt any perſon, in order to obtain ſome of their property; but to be content with their wages and proviſions. We ſhould conſider theſe anſwers, as preſcribing the *preſent duty* of the enquirers; and as forming an *immediate touchſtone* of their ſincerity: for it would be moſt abſurd to conclude, that an external performance of theſe duties would purchaſe them an indulgence to continue in other ſins; or profit them, if they neglected the ſalvation of Chriſt. If therefore they without heſitation thus far did works meet for repentance; they might gradually be brought forward into an acquaintance with other parts of true religion: but if in theſe reſpects they proved diſobedient; they would not be likely to attend to the more ſpiritual, and ſelf-denying doctrine of Chriſt. Whilſt John in this manner inſtructed the people; his holy life, and his faithful inſtructions, (though he wrought no miracles,) induced the people to enquire whether he were not the Chriſt; and they were in ſuſpenſe in their own minds, and diſputed with each other about this matter; till John, who ſought no glory to himſelf, but only to Jeſus, aſſured them, that the Meſſiah was at hand, and was a far more honourable, and excellent Perſon than he. Some expoſitors ſeem to interpret the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, and of fire, almoſt excluſively of the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on the apoſtles, &c, and of their conſequent miraculous powers: but it ſeems rather to refer to his penetrating, purifying, and transforming influences in the hearts of true chriſtians, of which thoſe miraculous operations were a ſort of earneſt, and emblem.

V. 21. *Praying*, &c.] “It is obſervable, that all “the three voices from heaven, by which the Father “bare witneſs to Chriſt, were pronounced while he was “praying, or very quickly after it.” (*Luke*, c. ix. v. 29. 35. *John*, c. xii. v. 28) (Doddridge.)

V. 22. *Bodily*, &c.] It is evident that this was a corporeal appearance deſcending on Chriſt, as a dove lights on the ground; and probably in the ſhape as well as after the manner of a dove: but it does not become us to enquire further into the ſubject. The emblem hath before been conſidered.

V. 23—38.] Jeſus is here ſaid to have began to be about thirty years of age at his baptiſm; or perhaps to have began, or entered upon his public miniſtry by being baptized of John, when he was about 30 years old. This ſingle expreſſion of an inſpired writer outweighs all the ſpecious conjectures of learned men, concerning the

26 Which was *the ſon* of Maath, which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Semei, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Juda,

27 Which was *the ſon* of Joanna, which was *the ſon* of Rheſa, which was *the ſon* of Zorobabel, which was *the ſon* of Salathiel, which was *the ſon* of Neri,

28 Which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Addi, which was *the ſon* of Coſam, which was *the ſon* of Elmodam, which was *the ſon* of Er,

29 Which was *the ſon* of Joſe, which was *the ſon* of Eliezer, which was *the ſon* of Jorim, which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi,

30 Which was *the ſon* of Simeon, which was *the ſon* of Juda, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Jonan, which was *the ſon* of Eliakim,

31 Which was *the ſon* of Melea, which was *the ſon* of Menan, which was *the ſon* of Mattatha, which was *the ſon* of Nathan, which was *the ſon* of David,

32 Which was *the ſon* of Jeſſe, which was *the ſon* of Obed, which was *the ſon* of Booz, which was *the ſon* of Salmon, which was *the ſon* of Naaſſon,

33 Which was *the ſon* of Aminadab, which was *the ſon* of Aram, which was *the ſon* of Eſrom, which was *the ſon* of Phares, which was *the ſon* of Juda,

34 Which was *the ſon* of Jacob, which was *the ſon* of Iſaac, which was *the ſon* of Abraham, which was *the ſon* of Thara, which was *the ſon* of Nachor,

35 Which was *the ſon* of Saruch, which was *the ſon* of Ragau, which was *the ſon* of Phalec, which was *the ſon* of Heber, which was *the ſon* of Sala,

36 Which was *the ſon* of Cainan, which was *the ſon* of Arphaxad, which was *the ſon* of Sem, which was *the ſon* of Noe, which was *the ſon* of Lamech,

37 Which was *the ſon* of Mathuſala, which was *the ſon* of Enoch, which was *the ſon* of Jared, which was *the ſon* of Maleleel, which was *the ſon* of Cainan,

38 Which was *the ſon* of Enos, which was *the ſon* of Seth, which was *the ſon* of Adam, which was *the ſon* of God.

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duration of our Lord's miniſtry; and if he were crucified in the year 33, it muſt have laſted longer than they generally allow. There ſeems no reaſon to doubt, but the following is the genealogy of Jeſus in the line of Mary: but as the names of men only, chiefly, ſtood in public regiſters; ſo the name of Joſeph, not that of Mary, muſt have been inſerted. It is therefore added that Jeſus was ſuppoſed to be the Son of Joſeph, which may refer to the legal conſtitution, as well as to the common opinion of the Jews; as he was born of Mary after ſhe was married to Joſeph. Joſeph's father was called Jacob, (*Matt.* c. i. v. 16:) but marrying the daughter of Heli, and being perhaps adopted by him, he was called his Son, and as ſuch, his name ſeems to have been inſerted in the public regiſters; and ſo the pedigree is carried backward in the line of Nathan to David, and from him to Adam, who was the Son of God, as created by him in his own image; though he ſoon loſt it by ſin. Some of the ſame names indeed occur, which are in Joſeph's genealogy: but as different perſons often bear the ſame name, it ſeems needleſs to perplex ourſelves about ſo common a caſe. Cainan, (v. 36.) is not found in the Hebrew text of the Bible in any of the genealogies, but only in the ſeptuagint Greek tranſlation, from whence it ſeems to have been inſerted in the public regiſters: theſe the evangeliſts probably tranſcribed, as ſufficiently exact for their purpoſe; and as more generally ſuited to command attention, than if they had altered them, and even rendered them more accurate.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt the people of the world are eagerly contending for their tranſient honours, or employed in their carnal purſuits, the ſervants of God grow up in obſcurity, and when the Lord hath prepared them for uſefulneſs, he will bring them forth, and find work for them. The true doctrine of the holy ſcriptures is equally calculated to encourage the humble, and to abaſe the proud: when faithfully, and ſucceſsfully diſpenſed, "the valleys are "exalted, and the hills brought low," and every obſtacle is removed, to make way for Chriſt to reveal his Salvation, and ſet up his kingdom in the hearts of ſinners. But many attend the preaching of the goſpel, and come to public ordinances, who are no better than "a generation of vipers:" they ſhould therefore be dealt with very plainly, and ſometimes roughly; that they may be warned to flee from the wrath to come, and made ſenſible that it is vain to rely on forms, notions, external privileges, or profeſſion, without repentance, and fruits meet for repentance. Some of this ſort ſeem to think, that God would have no church on earth, if their ſect were caſt off: but he would ſooner form children to Abraham from the very ſtones of the ſtreet, than accept of or ſave proud hypocrites, and wicked profeſſors of the goſpel. Theſe are trees, at whoſe root the ax is

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Faſting forty days, and overcoming all the temptations of the devil, 1---13. *2d. Preaching in Galilee with great renown; and offending the Nazarites, ſo that they ſought in vain to kill him,* 14---32. *3d. Caſting out an unclean ſpirit, healing Peter's wife's mother, and working other miracles, &c.* 33---44.

AND Jeſus, being full of the Holy Ghoſt, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in thoſe days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this ſtone that it be made bread.

4 And Jeſus anſwered him, ſaying, It is written, That man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, ſhewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil ſaid unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me, and to whomſoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine.

8 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.

9 And he brought him to Jeruſalem, and

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laid, to cut them ſpeedily down, that they may be caſt into the fire; becauſe amidſt all their advantages, they have brought forth no good fruit: yea they are light worthleſs chaff, to be driven, as with a whirlwind, into the unquenchable fire of hell. Men ſhould therefore not only aſk what they muſt do to be ſaved? But they ought alſo to enquire more particularly concerning the proper evidences, and effects of ſaving faith, and true repentance; the work and duties of their ſtations, and the way in which they ſhould wait for the conſolations of the goſpel: and miniſters ſhould enter into the detail, and be exact and particular in anſwering ſuch enquiries. In general our repentance, faith, and love of God our Saviour muſt be evinced by our love to our neighbours, and brethren: and ſurely our clearer diſcoveries of the unſpeakable mercy of the Lord Jeſus to our ſinful ſouls ought not to render us more niggardly in relieving the diſtreſſes of our fellow ſinners: yet the rule laid down by this man of God would be deemed extremely rigorous, if we now ſhould attempt to inſiſt upon its being obſerved. However thus much we muſt ſay, that "he who ſoweth liberally, ſhall reap alſo liberally;" and that "God loveth a chearful giver." It is not generally adviſeable for men to quit their ſtations in the community, provided they are not directly criminal: for though they be attended with peculiar temptations, yet they may alſo afford them peculiar advantages for ſhewing the excellency of the goſpel, and the power of divine grace, by a blameleſs deportment in them; and there are many employments, that could have no exiſtence were men not wicked, which are nevertheleſs needful in the preſent ſtate of the world, and a man may conſcientiouſly ſerve God and his generation in them. Men ſhould firſt be cautioned againſt the peculiar temptations of their reſpective employments; and to avoid the ſins and give up the iniquitous gains, which generally attend them: for if they cannot be induced by fears of the wrath to come, to renounce injuſtice and fraudulency; they are not likely to be led forward into the knowledge of Chriſt, and his ſalvation. But when they are prevailed upon to make ſuch ſacrifices for conſcience ſake; there is good encouragement to inſtruct them more fully in all things relating to his perſon, his atonement, his ſanctifying Spirit, his holy precepts, and his perfect example; in every thing belonging to the doctrine, experience, and practice of Chriſtianity: and eminent holineſs will be ſo far from rendering a man proud, and legal; that it will proportionably abaſe him in his own eſteem, render him regardleſs of his own glory, and make Chriſt more precious and glorious in his eyes. The faithful ſervants of God will be ſure to make themſelves enemies, amongſt the proud and licentious; and contempt, reproach and perſecution are the general recompence of their honeſt reproofs. Yet they, who thus injure them, add a greater evil to all their other ſins, and one expreſſive of more determined enmity to God and holineſs, than any of the reſt. Whilſt after the example of our righteous Surety, we are pouring out our hearts in prayer, and honouring God's ordinances, we may expect to have the heavens, as it were, opened, to pour down bleſſings on our heads. Indeed all good things may be, in ſome ſenſe, ſaid to be compriſed in the Spirit of adoption communicated to us, as the pledge and earneſt of eternal felicity. If our ſouls be renewed by his ſacred influences to a conformity with our Saviour, in purity meekneſs and love; we ſhall thus be evinced to be *in Him* the children of our Father, with whom *for his ſake* he will be well pleaſed, though in ourſelves we be moſt unworthy: and thus alſo we ſhall be qualified for every ſervice to which we are called. Theſe are privileges worthy of our eſtimation. All fleſh as deſcended from the firſt Adam is indeed as graſs, and withers as the flower of the field: but he who partakes of the Spirit of life from the ſecond Adam hath that eternal happineſs, which by the goſpel is preached to us.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—13.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iv. v. 1—11. *Mark*, c. i. v. 12, 13.)

ſet him on a pinnacle of the temple, and ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thyſelf down from hence:

10 For it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee;

11 And in *their* hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.

12 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, It is ſaid, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a ſeaſon.

14 And Jeſus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their ſynagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſtood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Eſaias: and, when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor; he hath ſent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed;

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he cloſed the book, and he gave *it* again to the miniſter, and ſat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the ſynagogue were faſtened on him.

21 And he began to ſay unto them, This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witneſs, and wondered at the gracious words, which proceeded out of his mouth. And they ſaid, Is not this Joſeph's ſon?

23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye will ſurely ſay unto me this proverb, Phyſician heal thyſelf: whatſoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do alſo here in thy country.

24 And he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, Many widows were in Iſrael in the days of Elias, when the heaven was ſhut up three years and ſix months, when great famine was throughout all the land:

26 But unto none of them was Elias ſent, ſave unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Iſrael in the time of Eliſeus the prophet; and none of them was cleanſed, ſaving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the ſynagogue, when they heard theſe things, were filled with wrath,

29 And roſe up, and thruſt him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might caſt him down headlong.

30 But he, paſſing through the midſt of them, went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of

V. 14, 15.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iv. v. 12—25.) "The power of the Spirit" may here either refer to the impulſe upon our Lord's own mind; to the miracles that he wrought in confirmation of his doctrine; or to the energy, that attended his word, to the hearts and conſciences of the hearers.

V. 16—32.] When our Lord had made a circuit through the other parts of Galilee, he came at length to Nazareth, where he had ſpent his former life; and on the ſabbath-day, according to his conſtant cuſtom in every place, he reſorted to the Synagogue, that he might join in the public worſhip there performed, and embrace the opportunity of inſtructing the people: and either becauſe he had been uſed to join with them in their ſtated worſhip, and perhaps ſometimes to officiate as a reader amongſt them; or becauſe of the reputation that he had acquired by his miracles, and doctrine in other places; they gave him a roll containing the prophecy of Iſaiah, that he might read the ſcriptures to them, (which was always a part of their ſtated ſervice.) When therefore he had unrolled the parchment, he read a portion, that hath already been conſidered, (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. lxi. v. 1—3:) perhaps it was part of the leſſon appointed for the day. There are ſeveral variations between the paſſage, as it ſtands in the prophecy, and as it is he quoted; and the latter does not exactly accord either to the original text, or the ſeptuagint tranſlation: probably the evangeliſt rather meant to quote the ſenſe, than

Galilee, and taught them on the ſabbath days.

32 And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

33 And in the ſynagogue there was a man which had a ſpirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy one of God.

35 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midſt, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and ſpake among themſelves, ſaying, What a word *is* this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean ſpirits, and they come out!

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 And he aroſe out of the ſynagogue, and

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the exact words of the prophet. The "recovering of ſight to the blind" is here added: the fulfilment of it in Chriſt, both in reſpect of men's bodies and ſouls is manifeſt; and it ſeems to have been an alluſion to the wretched ſtate of thoſe priſoners, whoſe eyes had been put out, when they were thrown into the dungeon, and loaded with fetters that bruiſed their limbs. No other deliverer could reſtore to a redeemed captive the ſight, of which he had been deprived, except the Lord Jeſus. "The day of vengeance of our God," which the prophet connected with "the acceptable year of the Lord," ſeems not to have been at that time inſiſted on by Jeſus; that the Nazarites might have the leſs pretence for rejecting him, when his whole diſcourſe breathed nothing but mercy and compaſſion. Having choſen theſe words as the ſubject of his diſcourſe, he gave the book into the hands of the miniſter, (or ſtated ſervant of the ſynagogue, who took care of thoſe matters,) and ſat down, as teachers uſed then to do; and the report of his miracles, and doctrine, when compared with this remarkable prophecy, cauſed the people to fix their eyes upon him with the greateſt expectation, and attention. He therefore began explicitly to declare, that the words read to them were that day fulfilled in their ears; which implied that he was the promiſed Meſſiah, of whom the prophet ſpake. And doubtleſs he explained the words, as referring to the ſpiritual redemption, which he came to effect in behalf of enſlaved ſinners, and preſſed them to apply for a ſhare of theſe important bleſſings. In ſhort he ſpake with ſuch energy, wiſdom and affection, that his hearers, notwithſtanding their prejudices, bare witneſs to him, that he had diſcourſed to them in an excellent manner; and exceedingly admired the "words of grace," and tender compaſſion for the miſeries of ſinful men, which he had delivered with ſo much propriety, and authority. Yet their recollection of his mean birth, and of the diſadvantages of his education, and previous manner of life, came in their way as an inſuperable ſtumbling-block: and inſtead of thence inferring that he had his wiſdom and utterance immediately from heaven; they rejected his claim to be the Meſſiah, and ſeem even to have doubted of the reality of the miracles, that he was reported to have wrought. Knowing therefore their minds, he declared, that he was aware, that they were diſpoſed to uſe the common proverb, "phyſician heal thyſelf" with relation to him: intimating, that if indeed he were able to perform cures, he ought to have begun with healing the diſeaſes of his old neighbours; or at leaſt that he ought now to do ſuch miracles among them, as he had wrought at Capernaum, if he expected them to pay any regard to him. (*John*, c. iv. ver. 46.) Thus they wanted to dictate to him, or to cavil at his miniſtry, becauſe he did not comply with their humour, or pay court to them. He therefore now firſt applied to them that proverb, which hath already been conſidered, (Notes, &c. *Matt:* c. xiii. v. 53—58:) for having known him in a ſituation, externally perhaps inferior to their own, they could not endure to be warned and inſtructed *by Him*, or admit of his ſuperiority over them. But he further obſerved, that he had a right to diſpenſe his favours as he ſaw good: and that in working miracles at other places rather than at Nazareth, he did the ſame as their ancient prophets had done: for in that terrible famine, which took place in the days of Elijah, (Notes, &c. 1 *Kings*, c. xvii,) that prophet was not ſent to relieve any of the poor deſtitute widows of Iſrael, but only to one, who was of Gentile extraction: and in like manner Eliſeus, or Eliſha, cleanſed none of the lepers of Iſrael; but only exerted his miraculous power upon Naaman a Syrian, (Notes, &c. 2 *Kings*, c. v.) So that if He had not only given Capernaum the preference to Nazareth; but had even neglected them, and conferred his favours on the Gentiles; they could not have objected to his conduct, without condemning theſe two ancient prophets. But though their prejudices and unbelief were the real reaſons that they were not favoured equally with other cities; yet this declaration of our Lord, that he had a right to work his miracles where he pleaſed, exceedingly enraged them, as if it had been an inexcuſable injuſtice to them. They therefore forgot the holineſs of the day, and the religious purpoſes for which they were aſſembled; and riſing up with one conſent, they thruſt him out of the ſynagogue, and even out of the city: hurrying him away to the brink of a precipice, that they might caſt him down, and daſh him to pieces. But he miraculouſly eluded their attempt; and paſſing unobſerved through the midſt of them, went to Capernaum, where he proceeded to teach the people with ſurpriſing authority, and energy. (*Matt.* c. vii. v. 28, 29.)

V. 33—44.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 14—17. *Mark*, c. i. v. 23—39.) The words "when it was day," (v. 42,) may be rendered "when the day was coming on;" and thus be reconciled to thoſe of St. Mark, entered into Simon's houſe: and Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they beſought him for her.

39 And he ſtood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her. And immediately ſhe aroſe, and miniſtered unto them.

40 Now when the ſun was ſetting, all they that had any ſick with divers diſeaſes brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 And devils alſo came out of many, crying out, and ſaying, Thou art Chriſt, the Son of God. And he, rebuking *them*, ſuffered them not to ſpeak: for they knew that he was Chriſt.

42 And when it was day he departed, and went into a deſert place; and the people ſought him, and came unto him, and ſtayed him, that he ſhould not depart from them.

43 And he ſaid unto them, I muſt preach the kingdom of God to other cities alſo; for therefore am I ſent.

44 And he preached in the ſynagogues of Galilee.

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who ſays, that "it was a great while before day."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we return from ſacred ordinances, replete with thoſe ſpiritual affections, that are excited by the Holy Ghoſt; it is good for us to retire for prayer and meditation. And ſhould ſatan even take that opportunity of harraſſing us with his hateful temptations, we ſhall poſſeſs many advantages for repelling his aſſaults. Fervent devotion, or ſharp conflicts may render us for a time regardleſs of the concerns of our animal life; and this may ſubſerve our earneſtneſs, and ſucceſs: but the cravings of nature will again return; and then ſatan will either tempt us to impatience, to irregular methods of obtaining a ſupply, or to exceſſive indulgence: we ſhould therefore be eſpecially upon our guard, after remarkable ſeaſons of abſtraction, and communion with God. The enemy knows how to make his advantage of all the peculiarities of our ſituation: and we ought to ſtudy them ourſelves, that we may be prepared for the aſſault, and have our anſwer ready. To whatever ſin we are tempted, the ſcripture well underſtood, ſupplies us with ſpiritual armour of proof, with which to baffle the tempter. Let us remember in all our ſtraits, that "man doth not live by "bread only, but by the word of God alſo:" that all ſatan's promiſes and pretences are illuſion and deceit; and that if he be *permitted* to have any influence in diſpoſing of the "kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;" he only uſes them as baits, by which to enſnare ambitious and carnal men to their deſtruction. We ſhould therefore reject every opportunity of ſinful gain, or advancement, with deciſion and abhorrence, as a price offered us for our ſouls; and we ſhould ſeek our riches, honours, and happineſs in the worſhip and ſervice of God only. Thus as his beloved children, angels will have it in charge to watch over us "in all our ways," and we ſhall be preſerved from leaving them, through preſumptuous, and oſtentatious "tempting of the Lord "our God." As ſeaſons of peculiar conſolation are commonly tranſient, ſo are thoſe of diſtreſſing temptation, eſpecially when the enemy is vigorouſly reſiſted. But though he depart for a ſeaſon, we ſhall never be out of his reach, until we are removed from this evil world. Yet when, in the ſtrength, and after the example of our Redeemer, we have obtained a deciſive victory; we may hope for a reſpite, and an opportunity of applying ourſelves with compoſure, and diligence to our proper work. But ſhould any of us meet with acceptance for a time, in our endeavours to do good; we ſhould expect ſome change, or alloy. Indeed fame and honour do not belong to us, but to the Lord; nor can we reaſonably hope to eſcape that reproach, and contempt, which He continually experienced: this ought not therefore to damp our ardour, or diſmay us from a conſtancy in our attempts to be uſeful to mankind. It ſhould alſo be our cuſtom to reſort, on the Lord's day *at leaſt*, to the aſſemblies of God's people, to join in his worſhip, and attend to his truth: and whether we read, hear, or preach the word of God; we ſhould enquire diligently into its meaning, and then apply it to our own caſe, or to thoſe of others. The Spirit of the Lord, who anointed the Saviour for his work, and who hath revealed him in the ſcriptures, muſt ſo diſcover Him to our hearts in all his gracious characters, and offices. Under this bleſſed influence we ſhall perceive that the meſſage of the goſpel is indeed glad tidings to the poor and humble: the divine Redeemer came on purpoſe to bind up the broken in heart, and to give peace to the wounded conſcience; to reſcue the wretched captives of ſatan; to bring them forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and to the bleſſed light of divine truth; and alſo to open their blinded eyes, that they may behold, walk, and rejoice in this Light, and be delivered from all the galling chains of their own deſtructive luſts. Let then ſinners attend to the Saviour's invitation, in the acceptable year of the Lord, when liberty is thus proclaimed to thoſe that are bruiſed: let them ſeek to him for this bleſſed deliverance; that this ſcripture may not only be fulfilled in their ears, but in their experience; whilſt victory, peace, conſolation, and the fruits of righteouſneſs prove the conſequences of their "faith in the incarnate Son of God." But many will attend to the goſpel, and expreſs their approbation of the things which are ſpoken; yea many will give the Lord himſelf good words, who will not give him their hearts. Some prejudice will intervene to furniſh an objection againſt the humbling doctrine of the croſs: and whilſt the word itſelf excites their proud and carnal enmity, they will quarrel with ſomething in the conduct or manner of the ſpeaker, that they may not be ſelf-condemned in

CHAP. V.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Preaching from Simon's ſhip; requiting him with a miraculous draught of fiſhes; and calling him and his companions to a conſtant attendance on him, 1---11. *2d. Cleanſing a leper; healing a paralytic; calling Levi to follow him; and vindicating himſelf in aſſociating with Publicans, &c, and his diſciples in not faſting after the manner of the Phariſees, &c,* 12---39.

AND it came to paſs, that, as the people preſſed upon him to hear the word of God, he ſtood by the lake of Genneſaret,

2 And ſaw two ſhips ſtanding by the lake: but the fiſhermen were gone out of them, and were waſhing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ſhips, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thruſt out a little from the land. And he ſat down, and taught the people out of the ſhip.

4 Now when he had left ſpeaking, he ſaid unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon anſwering, ſaid unto him, Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheleſs, at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they incloſed a great multitude of fiſhes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ſhip, that they ſhould come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ſhips, ſo that they began to ſink.

8 When Simon Peter ſaw *it,* he fell down at Jeſus' knees, ſaying, Depart from me; for I am a ſinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was aſtoniſhed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fiſhes which they had taken:

10 And ſo *was* alſo James and John, the ſons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jeſus ſaid unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou ſhalt catch men.

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neglecting his meſſage. But the doctrine of God's ſovereignty peculiarly exaſperates proud men. They deem themſelves to have almoſt an excluſive right to his favour; yet they will not ſeek for it *in his way:* when therefore others are admitted to the privileges, which they have forfeited, they are greatly enraged. In vain do we demonſtrate, that God hath aſſerted his undoubted right to "do what he will with his own," and that he hath commonly paſſed by hypocritical profeſſors, to ſave pagans and profligates. Inſtead of being ſilenced, they are the more exaſperated by ſuch repreſentations: and their enmity to God often vents itſelf in revilings, outrages, and perſecutions againſt his ſervants. But He, who avoided the aſſaults of his enraged enemies, till his appointed hour arrived, will uphold and protect all his miniſters, till they have finiſhed their teſtimony. If therefore they are perſecuted from one place to another; let them boldly proceed in declaring to all men every where, the way of ſalvation. The word they ſpeak, being attended with the power of their Lord, will be made effectual to convince, alarm, and convert ſome of their hearers: and, as no caſe can be deſperate if Jeſus ſee good to work; even thoſe in their aſſemblies, who are moſt evidently poſſeſſed of "unclean ſpirits," may be delivered from them, and made illuſtrious monuments of his grace, and power: and though the devil may create great diſtreſs to ſuch as Chriſt is reſcuing from his dominion; yet he will not be able to do them any real harm. Our buſineſs therefore ſhould be to ſpread abroad his fame in every place; to beſeech him in behalf of thoſe, that are diſeaſed in body, or mind; and to uſe our influence in bringing ſinners to him, that his powerful hands may be laid upon them, for their healing. Whilſt we thus hope in his power, truth, and love, for ourſelves, and thoſe who are more immediately connected with us; we ſhould ſeek to promote the preaching of his goſpel in other cities alſo: for though his perſonal miniſtry was confined to one place at a time; yet he may continue with us, by his word, and Spirit, and extend the ſame bleſſings to other nations alſo; till throughout all the earth the worſhippers and ſervants of ſatan ſhall acknowledge him as the Chriſt the Son of God, and find redemption through his blood even the forgiveneſs of their ſins.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—11.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iv. ver. 18—22. c. xiii. v. 1, 2. *Mark,* c. i. v. 16—22.) This is ſuppoſed to be a fuller account of the calling of Peter and his companions; though perhaps it is not inſerted in the exact order of the hiſtory. They had got acquainted with Jeſus ſome time before this, and had probably attended him to Jeruſalem, and returned with him through Samaria into Galilee; (*John,* c. i. v. 35—42. c. iv:) but they ſeem to have, from time to time, followed their ordinary employments; till on this occaſion they became his conſtant attendants. He had hitherto generally preached in the ſynagogues; but now ſuch numbers thronged around him, that theſe places of worſhip could no longer contain them. Being therefore on the banks of the lake of Genneſaret, or the ſea of Tiberias, attended with a vaſt concourſe of people, he ſaw two ſmall fiſhing veſſels near the ſhore; but the fiſhermen had juſt left them, to waſh their nets, after an unſucceſsful uſe of them in fiſhing: accordingly he entered

11 And when they had brought their ſhips to land, they forſook all, and followed him.

12 And it came to paſs, when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leproſy; who, ſeeing Jeſus, fell on *his* face, and beſought him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.

13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately the leproſy departed from him.

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing according as Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.

15 But ſo much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 And he withdrew himſelf into the wilderneſs, and prayed.

17 And it came to paſs on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Phariſees and doctors of the law ſitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jeruſalem; and the power of the Lord was *preſent* to heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palſy: and they ſought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.

19 And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in, becauſe of the multitude, they went upon the houſe-top, and let him down through the tiling, with *his* couch, into the midſt before Jeſus.

20 And when he ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto him, Man, thy ſins are forgiven thee.

21 And the ſcribes and the Phariſees began to reaſon, ſaying, Who is this which ſpeaketh blaſphemies? Who can forgive ſins but God alone?

22 But when Jeſus perceived their thoughts, he anſwering, ſaid unto them, What reaſon ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, Riſe up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy,) I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine houſe.

25 And immediately he roſe up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own houſe, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, ſaying, We have ſeen ſtrange things to day.

27 And after theſe things he went forth, and ſaw a publican, named Levi, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom; and he ſaid unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, roſe up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feaſt in his

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that veſſel, which belonged to Simon Peter, and deſired him to come into it, and thruſt it to a ſmall diſtance from the land; and when this was done he ſat down, and thence inſtructed the people. When he had finiſhed his diſcourſe he ordered Peter to thruſt out his boat further from the ſhore, into the deep water of the lake; and there to caſt out his nets for a draught of fiſhes: to this Peter anſwered, that they had wearied themſelves very much during the whole night, which was the proper time for fiſhing, and yet had taken nothing: however at his word, they would make another attempt, though there was no human probability of it's being ſucceſsful. But this being done, they incloſed immediately ſo large a number of fiſhes, brought thither by the power of our Lord for that purpoſe, that the net brake in ſome places with the weight of them: yet by the aſſiſtance of their partners in the other ſhip, they ſecured them all; and with them both their boats were filled ſo much, that they were ready to ſink. (*John*, c. xxi. v. 1—11.) This diſplay of the power and knowledge of Jeſus ſo aſtoniſhed Peter, that he was over-powered with awe and conſternation: and being conſcious of his own ſinfulneſs, as well as impreſſed with a ſenſe of Chriſt's holineſs and majeſty; he in deep humility, but ignorantly, deſired Him to depart from him, being afraid of ſome fatal conſequence from his preſence with ſo vile a ſinner. Indeed he ſeems to have been ſo aſtoniſhed, that he ſcarce knew what he ſaid: though he ſpake according to the notions, that have generally been entertained of a wicked man's danger from the power, and preſence of an holy God, or of thoſe whom he eſpecially approves and favours. The miracle itſelf was emblematic of many things, relative to the preaching of the goſpel; and eſpecially of Peter's great ſucceſs on the day of Pentecoſt. However when Chriſt had encouraged him and his companions, and aſſured them, that he meant to employ them in bringing ſinners by his goſpel to the obedience of faith; they heſitated not to leave all and follow him.

V. 12—38.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 1—4. c. ix. v. 1—17. *Mark*, c. i. v. 40—45. c. ii. v. 1—22.)

own houſe: and there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that ſat down with them.

30 But their ſcribes and Phariſees murmured againſt his diſciples, ſaying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and ſinners?

31 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, They that are whole need not a phyſician; but they that are ſick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

33 And they ſaid unto him, Why do the diſciples of John faſt often, and make prayers, and likewiſe *the diſciples* of the Phariſees; but thine eat and drink?

34 And he ſaid unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber faſt while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days.

36 And he ſpake alſo a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwiſe, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; elſe the new wine will burſt the bottles, and be ſpilled, and the bottles ſhall periſh.

38 But new wine muſt be put into new bottles; and both are preſerved.

39 No man alſo, having drunk old *wine*, ſtraightway deſireth new; for he ſaith, The old is better.

It is ſaid, (v. 17,) that the power of the Lord was preſent to heal them; that is the ſick, that were brought to him, and not the Phariſees, &c, who came to watch him.

V. 39, *No*, &c.] As old wine is more valued, and deemed more wholeſome and pleaſant than new, which is yet in a ſtate of fermentation; and as they, who have been uſed to the former cannot readily be brought to reliſh the latter, but will ſtill prefer the old wine: ſo the ſubſtantials of religion, which have been the ſame from the firſt revelation of mercy to fallen man, are far more valuable, than the auſterities, traditions, or peculiarities of any ſect or party; and they, who have been habitually converſant with the former will not eaſily be brought to pay very great regard to the latter, but will deem repentance, faith and holineſs far preferable to them all. Or it may mean, that men cannot at once change their modes, and habits of life, but muſt gradually be inured to thoſe kinds and degrees of ſelf-denial, that are not immediately neceſſary; as perſons that have been uſed to old wine, muſt be gradually brought to reliſh the new: and therefore Jeſus did not think proper to impoſe their auſterities on his diſciples at once; but gradually to train them up to hardſhip and ſuffering.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When multitudes preſs to hear the word of God, it becomes expedient to exceed ordinary meaſures of diligence in teaching them. On ſuch rare, and important occaſions, every place, and every day are ſeaſonable and proper for the preaching of the goſpel; and the common maxims, by which ſuch matters are regulated at other times, are then to be ſuperſeded by far more weighty conſiderations. Whatever is employed in the ſervice of Chriſt, becomes holy by it's relation to Him: thus our houſes, poſſeſſions, employments, and even refreſhments may be ſanctified to us, by being rendered ſubſervient to his glory. We are often called upon to renounce temporal advantages for his ſake; but we are ſeldom even in theſe things eventually loſers by him. Obedience to his word, and dependance on his power and bleſſing, will in every reſpect enſure all deſirable ſucceſs; but eſpecially in the great concerns of religion. The miniſter, who hath toiled long under great diſcouragement, and with no apparent ſucceſs, muſt not give up his hope, or ceaſe from his labour: but at Chriſt's word he muſt again and again let down the net. Such delays ſometimes tend to more ſignal ſucceſs, by increaſing humility, ſimplicity, and fervency of ſpirit in prayer: and thus the unſucceſsful endeavours of many years may be amply recompenſed by the bleſſing of God even on a ſingle ſermon. It would indeed be more encouraging to ſee ſome fruit of our labours from time to time; and when this is not witneſſed, it may well cauſe us to enquire whether there be nothing in our ſpirit, conduct, or doctrine, which prevents uſefulneſs: yet the effect may at length be equally great, when we long labour diligently and patiently as it were in the dark. Let then the fiſhers of men perſevere in their work without yielding to diſcouragement, or growing remiſs in their work: let them only ſeek the ſalvation of men's ſouls; and not catch at their applauſe, or fiſh for preferments, honours or ſecular advantages: let them ſtand prepared to relinquiſh every worldly object at the call of Chriſt, that they may follow him more cloſely and give themſelves up wholly to their miniſtry: let them be helpers of each other in the work, as partners and not rivals; and let them not fear but from henceforth they ſhall catch men. But the more fully the Lord diſplays his excellent glory and majeſty to us, the more ſinful ſhall we appear in our own eyes: yet this ſhould not induce us to ſay "Depart from me, for I am a ſin-"ful man O Lord;" but rather to intreat Him to come and dwell in our hearts by faith, that he may transform and cleanſe them. Being full of leproſy, when we hear of Jeſus, we ſhould humbly beſeech him, ſaying "Lord "if thou wilt, thou canſt make *me* clean;" nor need we fear a repulſe, as this work is his delight and glory.

CHAP VI.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Anſwering the Phariſees, who accuſed firſt the diſciples, and then Him, with violating the reſt of the ſabbath-day, 1---11. *2d. Spending the night in prayer; appointing the twelve apoſtles; and healing many ſick perſons,* 12---19. *3d. Preaching to the people,* in the plain, *on many of the ſame topics, which are contained in the ſermon on the mount,* 20---49.

AND it came to paſs on the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt, that he went through the corn-fields; and his diſciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.

2 And certain of the Phariſees ſaid unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the ſabbath-days?

3 And Jeſus, anſwering them, ſaid, Have ye not read ſo much as this, what David did, when himſelf was an hungered, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the houſe of God, and did take and eat the ſhew-bread, and gave alſo to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the prieſts alone?

5 And he ſaid unto them, That the Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath.

6 And it came to paſs alſo on another ſabbath that he entered into the ſynagogue and taught: and there was a man whoſe right hand was withered.

7 And the Scribes and Phariſees watched him, whether he would heal on the ſabbath day; that they might find an accuſation againſt him.

8 But he knew their thoughts, and ſaid to the man which had the withered hand, Riſe up, and ſtand forth in the midſt. And he aroſe, and ſtood forth.

9 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, I will aſk you one thing: Is it lawful on the ſabbath-

Thus being ſaved from the guilt and power of our ſins, we may diffuſe abroad his fame; and be in ſome meaſure inſtrumental in bringing others to hear him, and to be healed of their infirmities.

In tracing the example of our divine Saviour, we find that He interchanged public ſervices and retired devotion; and that the ſole buſineſs of his life was to do good to men, and to commune with his Father. Thus our ſeveral duties ſhould in ſucceſſion occupy our time; and piety and charity ſhould be connected in our continual conduct. A life thus ſpent will beſt manifeſt our faith in Chriſt, and evince that He hath both pardoned our ſins, and healed our ſouls: and when profeſſors of the doctrines of grace thus copy their Lord's example, they will effectually confute the malicious cavils and perverſe reaſonings of oppoſing Scribes and Phariſees: and being enabled by divine grace to delight in the holy ſervice of God, which no man by nature can do; they will not only glorify Him themſelves, but excite others to do the ſame. Indeed when the power of the Lord is preſent to heal men's ſouls, and the avaricious are induced to forego their lucrative employments becauſe unlawful, and profligate perſons are taught to live ſober righteous and godly lives, by hearing the deſpiſed goſpel of Chriſt; mere ſpectators muſt ſometimes be aſtoniſhed, and allow that they have witneſſed ſtrange things, which they cannot account for. As Jeſus came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance; we too ſhould be ready to go amongſt them, as far as we have a proſpect of doing them good; and eſpecially to direct them to the only Phyſician of their diſtempered ſouls: and if we well know our own ſinfulneſs, and the power and grace of the divine Redeemer, we ſhall not diſdain, or deſpair of any of them. But let us attend mainly to the grand eſſentials of religion: for when externals, and circumſtantials are magnified above their real importance, cenſoriouſneſs and bigotry are the invariable conſequences. Becauſe humble chriſtians practiſe their ſelf-denial, and perform their devotions in ſecret, and without oſtentation, proud Phariſees may ſometimes be ready to conclude, that they neither faſt nor pray at all! But every part of our duty has it's proper ſeaſon and proportion, as ſtated in the ſcriptures, and it ſhould have the ſame in the conduct of our lives: the gracious preſence of our Beloved makes a feaſt to our ſouls, whilſt it is continued to us: but when our ſins provoke his departure, or his frown, we are called to mourn and faſt as well as pray. However the Lord trains up his people gradually for the trials and hardſhips allotted to them; and in perfect wiſdom and tenderneſs he proportions their ſervices to their ſtrength: we ſhould therefore copy his example, in dealing with the weak in faith, the young convert, or the tempted diſcouraged believer. They, who have been uſed to drink the "old wine" of divine conſolations, and of a cloſe walk with God, have not only loſt their reliſh for earthly joys; but they will not eaſily be brought to attend to thoſe novel inventions, and human additions to religion, which are far more oſtentatious, and ſhewy, but far leſs valuable, and ſatisfactory, than a life of humble faith, and of devoted obedience to the commandments of our Lord and Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—11.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 1—21. *Mark*, c. ii. v. 23—28. c. iii. v. 1—6.) The word, tranſlated "the ſecond ſabbath after the "firſt," is ſuppoſed to denote the next ſabbath but one, after the ſecond day of the feaſt of unleavened bread. This might be conſidered as a day of peculiar ſolemnity, and as ſuch it might render the objections of the Phariſees more plauſible.

days to do good, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to deſtroy *it*?

10 And looking round about upon them all, he ſaid unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did ſo: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with madneſs; and communed one with another what they might do to Jeſus.

12 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, he called *unto him* his diſciples: and of them he choſe twelve, whom alſo he named apoſtles;

14 Simon (whom he alſo named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iſcariot, which alſo was the traitor.

17 And he came down with them, and ſtood in the plain, and the company of his diſciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jeruſalem, and from the ſea-coaſt of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diſeaſes;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude ſought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his diſciples, and ſaid, Bleſſed *be ye* poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

21 Bleſſed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye ſhall be filled. Bleſſed *are ye* that weep now: for ye ſhall laugh.

22 Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you *from their company*, and ſhall reproach *you*, and caſt out your name as evil, for the Son of man's ſake.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your conſolation.

25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye ſhall

V. 12—16.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. v. 1—4. *Mark*, c. ii. v. 13—19) Our Lord ſpent the whole night, that preceded the appointment of his apoſtles, alone upon a mountain, "in prayer to God:" the original words are ſuppoſed to ſignify an oratory, or ſmall building there erected for retirement and devotion: however he doubtleſs was engaged in prayer during the whole night, whilſt his diſciples ſeem to have gone to their reſt as uſual.

V. 20—26.] As Chriſt is ſaid, (v. 17,) to have come down into the plain, before he began this diſcourſe, it is not probable that it is the ſame, which Matthew deſcribes him as going up into a mountain to deliver Perhaps it might be at a diſtance from the ſame place, where the ſermon on the mountain had ſome time before been preached, and his audience might be compoſed in great meaſure of different perſons; and he might therefore deem it proper to inculcate on them the ſame general and important truths: yet the ſeveral variations, omiſſions, and additions found in this place concur in ſhewing it to have been another diſcourſe. However a conſtant reference muſt here be made to what was adduced on the ſermon upon the mount. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v, vi, vii.) Our Lord here begins by pronouncing his poor diſciples bleſſed: for though they had no proſpect of worldly advantages, yet "their's was the kingdom of heaven." But being poor in this world would not have entitled them to bleſſedneſs, had they not alſo been poor in ſpirit, and his real diſciples; yet poverty hath many advantages above riches, in reſpect of our ſpiritual concerns. He alſo added, "that bleſſed were "they who hungered then; for they ſhould be filled:" probably many preſent were kept at a great diſtance from their neceſſary food, by their attention to his inſtructions; and thus their natural hunger might be the effect of their hungering after righteouſneſs; which would enſure their being ſatisfied in due time with divine conſolations, and a holy felicity. Many preſent might alſo be weeping for ſin, or through affliction; but being Chriſt's diſciples, they were to be accounted happy, for they would ſurely rejoice in due time. Indeed they would ſhortly be hated, excommunicated, excluded from the company of their former friends, reproached as if guilty of the moſt atrocious crimes, and loaded with infamy and diſgrace, for their profeſſion of his truth, and obedience to his commandments: but inſtead of being dejected on theſe accounts, they ought to exult with exceeding joy; being aſſured that the contempt and hatred of the world, *thus incurred*, would be a deciſive evidence of their acceptance with God, and the greatneſs of their future recompence; for their fathers had behaved in juſt the ſame manner to the prophets of old, whom God had ſent amongſt them. At the ſame time our Lord pronounced woes upon the rich, the full, and thoſe that then laughed. Perhaps ſome perſons were preſent, that were rich, and lived in plenty and luxury, who came to make their remarks on hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye ſhall mourn and weep.

26 Woe unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you! for ſo did their fathers to the falſe prophets.

27 But I ſay unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you:

28 Bleſs them that curſe you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you.

29 And unto him that ſmiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer alſo the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not *to take thy* coat alſo.

30 Give to every man that aſketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods aſk *them* not again.

31 And as ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye alſo to them likewiſe.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame.

34 And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo lend to ſinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the children of the Higheſt: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and *to* the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged: condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned: forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven:

38 Give, and it ſhall be given unto you; good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall men give into your boſom. For with the ſame meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.

39 And he ſpake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? ſhall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The diſciple is not above his maſter: but every one that is perfect ſhall be as his maſter.

41 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that

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his preaching, and to deride what they heard: and theſe might primarily be addreſſed. But in general He intended to ſhew his diſciples the danger of riches, worldly indulgences, and all thoſe ruinous advantages, which men ſo eagerly purſue; and of that pride, and ſelf-ſufficiency, which are often enhanced by outward proſperity. Notwithſtanding theſe poſſeſſions, they, who were not made partakers of better riches, would ſoon have received their conſolation, be left finally deſtitute, and exchange their mirth and laughter, for weeping, wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. (c. xii. v. 13—21. c. xvi. v. 19—31. *Jam:* c. iv. v. 8, 9.) As it could not be expected, that any of Chriſt's profeſſed diſciples would be well ſpoken of in this evil world, who decidedly adhered to his holy doctrine, and commandments; he pronounced a woe alſo on thoſe, of whom all men ſpake well. This might eſpecially be intended of teachers: as the falſe prophets were thus generally applauded by the Jews in former ages; ſo it might be inferred, that theſe teachers alſo ſoothed men's conſciences, and encouraged them in ſome meaſure in their ſins, or they would not have obtained the favour, and commendation of men in general.

V. 32. *Thank,* &c?] That is, what evidence have you that you are partakers of the grace of God? What reaſon can you give for your hope, that your perſons and ſervices are accepted? Mere nature can produce mutual affection between men of ſimilar character, and a reciprocal intercourſe of good offices amongſt them; notwithſtanding that they are all in a ſtate of enmity againſt God, and under the dominion of their ſelfiſh paſſions: for they either gratify a natural inſtinctive inclination in this way; or they ſeek their own eaſe, intereſt, pleaſure, or reputation by ſuch attachments, and friendly actions; without any regard to the glory, will or favour of God in them.

V. 38. *Men,* &c.] They, who are kind, and liberal to others from evangelical motives, and according to the rules of God's word, commonly meet with much unexpected favour, and kindneſs from many individuals amongſt their brethren; which tend to counterbalance the enmity, ingratitude, and contempt of the world at large: and as the Lord hath all hearts in his hands, this may confidently be expected by thoſe, who lay themſelves out in doing good to others for his ſake.

V. 40. *The,* &c.] It cannot be expected, that the ſcholar will become more learned than his teacher: the complete diſciple will be as his maſter, to whom he hath implicitly attached himſelf, and not wiſer or better than he. If therefore men thus follow blind guides in their religious enquiries, they muſt continue in ignorance, or be deluded into error: ſo that it is of the greateſt importance for them to take care what teachers they attend to; leſt their greateſt diligence, and higheſt attainments ſhould leave them ſhort of the ſaving knowledge of God, and of themſelves. This ſeems the meaning of this verſe, as it ſtands in the context: but many expoſitors under-is in thy brother's eye, but perceiveſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canſt thou ſay to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyſelf beholdeſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, caſt out firſt the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-buſh gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth ſpeaketh.

46 And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?

47 Whoſoever cometh to me, and heareth my ſayings, and doeth them, I will ſhew you to whom he is like.

48 He is like a man which built an houſe, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood aroſe, the ſtream beat vehemently upon that houſe, and could not ſhake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an houſe upon the earth; againſt which the ſtream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that houſe was great.

ſtand it of the diſciples of Chriſt meeting with ſimilar treatment in the world as he did.

V. 45. *A good*, &c.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 35—37.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord Jeſus will vindicate his diſciples againſt the falſe, and frivolous accuſations of their enemies; but he will not allow them to neglect his ordinances and commandments: yet how often do nominal chriſtians take occaſion, from his conceſſions reſpecting the ſabbath, to ſpend this holy day in ſloth, indulgence, worldly employments, or vain company and diſſipation! But this neither conſiſts with his authority, and glory as the Lord of the ſabbath; nor yet with the real good of man, for whoſe advantage it was inſtituted. Let us then follow our Lord to the places of public worſhip, on that day of ſacred reſt; and copy him in devoting it to the various duties of piety, and charity; to the care of our own ſouls and of thoſe that are connected with us, and in endeavouring to preſerve the lives, or alleviate the miſeries of our brethren around us. And if after all, the enemies of true godlineſs are filled with madneſs, and are conſulting to injure us: let us retire from them, and give ourſelves up to fervent prayer, and continue inſtant therein, according to the difficulty and importance of our work and ſtation. Serious conſideration, and earneſt prayer ſhould precede the appointment of men to the ſacred miniſtry: and all concerned in ſo momentous a work, ſhould obſerve and copy the example of Chriſt, when he ordained his apoſtles. All, who have thoughts of being thus employed, ſhould retire to examine ſeriouſly into their motives; and to ſeek the divine direction, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing, on their undertaking: and all chriſtians ſhould join in prayer to the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt; and that there may no more be any covetous, treacherous Judas amongſt thoſe, who ſuſtain that ſacred character. But in this, and every other particular, at how great a diſtance do the diſciples follow their Lord! Thouſands of the votaries of pleaſure frequently paſs whole nights in the purſuit of it: but how rare for a chriſtian, or a miniſter, even in the moſt important and arduous circumſtances, to devote a ſingle night to retired prayer, and ſupplication, or even to abridge himſelf of any conſiderable meaſure of his beloved ſleep for that purpoſe! Men will regard the diſeaſes of their bodies as greater evils than thoſe of their ſouls; but the ſcripture teaches us to form a contrary judgment: for if we could have acceſs to Jeſus, and obtain from him the moſt perfect cure of every diſeaſe, and the greateſt degree of health and long life, that fallen man ever poſſeſſed; yet without deliverance from the guilt, power and pollution of ſin, by the efficacy of his blood, and the virtue that proceeds from Him, we muſt be miſerable to all eternity. Yet how few in proportion apply to him for this ineſtimable benefit!

We may eaſily diſcover that there is but little faith amongſt men called chriſtians, whilſt we obſerve how eagerly they ſeek happineſs, in thoſe things, on which Jeſus hath pronounced a woe; and how they ſhun ſuch circumſtances, in which he declares that true happineſs may be found. Yet poverty, ſcanty ſubſiſtence, affliction, and contempt, when connected with humility, godly ſorrow, faith, and an earneſt deſire after the bleſſings of ſalvation; tend more even to preſent comfort, than all the riches, ſplendour, luxury, and carnal mirth of proud unbelievers. The former weakens all thoſe evil propenſities, which the latter more and more inflames: and a peaceful conſcience, a ſubmiſſive will, a contented mind, communion with God, well regulated affections, and the hope of heaven will render a chriſtian more happy in a cottage, or a dungeon; than an ungodly man can be in a palace, with a guilty conſcience, a proud heart, a ſtubborn will, furious paſſions, and the

CHAP. VII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Healing the ſervant, and commending the faith of the Centurion; and raiſing from the dead a widow's ſon at Nain, 1---17. 2d. Anſwering the meſſengers of John Baptiſt, and diſcourſing to the people concerning him, 18---35. 3d. Entertained by a Phariſee, and followed by a woman of previous bad character that was deeply penitent, and who waſhed and anointed his feet; vindicating his favour to her by a parable, and pronouncing her ſins forgiven, &c, 36---50.

NOW when he had ended all his ſayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

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fear of death with all it's terrifying conſequences. And to the poor, humble, and deſpiſed believer the kingdom of heaven excluſively belongs: there his beſt deſires will be eternally ſatisfied, his tears will be changed for triumphant ſongs of joy; and his reward will be great, in the bleſſed ſociety of the holy prophets and apoſtles; and in that of the incarnate Son of God, who paſſed the ſame way to his glory. On the other hand, when a few fleeting years are gone, the rich luxurious ſinner will lift up his eyes in hell, at the utmoſt diſtance from all conſolation; and his unſatisfied deſires will there for ever torment him: the giddy mirth of the diſſipated will be turned to bitter weeping; and the laughter of the ſcorner will terminate in doleful wailings, and lamentations. May theſe reflections be made effectual by the Spirit of God to rectify our judgments, and to direct our choice to that good part, which ſhall never be taken from us; and to teach us to prefer the reproach, and the croſs of Chriſt to all the temporal pleaſure of ſin, or applauſe of an ungodly world.. Nor ought any one to be diſquieted, when he hears worldly men, who teach ſmooth doctrines, and propheſy deceits applauded on every ſide; even if this be attended with invidious, and malicious reflections on thoſe, who are leſs complaiſant to the faſhions, and cuſtoms of a wicked world. Thus the falſe prophets, whom God abhorred, were generally applauded, and approved even by his profeſſing people: whilſt the true prophets, who declared his whole counſel, were hated, reproached, and perſecuted, as if they had been the vileſt of mankind: and it is better to have the bleſſing of God, amidſt man's contumely, and execration; than to be abhorred of Him, whilſt “all men ſpeak well “of us.”

However we ſhould be careful that our faithfulneſs in profeſſing, or preaching the truth of God, be not leavened with moroſeneſs or reſentment. Our attention ought therefore to be continually directed to thoſe precepts, which require us to love our enemies, and to pray for our revilers and perſecutors: and the bolder and more decided we are in the cauſe of God, the more pliant and paſſive we ought to be in our own concerns. We ſhould then in many things recede quietly from our due, and meekly ſubmit to injuries, and provocations; and at the ſame time we ought to perſevere in doing to others, as we *would* they ſhould do to us, and in unwearied acts of kindneſs to the moſt perverſe, and ungrateful of our enemies. Such a conduct will evidence us to be the children of the Higheſt, who is kind unto the unthankful and evil, and enſure a large and gracious recompence from Him: and it will illuſtrate the ſuperior excellency of our doctrines above all other ſyſtems, and the ſuperior efficacy of divine grace above all other principles. Whereas, if profeſſed chriſtians only love thoſe, who love them, and do good to ſuch, as do good to them; in what are their religion and principles diſcriminated from thoſe of heathens, who do the ſame things? Let us then do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and let us aim to be merciful to the miſerable and the vile, even according to the mercy of our heavenly Father to us poor periſhing ſinners. To avoid needleſs offence, in following Chriſt, and ſtanding up for his deſpiſed goſpel, we ſhould carefully abſtain from all needleſs, raſh, and rigorous deciſions, about men's motives, ſtate, and character. Our great buſineſs is to judge ourſelves, and not to judge another's ſervants, who muſt ſtand or fall to their own maſter. We ſhould never be backward to forgive any kind or degree of injury, as we hope to be forgiven of God for Chriſt's ſake: and we may reſt ſatisfied, that we ſhall not be loſers in the event, by the moſt liberal and abundant kindneſs to others, according to our meaſure of ability, and as far as conſiſts with other duties; for it ſhall aſſuredly be meaſured to us, by the ſame meaſure, with which we mete to others, whether that be more large, or more ſcanty. Theſe extenſive and moſt excellent precepts, as well as the evangelical principles connected with them, are over-looked or explained away by many blind guides, of whom every one ought to beware; for they are falling into the ditch together with their followers in vaſt multitudes continually. And as the diſciple is not above his maſter, let us be indeed the diſciples of Chriſt alone: that following his inſtructions and example, and regarding no man further than he declares the truth, and bears the Image of Chriſt alone; we may grow up into conformity to him, till at length, we become perfect even as our Maſter is perfect. Let us alſo ſeek to ſubdue our own evil tempers, and break off our ſins, before we ſet up for cenſors, or reformers of others; leſt Jeſus ſhould check our conceited officiouſneſs by ſaying to any of us “thou hypocrite, “caſt out firſt the beam out of thine own eye, and then “ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote that is in “thy brother's eye.” As then the tree is known by its fruits, may the word of Chriſt be grafted in our hearts, that we may be fruitful in every good word and work; and that inſtructive diſcourſe may be as natural to us, as corrupt converſation is to ungodly men. In vain do we call Chriſt, Lord, Lord, if we do not the things, which he ſays: may we then wiſely come to him, hear his words, and do them; that we may with diligence “dig “deep,” to lay the foundation of our hope upon a Rock. Thus when unbelievers of every name, whether they reject, deſpiſe, oppoſe, or abuſe the goſpel, ſhall be driven with all their preſumptuous confidences into everlaſting ruin; we ſhall dwell ſecurely, weather out every ſtorm, and have at laſt a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 And a certain centurion's ſervant, who was dear unto him, was ſick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jeſus, he ſent unto him the elders of the Jews, beſeeching him that he would come and heal his ſervant.

4 And when they came to Jeſus, they beſought him inſtantly, ſaying, That he was worthy for whom he ſhould do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a ſynagogue.

6 Then Jeſus went with them. And when he was now not far from the houſe, the centurion ſent friends to him, ſaying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyſelf; for I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myſelf worthy to come unto thee: but ſay in a word, and my ſervant ſhall be healed.

8 For I alſo am a man ſet under authority, having under me ſoldiers; and I ſay unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

9 When Jeſus heard theſe things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and ſaid unto the people that followed him, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael.

10 And they that were ſent, returning to the houſe, found the ſervant whole that had been ſick.

11 And it came to paſs the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his diſciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother, and ſhe was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* ſtood ſtill. And he ſaid, Young man, I ſay unto thee, Ariſe.

15 And he that was dead ſat up, and began to ſpeak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, ſaying, That a great prophet is riſen up among us; and, That God hath viſited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

18 And the diſciples of John ſhewed him of all theſe things.

19 And John calling *unto him* two of his

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—10.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 5—13.)

V. 11—17.] We do not read, that our Lord ever went to Nain, except on this occaſion: it is ſuppoſed to have been diſtant about 12, or 13 miles from Capernaum, and He ſeems to have taken this journey on purpoſe to perform the compaſſionate cure, that is here recorded. For when he came with his attendants to the entrance of the city, he met a company of people carrying a dead man out thence to bury him. He was the only ſon of a widow woman, who had been the ſupport and comfort of her declining years, and every circumſtance tended to render her affliction peculiarly diſtreſſing: as the funeral was attended by a great number of the people, the miracle that enſued would be more fully atteſted, and generally known. When our Lord therefore ſaw the afflicted, and bereaved mother following the corpſe of her beloved ſon, he had compaſſion on her, and bade her weep no more, as he was come to her relief: He then went and touched the bier, on which the body lay, and they who carried it ſtood ſtill; perhaps with ſome degree of expectation, as the rumour of his other miracles muſt have reached them. Upon which he ſaid, as one poſſeſſed of divine authority and power "Young man, I "ſay unto thee ariſe;" and by the ſame omnipotent energy, that created the world, at his word the ſoul returned to be reunited to the before lifeleſs clay; all the powers of life were reſtored, and every part in the whole animal economy again began to perform its functions: ſo that he that had been dead ſat up, and began to ſpeak, and Jeſus delivered him to his mother, that he might ſtill live to be a comfort to her. The evangeliſt hath left *us* to conceive of the emotions of her heart on this occaſion, to which no words could poſſibly do juſtice: but he informs us that an awe, and fear of Chriſt's power fell upon the ſpectators of this ſurpriſing ſcene: and they glorified God for his mercy, and thanked him for having viſited his people, and raiſed up ſuch a prophet amongſt them. But though the rumour of this extraordinary miracle ſpread even into Judea, and through all the adjacent regions; yet we do not find that any one expected a ſimilar miracle in the caſe of Jairus's daughter. (c. viii. v. 41—56.)

diſciples, ſent *them* to Jeſus, ſaying, Art thou he that ſhould come? or look we for another?

20 When the men were come unto him, they ſaid, John Baptiſt hath ſent us unto thee, ſaying, Art thou he that ſhould come? or look we for another?

21 And in that ſame hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil ſpirits: and unto many *that were* blind he gave ſight.

22 Then Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have ſeen and heard; how that the blind ſee, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed, to the poor the goſpel is preached.

23 And bleſſed is *he*, whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.

24 And when the meſſengers of John were departed, he began to ſpeak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs for to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeouſly apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts.

26 But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? Yea, I ſay unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is *he* of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I ſay unto you, Among thoſe that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptiſt: but he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, juſtified God, being baptized with the baptiſm of John.

30 But the Phariſees and lawyers rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves, being not baptized of him.

31 And the Lord ſaid, Whereunto then ſhall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children ſitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33 For John the Baptiſt came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye ſay, he hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye ſay, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners!

35 But wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.

V. 18—35.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xi. v. 1—19.)

V. 29, 30.] It is not evident whether theſe verſes are a continuation of Chriſt's diſcourſe, or the evangeliſt's remark upon its effects: our tranſlation favours the latter ſuppoſition, yet the moſt approved expoſitors incline to the former: however the inſtruction contained in them is nearly the ſame, on either ſuppoſition. If they were the words of Chriſt, they called the attention of his hearers to the effects, that had been produced by John's miniſtry. The common people, and even the publicans, and others of bad moral character, had been induced by it "to juſtify God;" for they acknowledged the juſtice of the puniſhment, that was denounced againſt them for their ſins, and their need of repentance, forgiveneſs, and a change of heart and life: and profeſſing theſe things, they had ſubmitted to his baptiſm, and paid ſome regard to his teſtimony to Jeſus, as the promiſed Meſſiah. But the Phariſees, and Scribes, generally rejected his miniſtry, and were not baptized of him; and thus they rendered the counſel of God, in ſending him to prepare the way of Chriſt, of none effect, *as to themſelves*. Hence it might be inferred, that their prid and hypocriſy were more adverſe to ſpiritual religion, than the ignorance, careleſſneſs, or profligacy of the people, or the publicans; that they might naturally be expected to be the inveterate enemies to Him, whoſe forerunner John was; and that all men muſt be cautioned not to follow ſuch blind guides. If we underſtand the paſſage, as the words of the evangeliſt, it implies, that the common people, &c, approved of Chriſt's honourable teſtimony to John, and expreſſed themſelves to be well ſatiſfied with the wiſdom, juſtice and goodneſs of God, diſplayed in that diſpenſation; to which they were the more inclined, as they had been baptized of John: but the Phariſees and Scribes, who had refuſed his baptiſm, were diſpleaſed with Chriſt's teſtimony to him, as it implied a ſevere cenſure on their conduct: and thus they perſiſted in their oppoſition to the counſel of God, to their own great loſs, and danger; thereby proving themſelves to be none of wiſdom's children, by all of whom her appointments are juſtified, and approved. (c. 35.)

V. 36—39.] When our Lord had concluded his diſ-

36 And one of the Phariſees deſired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Phariſee's houſe, and ſat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a ſinner, when ſhe knew that *Jeſus* ſat at meat in the Phariſee's houſe, brought an alabaſter-box of ointment,

38 And ſtood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to waſh his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kiſſed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Phariſee, which had bidden him, ſaw *it*, he ſpake within himſelf, ſaying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him; for ſhe is a ſinner.

40 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, Simon, I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee. And he ſaith, Maſter, ſay on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him moſt.

43 Simon anſwered and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that *he* to whom he forgave moſt. And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and ſaid unto Simon, Seeſt thou this woman? I entered into thine houſe, thou gaveſt me no water for my feet: but ſhe hath waſhed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gaveſt me no kiſs: but this woman, ſince the time I came in, hath not ceaſed to kiſs my feet.

46 Mine head with oil thou didſt not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I ſay unto thee, Her ſins,

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courſe, a Phariſee preſent, who was called Simon, invited him to eat with him. This man ſeems to have been impreſſed with what he had ſeen, and heard; but his prejudices were ſo ſtrong, that he was yet in ſuſpenſe about Chriſt's character. He therefore probably aſked him to his houſe, that he might more narrowly obſerve, and ſcrutinize all his words and actions, in order to determine from thence whether he were a prophet or not: and he ſeems to have had ſome others about him, who were in the ſame ſtate of mind. However our Lord was ever ready to ſhew a friendly and ſociable diſpoſition, and to embrace every occaſion of doing good; he therefore accepted his invitation: and having entered his houſe, he immediately ſat down to meat. For the Phariſee, conſidering Jeſus as a poor man, and having no proper ſenſe of the real excellency, and dignity of his character, did not ſhew him even the cuſtomary tokens of reſpect or affection. Whilſt they ſat at table, a woman of the city, who was of known bad character, having formerly been a harlot, as is generally ſuppoſed, came into the room where they were. Tradition reports that this was Mary Magdalene; but there is no other proof of it. (c. viii. v. 2.) She appears to have heard Chriſt's inſtructions with great attention; and to have been thereby brought to a deep conviction of her guilt and danger, and to the moſt unfeigned, and hearty repentance of her ſins: and being thus prepared to receive the truth, ſhe ſeems to have perceived Him to be the promiſed Meſſiah, a ſpiritual Redeemer, the Saviour of loſt ſinners; and to have expected forgiveneſs, and all bleſſings from him. She therefore wanted to hear more of his encouraging words, and alſo to expreſs her love and gratitude to him: and inattentive to ordinary rules, ſhe in the fulneſs of her heart followed him into the Phariſee's houſe; having taken with her an alabaſter box of valuable ointment, which probably ſhe had been accuſtomed before to uſe for far other purpoſes. Coming thus behind him as he reclined at meat, his preſence and converſation ſo affected her with a remembrance of her former ſins, and with a ſenſe of his grace and mercy; that ſhe wept abundantly; and as his feet were bare, (his ſandals having been put off,) ſhe rained tears plenteouſly upon them, wiping them at the ſame time with her neglected diſhevelled treſſes; and kiſſing them in the moſt humble reſpectful and affectionate manner, ſhe anointed them with the ointment, that ſhe had brought with her. But when the Phariſee ſaw this intereſting ſcene; inſtead of rejoicing in theſe hopeful tokens of her repentance, he confined his thoughts entirely to her former ſcandalous character; and he began to form a diſadvantageous opinion of Jeſus, becauſe he allowed ſuch a woman to approach him: for he ſaid in his heart, that if he were a prophet, he would have known her character, and conſequently would have driven her from his preſence; as he, and his brethren the Phariſees would have done. (*Iſaiah*, c. lxv. v. 5.)

V. 40—50.] Whilſt Simon was fancying that he had got deciſive proof that Jeſus was no prophet, He anſwered to his inmoſt thoughts in ſuch a manner, as ſufficiently evinced that he was far more than a prophet. Had our Lord directly attacked him upon the ſubject of his wicked, and unreaſonable pride, and diſdain of the poor weeping penitent, (as we ſhould have been apt to have done;) he would probably have been only hardened, and irritated by it: but the manner, in which he addreſſed him, was admirably ſuited to convince without affront-which are many, are forgiven; for ſhe loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the ſame* loveth little.

48 And he ſaid unto her, Thy ſins are forgiven.

49 And they that ſat at meat with him began to ſay within themſelves, Who is this that forgiveth ſins alſo?

50 And he ſaid to the woman, Thy faith hath ſaved thee: go in peace.

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ing him. Having ſpoken to him by name, and intimated that he had ſomething of importance to ſay to him; the Phariſee anſwered with a reſpect, which he did not feel, and deſired him to proceed: and he accordingly ſtated a caſe to him, deſiring his opinion upon it. The creditor in this parable evidently repreſents the Lord himſelf; the two debtors, one of whom owed him ten times as much as the other, denote different deſcriptions of ſinners, who are all guilty, but in various degrees, and who have no power at all in any meaſure to pay their debt, or atone for their own ſins. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xviii. v. 23—35.) As therefore two debtors thus circumſtanced, and then freely pardoned, would love their kind creditor in ſome proportion to the ſum remitted to them: ſo pardoned ſinners may be ſuppoſed to love their gracious Lord, in proportion to the degree of their guilt, or rather of their own eſtimation of it. But this was propoſed to Simon in the form of a queſtion, by which means the proper conceſſion was drawn from him; for he could not but allow, that the debtor, who had been freely pardoned the larger ſum, would in all probability have the deeper ſenſe of his obligations, and the more lively impreſſion of his benefactor's liberality. Indeed the longer men live in ſin, the more advantages they abuſe, and the more miſchief they do; the greater is their actual guilt: yet pride and ignorance of God, of the evil of ſin, and of themſelves, impoſe upon many to think their debt ſmall, when in God's account it is very large: but gracious convictions always lead people to conſider themſelves great ſinners; and when they attain to a comfortable ſenſe of forgiveneſs by the mere mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus, their love and gratitude will be proportioned to their humiliation. Our Lord therefore, having approved of Simon's anſwer, proceeded to apply it to the caſe in queſtion: and turning to the weeping penitent, he aſking him whether he did not obſerve that woman? Simon had indeed noticed her with diſdain, and thought that her preſence even polluted his houſe; but he had not duly conſidered her tears of godly ſorrow, and her expreſſions of love to Chriſt. He therefore contraſted her conduct with that of the ſelf-righteous Phariſee: the latter had not even treated him with ordinary reſpect; when he came into his houſe at his invitation, he had not ſo much as brought him water, with which to waſh his feet; he had not welcomed him with a friendly kiſs, nor given him oil, which was cheap, and plentiful, to anoint his head, according to the cuſtom on ſuch occaſions: but this deſpiſed woman had waſhed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair; ſhe had inceſſantly kiſſed his feet, from her firſt entrance into the room; and had anointed them with the moſt coſtly, and fragrant ointment. Therefore, though her ſins had been very many and aggravated, yet were they all forgiven, "for ſhe loved much." Many good expoſitors would render it "Therefore ſhe loved much," though they allow this uſe of the greek particle to be very uncommon. But there ſeems no occaſion for the alteration: her great love was doubtleſs the effect, and not the cauſe, of her being forgiven much; but it was alſo *an evidence* of it; for it proved the ſincerity of her repentance, and faith in Chriſt, from which her forgiveneſs might with certainty be inferred. Thus our Lord intimated to them, that the woman owed the forgiveneſs of ſins to Him, and that her love to Him was a full proof of it! to which he added, that "to whom "little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little." This was intended as an anſwer to the proud Phariſees: with their erroneous eſtimate of their own character, they could not properly value a free ſalvation, or love a ſpiritual Redeemer; and ſhould they receive forgiveneſs of their *little, and trivial offences* (as they deemed them;) they could only love Him a little. But it is alſo a general rule: for every perſon who is pardoned, or concludes himſelf to be ſo, will love the Saviour in proportion to the degree, in which he conſiders himſelf guilty and deſerving to periſh, and incapable of eſcaping the wrath of God by any other means, than his free, and complete ſalvation. Having ſtated this, our Lord more expreſsly declared to the woman "that her ſins were "forgiven:" and regardleſs of the murmurs, which this excited, he encouraged her with the aſſurance that her faith in him had ſaved her ſoul, and that ſhe might depart in peace with God and her conſcience, for all the bleſſings of his goſpel belonged to her.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The grace of God is communicated to ſome of every rank and order in the community; and where it prevails, it influences men to a conſcientious performance of the various duties of their ſeveral relations to each other. When maſters and ſervants behave properly in their reſpective ſituations from the fear of God, they become dear to each other: they who love the Lord, will love his people alſo, and will be diſpoſed to employ their wealth or influence in promoting his worſhip: and ſuch, as are moſt worthy in the opinion of competent judges, will moſt honour Chriſt, and be moſt ſenſible of their own unworthineſs. When we have received favours, which we are unable to return; juſtice, as well as gratitude, requires us to beſeech the Lord inſtantly in the behalf of our benefactors, eſpecially when they are under trials and afflictions: and we are moſt likely to obtain the greateſt favours from him, when we are moſt ſenſible that we do not deſerve the leaſt. To him all things are alike eaſy; all creatures obey his word; and he never fails to anſwer the expectation of that faith, which honours his power, and love. Our bleſſed Redeemer's heart is ſuſceptible of pity, on account of all the diſtreſſes that we are expoſed to. The weeping widow, and

CHAP. VIII.

Contains 1ſt. An account of Chriſt's preaching and attendants, 1---3. *2d. The parable of the ſower, and its interpretation; and that of the lighted candle,* 4---18. *3d. Our Lord's endeared affection for his obedient diſciples; His calming the tempeſt, and his caſting out the Legion, &c,* 19---39. *4th. His curing of the woman, who had the iſſue of blood, and raiſing Jairus's daughter from the dead,* 40---56.

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bereaved parent, are the peculiar objects of his compaſſionate regard: and though he no longer reſtores to them their deceaſed relatives; yet the power, which formerly effected this, can now repair every breach, dry up every tear, and cauſe every bleeding heart to rejoice. Whilſt many therefore glory in a worthleſs ſenſibility; weep over imaginary woe with an unmeaning ſympathy, and leave real miſery to pine in neglect; let the chriſtian both rejoice in and copy the compaſſion of his Lord; let him look out for thoſe objects of diſtreſs, which often lie concealed from the ſuperficial obſervers of mankind; and let him endeavour to ſoothe the aching heart, to relieve the indigent, and to comfort the afflicted. In this way we ſhall moſt reaſonably hope for comfort from our compaſſionate Saviour, under the troubles of life, and in the hour of death; from whoſe ſtroke no period of age, or vigour of health can ſecure us: and thus we may alſo look forward with joyful expectation to the time, when the Redeemer's powerful voice ſhall call forth all that are in the graves, either to the reſurrection of life, or to the reſurrection of damnation. All the diſplays of the glorious power and majeſty of the Lord, ſhould make us fear coming ſhort of his ſalvation: and all his kindneſs to us, or to others, ſhould excite us to glorify him, eſpecially for viſiting his people, and raiſing up a great Redeemer amongſt them.

As the beneficent miracles of Chriſt above all things proclaimed him to be the Son of God, and the promiſed Meſſiah: ſo the effects of his goſpel, in enlightening, reforming, and changing the hearts of ſinners, is ſtill the beſt evidence of the divine excellency of our holy religion. Miniſters ought therefore to be peculiarly earneſt in "preaching the goſpel to the poor;" and in ſeeking a bleſſing upon it; that all may ſee its ſalutary effects, in their ſober, righteous, and godly lives: and every one ſhould enquire into his own motives, in going to hear the word of God, and aſk himſelf whether he derives any benefit from it; for every miniſter is a meſſenger ſent by the Lord Jeſus to prepare the way before him, and to bring ſinners to receive, believe in, and obey him. But whilſt numbers are offended with the truths and precepts of Chriſt, and reject the counſel of God againſt themſelves, from one perverſe prejudice or other: may we ſtudy to approve ourſelves to be the children of wiſdom; by attending to the inſtructions of God's word, and adoring thoſe myſteries and diſpenſations, which proud infidels and phariſees deride, and blaſpheme.

They, who ſeek to do good to men's ſouls muſt meekly bear with the perverſeneſs of oppoſers, and avoid all affected moroſeneſs; and they muſt endure perſonal ſlights, in order to have acceſs to ſinners, and to obtain a hearing from them. None can perceive the precíouſneſs of Chriſt, or the glory of the goſpel, except the broken-hearted. But whilſt theſe feel, that they cannot ſufficiently expreſs their ſelf-abhorrence on account of their ſins, or their admiration of his mercy, and grace; the ſelf-ſufficient will not only be diſguſted with them, but they will even think the worſe of the goſpel for giving encouragement to ſuch vile characters! And ſuch men often feel a deeper enmity to Chriſt, and his miniſters and diſciples, than they chooſe to avow. But did they know the real ſtate of mankind, they muſt perceive the folly, and malice of their objections: for all, without exception, have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God. By abuſing his bounty, and refuſing him the love and worſhip due to him, we have contracted a debt, of which we cannot diſcharge the ſmalleſt part: nay it muſt continue to increaſe as long as we live in this world; for who can render unto God all that obedience in any one day, that is due to him on every day? Or who can perform one ſervice, that is free from every defect, or alloy of ſin? Without a frank forgiveneſs we can none of us eſcape the wrath to come: this our gracious Saviour hath purchaſed with his blood, that he might freely beſtow it on every one, who believeth in him. But he, who is convinced of his own ſinfulneſs, and expects pardon, and all the bleſſings of ſalvation as the gift of God in Jeſus Chriſt, will in proportion become humble, patient, contented, teachable, and obedient: above all other things he will learn to love Chriſt in every part of his character, and to value him in all his offices; he will deſire his favour, be thankful for his mercy, and zealous for his glory; he will become earneſt conſtant and diligent in his endeavour to pleaſe him, and to recommend his ſalvation to others; he will love his ordinances, commandments, and diſciples; and he will value every talent in proportion as it enables him, to expreſs his love to him, and his cauſe. Thus it often happens, that the vileſt ſinners, having been brought to repentance, and made joyful by a free forgiveneſs and ſalvation, become more zealous and active in their obedience than other believers: they love much, becauſe much has been forgiven them; and they labour much, becauſe they love much. And in the caſe of others, deep humiliation will always be connected with a proportionable love, and willing obedience, when it is accompanied with a good hope, that all their ſins are pardoned. The ſcanty formal ſervices therefore of too many, either prove that they have no proper ſenſe of their guilt, and no juſt views of the precíouſneſs of Chriſt, and the redeemed ſinner's obligations to him; or at leaſt, that they love but little, becauſe they ſuppoſe that little hath been forgiven them. But when a real, and vigorous love to Chriſt ſprings from ſorrow for ſin and hope of forgiveneſs through him, and is expreſſed by ſuch methods as a man's ſituation admits of; we may from it ſafely infer that his ſins though many are forgiven; and may thus give him great encouragement, without in the leaſt palliating his guilt: and when the witneſſing Spirit makes it evident to the believer's conſcience, that he doth in-

AND it came to paſs afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching, and ſhewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve *were* with him.

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil ſpirits and infirmities; Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went ſeven devils,

3 And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's ſteward, and Suſanna, and many others, which miniſtered unto him of their ſubſtance.

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he ſpake by a parable:

5 A ſower went out to ſow his ſeed: and as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way-ſide; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And ſome fell upon a rock; and as ſoon as it was ſprung up it withered away, becauſe it lacked moiſture.

7 And ſome fell among thorns; and the thorns ſprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and ſprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had ſaid theſe things he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, What might this parable be?

10 And he ſaid, unto you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand.

11 Now the parable is this; The ſeed is the word of God.

12 Thoſe by the way-ſide are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved.

13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and theſe have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleaſures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honeſt and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a veſſel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but ſetteth *it* on a candleſtick, than they which enter in may ſee the light.

17 For nothing is ſecret, that ſhall not be made manifeſt; neither *any thing* hid, that ſhall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given; and whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken, even that which he ſeemeth to have.

19 Then came to him *his* mother and

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deed love Chriſt; he may know more certainly that his ſins are forgiven, than if an angel from heaven had told him ſo. Let who will object to and murmur at theſe things, Chriſt will aſſert his authority of thus forgiving ſin, and of bidding the weeping penitent, who applies to him, depart in peace, as partaking of ſalvation through faith in his name. But may not we with ſhame confeſs, that whilſt we hope that our many and great offences are freely pardoned; we yet comparatively love but little? If this be the caſe, we ſhould ſeek for deeper, and more heart-affecting views of our own vileneſs, and of Chriſt's preciouſneſs; and we ſhould give diligence to make our calling and election ſure, and to get deeper impreſſions of our obligations to, and expectations from him; that we ſtand a greater diſtance from the proud ſpirit of the Phariſee; that we may more ſimply depend on and rejoice in Chriſt alone, and may ſo be prepared to obey him more zealouſly, and more cordially to recommend him to our fellow-ſinners on every ſide.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—3.] Some have conjectured that Chuza, Herod's ſteward, was the nobleman or courtier, whoſe ſon Jeſus had cured, (*John*, c. iv. ver. 43—54:) Doubtleſs it was by his conſent that his wife accompanied Jeſus, in his journeying to preach the goſpel. As our Lord choſe to be "poor for our ſakes," and did not work miracles for his own ſupport: ſo theſe pious women, who had been under the greateſt obligations to him, in reſpect both to their ſouls, and bodies, being in good circumſtances, were glad to communicate from their ſubſtance to the maintenance of him, and his diſciples, as well as perſonally to attend him. And he was pleaſed to ſtoop thus low, for an example to his ſervants and diſciples in ſimilar circumſtances. We do not read, that any men ſhared this honour "of miniſtering to Chriſt "from their ſubſtance," with theſe favoured women, who thus continually followed him.

V. 4—18.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 1—23.

his brethren, and could not come at him for the preſs.

20 And it was told him *by certain*, which ſaid, Thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſee thee.

21 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, My mother and my brethren are theſe which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 Now it came to paſs on a certain day, that he went into a ſhip with his diſciples; and he ſaid unto them, Let us go over unto the other ſide of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they ſailed he fell aſleep: and there came down a ſtorm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Maſter, maſter, we periſh. Then he aroſe and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceaſed, and there was a calm.

25 And he ſaid unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, ſaying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over againſt Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man which had devils a long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* houſe, but in the tombs.

28 When he ſaw Jeſus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, *thou* Son of God moſt high? I beſeech thee torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean ſpirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him; and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderneſs.)

30 And Jeſus aſked him, ſaying, What is thy name? And he ſaid, Legion: becauſe many devils were entered into him.

31 And they beſought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there an herd of many ſwine feeding on the mountain: and they beſought him that he would ſuffer them to enter into them. And he ſuffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the ſwine: and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* ſaw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city, and in the country.

35 Then they went out to ſee what was done; and came to Jeſus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, ſitting at the feet of Jeſus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36 They alſo which ſaw *it* told them by what means he that was poſſeſſed of the devils was healed.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about beſought him to depart from them: for they were taken with great fear. And he went up into the ſhip, and returned back again.

38 Now the man, out of whom the devils were departed, beſought him that he might be with him: but Jeſus ſent him away, ſaying,

39 Return to thine own houſe, and ſhew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and publiſhed throughout the whole city how great things Jeſus had done unto him.

40 And it came to paſs, that when Jeſus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the ſynagogue; and he fell down at Jeſus' feet, and beſought

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Mark, c. iv. ver. 1--25.)

V. 19—21.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 46—50.)

V. 22—39.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 23—34. *Mark*, c. iv. ver. 35—41. c. i. v. 1—20.)

40—56.] (Notes, &c. *Mark*, c. v. ver. 21—43.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miniſters of Chriſt ſhould copy his example of aſſiduity, and earneſtneſs, in preaching the glad tidings of him that he would come into his houſe:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and ſhe lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 And a woman, having an iſſue of blood twelve years, which had ſpent all her living upon phyſicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her iſſue of blood ſtaunched.

45 And Jeſus ſaid, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, ſaid, Maſter, the multitude throng thee, and preſs *thee*, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jeſus ſaid, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman ſaw that ſhe was not hid, ſhe came trembling, and falling down before him, ſhe declared unto him before all the people, for what cauſe ſhe had touched him, and how ſhe was healed immediately.

48 And he ſaid unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

49 While he yet ſpake, there cometh one from the ruler of the ſynagogue's *houſe*, ſaying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Maſter.

50 But when Jeſus heard *it*, he anſwered him, ſaying, Fear not: believe only, and ſhe ſhall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the houſe, he ſuffered no man to go in, ſave Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he ſaid, Weep not; ſhe is not dead, but ſleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to ſcorn, knowing that ſhe was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, ſaying, Maid, ariſe.

55 And her ſpirit came again, and ſhe aroſe ſtraightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

56 And her parents were aſtoniſhed: but he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what was done.

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the kingdom of God; and in ſubmitting to any hardſhip, or degradation in their outward circumſtances, which may conduce to the ſucceſs of the goſpel: and they, who have profited by their labours, ought to imitate theſe pious women; and to uſe their ſubſtance in miniſtering unto Chriſt, by ſupporting his indigent ſervants and diſciples, as occaſion may require, and according to their ability. In this way, as well, as in many others, they may bring forth fruit with patience, and evince that the grace of God hath indeed made their hearts honeſt, and good, and prepared them to receive the good ſeed of his word; for it hath taken root therein, and will ripen to a glorious harveſt. Indeed we ſhould aim, by every method to diſcriminate our character and conduct from thoſe of mere careleſs hearers; of ſuperficial, and temporary profeſſors, and of thoſe, “who are choked with the cares, riches, and pleaſures of this life, “and bring no fruit to perfection.” Nor is it enough for us, “not to hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs;” we ſhould deſire to hold forth the word of life, and to ſhine in our ſeveral circles, as a lighted candle in the room, for the benefit of all around us. Thus profeſſing, and recommending the truths of the goſpel, by our conduct, and converſation, we ſhall receive more and more from our gracious God; whilſt many, that *ſeemed to have* knowledge, abilities, and poſſeſſions, not having had grace to make a proper uſe of them, will ſhortly be deprived of them all; and their poverty, folly and worthleſſneſs, which before were kept ſecret, ſhall be made known to all the world. Happy are they, who hear the word of God, and keep it: theſe are the Redeemer's beloved friends and relations; every ſtorm that ariſes, every peril that diſmays them, will tend to excite their fervent prayers, and their Lord will awake for their help, and deliverance, and cauſe the trial to iſſue in their increaſing admiration of his power and love. Yet at times even true believers ſeem to have miſlaid their faith, or left it behind them; they have ſo many anxious fears about the event, when they are following Chriſt in the path of duty: and we may often aſk ourſelves, or each other “where is your faith?” Whilſt we witneſs, or feel the effects of ſin, and of ſatan's malice, to fill the earth with miſery; let us advert to the varied diſplays of the Redeemer's power to counteract this fatal tendency: if he hath but delivered our ſouls from the power of ſatan, and brought us to ſit at his feet, *in our right mind*; to hear his word, and to deſire to be with Him: He will preſerve us from falling again under the dominion of ſin; he will remove or ſanctify our bodily ſickneſſes, and give us the comfort of his forgiving love; he will ſupport us under domeſtic afflictions, and do us good by them; he will deliver us from the fear of death, and at length make us more than conquerors even over this king of terrors. Let us then declare what great

CHAP. IX.

Contains Jeſus, 1ſt. Sending forth the twelve apoſtles; and an account of Herod's opinion, and deſire, concerning him, 1---9. *2d. Retiring with the apoſtles, after their return; followed by the multitude, and miraculouſly feeding them,* 10---17. *3d. Diſcourſing with the diſciples concerning himſelf, and his ſufferings, and calling them to prepare for ſelf-denial, and to bear the croſs after him, &c,* 18---27. *4th. Transfigured on the mount; and caſting out an evil ſpirit, which the diſciples could not effect,* 28---42. *5th. Again predicting his ſufferings; and reproving the diſciples at different times, for their ambition, bigotry, fiery zeal and reſentment; and anſwering ſome perſons, who were not diſpoſed to follow him unreſervedly, or immediately,* 43---62.

THEN he called his twelve diſciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diſeaſes.

2 And he ſent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the ſick.

3 And he ſaid unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither ſtaves, nor ſcrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4 And whatſoever houſe ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And whoſoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, ſhake off the very duſt from your feet for a teſtimony againſt them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the goſpel, and healing every where.

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, becauſe that it was ſaid of ſome, that John was riſen from the dead;

8 And of ſome, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was riſen again.

9 And Herod ſaid, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear ſuch things? And he deſired to ſee him.

10 And the apoſtles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aſide privately into a deſert place belonging to the city called Bethſaida.

11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and ſpake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and ſaid unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a deſert place.

13 But he ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they ſaid, We have no more but five loaves and two fiſhes; except we ſhould go and buy meat for all this people:

14 (For they were about five thouſand men.) And he ſaid to his diſciples, Make them ſit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did ſo, and made them all ſit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, he bleſſed them, and brake, and gave to the diſciples to ſet before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baſkets.

18 And it came to paſs, as he was alone praying, his diſciples were with him: and he

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things our God and Saviour hath done for us; let us commit all our concerns into his hands, and apply to him for help in all our difficulties; and let us endeavour to imitate his compaſſion and unwearied activity in doing good. But woe be to them, who bid Jeſus depart from them, through fear of worldly loſs, or from love to ſin: He will not ſtay with, and perhaps may no more return to, thoſe who thus ſlight him, whom others are ſo glad to receive, being waiting for him: and none but Jeſus can ſave them from the wrath of God, or the power of ſatan; or give them effectual help in the time of trouble, in the hour of death, or in the day of judgment.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—17.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. c. xiv. v. 1—21. *Mark*, c. vi. v. 7—44.) Though Herod was perplexed and uneaſy, at the report of Chriſt's miracles; and upon the whole acceded to their opinion, who ſaid that John was riſen from the dead; yet he deſired to ſee him, in order to aſcertain that matter, or in hopes to diſprove a report, which gave him ſo much alarm. (v. 7—9.)

V. 18—27.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xvi. v. 13—28.

aſked them, ſaying, Whom ſay the people that I am?

19 They anſwering, ſaid, John the Baptiſt: but ſome *ſay*, Elias; and others *ſay*, That one of the old prophets is riſen again.

20 He ſaid unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? Peter anſwering, ſaid, The Chriſt of God.

21 And he ſtraitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing.

22 Saying, The Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be ſlain, and be raiſed the third day.

23 And he ſaid to them all; If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me.

24 For whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it: but whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, the ſame ſhall ſave it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away?

26 For whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 But I tell you of a truth, There be ſome ſtanding here, which ſhall not taſte of death till they ſee the kingdom of God.

28 And it came to paſs, about an eight days after theſe ſayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And, as he prayed, the faſhion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* gliſtering.

30 And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moſes and Elias;

31 Who appeared in glory, and ſpake of his deceaſe, which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem.

32 But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep: and when they were awake they ſaw his glory, and the two men that ſtood with him.

33 And it came to paſs, as they departed from him, Peter ſaid unto Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias: not knowing what he ſaid.

34 While he thus ſpake, there came a cloud and overſhadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved ſon; hear him.

36 And when the voice was paſt, Jeſus was found alone. And they kept *it* cloſe, and

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Mark, c. viii. v. 27—38.)

V. 28—50.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. xvii. v. 1—23. c. xviii. *Mark*, c. ix. v. 1—42.)

V. 51—56.] The evangeliſt ſeems, in the concluſion of this chapter, to have recorded ſeveral detached incidents of ſimilar import, which occurred at different times: we are not therefore to conclude, that the remainder of his goſpel relates to events, which took place during Chriſt's laſt journey from Galilee to Jeruſalem, or ſubſequent to it. The expreſſion is here very remarkable: "when the time was come, that he ſhould be received up," which muſt relate to his aſcenſion to his glory in heaven, "he ſtedfaſtly ſet his face to go up to Jeruſalem." He had "the joy ſet before him" continually in his eye, and his ſufferings and crucifixion were regarded merely as preparatory ſteps to it: and therefore he ſtedfaſtly, and conſtantly ſet his face to go up to Jeruſalem, though he perfectly knew all that there awaited him; nor would he be induced by any perſuaſions to defer his journey. As he went along, he ſent ſome of his diſciples before him, to get things ready for his reception, in the ſeveral places, through which he paſſed: but when they came to a village of the Samaritans, the inhabitants would not entertain him in their houſes, or admit him into the town; becauſe they found by his rout, that he was on his journey to Jeruſalem. They had doubtleſs heard of his miracles and doctrine, (*John*, c. iv;) and they were probably diſpleaſed at his proteſting againſt their ſchiſmatical temple and worſhip on Mount Gerizzim, by going up to Jeruſalem to keep the feaſt of the dedication, as it is generally ſuppoſed to have been. This repulſe, though not attended by any further ill uſage, ſo excited the indignation of James and John, that they deſired permiſſion to call for fire from heaven upon the Samaritans; as Elijah, (perhaps near the ſame place,) had done on thoſe, who were ſent by King Ahaziah to apprehend him, (Notes, &c. 2 *Kings*, c. i:) and they had no doubt, but that it would be ſent at their command to conſume them all together. But they did not conſider the different circumſtances of the two caſes: the Samaritans were indeed very blameable; but their conduct was rather the effect of national prejudices and bigotry, than of determined enmity to the word and worſhip of God; and though they refuſed to told no man in thoſe days any of thoſe things which they had ſeen.

37 And it came to paſs, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, ſaying, Maſter, I beſeech thee, look upon my ſon; for he is mine only child:

39 And, lo, a ſpirit taketh him, and he ſuddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and, bruiſing him, hardly departeth from him.

40 And I beſought thy diſciples to caſt him out; and they could not.

41 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation! how long ſhall I be with you, and ſuffer you? Bring thy ſon hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down and tare *him*. And Jeſus rebuked the unclean ſpirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jeſus did, he ſaid unto his diſciples,

44 Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears: for the Son of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 But they underſtood not this ſaying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to aſk him of that ſaying.

46 Then there aroſe a reaſoning among them, which of them ſhould be greateſt.

47 And Jeſus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and ſet him by him,

48 And ſaid unto them, Whoſoever ſhall receive this child in my name, receiveth me: and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth him that ſent me: for he that is leaſt among you all, the ſame ſhall be great.

49 And John anſwered, and ſaid, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name: and we forbad him becauſe he followeth not with us.

50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not againſt us is for us.

51 And it came to paſs, when the time was come that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his face to go up to Jeruſalem.

52 And ſent meſſengers before his face: and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, becauſe his face was as though he would go to Jeruſalem.

54 And when his diſciples, James and John, ſaw *this*, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and conſume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to de-

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entertain Chriſt and his diſciples; yet they did not attempt to perſecute or murder them, according to the conduct of idolatrous Ahaziah towards the prophet Elijah: ſo that there was no occaſion for ſuch a terrible execution, either to vindicate the honour of God, or to ſecure his ſervants from the rage of his enemies. Neither were they aware of the different diſpenſation, that was about to be introduced; which was to be characterized by miracles of beneficence, and the judgments of which were mainly to be ſpiritual. Above all, they were not duly ſenſible of the prevailing principles of their own hearts: they ſuppoſed themſelves to be actuated by zeal for the honour of their Lord; but pride, carnal ambition, bitter reſentment, and bigotry, in reality inſtigated them to make ſo improper a requeſt: for, when the inhabitants of Nazareth behaved far worſe to Chriſt, they had not thought of taking ſuch revenge upon them; but theſe, and others, who ſlighted or injured him, were *Jews*, and therefore they were more diſpoſed to bear it from *them*, than from the deſpiſed and deteſted Samaritans. But Elijah was actuated by a zeal for the honour of God; and a regard to the real good of his people, who were about to be ruined by the abominable idolatries, and perſecutions of Ahab's family: ſo that they, whom the fire from heaven conſumed at his word, fell ſacrifices to the juſtice of God, and their death tended to the benefit of Iſrael; whereas had theſe Samaritans been deſtroyed, they would have been ſacrificed to the diſciples' prejudices, and reſentment, and the conſequences would have been injurious to both Jews and Samaritans. Our Lord therefore turned and ſharply rebuked them, aſſuring them, that "they knew not what manner of ſpirit "they were of:" they were not aware under what influence they ſpake, or what diſpoſitions predominated in them; for they deſired to deſtroy the lives of their enemies, inſtead of overcoming them with perſevering kindneſs: whereas He, the Son of man, was come to preſerve men's lives, as well as to ſave their ſouls; his goſſtroy men's lives, but to ſave *them*. And they went to another village.

57 And it came to paſs, that as they went in the way, a certain *man* ſaid unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.

58 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* neſts; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

59 And he ſaid unto another, Follow me: But he ſaid, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father.

60 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another alſo ſaid, Lord, I will follow thee: but let me firſt go bid them farewell which are at home at my houſe.

62 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

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pel was not to be propagated by fire and ſword, but by more rational and beneficent means; and the tendency of it would be to terminate ſuch furious conteſts, as far as it truly prevailed. Accordingly, without any diſpute with the Samaritans, he led the diſciples forward to another village.

V. 57—62.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 19—22.) Some of theſe incidents ſeems to have occurred early in our Lord's miniſtry: the laſt we have not before met with. The deſire of this perſon to go home, and bid farewell to his friends, and to ſettle his temporal concerns, before he attached himſelf to Chriſt as his conſtant follower, was no doubt the effect of a wavering and undetermined ſtate of mind: Jeſus therefore anſwered his requeſt by applying to his caſe a proverbial expreſſion, which ſeems to have been frequently uſed. If a man ſhould put his hand to the plough, and then look behind him, he could not make his furrows ſtraight and of a proper depth: thus no man can be expected to tranſact any buſineſs in a proper manner, if his attention be fixed upon ſome other object. No man therefore can be fit to be a preacher of the goſpel, whoſe heart hankereth after the worldly intereſts or pleaſures, which he had left behind; and who looketh back towards them, with a deſire of recovering them, even when outwardly employed in the work of the Lord. The proverb applies to the ſubjects, as well as to the miniſters of the kingdom of God; but the latter ſeem eſpecially intended (c. xiv. v. 25—35. c. xvii. v. 32.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord Jeſus is the fountain of power and authority, to whom all creatures muſt in one way or other be ſubjected: and if he accompany the word of his miniſters with efficacy, "to deliver ſinners from ſatan's bondage;" they need not fear but he will procure them needful ſuſtenance; and more they ought not to deſire. They ſhould always ſhew a kind attention to the temporal comforts of thoſe whoſe ſalvation they ſeek: and when this is attended with an evident indifference to their own eaſe and accommodation, it tends much to conciliate men's goodwill to, and favourable opinion of, them: if they can therefore, by ordinary means, do any thing to relieve their diſtreſſes, and heal their diſeaſes, it may help to promote the ſucceſs of their miniſtry. But when truth and love in this manner go hand in hand, and the meſſage of God is after all rejected, and deſpiſed; it will leave men moſt inexcuſable, and every circumſtance will turn to a teſtimony againſt them. The increaſe of faithful miniſters, and the ſpread of the goſpel, frequently cauſe great perplexity, and diſtreſs to ungodly men, who have ſet themſelves to oppoſe the cauſe of God: and they, who have thus ſhed innocent blood, will often have their guilt brought to their remembrance, with renewed terror and diſmay, as long as they live. Whilſt the bleſſed Jeſus conſults the benefit and comfort of his diſciples; and readily receives all that come to him; healing thoſe that feel their need of it, and feeding all who hunger for the bread of life: let us learn to communicate liberally to the neceſſities of our brethren; and even if poor ourſelves, to ſhare our mean and ſcanty morſel with thoſe, who are in more urgent and immediate want. By the bleſſing of God a little will *in this uſe of it* go far, and we ſhall never be impoveriſhed by expences of this kind. After our Lord's example alſo, miniſters, parents, and heads of families ſhould pray *with*, as well as *for*, thoſe, who are intruſted to their care: their retired converſations would be attended by ſocial devotions; and this would render them as profitable as public ordinances. They, who are eſtabliſhed in one important doctrine of the goſpel, will be prepared to underſtand others, that are connected with it: and thoſe truths which relate to the perſons, the ſufferings, and the mediatorial kingdom of Chriſt, form the very ſubſtance or centre of true religion. In meditating on his crucifixion, and the glory which enſued; we ſhall beſt learn to deny ourſelves, and to bear our croſs *daily*: we ſhall thus be induced to renounce the friendſhip, and venture the enmity of the world: we ſhall in this glaſs ſee the folly and madneſs of ſeeking the largeſt temporal advantages, with the hazard of loſing ourſelves, and being caſt away; and we ſhall get the victory over that fooliſh and wicked ſhame, which cauſes many to forſake and diſobey Chriſt, againſt the convictions of their own conſciences; though he hath declared, that "he will be aſhamed," of all ſuch perſons, "when he ſhall come in his own glory, "and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

To form ſome faint conception of that glory, let us contemplate him upon the mount, "when the faſhion of "his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white, "and gliſtering," &c. With this before our eyes, we may meditate to advantage on his deceaſe "which he "accompliſhed at Jeruſalem;" and thence follow him with our thoughts to his preſent exaltation in heaven, where he is ſurrounded with his ſaints, who there appear with him in glory, and expatiate in his praiſes. Thus

CHAP. X.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus commiſſioning, inſtructing, and ſending forth the 70 diſciples, &c, 1---16. *2d. Their return to him with joy, on account of their ſucceſs; and his diſcourſe to them on that occaſion,* 17---24. *3d. A lawyer's enquiry about the way to eternal life; and Chriſt ſtating to him the caſe of the good Samaritan,* 25---37. *4th. Martha reproved for her carefulneſs about carnal things, and Mary commended for minding the one thing needful,* 38---42.

AFTER theſe things the Lord appointed other ſeventy alſo, and ſent them two

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may reconcile us to our preſent trials, and prepare us for the ſtroke of death; that we may go to behold, and ſhare that glory, one glimpſe of which hath ſometimes made us ſay, "It is good for us to be here." But we muſt now walk by faith, and hear obediently the words of the beloved Son of God; treaſuring up every comfortable experience of his love, and every diſcovery of his Majeſty and Excellency, to be our ſupport in the days of darkneſs. Thus we may maintain a ſucceſsful conflict with the enemies of our ſouls: and in the exerciſe of a vigorous faith, we may hope to be inſtrumental in reſcuing others from their deſtructive influence.

But if we would be thus uſeful, we muſt ſeek to have our minds delivered from every prejudice: and when we find ourſelves unable to underſtand the words of Chriſt; we ſhould not fear, or neglect to aſk Him, and to conſult his more experienced ſervants, concerning them. But alas, our reaſonings, and diſcuſſions, (inſtead of being directed to mutual edification,) are too often mere diſputes, "which of us ſhould be the greateſt?" This may be ſpeciouſly diſguiſed: but applauſe, popularity, and precedency are too much aimed at by profeſſing chriſtians, and even by miniſters. Theſe thoughts of our fooliſh hearts Jeſus perceives: and a little child is his conſtant emblem, by which to teach us ſimplicity and humility. But if indeed we are his diſciples, we need not be ambitious of any further honour: for not only are apoſtles, prophets, and evangeliſts diſtinguiſhed perſons; but the leaſt of the whole company of believers, is, and ſhall be great, as a child, and friend of God, an heir of heaven, and a future companion, and compeer to the angels before the throne. "Such honour have all his ſaints:" and as every one, who in any place, or form, ſucceſsfully preaches repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is inſtrumental in bringing the ſlaves of ſatan to partake of theſe glorious and everlaſting privileges: ſurely we ſhould not pretend to forbid them, thus "to caſt out devils in Chriſt's name, becauſe they follow not with us:" leſt He rebuke us for our officiouſneſs, and remind us, that "he who is not againſt us is for us." But whilſt we are zealous, courageous, and patient to endure hardſhip in the work of the Lord: let us alſo look well to our own ſpirits, leſt we be betrayed into diſhonourable meaſures, and diſgrace the cauſe we mean to promote. It is eaſy for us to ſay, "Come ſee our zeal for the Lord;" and obvious for us to think that we are remarkably faithful in his cauſe; when in fact we are inflamed with reſentment, impatient of contradiction, ſeeking our own honour, and doing harm inſtead of good to others. Nay we may be ſo zealous againſt the errors, prejudices, ſuperſtitions, and bigotry of others, as to fall into the ſame evils; and ſo to ſanction all their calumnies, and injuries. How ſtrange is it, that the profeſſed diſciples of Chriſt, who thus decidedly blamed the propoſal of calling for fire from heaven to conſume their adverſaries, ſhould think of kindling fires on earth for that purpoſe! Or of promoting the goſpel, and deſtroying ſchiſmatics and heretics by wars and maſſacres! Fire from heaven might indeed have proved the doctrine to be true, and thus might have in ſome meaſure tended to the conviction of oppoſers: but fire and faggot, &c, can only prove the diabolical malice and cruelty of thoſe who uſe them; and if the truth itſelf were ſupported by ſuch means, it would become ſuſpected of being from beneath. Yet many, who ſeem upon the whole to be upright in their religion, are led to indulge the ſame ſpirit in another way: and their ſarcaſms, and calumnies againſt thoſe who differ from them, and other bitter fruits of pride and reſentment, too plainly ſhew, "that they know not what manner of ſpirit they are of." Many controverſial books, many religious converſations, nay many ſermons demonſtrate to the impartial judge, that much is wrong in the temper of the parties concerned; though perhaps they are not aware of it. It behoves us therefore to beg of the Lord, that he would convince us of our ſinfulneſs in this matter; and that he would rather rebuke, and chaſten us, than leave us to indulge ſuch unchriſtian tempers; and thus to act contrary both to his precepts, his example, the end of his coming into the world, and the tendency of his holy religion.

In following Chriſt we ſhould count our coſt: worldly riches and pleaſures cannot reaſonably be expected from him, who, when on earth, "had not where to lay his head:" and in that cauſe, for which he ſhed his blood, we ſhould be ready to renounce all ſecular intereſts, and to forego even relative endearments, that we may preach or promote the kingdom of God. No man is therefore fit for the miniſtry of the goſpel, whoſe eye and heart are fixed on worldly objects: for he will either leave his work to return to them, or he will neglect it, and do it in an improper manner, by hankering after them. This ſhould be ſeriouſly laid to heart by all, who intend to engage in that important work, as well as by thoſe who are already employed in it. Many lay hold of this ſacred function, whilſt their affections are fixed upon the riches, honours, and pleaſures of the world; nay whilſt they are ſcheming to render their miniſtry itſelf ſubſervient to the gratification of their avarice, ambition, or ſenſuality. But no one would employ a man to plough his lands, who ſo neglected his work, or performed it in ſo bungling a manner, as ſuch men do their ſacred ſervices: as therefore they are not fit for the work of the kingdom of God on earth; they will aſſuredly not be deemed meet for the inheritance of the kingdom of God in heaven.

and two before his face into every city and place whether he himſelf would come.

2 Therefore ſaid he unto them, The harveſt truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

3 Go your ways: behold, I ſend you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purſe, nor ſcrip, nor ſhoes: and ſalute no man by the way.

5 And into whatſoever houſe ye enter, firſt ſay, Peace *be* to this houſe.

6 And if the ſon of peace be there, your peace ſhall reſt upon it: if not, it ſhall turn to you again.

7 And in the ſame houſe remain, eating and drinking ſuch things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from houſe to houſe.

8 And into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat ſuch things as are ſet before you;

9 And heal the ſick that are therein; and ſay unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the ſtreets of the ſame, and ſay,

11 Even the very duſt of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off againſt you: notwithſtanding, be ye ſure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I ſay unto you, That it ſhall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee Bethſaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, ſitting in ſackcloth and aſhes.

15 But it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, ſhall be thruſt down to hell.

16 He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.

17 And the ſeventy returned again with joy, ſaying, Lord, even the devils are ſubject unto us through thy name.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—16.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. 10.) Luke alone records the appointment of the 70 diſciples, who in number anſwered to the elders, which had been conſtituted by Moſes: (*Num*. c. xi. v. 16, 17. 24—30.) Some expoſitors conjecture that the evangeliſt himſelf was one of them. They were ſent forth by two and two, to go on different circuits to the ſeveral places, that Jeſus intended to viſit; that they might prepare the inhabitants for his reception, as his perſonal miniſtry amongſt them would be very ſhort. The inſtructions given them were nearly the ſame, as thoſe that had been delivered to the apoſtles. As an intimation of the ſtill greater work, that was afterwards to be wrought amongſt them, he began by repeating an exhortation, which hath been already explained; (*Matt*. c. ix. v. 37, 38.) He alſo ordered them "to ſalute no man by the way;" that is, as their time was ſhort, and precious, and their work important; they muſt ſhew themſelves to be altogether intent upon it; and not loiter or trifle, out of a needleſs regard to ceremony, and compliment. He alſo cloſed their inſtructions by repeating a ſolemn warning, that hath been explained (*Matt*. c. xi. v. 20—24.) The concluding verſe ſhews that ſuch declarations are not to be excluſively explained of the apoſtles, but are equally to be underſtood of more ordinary miniſters, in proportion to their faithfulneſs.

V. 17—20.] Our Lord ſeems not expreſſly to have promiſed the 70 diſciples the power of caſting out unclean ſpirits. When therefore they returned to him, (doubtleſs at a time and place appointed for them;) they told Him with a joyful ſurpriſe, that not only diſeaſes, but even the devils had been ſubject to them through His name. They appear to have been too much elevated by their ſucceſs; but Chriſt in his anſwer pointed out far more valuable bleſſings to be conferred on his diſciples. He obſerved to them that "he had ſeen ſatan fall as lightning from heaven": he had thus inſtantaneouſly been caſt down from heaven, on his original apoſtacy; and his uſurped dominion on earth, and the idolatrous worſhip that he had deviſed to eſtabliſh, were about to be thrown down in the ſame ſudden, and ſurpriſing manner, by means of the preached goſpel; of which theſe diſpoſſeſſions were but emblems. Chriſt would therefore have them obſerve, that he gave them power to tread on ſerpents, &c; or to prevail againſt and cruſh the head of the old ſerpent and his ſeed (Note, *Gen*. c. iii. v. 15. *Mark*, c. xvi. v. 17, 18. *Rom*. c. xvi. v. 20) and to withſtand all the power of the great enemy of God and his church; ſo that neither temptations, afflictions, or perſecutions ſhould eventually hurt them. Yet they were not ſo much to rejoice, that theſe evil ſpirits were ſubjected to them, but rather that their names were written in heaven, as the choſen people of God, and the heirs of His kingdom: for many workers of miracles will at laſt be condemned as wicked men: (*Matt*. c. 7. v. 22, 23:) but no true believer will come ſhort of eternal life. It is not likely that Chriſt meant, by way of ſpecial revelation, to in-

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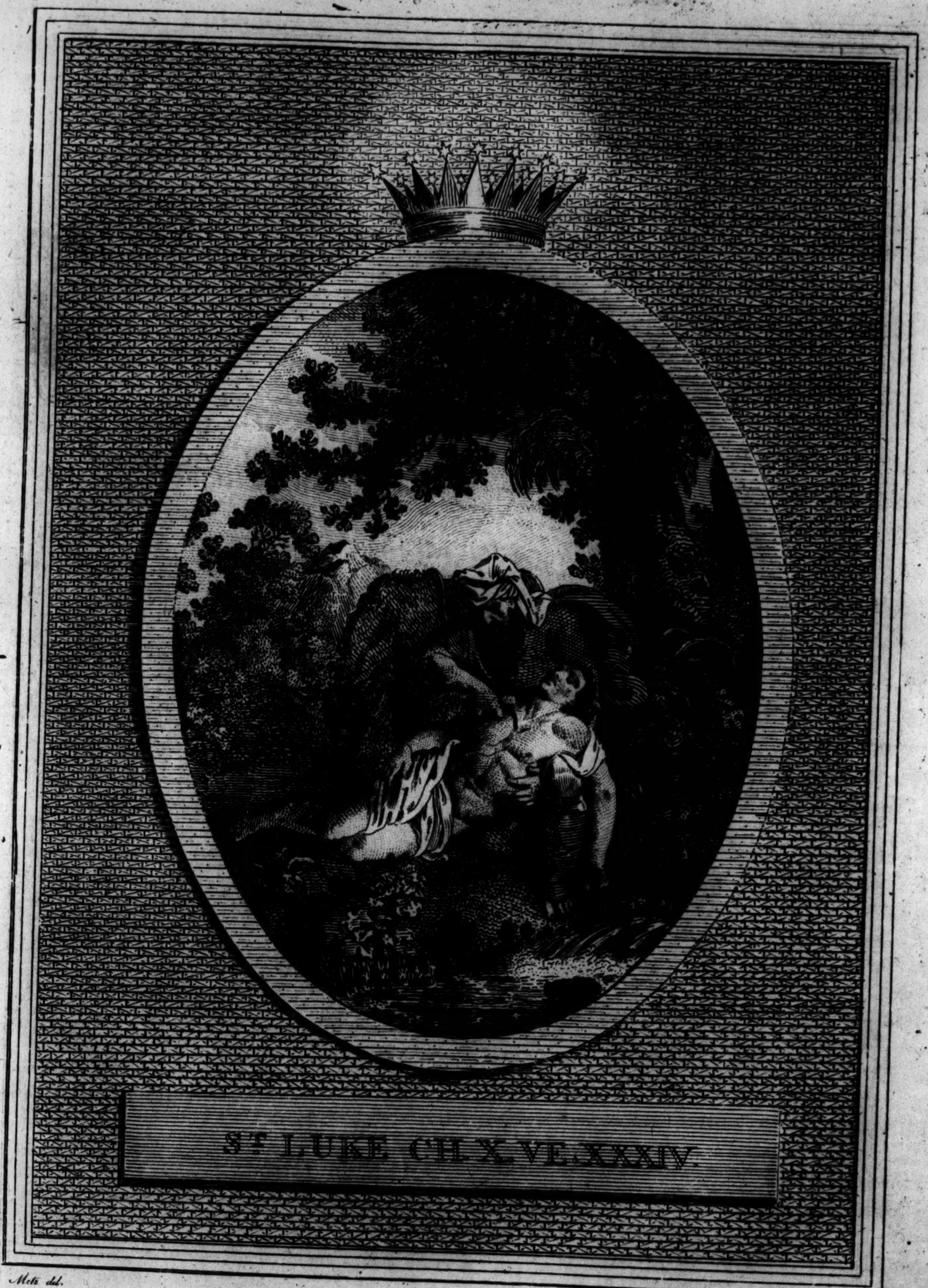

St. LUKE CH. X. VE. XXXIV.

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18 And he ſaid unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithſtanding in this rejoice not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto you; but rather rejoice, becauſe your names are written in heaven.

21 In that hour Jeſus rejoiced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: even ſo, Father; for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father: and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 And he turned him unto *his* diſciples, and ſaid privately, Bleſſed *are* the eyes which ſee the things that ye ſee:

24 For I tell you, That many prophets and kings have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them*; and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

25 And, behold, a certain lawyer ſtood up, and tempted him, ſaying, Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He ſaid unto him, What is written in the law? how readeſt thou?

27 And he anſwering ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyſelf.

28 And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt anſwered right: this do, and thou ſhalt live.

29 But he, willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid, A certain *man* went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which ſtripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain prieſt that way; and when he ſaw him, he paſſed by on the other ſide.

32 And likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and paſſed by on the other ſide.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he ſaw him, he had compaſſion *on him*,

34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and ſet him on his own beaſt, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the hoſt, and ſaid unto him, Take care of him: and whatſoever thou ſpendeſt more, when I come again I will repay thee.

36 Which now of theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he ſaid, He that ſhewed mercy,

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form all theſe 70 perſons of their being the elect of God: however *we* cannot know it of ourſelves, except by thoſe evidences, which prove us to be born of the Spirit, and truly converted: and when it is thus aſcertained, it conſtitutes a far more valuable, and comfortable diſtinction, than any miraculous powers could be.

V. 21—24.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xi. v. 25—27. c. xiii. v. 16, 17.) Our Lord inwardly rejoiced with a holy and ſpiritual joy, in the proſpect of the extenſive ſucceſs of the goſpel, of the ſalvation of many ſouls, and of the glory that would redound to God, both in thoſe events themſelves, and in the inſtruments by which they would be brought to paſs. Kings as well as prophets deſired to ſee their incarnate Meſſiah, and to hear his doctrine; but they were not allowed to live on earth to witneſs theſe tranſactions.

V. 25—37.] Whilſt our Lord was teaching the people, a lawyer ſtood up amongſt them, and in order to make trial of, or to enſnare, him, he enquired of him, what he ſhould do to inherit eternal life? (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xix. v. 16—22. *Mark* c. xii. v. 28—34.) In anſwer to this enquiry Chriſt referred him to the law, which he profeſſed to ſtudy, and to teach: and when he had quoted the two precepts, of loving God with all the heart, &c, and our neighbour as ourſelves; he allowed that he had anſwered right; that was indeed the ſum and ſubſtance of the whole law, and if he perfectly kept thoſe two commandments, he would acquire a title to eternal life; but it was alſo implied, that if he had failed of this obedience, he could not poſſibly obtain life *in this way*, for he would be condemned by the law as a tranſgreſſor, This inference he ſeems to have been aware of; and find-on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe.

38 Now it came to paſs, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her houſe.

39 And ſhe had a ſiſter called Mary, which alſo ſat at Jeſus' feet, and heard his word.

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ing himſelf entangled in his own net, yet being willing and deſirous to juſtify himſelf; he paſſed by the law of loving God with all the heart, and only enquired, who was his neighbour? For the ſcribes confined this term to their own nation, ſect, friends and connexions; and they did not deem themſelves bound to love others at all: but this man appears to have had ſome ſuſpicion that this would not ſtand good. However our Lord did not give a direct anſwer to the enquiry; but ſtated a caſe to him, and led him to anſwer it himſelf. This has generally been called a parable; but it is related as a fact, and probably was ſo. A great number of prieſts and levites reſided at Jericho, who would be frequently journeying from thence to Jeruſalem, or back again; and as the road lay through a deſert, it was greatly infeſted by robbers. Now a certain man, ſuppoſed to be a Jew, being on the road to Jericho, fell into the hands of theſe plunderers, who ſtripped and wounded him, and left him half-dead. Whilſt he lay in this helpleſs and deplorable condition, a prieſt happened to be going on the road; yet neither natural compaſſion, nor regard to the duties of religion, induced him to give any aſſiſtance to his countryman, who lay periſhing for want of help; but either pretending urgent buſineſs, or fearing leſt he alſo ſhould fall among the thieves, he paſſed by on the other ſide, regardleſs of his groans, and miſery. In like manner a Levite, who travelled that way, came indeed and looked on him, but gave him no help. At length a Samaritan in his journey came to the place; and when he ſaw the poor man's perilous and pitiable caſe; he forgot his ſtrong national, and religious prejudices, as well as the contempt and hatred, with which the Jews in general treated the Samaritans. Being moved therefore with compaſſion, he diſregarded the hindrance, trouble, danger, and expence, that muſt be incurred by helping him; and going to him, he poured the wine and oil, that he carried with him for his own refreſhment, into his bleeding wounds, and bound them up with ſuch linen as he had about him: having then placed him on the beaſt, on which he rode, he conveyed him to an inn; and there took care of him during the night, as his ſurgeon and nurſe, even as if he had been his friend and brother; and on the morrow, when his buſineſs required him to depart, he gave the hoſt what money he could ſpare, and promiſed to repay him whatever he ſhould further expend in taking care of him. The direct ſcope of this parable or narrative is evidently fixed by the context: it is a beautiful illuſtration of the law of loving our neighbour as ourſelves, without regard to nation, party, or any other diſtinction. The Samaritan alone had acted according to the commandment; and the whole was admirably ſuited to lead the Scribe to underſtand the ſubject. Had a Jew been introduced as thus relieving a diſtreſſed Samaritan, his prejudices might have prevented his approbation of his conduct: but his feelings were ſo intereſted in the caſe of the Jew, that he could not but allow that "he who "ſhewed mercy on him" was neighbour to him, and fulfilled the duty of that relation; yet he ſeems purpoſely to have avoided the uſe of the word Samaritan in this connexion. However our Lord ſent him to imitate the Samaritan's conduct; and this concluſion was calculated, by ſhewing him the extent and ſpirituality of the law, to convince him that he could not in this way obtain eternal life; as well as to direct his ſubſequent conduct. Some commentators almoſt excluſively explain this *ſuppoſed* parable, of the love of Chriſt to ſinners: but I cannot think this further allowable, than as a mere accommodation. Fallen man is not only in a pitiable ſtate, as under the power of ſatan; but he is alſo a condemned criminal expoſed to the righteous vengeance of God, from which Chriſt alone can deliver him. The Prieſt and the Levite *could* have helped the man, if they *would*, and were very wicked in omitting to do it; but the law of God is holy juſt and good, though it leave the ſinner to periſh. At the ſame time Chriſt hath far outdone the good Samaritan: He came into the world *on purpoſe* to ſave ſinners; their rebellions had been committed againſt him, and they were deſerving of his righteous indignation, and holy abhorrence: He not only ventured ſome danger, and incurred ſome trouble and expence, in reſcuing them from *deſerved* deſtruction; but he impoveriſhed and abaſed himſelf, and endured the moſt excruciating tortures, and the moſt ignominious death for that purpoſe: and He not only brings them a temporary relief, but perfects their everlaſting ſalvation; and he will abundantly recompenſe, when he comes to judgment, all thoſe, who are now willingly inſtrumental in promoting the purpoſes of his love. In ſhort the bleſſed Jeſus hath perfectly fulfilled the law of "loving our "neighbour as ourſelves," in ſuch circumſtances, as no other perſon could be placed in: His conduct therefore is the beſt interpretation of the commandment, and the beſt example for our imitation. Several other accommodations may be made of the ſubject: the oil and wine may be ſaid to repreſent the blood and Spirit of Chriſt, by which our ſouls are healed; the inn may repreſent his church; the hoſt his miniſters; and the two pence his ſacraments: but perhaps theſe things are more ingenious than ſolid, and more amuſing than inſtructive: and it may ſeriouſly be apprehended, that by ſuch interpretations, men's thoughts have been far too much drawn off from the grand practical inference "go thou, and do "likewiſe."

V. 38—42.] On ſome occaſion, when our Lord and his diſciples ſtopped at Bethany, in their way to Jeruſalem, and were hoſpitably entertained in the houſe of Martha the ſiſter of Lazarus, (*John*, c. xi; the following incident occurred. As ſoon as he was ſat down, he entered as uſual upon ſome edifying diſcourſe to the company, who had come together; and Mary delighted with the opportunity, ſat at his feet, as an humble diſciple, to hear his word, and thus to welcome him as her Savi-

40 But Martha was cumbered about much ſerving, and came to him, and ſaid, Lord, doſt thou not care that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone? bid her therefore that ſhe help me.

44 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things;

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath choſen that good part, which ſhall not be taken away from her.

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our and Inſtructor. But Martha was deſirous of ſhewing her reſpect and affection to him in another manner; and aiming to provide a ſuitable entertainment for ſo honoured a gueſt, ſhe was hurried and incumbered "about "much ſerving." Thus ſhe was likely to loſe her opportunity of obtaining good to her ſoul by our Lord's viſit, and put herſelf into an agitation of mind, which was both uncomfortable and ſinful. Whereas it would have been far more honourable to Chriſt, and profitable to herſelf, to have made the moſt ſimple and frugal proviſion, with as little trouble as poſſible to herſelf and her domeſtics; and to have been chiefly intent on receiving his inſtructions. However it appeared otherwiſe to her: and not being able *alone* to accompliſh her various contrivances, in which ſhe probably too much conſulted the credit of her hoſpitality; ſhe was diſpleaſed with her ſiſter for not coming to her aſſiſtance. She therefore came into the room in haſte, and with ſome warmth appealed to Jeſus himſelf, nay in ſome ſenſe expoſtulated with Him, about the ſuppoſed impropriety of Mary's conduct: enquiring whether it did not give him concern to ſee her ſiſter ſo inattentive, as to leave her to ſerve alone? And deſiring him to command her to go to her aſſiſtance! But the matter appeared in a far different light to the ſpiritual mind of Chriſt: and addreſſing Martha with a tender, and compaſſionate repetition of her name, He intimated to her that ſhe was in a very faulty temper of mind, and perplexing herſelf to no purpoſe. He obſerved to her that ſhe was ſolicitous and diſquieted (as the waters are agitated by a violent ſtorm) about many things that related to her own credit, or the accommodation of the company; which were objects not worth her regard: "but "that one thing was needful," which ſhe was at that time tempted to neglect. The term *needful* has reference to ſome propoſed end: many things are *needful* to the gratification of men's corrupt paſſions; but the end propoſed is in itſelf neither *needful nor uſeful:* many things are *needful* to the continuance of our lives on earth; but that may not be *needful*, or profitable for us. So that the favour of God is the only thing that is abſolutely *needful* to our final happineſs; the ſalvation of Chriſt is abſolutely *needful* for us ſinners, in order to the enjoyment of God's favour; and an humble, believing, obedient attention to the goſpel is abſolutely *needful* in order to our obtaining an intereſt in the ſalvation of Chriſt. Where this one thing *needful* is properly attended to, all other matters will be uſed or purſued in ſubſerviency to it; and whatever may ſeem to be neglected, or loſt by this choice and conduct; preſent comfort, and eternal felicity will be ſecured thereby. Our Lord therefore added that "Mary had choſen that good "part, which ſhould not be taken from her:" it was her wiſe and happy choice to "ſit at his feet, and hear "his words;" ſhe was not to be ſeduced into a neglect of his inſtructions, by any ſecular cares and incumberances: and as neither life, death, or eternity would deprive her of her intereſt in his ſalvation, ſo Chriſt would by no means conſent to her being deprived of the preſent ſatisfaction of liſtening to his diſcourſe, in order to aſſiſt in providing a *needleſs* plenty and variety for the refreſhment of the bodies, or the indulgence of the appetites of the company. Though Martha was on this occaſion faulty; yet ſhe was a true believer, and did not in her general conduct neglect the one thing needful: we may therefore ſuppoſe that this ſeaſonable, and affectionate reproof had its proper effect; and that her conduct, when Jeſus afterwards came to her houſe, was regulated by more ſpiritual, and rational conſiderations.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miniſtry of the goſpel is intended to prepare men to receive Chriſt, as a Prince and a Saviour; and He will ſurely come in the power of his Spirit to all thoſe places whither He ſends his faithful ſervants. The increaſe of labourers in this bleſſed work ſhould excite us to pray the Lord of the harveſt, to ſend forth more and more: for they are but few compared with the harveſt of ſouls, that ſhall in due time be gathered in; or even in proportion to the extent of the viſible church, and the number of mere loiterers. At Chriſt's command we ſhould go forth to preach his goſpel, "as lambs among "wolves;" depending on his power we need not fear their rage; and copying his example we ſhould maintain a meek and blameleſs conduct, in the midſt of their injuries and provocations. Whilſt we diſintereſtedly ſeek the peace and ſalvation of thoſe, to whom we are ſent; we may conſcientiouſly "eat and drink ſuch things as "are ſet before us;" for the faithful miniſter is as juſtly entitled to a moderate ſubſiſtence, as the labourer is to his wages: yet we ſhould endeavour to requite thoſe, who contribute to our ſupport, as well as to promote the ſucceſs of the goſpel, by our prayers and good offices in their behalf. But if our meſſage be obſtinately rejected, we ought, in the moſt public and decided manner, to bear teſtimony againſt, and ſeparate from, the oppoſers of it: and dreadful will be the caſe of thoſe, to whom "the "kingdom of God hath come nigh," but who have put it from them with contempt and diſlike. In this way, numbers, who have poſſeſſed, and been proud of valuable privileges and diſtinctions, will be thruſt down into hell, with more terrible vengeance, than the inhabitants of Tyre, or even of Sodom; for they did not continue impenitent under ſuch abundant means of grace. Nor let any imagine, that this will only be verified on thoſe, who were favoured with, and rejected the miniſtry of Chriſt, and his apoſtles: for it is ſtill true of all the faithful preachers of the goſpel, that "he who "heareth them heareth Chriſt; and he who deſpiſeth

CHAP XI.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Teaching his diſciples to pray, and encouraging their earneſtneſs by two illuſtrations, 1---13. *2d. Caſting out a devil, and ſhewing the abſurdity, and the malice of thoſe, who aſcribed the miracle to the power of Beelzebub,* 14---26. *3d. Shewing the bleſſedneſs of true piety above all*

“ them, deſpiſeth Chriſt, and the Father alſo who ſent “ him.”

When pious miniſters are evidently made uſeful to their fellow-ſinners, they diſregard their toil and hardſhip, and return from preaching the word to meet their gracious Lord in retirement, with joy and gratitude. We may always be ſure, that he will exceed his promiſe, rather than fall ſhort of it, to all thoſe, who go forth to his work depending on his help, and obſerving his directions. As he was manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the devil; and as in conſequence of his humiliation even unto the death of the croſs, he foreſaw that adverſary “ falling as lightning from heaven:” ſo we may labour and pray in hope for the pulling down of his kingdom of ignorance, infidelity, impiety, and vice, all over the earth, through the preached goſpel, and by the power of our exalted Redeemer. Relying on him, we may expect to trample under foot the moſt potent, and malignant enemies, who are like ſerpents, and ſcorpions; and to have ſatan himſelf bruiſed under our feet ſhortly: nor can any adverſary by any means hurt thoſe, whom he employs, protects and proſpers. But though we ſhould be thankful for gifts, and uſefulneſs; yet we ſhould chiefly ſeek the aſſurance that our names are written in heaven, that we may have a ſolid ground of rejoicing: for it would be far better to be the moſt obſcure believer; than to have all knowledge, eloquence, and even ſucceſs in ſpreading the goſpel, and at length to be ourſelves caſt-aways. Let us then beware eſpecially of ſpiritual pride: by this ſin, ſatan fell like lightning from heaven, and from a bright arch-angel became a hateful and miſerable fiend: it hath been the fore-runner of deſtruction to many, who “ have propheſied, “ wrought miracles, and caſt out devils in Chriſt's “ name;” and of many, who for a time have preached his goſpel with great popularity, and apparent ſucceſs: and it hath tarniſhed the luſtre, and terminated the uſefulneſs of others, concerning whoſe final ſtate we have better hopes. The Lord Jeſus rejoiced in Spirit, that it pleaſed the Father to hide his myſteries from the wiſe and prudent, and to reveal them unto babes: and He hath ever reſiſted the proud, and given his grace unto the humble. The more ſimply dependant we therefore are on the teaching, help, and bleſſing of the Son of God; the more we ſhall know both of the Father and of the Son, the more bleſſed we ſhall be in ſeeing the glory, and hearing the words of the divine Saviour; and the more we ſhall be made uſeful in promoting his cauſe.

Good queſtions may be propoſed from very baſe motives: yet we ought ſeriouſly to enquire “ What we “ ſhould do to inherit eternal life?” And nothing ſhould be counted difficult or perilous, where ſuch a prize is at ſtake, eſpecially as it is connected with the awful alternative of everlaſting puniſhment. In anſwer to this enquiry the bleſſed Saviour will direct us to the written word, and demand of us how we there read? Yet even the right reply concerning the demands of the holy law does nothing towards reſolving the queſtion, *how a ſinner may inherit eternal life?* *In this ſenſe* however it is proper for “ thoſe, who deſire to be under the law, to “ hear the law:” and when it's extenſive, ſpiritual and reaſonable requirements are ſcripturally ſtated; we may ſafely aſſure any enquirer, that if he do this, he ſhall live. Indeed the moſt perfect obedience for the time to come would not diſcharge any part of the debt, which we have already contracted; (c. vii. v. 40—42:) yet we know that no man will ever perform this condition, or be able to claim eternal life even on this ground: nay no one will ever love God, and his neighbour with any meaſure of pure ſpiritual love, who is not made partaker of regenerating grace; the tendency of which is to increaſe humiliation for ſin, and ſimplicity of dependance on the free mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus for the gift of eternal life. But the proud heart of man ſtrives hard againſt theſe mortifying convictions: and every ray of light that breaks in upon the conſcience, excites the renewed endeavour “ to juſtify himſelf;” even as the approach of danger ſtirs us up to provide for our own defence. As the nature and effects of the love of God are moſt out of the way of carnal men; they are ready to conclude that they ſhall elude conviction on that ſcore, provided they can prove that they have not been injurious to their neighbours. Leaving out therefore the firſt and great commandment, as if it were actually repealed; they ſet themſelves “ to juſtify themſelves” in reſpect of the ſecond, which is like unto it: and learned Scribes, ancient and modern, come in to their aid with a variety of corrupt gloſſes, perplexing criticiſms, and frivolous diſtinctions; before which the meaning and ſpirit of the precept ſeem to evaporate. Thus the moſt flagrant injuſtice, treachery, oppreſſion, and inhumanity are openly vindicated as conſiſtent with the law of God! Nay the ſcripture is ranſacked, and quoted for precedents, and arguments, in favour of the moſt horrid cruelties, that rapacious avarice, revenge, bigotry, or ambition can perpetrate; Some difference of climate, colour, or religious tenets is pleaded; as if this bounded the divine command, and excuſed us for not loving a vaſt majority of the human ſpecies as our neighbours! Or ſome *judicial* regulation, which was made to prevent the more fatal effects of that hardneſs of heart, which no law can change; or ſome practices evidently originating from human ſelfiſhneſs, are adduced; as if they actually repealed the laws of “ loving our neighbours as ourſelves,” and “ of doing to all others, as we would they ſhould do unto us.” Thus men render the commandments of God of none effect, by their traditions, and corrupt reaſonings; and human learning, nay what is called theology, often rivets men the more entirely in thoſe prejudices, which are equally ſubverſive of the law of love, and of the goſpel of free grace. However we muſt endeavour *external privileges; and further warning the impenitent Jews, &c,* 27---36. *4th. Dining with a Phariſee; and expoſing the ignorance, hypocriſy, and wickedneſs of both the Scribes and Phariſees; with their eager endeavours to enſnare, and accuſe him,* 37---54.

by every means to counteract the effects of ſuch deſtructive errors: and in order to this, apt illuſtrations, and appeals to men's conſciences and feelings may be more uſeful, than abſtracted reaſonings: and though we muſt not countenance any corrupt prejudices; yet on many occaſions it is adviſeable to oppoſe them *indirectly*, and to ſtudy by what avenue we may beſt come at the heart, on the ſtate of which the determination of the judgment in great meaſure depends. But it is moſt lamentable to obſerve to what a degree ſelfiſhneſs pervades all ranks and orders of men; and how many excuſes they will deviſe, that they may avoid incurring trouble or expence in relieving the miſeries of others. They will plead that they are in haſte, their buſineſs is urgent or *ſacred*, that the attempt is vain or perilous, that they have it not in their power, that others will do it to greater advantage, or that it properly belongs not to them. With ſuch pretences many paſs by the wretched and periſhing, and avoid looking on them, that they may be excuſed from aſſiſting them: others will give them a look, and a pitying word, hoping ſome good chriſtian will come to their relief, though they cannot get time, or are not able to do it. Alas, that it muſt here be added, that many profeſſors and miniſters of religion are as evidently ſelfiſh and unfeeling in theſe things, as any other men: and thus they give up their holy faith, and ſacred function to the contempt and invectives of infidels, who ſubſtitute a proud ſemblance of benevolence in the place of all the ſcriptural graces of repentance, faith in a divine Saviour, love to God, and to man for his ſake. However, the true chriſtian has the law of love written in his heart: the Spirit of Chriſt dwells in him, and his Image is renewed on his ſoul: miſery will therefore uniformly excite compaſſion in his breaſt, wherever it is ſeen, though in a ſtranger, an enemy, or one of an oppoſite ſect or party. Thus the Son of God looked down with compaſſion on our deſerved, and helpleſs miſery, and came to our relief; though he knew that it would expoſe him to the deepeſt abaſement, and moſt intenſe ſufferings to deliver us: thus he is ever ready to pity and help the poor ſinner, when ſtripped of every plea, wounded in his conſcience, and without hope of deliverance from any other quarter. In our utmoſt diſtreſs he hath come to us, to bind up our broken hearts, to pour his healing balm into our bleeding wounds, and to preſerve us from that deſtruction, into which our enemies had almoſt plunged us: by his power, and grace he brings us into his church, and there takes care of and heals our ſouls; and he requires his miniſters and people to ſhew their love to him by their attention to the weak and diſcouraged of his flock; aſſuring them of an abundant recompence at his return to judge the world. After this intereſting and endearing example of inexpreſſible love, to which we owe all our hopes and comforts; every believer muſt and will pity, and endeavour to relieve the oppreſſed, and to comfort the wretched; he will be induced to venture loſs, danger, and reproach, in the work and labour of love: the excuſes, which ſatiſfy others, and which once ſatisfied him, will no longer be regarded; he will become the good Samaritan to the poor and afflicted of every name and nation who come in his way; yea he will go out of his way to meet with and relieve them, as he hath ability and opportunity. And when he conſiders that Jeſus loved him and bled for him, when an enemy and a rebel; and having ſhewn him mercy, that he bid him "go and do likewiſe;" he will love, and do good even to his enemies, and to the vileſt of mankind for Chriſt's ſake. With this view of chriſtianity before our eyes, have we reaſon to expect that any, who profeſs it, will defraud, oppreſs, enſlave, or perſecute any of the human race? If there be any appearance of ſuch practices in thoſe, who ſeem to be chriſtians; we muſt either allow that they are not what they profeſs to be, or that they know not what manner of ſpirit they are of.

But let us follow Chriſt, eſpecially in his perſevering, and ſelf-denying love to ſinners: in order to it, let us welcome him into our hearts, and his diſciples and miniſters into our houſes: and let the latter eſpecially be careful to improve the hours of ſocial intercourſe with their friends, in edifying diſcourſe. But we ſhould have more profit in meeting together, as well as larger ability in imitating the good Samaritan; if we were not ſo commonly "cumbered about much ſerving." Alas, what time is waſted, and what expences are incurred, even in the entertainment of the miniſters, and profeſſors of the goſpel, to feaſt the appetites of the gueſts, and to gratify the vanity of thoſe who furniſh the repaſt! Whilſt a ſcanty ſurplus remains for the poor, and a ſmall proportion of the opportunity for religious improvement! Nay ſometimes the perſons concerned in this manner loſe their temper alſo; and are even induced to violate the ſabbath reſt, and to conſtrain their ſervants to neglect the public ordinances of God, and ſometimes to do the ſame themſelves! If the gracious Saviour were perſonally preſent on ſuch occaſions, and ſaw his profeſſed diſciples thus careful and troubled about many things, would he not rebuke them more ſharply than He did Martha? Indeed ſuch delinquents will attempt to vindicate their conduct, and perhaps may be angry with and affect to cenſure thoſe, who are indifferent to ſuch external accommodations, compared with "ſitting at Chriſt's feet, and "hearing his word:" but He will decide the matter againſt them, and not admit of their plea, that theſe are *little things*; much leſs will He conſider ſuch cares, and incumbrances as *needful*. But it is not in this way alone, that we are apt to be careful and troubled about many things. Numbers are wholly given up to a variety of worldly purſuits and anxieties, to the entire neglect of their ſouls: and there are none of us, who do not at ſome times expoſe ourſelves to the rebuke of Chriſt, for our diſproportionate ſolicitude, and eagerneſs about mere trifles, when compared with our attention to the concerns of eternity. Let us then mind more diligently, and entirely, the one thing needful: none but Jeſus can

AND it came to paſs, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceaſed, one of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his diſciples.

2 And he ſaid unto them, When ye pray, ſay, Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, ſo in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our ſins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he ſaid unto them, Which of you ſhall have a friend, and go unto him at midnight, and ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to ſet before him?

7 And he from within ſhall anſwer and ſay, Trouble me not: the door is now ſhut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot riſe and give thee.

8 I ſay unto you, Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend; yet, becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I ſay unto you, Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that aſketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.

11 If a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? or, if *he aſk* a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent?

12 Or, if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he offer him a ſcorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to

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do wretched ſinners good: to hear, believe, and obey his goſpel; and to have him for our Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption, compriſes all that is neceſſary for this world, and the next: and without this all the reſt will leave us for ever miſerable. This good part is by the goſpel propoſed to our choice; happy then are they, who give it a decided preference to all earthly objects: for it ſhall not be taken from them, through the countleſs ages of eternity; and to them, who chooſe and ſeek it in the firſt place, all things elſe that can conduce to their preſent comfort, or their everlaſting felicity, ſhall aſſuredly be added.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—3.] Our Lord ſeems to have conſtantly prayed with his diſciples, when they were retired together. On one of theſe occaſions, a certain perſon, (perhaps one of the 70 diſciples, who might not have heard the ſermon on the mount,) intreated him to teach them to pray, as John had taught his followers. Probably John had added to his general inſtructions on this ſubject, ſome ſhort directory, or form of prayer, which both ſerved to diſtinguiſh his diſciples from thoſe of the Phariſees, and to impreſs upon their minds the important truths, that he had inculcated concerning the Meſſiah and the ſpiritual bleſſings of his kingdom; and thus to regulate their judgments, and their devotions at the ſame time. This diſciple therefore deſired Chriſt to inſtruct them to pray by ſome ſimilar method: for we cannot ſuppoſe, but that He had taught them both what to pray for, and in what manner to pray, by his doctrine and his daily example. However the man evidently was ſenſible of the importance of prayer, of his own need of inſtruction reſpecting it, and of his dependance on Chriſt to teach him how to perform it in a ſuitable manner. In anſwer to his requeſt our Lord repeated that prayer, which we have already fully conſidered; (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vi. v. 7—12.) The variations are immaterial, except the omiſſion of the concluding doxology; but the expreſſion, "when ye pray ſay," at leaſt warrants the frequent uſe of the very words here preſcribed, which certainly imply every thing that we can aſk for ourſelves or others, in reſpect of this life, and of that which is to come.

V. 5—13.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 7—12.) In addition to this comprehenſive form of prayer, our Lord encouraged the diſciples to be perſevering, and earneſt in their requeſts; the happy effects of which he firſt illuſtrated by a caſe, that might occur to them. A man, in the circumſtances here deſcribed, might ſometimes prevail by importunity, when friendſhip had proved ineffectual to overcome the reluctancy, which another felt to put himſelf to much trouble, and uneaſineſs to ſerve him. If this method then proved ſo ſucceſsful with men, notwithſtanding their ſelfiſhneſs, and the trouble, that attends granting a requeſt made at an unſeaſonable hour: how much more will importunity prevail with God, who delighteth in mercy, who deems no time unſeaſonable, who anſwers every prayer with moſt perfect eaſe, and who only delays his favours in order to make us more earneſt and perſevering in our ſupplications? This illuſtration our Lord concluded by repeating ſuch exhortations and promiſes, &c, as have already been conſidered: except that inſtead of "*good things*," he here inſerts "The Holy Spirit:" by which it is intimated, that this gift to us ſinners is the ſum or earneſt of all good things: for by his influences we are brought to know God and ourſelves, to repent, to believe in and love Chriſt, to hope, rejoice, and obey; and are ſo made give good gifts unto your children; how much more ſhall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?

14 And he was caſting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to paſs, when the devil was gone out, the dumb ſpake; and the people wondered.

15 But ſome of them ſaid, He caſteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting *him*, ſought of him a ſign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to deſolation; and a houſe *divided* againſt a houſe, falleth.

18 If Satan alſo be divided againſt himſelf, how ſhall his kingdom ſtand? becauſe ye ſay that I caſt out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your ſons caſt *them* out? therefore ſhall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God caſt out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a ſtronger than he ſhall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divideth his ſpoils.

23 He that is not with me is againſt me; and he that gathereth not with me ſcattereth.

24 When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt: and finding none, he ſaith, I will return unto my houſe whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* ſwept and garniſhed.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf; and they enter in, and dwell there; and the laſt *ſtate* of that man is worſe than the firſt.

27 And it came to paſs, as he ſpake theſe things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt ſucked.

28 But he ſaid, Yea rather, bleſſed *are* they that hear the word of God and keep it.

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to ſay, This is an evil generation: they ſeek a ſign; and there ſhall no ſign be given it, but the ſign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a ſign unto the Ninevites, ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for ſhe came from the utmoſt parts of the earth to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

32 The men of Nineve ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a ſecret place, neither under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick, that they which came in may ſee the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is ſingle, thy whole body alſo is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body alſo *is* full of darkneſs.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkneſs.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of

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comfortable in this world, and meet for happineſs in the next.

V. 14—26.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 22—30. 43—45.) "The finger of God," denoting the power by which Chriſt wrought his miracles, may refer to the confeſſion of the Egyptian magicians, with reſpect to the miracles performed by Moſes. (*Exod.* c. viii. v. 19.)

V. 27, 28.] The power and beneficence of Chriſt's miracles, the authority and excellence of his doctrine, the holineſs of his character, and the wiſdom of his anſwers to his malicious enemies, ſeem to have combined to overpower this woman with admiration of Chriſt; ſo that ſhe could not refrain from crying aloud, that the woman, who had the honour of being his mother muſt be peculiarly happy above all others. The anſwer of our Lord to this, was exactly to the ſame effect with one on another occaſion, that hath already been conſidered. (*Matt.* c. xii. v. 46—50.)

V. 29—36.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 15, 16. c. vi. v. 22, 23. c. xii. v. 38—42.) This was an light, having no part dark, the whole ſhall be full of light, as when the bright ſhining of a candle doth give thee light.

37 And as he ſpake, a certain Phariſee beſought him to dine with him: and he went in, and ſat down to meat.

38 And when the Phariſee ſaw *it*, he marvelled that he had not firſt waſhed before dinner.

39 And the Lord ſaid unto him, Now do ye Phariſees make clean the outſide of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedneſs.

40 *Ye* fools! did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within alſo?

41 But rather give alms of ſuch things as ye have, and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 But woe unto you, Phariſees! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and paſs over judgment and the love of God: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you, Phariſees! for ye love the uppermoſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware *of them*.

45 Then anſwered one of the lawyers, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, thus ſaying thou reproacheſt us alſo.

46 And he ſaid, Woe unto you alſo, *ye* lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourſelves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the ſepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witneſs that ye allow

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anſwer to another cavil, which was connected with the preceding objection, (v. 16.) The ſubſtance of it hath been already commented upon: but the parable, concerning the light and the eye, ſeems here to be applied in ſomewhat of a different manner, than elſewhere. Our Lord appears to have firſt intimated, that he ſhould proceed to diffuſe the light of his truth, notwithſtanding the perverſe oppoſition of the Phariſees, &c; nor would they be able to cover or extinguiſh that candle, which he had kindled for the benefit of mankind. Yet amidſt all this light they would remain in darkneſs, through the prejudices of their wicked hearts; even as men, whoſe eyes are vitiated, ſee nothing, or nothing aright, in the moſt illuminated place. It therefore concerned every hearer to be peculiarly careful, that their ſuppoſed light, which they followed, was not darkneſs, or their firſt principles and practical judgment erroneous. For, as the body is furniſhed with light for its direction by the eye; ſo the mind is guided in every operation by the practical judgment: if then their minds were well prepared to receive the benefit of his revelation, they would have no more occaſion to demand more information, than a man with good eyes would be at a loſs to diſtinguiſh the ſurrounding objects, "when "the bright ſhining of a candle doth give him light." The laſt verſe, which ſeems in our tranſlation to be a mere repetition, may perhaps be rendered, "If thy "whole body therefore be full of light, having no part "dark, the whole," that is, (of thy conduct,) ſhall "be full of light, as when the bright ſhining, &c."

V. 37—39.] As Jeſus was ſpeaking on this occaſion, or on ſome other, (for harmoniſts ſeem with probability to place the following incident in another connexion;) a Phariſee with apparent reſpect and earneſtneſs preſſed him to dine with him; and though he knew the ſtate of the man's heart, and his intentions, he yet ſaw good to accept of the invitation: for it is probable that the Phariſee had purpoſely collected together many of his brethren to meet Jeſus, with a deſign to enſnare him; which may account for the remarkable ſharpneſs of his reproofs, and warnings. However he expreſſed his ſurpriſe that Jeſus had not firſt waſhed before dinner, according to their traditions; and this gave Him the opportunity of expoſing and condemning their hypocriſy, and ſuperſtition. The ſubſtance of this diſcourſe, as delivered on another occaſion, hath been already conſidered, and a few hints will here ſuffice. (Notes, *Matt.* c. xxiii.)

V. 41. *But*, &c.] Charity to the poor, according to a man's ability, from proper principles, as the fruit of repentance, faith, and love to God, will do more to render our outward poſſeſſions or enjoyments ſanctified to us, than any ceremonial waſhings could do. Where this is properly attended to, and men deduct from their own indulgence, to give a portion to their poor neighbours "behold all things are clean unto them."

V. 44. *Appear*, &c.] Some of their tombs were whited, others were grown over with graſs, and were not ſeen; but both of them were full of dead men's bones, &c, and men contracted ceremonial uncleanneſs unawares by coming near the latter: Thus they, who formed an acquaintance with the hypocritical Scribes and Phariſees, were deeply corrupted by them in their principles and conduct, before they ſuſpected any harm.

V. 45. *Lawyers*, &c.] Theſe ſeem to have been a ſuperior order of the Scribes, who were moſt celebrated as learned men, or moſt followed as teachers. This man deemed himſelf, and his brethren, ſuperior to all the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their ſepulchres.

49 Therefore alſo ſaid the wiſdom of God, I will ſend them prophets and apoſtles, and *ſome* of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute;

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the altar and the temple: verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourſelves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And as he ſaid theſe things unto them, the Scribes and the Phariſees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to ſpeak of many things;

54 Laying wait for him, and ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his mouth, that they might accuſe him.

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cenſure or reproof, and wondered that Chriſt ſhould join the Scribes with the Phariſees in the preceding woe, deeming him inexcuſeable in ſo doing.

V. 49. *Wiſdom*, &c.] Some expoſitors underſtand "the wiſdom of God" of Chriſt himſelf: and as the words that follow are not found in the Old Teſtament; we may ſuppoſe, that He meant, as the mouth of God, immediately to reveal to them his wiſe counſels and purpoſes reſpecting them. (1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 21.)

V. 52. *Key of*, &c.] The Scribes are ſaid to have been diſtinguiſhed by the ſymbolical figure of a key; intimating that their proper office was to open and explain the ſcripture, and to admit men into the knowledge of God and his truth and will: but inſtead of uſing this key aright, they had taken it away, by their corrupt gloſſes, and perverſe oppoſition to the doctrine of Chriſt; ſo that they neither entered in themſelves, nor allowed the people to enter in, even when they were in a meaſure deſirous of doing it.

V. 53, 54.] No wonder theſe ſharp reproofs extremely enraged the hypocritical Scribes and Phariſees; eſpecially as Jeſus was a gueſt at one of their tables, when he ſpake to them: they therefore ſet on him all at once to put him off his guard, that he might ſay ſomething, which ſhould give them matter of accuſation againſt him. The original word, tranſlated "to urge "him vehemently," is taken from dogs coming all together with open mouths to devour their prey.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a great mercy for us to be made ſo ſenſible of our indigence and dependance on God, as to deſire to pray; and ſo aware of our own ignorance and of the difficulty of praying aright, as to ſeek for inſtruction in reſpect of this important part of religion. When we are led by ſuch convictions to beſeech the Lord Jeſus to teach us to pray, we uſe a very proper introduction to all our ſubſequent devotions: but He will do it, in a far ſuperior manner, to that, in which John, or any other of his ſervants could: He will lead us into an acquaintance with our own wants and God's promiſes, and excite in our hearts correſpondent deſires and affections; and thus he will teach us to pray in humility, reverence, faith, expectation, and earneſtneſs: He will give us the Spirit of adoption, that we may come with confidence to God, as "Our Father, who is in heaven;" and from love to him and zeal for his glory, as well as from good-will to men, to pray, "that his name may be hallowed, his "kingdom be advanced, and his will done, on earth as "in heaven:" from ſubmiſſion to his will, moderation in our deſires, and reliance on his providence, we ſhall thus learn to live upon him "day by day, for our daily "bread;" we ſhall, under this inſtruction be led to apply continually for the "pardon of our ſins, and to for"give every one, who is indebted to us;" and from abhorrence of iniquity, as well as from dread of it's conſequences, we ſhall, in humble conſciouſneſs of our own weakneſs; pray "not to be led into temptation, but to "be delivered from evil;" from the evil one, from the evil of this world, and from the evil of our own hearts; that we may be made holy as our God is holy, and be prepared for perfect felicity in his favour and preſence for ever. The teaching of Chriſt will alſo encourage and enlarge our hopes: aſſured that we are praying for ſuch things as are good for us, we ſhall be taught to perſevere, and to be importunate, though we ſeem to meet with a repulſe; being ſatisfied, that every one, "that aſketh "receiveth, &c:" we ſhall therefore return again and again to the throne of grace, even when we have been baffled by temptation, or proved by delays; and renew, and increaſe our earneſtneſs in aſking, ſeeking, and knocking, eſpecially that we may obtain the Holy Spirit, to enlighten, ſanctify, ſtrengthen, and comfort our hearts, and to put us in full poſſeſſion of the ſalvation of Chriſt. All theſe bleſſings our heavenly Father is far more ready to beſtow on *every one*, who aſketh for them, than any indulgent father can be to give food to his hungry child; and *in this way*, we need no more fear being fatally deluded, or finally overcome by our enemy; than a beloved child need fear leſt his father ſhould "give him a "ſcorpion inſtead of an egg:" nay this would be far more likely; becauſe men are evil, but God is Love and delighteth in mercy.

But his goodneſs, in all its varied diſplays, tends to draw forth man's ingratitude and enmity: even when divine Love was incarnate for the ſalvation of ſinners; his continued and perſevering kindneſs, and pre-eminent excellency excited the utmoſt envy and malignity in them, whoſe hypocriſy he expoſed, whoſe ſelfiſhneſs he ſhamed, and with whoſe credit, intereſt, or authority his doctrine interfered: they even aſcribed his beneficent miracles to diabolical agency! But the tendency of his goſpel to lead men to humble piety, purity, equity, truth

CHAP. XII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Warning his diſciples, in the preſence of the multitude, to beware of hypocriſy, and of the fear of man; encouraging them boldly to confeſs him before men; and ſhewing the danger of blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, 1---12. *2d. By the parable of the unexpected death of a rich fooliſh man, cautioning them againſt covetouſneſs; and thence proceeding to diſſuade them from worldly cares, to exhort them to hope and ſeek for ſpiritual bleſſings; and inculcate watchfulneſs and faithfulneſs, as a preparation for his ſecond coming,* 13---48. *3d. Predicting the conteſts, and perſecutions, that his goſpel would occaſion; expoſing the hypocriſy, and blindneſs of thoſe, who knew not the ſigns of the times; and admoniſhing them without delay, to make their peace with God, &c,* 49---59.

and love, did then, and do ſtill confute ſuch blaſphemous ſlanders; and it is even now in a meaſure accompanied with “the finger of God,” to change the willing ſlaves of ſatan into the devoted worſhippers and ſervants of Jehovah. As the converſion of a ſinner breaks that falſe peace which was in his conſcience and heart whilſt ſatan reigned there with undiſturbed ſway, and two conflicting parties are formed within the ſoul, of which grace is ſuperior, and will obtain the complete victory: ſo is the ſtupid indifference of men to the concerns of religion diſturbed, wherever the goſpel is ſucceſsfully preached; and two parties are formed, the one for Chriſt and his goſpel, and the other in oppoſition to it; but the former will certainly prevail at length. In this conteſt none are allowed to ſtand neuter: the Lord Jeſus calls on every one to join him in deſtroying the kingdom of ſatan; “he that is not for Him is againſt him, and he “that gathereth not with Him ſcattereth.” Yet we muſt not haſtily conclude, that all who appear to be for him, will “continue to the end.” Alas, ſatan for a time goes out of many, who never admit the Saviour to take poſſeſſion of their hearts; and ſo the enemy returns to his habitation, and “the laſt ſtate of that man becomes “worſe than the firſt:” from ſuch a dreadful event, (may every one ſay,) “Good Lord deliver us!” In order to be preſerved from it, we ſhould endeavour to “hear “the word of God, and keep it,” by faith and love in our hearts, and by obedience in our lives. Without this we cannot be bleſſed: for all notions, forms, and outward privileges, which fail of rectifying men's diſpoſitions and regulating their conduct, will only tend to their deeper condemnation. Thus multitudes, who hear the goſpel are proved to be an evil generation: they ſtand out in unbelief againſt every demonſtration of the truth, and in ſin againſt the convictions of their own conſciences; whilſt many come from diſtant places through love to the word of God, and beſtow great pains amidſt immenſe diſadvantages to become wiſe unto ſalvation; and others profit by far inferior means and inſtruments, who will riſe up in judgment againſt them and condemn them. But were Chriſt himſelf the conſtant Preacher in any congregation, and did he daily work his miracles among them; unleſs his grace alſo humbled their hearts, and ſubdued their carnal prejudices, they would not profit by his word. Inſtead therefore of wanting more evidence, and fuller inſtruction, than the Lord is pleaſed to afford us; we ſhould “pray without ceaſing,” that our hearts, and underſtandings may be opened, that we may profit by the Light we enjoy: and above all things we ought to take heed, that the “Light that is in us be not dark“neſs;” for if our leading principles be *fallacies*, and our affections *carnal*, our judgment and practice muſt become more egregiouſly wrong by all our reaſonings, and aſſiduity.

Of this we have an inſtructive and awful example in the caſe of the Phariſees and lawyers here before us. Their ambitious deſire of pre-eminence, applauſe and authority, and their proud and carnal prejudices, led them to place religion in minute, but ſpecious obſervances: this ſeduced them further from the ſpiritual truth, will, and worſhip of God, and entangled them more and more in ſuperſtition, and deluſion. They gravely marvelled that Jeſus waſhed not his hands before dinner: yet they attempted not to cleanſe their own hearts from ravening and wickedneſs; fooliſhly forgetting that “He who made that which is without, made that “which is within alſo!” they fancied that ſuch external and uncommanded purifications would ſanctify their meals; whilſt the demands of juſtice and charity, as well as the duties of piety were neglected by them! That they might appear ſingularly conſcientious, and pay court to the prieſts, who flattered them in return, they ſcrupulouſly tithed even their garden herbs; but at the ſame time “they paſſed over judgment, and “the love of God!” Thus they were expoſed to the ſharp rebukes of Chriſt, and engaged in oppoſition to Him; and with all their ſanctimonious gravity, auſterity, and pretended piety, they became his perſecutors and murderers, and fell under his moſt tremendous indignation, till vengeance came upon them to the uttermoſt. Alas, they have had many ſucceſſors, who have proved themſelves to be their children; even as they were proved to be the children of thoſe, who ſlew the prophets; and whoſe conduct has evinced, that the honour they affected to render to the memory of deceaſed ſaints and martyrs, was rather intended for their murderers than for them. Let us alſo obſerve that proud men deem the word of God to be a *reproach* to them: many would allow the preacher to be ſevere upon the crimes of others, provided he would be gentle to their's; and amongſt learned men, hypocritical churchmen, and falſe profeſſors of the goſpel, who imagine that their characters even ſanctify their crimes, it is often deemed intolerable inſolence, for a miniſter to expoſe their moſt flagrant enormities! But the reproach comes from their own conſciences; and we muſt by no means connive at their vices, which are more diſhonourable to God, and ruinous to men, in proportion to the eminence, or ſacredneſs of their characters: and when renowned or authorized teachers perplex the truth by their ſubtilties, and ſet the people againſt it by their influence, they become murderers of mens ſouls, and ought moſt carefully to be avoided;

CHAP. XII.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inſomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to ſay unto his diſciples firſt of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy.

2 For there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed; neither hid, that ſhall not be known.

3 Therefore whatſoever ye have ſpoken in darkneſs, ſhall be heard in the light; and that which ye have ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed upon the houſe-tops.

4 And I ſay unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do:

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not five ſparrows ſold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God.

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many ſparrows.

8 Alſo I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him ſhall the Son of man alſo confeſs before the angels of God.

9 But he that denieth me before men, ſhall be denied before the angels of God.

10 And whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven.

11 And when they bring you unto the ſynagogues, and *unto* magiſtrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye ſhall anſwer, or what ye ſhall ſay:

12 For the Holy Ghoſt ſhall teach you in the ſame hour what ye ought to ſay.

13 And one of the company ſaid unto him, Maſter, ſpeak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he ſaid unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

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woe unto them, "for they take away the key of know-"ledge; they enter not in themſelves, and thoſe who "are entering in they hinder," and they are the more dangerous for being "as graves that appear not," of which the men who walk over them are not aware. But ſuch truths muſt excite oppoſition and indignation amongſt the parties concerned; and they will vehemently urge thoſe, who openly declare them, to ſpeak or do ſomething, that may give them an handle againſt them. Such perſons therefore, as engage in a conteſt of this kind, ſhould be of a blameleſs converſation, and endued with heavenly wiſdom; they ſhould have a clear call, and a great command of their own temper and ſpirit; ſo that few are qualified for ſuch ſervices. But we ſhould all look well to our own hearts, that they may be cleanſed and new created: and whilſt we attend to, and inſiſt upon the great things of the law, and of the goſpel; we muſt be careful not to neglect even the ſmalleſt matter, which God hath appointed; "theſe things ought we to "do, and not to leave the other undone:" and the more careful we are "to give alms of ſuch things as we "have;" and to deduct from every article of expence for that purpoſe, the more comfortable, pure and holy will all our poſſeſſions, and enjoyments be unto us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—12.] Whilſt Chriſt was ſpeaking to the Scribes and Phariſees within the houſe, an immenſe multitude were collected together without; ſo that they even trampled upon one another, in endeavouring to get near him. The words rendered "an in-"numerable multitude" literally ſignify "ten thou-"ſands:" the people muſt therefore have come from very diſtant places, to hear his word: and He ſeems to have left the Phariſee's houſe, and to have ſpoken the ſubſequent inſtructions to his diſciples, in the hearing of the multitude, and in the preſence of the company, with whom he had before dined. He therefore began by warning his diſciples againſt hypocriſy, which was the leaven of the Phariſees, that corrupted all their ſervices. (Notes, &c, *Matt.* c. xvi. v. 6—12.) What follows hath been conſidered in detached places, (c. viii. v. 17. *Matt.* c. x. v. 19, 20. 24—33. c. xii. v. 31, 32:) but the declaration, that "there is nothing covered, "which ſhall not be revealed, &c," (v. 2, 3,) ſeems here entirely to relate to the folly and danger of hypocriſy; which can only conceal a man's character for a ſhort time, when it muſt be made public at length before the whole world, without one word, that hath been whiſpered to any one in confidence, being omitted: whereas in ſome of the paſſages referred to, it ſeems immediately to apply to the apoſtles duty in publiſhing the goſpel, and to the aſſurance that the purity of their motives, &c, would be fully known in due time, however they might at preſent be miſrepreſented and traduced. The awful warning to fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell, is addreſſed immediately to the diſciples, as the friends of Chriſt: for even true believers have often been rendered victorious over the dread of man's cruelty, by fear of falling under the wrath of Almighty God.

V. 13—21.] As Jeſus was thus inſtructing and warning his hearers, a certain perſon deſired Him to interpoſe

15 And he ſaid unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetouſneſs: for a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth.

16 And he ſpake a parable unto them, ſaying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.

17 And he thought within himſelf, ſaying, What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to beſtow my fruits?

18 And he ſaid, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I beſtow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God ſaid unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.

22 And he ſaid unto his diſciples, There-

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between him and his brother, and to order the latter to ſhare his paternal inheritance with him. Whether this perſon had been injuriouſly treated or not, cannot be aſcertained: but it is evident, that earthly things had obtained too great an aſcendancy in his mind. He had probably ſome honourable thoughts of Chriſt as a teacher, and perhaps adverted to the opinion of thoſe, who thought him the promiſed Meſſiah; but having a miſtaken notion concerning the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom, he ſuppoſed that Jeſus would interpoſe his authority to conſtrain his brother to do him juſtice; and as the latter might be preſent in the multitude, the man in a very improper manner interrupted Chriſt's diſcourſe, in hopes that he would do this directly. But our Lord ſaw much amiſs in the man's ſpirit, and conduct: and as he meant not to interfere with ſuch ſecular concerns, he enquired of him, who had conſtituted him a Ruler to decide cauſes, or an Umpire to divide inheritances among them. His kingdom was not of this world: He appeared as a Teacher and a Saviour: and He was not commiſſioned of the Father, to take the civil magiſtrate's office out of his hand; and if he had attempted it, they would have enquired of him, as the Iſraelite had formerly done of Moſes, “Who made “thee a prince and a judge over us?” (*Exod.* c. ii. v. 14.) Having thus reproved, and checked the man's unreaſonable interruption, he thence took occaſion to warn his hearers that they ſhould take heed, and uſe the greateſt circumſpection in keeping at the utmoſt diſtance from every kind, or degree of covetouſneſs: as neither the duration, comfort, credit, uſefulneſs, or happy event of a man's life, conſiſted in the abundance of his poſſeſſions: theſe can add nothing to a man's preſent, or future happineſs, but the contrary; though almoſt all men vainly imagine that wealth, and enjoyment are inſeparably united. To illuſtrate, and enforce this caution, He ſpake a parable, which is replete with inſtruction. The rich man deſcribed in it, is not ſtated to have obtained his wealth by fraud or oppreſſion, or to have been a penurious miſer: he had an eſtate, and by ſkilful and diligent culture it yielded him large crops, ſo that his affluence increaſed rapidly: at length however his vaſt abundance became as troubleſome to him, as other men's indigence; and he was led to conſider where to ſtore up his treaſures, ſeeing he had no longer room for them. He therefore determined to build larger barns and granaries; and having thus properly ſecured his abundance, to have done with the ſuperfluous incumbrance of buſineſs, and to give himſelf up to eaſe and indulgence, in the liberal uſe of his riches. Thus the character here drawn is exactly that of a prudent worldly man, who riſes from inferior circumſtances to great affluence, by aſſiduous induſtry and good management; and then retires from buſineſs, to ſpend the latter part of his life according to his own inclinations. But here was no grateful regard to the bountiful providence of God, who gave him power to get wealth; no conſideration of his accountableneſs for the uſe of it; and no reſpect to the authority, commandment, favour, or glory of God. Here was no apprehenſion of the inſtability of human affairs, the uncertainty of life, the vanity of earthly pleaſure, the worth of his ſoul, or the importance of eternity; nor was there any thought of happineſs to be found in communion with God, in peace of conſcience, and the hope of glory: but he ſpake within himſelf, as if “eating, drinking and being, “merry” had conſtituted the chief good of a rational creature; and as if it might be enjoyed here for ever. Neither did he expreſs any regard to his neighbour: he deemed his wealth to be *his own*, and he meant to hoard it for, and to ſpend it on himſelf; for if he had enquired how many poor perſons were deſtitute of food and raiment, &c; he might have found ſome other way of diſpoſing of his ſuperfluous abundance, and have enjoyed a far ſuperior ſatisfaction than what he propoſed to himſelf. But the whole was the language of a ſelfiſh ungodly man, and was intended to expoſe ſuch characters, even when they are not chargeable with groſs immorality. However therefore the man gloried that the might of his hand had gotten him this wealth, and ſo deemed himſelf wiſe and happy; or however he might be envied, reſpected or commended by his neighbours: he was in the judgment of God “A fool,” and as ſuch he addreſſed him. He had *fooliſhly* reckoned on many years to come, when he had not a ſingle day to live, he had anxiouſly provided a vaſt ſuperfluity for a future continuance on earth, which was never to be granted him; but he had made no manner of proviſion for the world to come, into which he was immediately to paſs, and in which he was to exiſt to all eternity! For that very fore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat; neither for the body, what ye ſhall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

24 Conſider the ravens: for they neither ſow nor reap; which neither have ſtore-houſe nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his ſtature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is leaſt, why take ye thought for the reſt?

27 Conſider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they ſpin not; and yet I ſay unto you, That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe.

28 If then God ſo clothe the graſs, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

29 And ſeek not ye what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all theſe things do the nations of the world ſeek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe things.

31 But rather ſeek ye the kingdom of God; and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.

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night his ſoul was required of him, and he muſt give an account of, and be condemned for his ungodlineſs, ſelfiſhneſs, and covetouſneſs; “and then whoſe would “thoſe things be, which he had provided,” in the neglect of his ſoul, and to his everlaſting ruin? He could not tell into whoſe hands his wealth would paſs; nor would it be any comfort to him, even for his friends or children to poſſeſs it, when he was torn from all he loved and idolized, and plunged into the pit of deſtruction; and perhaps they too were preparing by it for the ſame dreadful end. To this parable our Lord added, that “So is every one, who layeth up treaſure for him-“ſelf, and is not rich towards God.” They “lay up “treaſure *for themſelves*,” who ſeek riches either for their own ſakes, or for the influence and conſequence that they beſtow; or to ſpend in the pride of life and luxurious indulgence; or in order to aggrandize their families: but, who are not rich in faith, in wiſdom and grace, in good works, and an heavenly treaſure. Every man of this character is in God's account “A fool;” his life is vanity and vexation, his ſucceſs an empty bubble, or a deſtructive deluſion, (*Prov.* c. i. v. 32,) and his end moſt miſerable. Whereas the true believer, who is rich towards God, even if he be poor and unſucceſsful in this world, is wiſe and happy; he lives to good purpoſe, he glorifies God, and is uſeful to man, he will not be diſappointed of his hopes or deprived of his inheritance, and he is prepared for all events that can come upon him.

V. 22—34.] Our Lord next took occaſion to inculcate the inſtructions, that he had before given his diſciples; (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vi. v. 19—34.) They were generally poor, and might think themſelves the leſs concerned in the parable he had ſpoken; as not duly conſidering that the earneſt deſire, and unſucceſsful purſuit of riches, are equally criminal, with the actual acquiſition and poſſeſſion of them, by thoſe, “who are not “rich towards God.” Some variations from the paſſage above referred to may be noted. It is here added, (v. 26,) “If ye be not able to do that, &c?” Whence we may infer that the preceding queſtion was proverbial, and was uſed to ſhew the inefficacy of being careful about thoſe things, which are not at all in our own power. If a man were ever ſo ſolicitous about it, he “could not add a “cubit to his ſtature:” as this would therefore be ſo entirely unavailing; why ſhould men be anxious about other matters of greater importance to their comfort and happineſs, but which were unconnected with their preſent duty? For theſe alſo would be ordered by the ſame unerring hand of God, as he ſaw beſt, without their being able in the leaſt to alter his appointments. The expreſſion, (v. 29,) “neither be ye of a doubtful mind,” ſeems to be taken from the irregular motion of the clouds, &c, as agitated by the winds: thus men's minds are hurried about, with various cares, and anxieties, by the changing events of life; ſo long as they want to contrive and manage for themſelves, and have not learned to truſt the Lord in the path of duty. Chriſt here adds, (v. 32,) “Fear not, little flock, &c:” His diſciples are a ſmall flock of harmleſs defenceleſs ſheep, in the midſt of the multitudes of this wicked world: but they are dear to him, who hath purchaſed them, and brought them back to his fold: and as “their Father intends to give them “the kingdom” of heavenly glory and felicity, and greatly delights in doing this; ſo he will certainly provide for them, during their paſſage through this world to it: they ought therefore to diſmiſs their fears, and to caſt all their cares upon Him. Inſtead of burthening themſelves in endeavours to accumulate more wealth; they ought, when properly called to it, to part with

35 Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

36 And ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Bleſſed *are* thoſe ſervants whom the lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching: verily I ſay unto you, That he ſhall gird himſelf, and make them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them.

38 And if he ſhall come in the ſecond watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* ſo, bleſſed are thoſe ſervants.

39 And this know, that if the good man of the houſe had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready alſo: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 Then Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord ſaid, Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom *his* lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give *them their* portion of meat in due ſeaſon?

43 Bleſſed *is* that ſervant, whom his lord, when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing.

44 Of a truth I ſay unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that ſervant ſay in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and ſhall begin to beat the men-ſervants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 The lord of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And that ſervant which knew his lord's

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their preſent poſſeſſions, and diſtribute to their needy brethren. This, when done in faith and love, would tend to enſure to them a treaſure, of which God himſelf is the Guardian: in this manner they would be ſecured from "putting their money into a bag with holes," (*Hag:* c. i. v. 6,) or into one that was liable to wear out, (which is an apt emblem of the uncertainty of all earthly poſſeſſions;) for their treaſure would be laid up in heaven out of the reach of change, or danger; and their hearts alſo would become more and more heavenly. Probably this inſtruction influenced the primitive converts, after the day of Pentecoſt, to ſell their eſtates for the ſupport of their poor brethren: and it is ſtill binding upon us, *in the ſpirit of it*, as circumſtances and occaſions may require.

V. 35—46.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 42—51.) Chriſt here addreſſed his diſciples about their diligent attention to their proper work; as he before had done about their moderation, indifference, and confidence in God, reſpecting their ſubſiſtence. They were ordered "to have their loins girded," &c; in alluſion to the cuſtom of ſervants in thoſe days, who girded up their long looſe garments by a girdle round their loins; that they might attend to their work with leſs incumbrance. Thus the diſciples were to be prepared for active ſervice by a vigilant frame of mind, and by laying aſide every needleſs worldly engagement, and avoiding improper indulgences; as well as ſtrengthened for it by the habitual exerciſe of faith, hope, love, &c. (1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 13.) And as ſervants, during the night, when they were waiting for their maſter's return home, or engaged in any work, kept their lights burning: ſo the diſciples were to keep the inſtructions of Chriſt before them, to make an open profeſſion of his truth, and to hold out the light of a good converſation. Thus they would be like ſervants, who were waiting for the return of their maſter from a wedding; that they might open to him immediately, when he knocked at the gate. Weddings were then generally celebrated at night, and the return of the gueſts might be uncertain: in this ſimile Chriſt alluded to his own aſcenſion to heaven, his coming to call his people to him by death, and his return to judge the world; for which the diſciples were continually to hold themſelves in readineſs. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 1—13. *Mark*, c. xiii. v. 33—37.) To induce them to this conſtant, habitual preparation, by the watchful and diligent performance of their preſent work in their ſeveral places; our Lord further mentions the bleſſedneſs of thoſe ſervants, who ſhould be found ſo doing, and the danger of being found unprepared, or miſemployed. In reſpect of the former, he ſays, that "the Lord will gird himſelf, and make them ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them:" that is, He will graciouſly condeſcend to employ all his power and authority, in advancing their honour and felicity; in proportion as they have ſimply devoted all their ability to promote his glory and do his will. In anſwer to Peter's enquiry, whether they only, or all his diſciples were concerned in theſe exhortations, promiſes, and warnings; our Lord intimated, that though the apoſtles and other miniſters, who had authority in his church, were primarily intended; yet that others alſo were included, according to the different ſituations, and the ſervices, to which they were called.

V. 47, 48.] Our Lord here further intimated, that his profeſſed diſciples or miniſters would not only be ſeverely puniſhed for ſuch outrages, as he had mentioned; but alſo for neglecting, or improperly performing their will, and prepared not *himſelf*, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many *ſtripes*.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few *ſtripes*. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.

49 I am come to ſend fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled?

50 But I have a baptiſm to be baptized with; and how am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed!

51 Suppoſe ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather diviſion:

52 For from henceforth there ſhall be five in one houſe divided, three againſt two, and two againſt three.

53 The father ſhall be divided againſt the ſon, and the ſon againſt the father: the mo-

work: but this would be regulated according to the degree of information that was afforded them. The ſervant, who knew what his Lord required him to do; and yet beſtowed no pains in preparing himſelf for, or in performing, his work, would be ſeverely puniſhed; as their ſervants then were, when ſcourged with many ſtripes: but he who had not received ſuch explicit inſtructions, or had not attained to ſuch diſtinct knowledge of his maſter's will; and was remiſs and negligent in his work, would indeed be adjudged deſerving of puniſhment, but he would not be dealt with in ſo rigorous a manner. This may alſo be conſidered as a general rule of God's dealing with all his rational creatures. No man is left in ſuch abſolute ignorance, except by his own fault, as not to do many things that he knows to be wrong; and to neglect many things that he knows to be right: therefore all are inexcuſable in their ſin, and liable to condemnation and puniſhment, if they continue impenitent. But in proportion to the degree in which they have the means of inſtruction, and are actually acquainted with the will of God; their diſobedience becomes more aggravated, and their puniſhment will be proportionably more ſevere: and thus will the Lord alſo diſpenſe correction to his offending children, in proportion as they have ſinned againſt light and conviction, or the contrary. For as men expect a proportional return from them, to whoſe ſtewardſhip they have committed much: ſo will God call every man to account for the uſe of every talent entruſted to him; and if he have been unfaithful in the midſt of many advantages, he will inflict on him the heavier vengeance. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 14—30.)

V. 49—53.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. v. 34—39.) Our Lord next aſſured his diſciples, that “he was come to ſend fire on earth.” The introduction of the goſpel diſpenſation would reſemble the kindling of a fire, which would occaſion very deſtructive and wide ſpreading deſolations. Not that this would be the tendency of his religion, which is moſt pure, peaceable, and loving: but this would be the effect of the oppoſition raiſed againſt it, by it's contrariety to men's pride and luſts; and of the abuſes, which many would make of it. Hence would ariſe furious perſecutions, bitter contentions, and multiplied diviſions, uſurpations and oppreſſions; and theſe things, with the reſiſtance made to them, would diffuſe manifold calamities and evils all over the earth. Infidels have confidently adduced theſe effects of chriſtianity, as ſo many arguments to prove it not to have been of divine original; wilfully forgetting that “thus it was written, and thus it muſt be.” The prediction of theſe effects, which a ſuperficial obſerver would never have expected from ſo benign a religion, forms an additional demonſtration that it is from God: and every man, who is experimentally acquainted with the human heart, will readily account for them, without charging the leaſt blame on the goſpel; nay he will ſee, that they are occaſioned by it's excellency, and muſt follow from it, whilſt men continue ſo proud, carnal, ſelfiſh, and alienated from God, as they all are by nature. To this prediction of the effects of the goſpel, Chriſt added, “and what will I, if it be already kindled?” This ſeems to refer to the malignant oppoſition of the Scribes and Phariſees, and the ferment that his miniſtry had excited: but though the fire was indeed already kindled; did they ſuppoſe that he wiſhed he had not been ſo open in his inſtructions, and ſharp in his reproofs? Did they ſuppoſe that he was diſappointed or diſconcerted? Did they imagine that he meant to deſiſt? This was by no means the caſe: on the contrary, he earneſtly deſired that this fire ſhould be more completely kindled, by the more full and extenſive publication of his goſpel: but before that could take place, “He had a baptiſm to be baptized with,” far different from that of water and of the Holy Spirit, by which he had been admitted to the exerciſe of his prophetical office, for he muſt endure the moſt extreme ſufferings, ſhed his blood, and pour out his ſoul unto death, before he could enter upon his work within the veil, as the High-Prieſt of his church, and be put in poſſeſſion of the mediatorial throne. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xx. v. 22, 23.) “But how was he ſtraitened, till this was accompliſhed?” It conſiſted not with the plan laid down for the performance of this work, to preach the goſpel more openly, or extenſively, 'till this baptiſm was completed: in the mean time Chriſt was exceedingly ſtraitened and limited in the exerciſe of his ardent love and zeal; and he even longed for that awful and important criſis, which ſhould make way for his exaltation, and the publication of his goſpel to all nations, that God might be glorified in the ſalvation of an innumerable multitude of precious ſouls, in the ſame manner, that a pregnant woman deſires the approach or increaſe of her pangs, in expectation of deliverance, and of being made a joyful mother. But if the diſciples ſuppoſed, that he came to ther againſt the daughter, and the daughter againſt the mother: the mother-in-law againſt her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law.

54 And he ſaid alſo to the people, When ye ſee a cloud riſe out of the weſt, ſtraightway ye ſay, There cometh a ſhower: and ſo it is.

55 And when *ye ſee* the ſouth wind blow, ye ſay, There will be heat; and it cometh to paſs.

56 *Ye* hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not diſcern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right?

58 When thou goeſt with thine adverſary to the magiſtrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayeſt be delivered from him; leſt he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer caſt thee into priſon.

59 I tell thee, thou ſhalt not depart thence, till thou haſt paid the very laſt mite.

ſend peace on earth, they were greatly miſtaken; for the contrary would certainly be the effect of his doctrine and their miniſtry.

V. 54—57.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xvi. v. 1—4.) When the people ſaw a cloud riſe in the weſt from the Mediterranean ſea, they had learned by conſtant obſervation to expect a ſhower: and a ſouth-wind from off the ſultry deſerts, was deemed a ſure prognoſtic of heat. In ſuch matters they were very ſagacious: but the exact accompliſhment of types and prophecies in the doctrine, miracles, and character of Chriſt, and in the time and circumſtances of his appearance, did not convince them that He was their promiſed Meſſiah! In this, their hypocritical ſcribes, and teachers were moſt faulty; and being blinded by their carnal prejudices, they uſed their influence to miſlead the people. Yet, as the caſe was ſo very evident, why did not the latter ſee with their own eyes, and judge of themſelves what was right in this matter; or decide impartially and juſtly between Him and theſe his malicious opponents? This ſeems to be the meaning of this queſtion, which was probably addreſſed to the multitude; as what went before appears to have been immediately intended for the Scribes, and Phariſees.

V. 58, 59.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 25, 26.) This paſſage, as it is here connected, implied a warning to the Jewiſh nation, to ceaſe from their oppoſition to Chriſt, and to welcome him as their Prince and Saviour, before it were too late; otherwiſe terrible and durable miſeries would ſoon come upon them: but it alſo inculcated thoſe inſtructions to individuals, that have been already conſidered.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Increaſing popularity, and the earneſt and diligent attendance of multitudes on the preached goſpel, muſt not induce the miniſters to be leſs plain and diſtinguiſhing in their addreſs: this would only tend to the multiplying of looſe profeſſors; for even amidſt innumerable multitudes of hearers, there is generally but a little flock of true diſciples. (v. 32.) We all need to be repeatedly, and *firſt of all* reminded "to beware of hypocriſy:" and this ſhould eſpecially be done before thoſe, who are moſt infected with this leaven, though they will be exceeding ready to take offence at it. It probably will not have a ſalutary effect on many of thoſe, that are confirmed in hypocriſy; but it may tend to prevent others from venturing upon the ſame ruinous abomination: for perſons, who are under ſome concern about their ſouls, but not eſtabliſhed in the faith, will in various ways be tempted to it; and as it aſſumes many ſpecious appearances, and promiſes great advantages, ſo we are all, in ſome degree, in danger of being infected with it: yet it is a moſt fooliſh, as well as hateful ſin; it can only hide for a moment, what muſt be known to all at laſt; and it confers a temporary reputation, but leads to everlaſting ſhame, and contempt. Let us then continually think of that day, when our moſt ſecret actions, words, thoughts, motives and intentions, will be proclaimed, before men and angels; that we may be more careful to approve our inmoſt purpoſes, and our moſt retired conduct to a heart-ſearching God, than to obtain the good opinion of our fellow ſervants. But if we are the friends of Chriſt, we muſt alſo be open in our religion, and on our guard againſt the fear of dying men: were we ſure that our enemies would prevail as much as poſſible againſt us, we know that they could only kill the body; and after the tranſient pain occaſioned by their cruel hatred, we ſhould be for ever beyond their reach: whereas ſhould their terror induce us to incur the righteous diſpleaſure of God, we know, that "after he hath killed, he hath power to caſt into hell." All ought therefore to fear Him: and as this fear is often the beginning of a ſinner's converſion; ſo it often arms the believer againſt temptations to unfaithfulneſs, ſecret ſins, or apoſtacy; and therefore Chriſt inculcates it even on his friends. However, if believers, we are perfectly ſafe from every effect of man's enmity which can prove really injurious to us: and whilſt we realize to our minds the ſuperintending providence of God over the meaneſt animal, we may be ſure, that "even the very hairs of our head are all numbered." Let us then boldly confeſs Chriſt before men, in joyful hope of being acknowledged by him before the angels of God; whilſt thoſe, who have denied him, for fear of reproach or perſecution, will be rejected by Him, and left under the condemnation to everlaſting miſery. But let no trembling penitent backſlider, who in an unguarded hour hath ſpoken "a word againſt the Son of man," doubt of obtaining forgiveneſs: for this is far different from that determined enmity, that dictates the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which ſhall never be forgiven, becauſe it will never be repented of. And let no one, who is

CHAP. XIII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Firſt taking occaſion from ſome recent events to call the Jews to repentance, and to warn them of approaching deſtruction, 1---5. 2*d. Speaking the parable of the barren fig-tree,* 6---9. 3*d. Healing a woman, who had been bowed together for eighteen years; and expoſing the hypocriſy of the ruler of the ſynagogue, who blamed him for doing it on the ſabbath-day,* 10---17. 4*th. Speaking the parables of the grain of muſtard*

ſuffering for Chriſt's ſake, or called upon to ſpeak in his name amidſt his enemies, fear but that he will by his “Holy Spirit teach him in the ſame hour, what he ought to ſay;” for they who truſt in him ſhall never be confounded.

But moſt men are too much immerſed in thoughts and contrivances about the world, to value ſuch ſpiritual bleſſings: and many hearers of the goſpel are at the time ſo diſtracted about their inheritances, that they would be ready even to interrupt the preachers, if they could uſe their counſel or influence to promote their own ſecular intereſts. But as Chriſt would not go out of his way to attend to ſuch *inferior concerns:* ſo his miniſters ſhould avoid ſimilar diſtractions, and leave it to others to be judges and dividers over the people. However every opportunity ſhould be embraced of warning men to take heed and beware of covetouſneſs, by which almoſt all men are, one way or other, in ſome degree ſeduced. Every reflecting man's experience and obſervation may convince him of the inefficacy of riches to promote even the comfort of this life: yet after all that the Lord hath ſaid upon this ſubject, how few are there amongſt profeſſing chriſtians, who do not deſire to be rich, and to make their children rich! And many are apt to point out to them ſimilar characters with this in the parable, as models for their imitation, and as proper perſons with whom to form connexions. And yet it is, as it were, ſaid to one of them after another, “this night thy ſoul is required of thee,” perhaps when they were ſaying within themſelves, “ſoul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years, take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry.” But what doth it then avail them, to have the public informed how many thouſands they have left behind them, or how rich their heirs are made by their deceaſe? Nay it often happens, that when ſuch men have ſpent their lives, without regard to God, to their neighbours, or their own ſouls, in order to enrich their families; they are even diſappointed in this vain ambition, their riches are ſtrangely diſſipated, and their children are reduced to dependance or beggary: for man walketh in a vain ſhadow, and diſquieteth himſelf in vain; he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who ſhall gather them. As therefore “every one, who layeth up treaſure for himſelf,” is thus fooliſh, guilty, and miſerable; let us ſeek the true riches, that we may be approved of God as wiſe men, and made honourable and happy in the enjoyment of his favour.

If we are indeed the diſciples of Chriſt, and have learned to ſerve Him in our ſecular employments, and in the uſe of our poſſeſſions; we may have our minds free from diſtracting cares and diſquieting apprehenſions. He that created our bodies and ſuſtains our lives, and who alſo feeds the ravens, and adorns the lilies, will give us needful food and raiment: and if we have got a reliſh for ſpiritual pleaſures, and know the value of “the beauty of holineſs:” we ſhall not crave the luxuries, and elegancies of life. Yet we often need rebuking for “being of little faith,” and therefore “of a doubtful mind.” But it becomes chriſtians to ſeek nobler bleſſings, than the nations of the earth, who know not God: they ſhould remember that “their Father knoweth that they have need of food and raiment;” and is both able and willing to beſtow them: and if we ſeek firſt the privileges and the righteouſneſs of his kingdom, and deſire its peace and proſperity; all other things will ſurely be added unto us. Indeed the flock, which the good Shepherd hath purchaſed and collected into his fold; and which he hath taught to rely on his powerful and watchful care, to hear his voice, to love his ordinances, and to copy his example, is but a ſmall company, when compared with the vaſt multitudes, that reſemble filthy ſwine, ravening wolves, ſubtle foxes, or venomous ſerpents, amongſt whom they live: but they need not fear wanting any good thing, notwithſtanding the diſadvantages of their ſituation, “for it is their Father's good pleaſure to give them the kingdom,” and he will withhold no good things from them. Let us then firſt examine, whether we belong to this little flock, and have thoſe diſpoſitions, and peculiarities that characterize it: let us alſo keep cloſe under our ſhepherd's care, and in the path of duty: and let us be thankful, that it was not the Lord's good pleaſure to give us worldly treaſures, and to leave us deſtitute of his grace. Whilſt others therefore are graſping at more and more of earthly, periſhing vanities; chriſtians ſhould excite one another to abound in good works: that willingly expending what they have, in relieving the neceſſitous, and promoting the cauſe of godlineſs; they may “provide themſelves bags, which wax not old, a treaſure in heaven that faileth not:” and this will gradually both enlarge their capacities of enjoyment, and enſure to them a more rich and glorious recompence.

Whilſt we caſt all our care upon God, in reſpect of events, and conſequences; we cannot be too careful about, and attentive to, our duty. We are the ſervants of Chriſt, whoſe coming to remove us by death, or to judge the world, may be very ſoon or very ſudden: but if “our loins be girded and our lights burning;” we ſhall have no more reaſon to dread the ſummons, than a child has to be alarmed at the arrival of a meſſenger, who is ſent to convey him home to his tender parents: nay words can never expreſs the delight, with which our gracious Lord will welcome and bleſs his faithful ſervants. If then we are habitually watching, and ready; what does it ſignify, whether he come at the ſecond, or the third watch? For bleſſed are thoſe ſervants, who are found ſo doing. But as robbers aſſault the houſe, when the family has leaſt expectation of them: ſo death generally ſurpriſes a man, when he is leaſt thinking of it. We ſhould therefore never remit our watch, to purſue *ſeed, and of the leaven,* 18---21. *5th. Warning his hearers to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, before it was finally ſhut againſt them; ſending a meſſage to Herod, who threatened to kill him; and predicting his own death at Jeruſalem, and the ruin of that city and of the temple,* 22---35.

THERE were preſent at that ſeaſon ſome that told him of the Galileans, whoſe blood Pilate had mingled with their ſacrifices.

2 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Suppoſe ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners above all the Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

4 Or thoſe eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and ſlew them, think ye that they were ſinners above all men that dwelt in Jeruſalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

vain diverſions, worldly intereſts, or ſenſual indulgences; leſt our Lord ſhould come at that very time, when we are thus unprepared and neglecting our work. This indeed applies to every man, but more eſpecially to the miniſters of the goſpel: they are the ſtewards of God's myſteries, and rulers of his houſhold, to give every one his portion in due ſeaſon, and rightly to divide the word of truth. Happy then is that faithful and wiſe ſervant who delights in his work, and gives himſelf continually to it; for "his Lord, when he cometh, will make him ruler over all that he hath:" and how paltry are all other preferments, when compared with this crown of glory, that fadeth not away? But woe to infidels, and ungodly men, who appear in the garb of miniſters! They ſay in their hearts, that "their Lord delayeth his coming," and ſo they are emboldened to perſecute, oppreſs, and fleece their brethren, and to indulge in riot and licentiouſneſs: but they will ſoon be ſurpriſed in the midſt of their ſucceſsful impiety, and torn away from all their abuſed preferments and dignities, "in a day when they think not of it," and will have their portion with the unbelievers. They however will be puniſhed with moſt awful ſeverity, who were thus ungodly, not only with the Bible in their hands, but with the goſpel in their mouths; and who knew their Lord's will accurately, and could inſtruct others in it, yet never prepared themſelves, or ſet about obeying it. Indeed the condemnation of heathens, and others of thoſe who have had but few advantages for knowing the will of God, will be very light, compared with that of wicked profeſſors of chriſtianity, and of ungodly miniſters, &c: "for unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required." May the Lord then give us grace, to improve our many advantages to the glory of his name!

Nor ſhould we be diſconcerted at the effects occaſioned by, or the abuſes made of, the preaching of the goſpel. The bleſſed Jeſus perſevered in his work, though he ſaw the fire already kindled, and foreſaw how far it would communicate its flames: nay he even longed for the hour of his extremeſt ſufferings, that he might poſſeſs the "joy ſet before him," and ſend the goſpel through the nations of the earth. We ſhould therefore be bold, and zealous in promoting his truth, without ſhrinking for fear of conſequences to ourſelves or others: for though afflictions muſt be endured, diviſions will be excited, and a man's foes will be thoſe of his own houſhold; yet ſinners will be converted, and God will be glorified. But if men were as wiſe for their ſouls, as in their temporal concerns; they would know the ſigns of the times, and the day of their viſitation: and though falſe teachers might attempt to prejudice or miſlead them; they would even of themſelves diſcern what was right, ſuitable to their wants, and conducive to their ſalvation. If any man therefore have found out that God hath a controverſy with him concerning his ſins; let him without delay apply to him, as "God in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf;" for if death come, before this peace be made, his ſoul will be caſt into the priſon of hell: and as he will never be able to pay his mighty debt, ſo he muſt abide in that doleful place of torment to all eternity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—5.] Theſe Galileans are ſuppoſed to have been concerned in the inſurrection made by Judas of Galilee, (*Acts*, c. v. ver. 37;) who oppoſed paying tribute to Ceſar, and ſubmitting to the Roman authority. When therefore they were come to Jeruſalem to worſhip, and were preſenting their oblations in the court of the temple; Pilate ſent a company of ſoldiers amongſt them, who cut them in pieces, and mingled their blood with that of their ſacrifices. The perſons, who brought this melancholy report to Chriſt, ſeem to have concluded, that theſe men were guilty of ſome dreadful crime, and that they were far worſe than any of their countrymen, who eſcaped ſuch deſtruction: but Chriſt repreſſed this raſh, and proud deciſion on their ſtate and character, and aſſured them and his other hearers, that except they repented of their ſins, they too would fall under the righteous indignation of God, and periſh in like manner. This is generally ſuppoſed to refer to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the ſlaughter of the Jews by the Romans, for making inſurrections againſt their government; and eſpecially to the havock made amongſt them, in the courts of the temple, whilſt they were there offering their ſacrifices. However it is applicable to the caſe of ſinners in general who muſt either repent, or periſh miſerably by the juſt judgment of God upon them. At the ſame time our Lord mentioned another circumſtance, doubtleſs well known to his hearers, but of which we have no account in hiſtory, concerning 18 perſons, who were ſlain by the falling of a tower upon them. Theſe were ſuppoſed to have been greater ſinners than any of the other inhabitants of Jeruſalem; becauſe they ſeemed to be ſingled out by the hand of God himſelf for immediate puniſhment. But Chriſt aſſured them that this was not the caſe; and he

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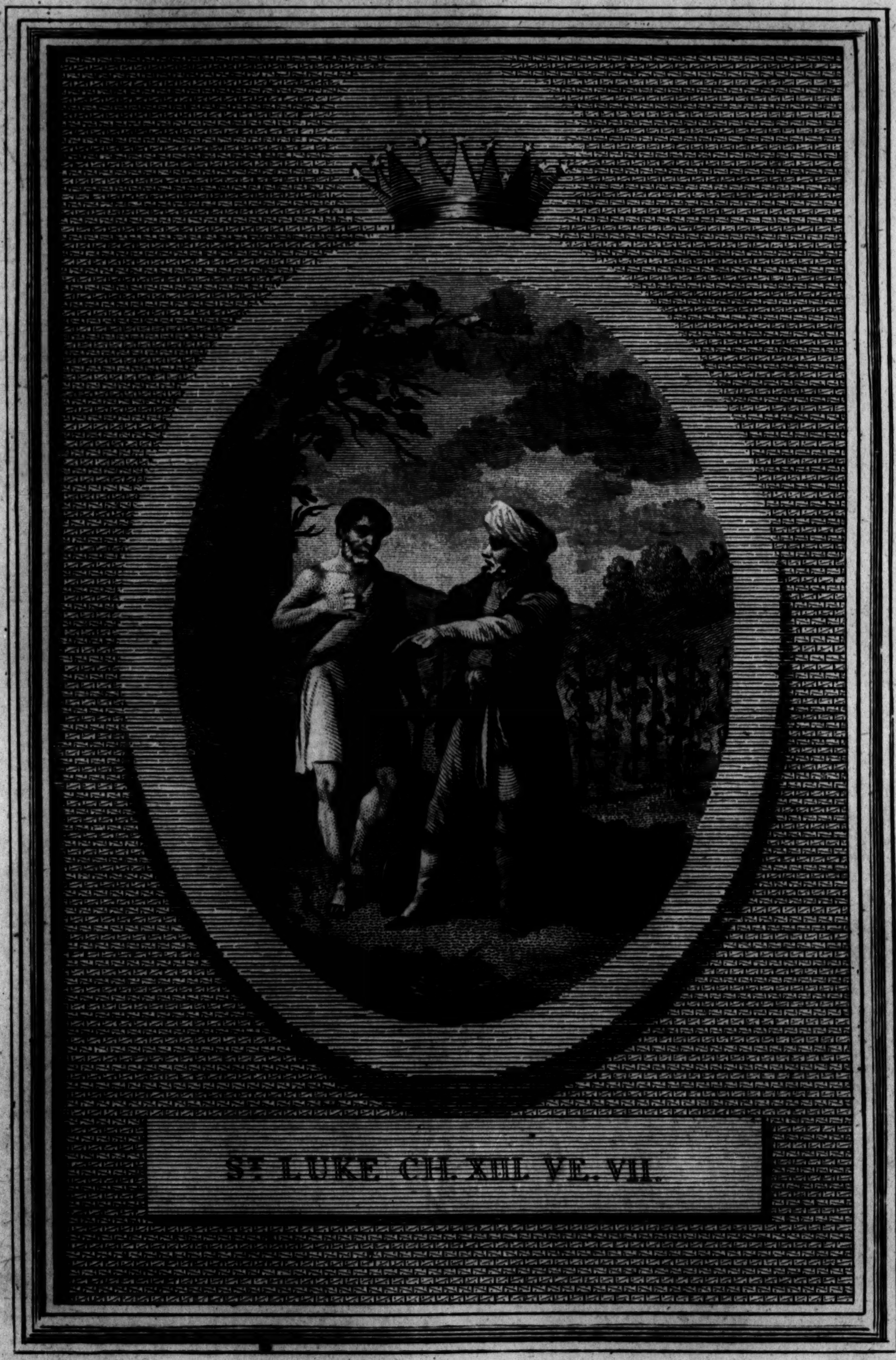

St. LUKE. CH. XIII. VE. VII.

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6 He ſpake alſo this parable: A certain *man* had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard: and he came and ſought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then ſaid he unto the dreſſer of his vineyard, Behold, theſe three years I come ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Lord, let it alone this year alſo, till I ſhall dig about it, and dung *it:*

9 And if it bear fruit, *well;* and if not, *then* after that thou ſhalt cut it down.

10 And he was teaching in one of the ſynagogues on the ſabbath:

11 And behold, there was a woman which had a ſpirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wiſe lift up *herſelf.*

12 And when Jeſus ſaw her, he called *her to him,* and ſaid unto her, Woman, thou art looſed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately ſhe was made ſtraight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the ſynagogue anſwered with indignation, becauſe that Jeſus had healed on the ſabbath-day, and ſaid unto the people, There are ſix days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the ſabbath-day.

15 The Lord then anſwered him, and ſaid, *Thou* hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the ſabbath looſe his ox or *his* aſs from the ſtall, and lead *him* away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the ſabbath-day?

17 And when he had ſaid theſe things, all his adverſaries were aſhamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 Then ſaid he, Unto what is the king-

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renewed his declaration, that except they repented, they would all *likewiſe* periſh. This is commonly ſuppoſed to refer to the deſtruction of the Jews in great multitudes, by the caſting down of the walls and towers of Jeruſalem, when the city was taken: but it ſufficiently anſwers to the expreſſion, as their death was ſudden, and an effect of the immediate hand of God gone forth againſt them; and probably Chriſt particularly intended to denounce the future deſtruction of impenitent ſinners in the other world. It is obſervable that he determines nothing either way concerning the character and ſtate of the perſons in queſtion.

V. 6—9.] (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah,* c. v. ver. 1—7. *Matt.* c. xxi. v. 23—43.) This parable ſeems to have been added to enforce the preceding warning. A fig-tree planted in a vineyard would have every advantage of culture: in three years time the young trees were expected to bear fruit; but the owner of this tree is repreſented as coming three other years to ſeek fruit, and not finding any: it might therefore be concluded to be a barren tree, not fit to occupy the room, or appropriate the nouriſhment and culture, which might be more profitably employed. However the dreſſer of the vineyard intreated that it might be ſpared for one more year; during which ſpace he would uſe proper means for rendering it fruitful: then perhaps it would produce fruit; but otherwiſe it ought to be cut down. The Jewiſh nation ſeems here to be primarily intended: the Lord had long borne with their unfruitfulneſs, amidſt their manifold advantages, and the time of his vengeance approached. However they were to be ſpared a little longer, that the apoſtles and miniſters of the goſpel might make one more vigorous and zealous effort to bring them to repentance, faith and holineſs; and if this failed, they were to be cut down, and caſt out of the vineyard: Jeruſalem was to be deſtroyed, the ceremonial worſhip terminated, and the unbelieving Jews caſt out of the church, to make way for the calling of the Gentiles into it. But it is alſo equally applicable to the caſe of individuals, who continue unfruitful under the means of grace: though they are ſpared from time to time, through the long-ſuffering of the Lord; yet they will at length be cut down by death and caſt into hell, except they repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Many expoſitors underſtand Chriſt by the dreſſer of the vineyard; and indeed God's long-ſuffering with ſinners is the effect of his mediatory office and work: yet he ſeems rather to be the Owner of the vineyard, who ſentenceth the barren trees to be cut down: and the language uſed may be intended to deſcribe the fervent prayers, and zealous labours of faithful miniſters, who earneſtly deſire to prevent the ruin of their hearers.

V. 10—17.] As Chriſt was teaching in a ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, there was a woman preſent, who muſt have attended the worſhip of God with great difficulty; as ſhe was ſo bowed together, that ſhe could in no degree lift up herſelf to ſtand upright, but was forced to go almoſt double. This calamity, under which ſhe had laboured for 18 years, would in general have been conſidered as a very remarkable diſeaſe, ariſing from ſome unknown natural cauſe; but it was then *juſtly* aſcribed to an evil ſpirit, who had been permitted to reduce her to this ſtate of infirmity; ſo that in fact "ſatan had "bound her" for ſo long a time. Our Lord ſeeing her in this afflicted ſtate, called her to him, and by his word, attended with the laying on of his hands, immediately dom of God like? and whereunto ſhall I reſemble it?

19 It is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took, and caſt into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20 And again he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

22 And he went through the cities and villages teaching, and journeying towards Jeruſalem.

23 Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there few that be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them,

24 Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

25 When once the Maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he ſhall anſwer and ſay unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

26 Then ſhall ye begin to ſay, We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets.

27 But he ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all *ye* workers of iniquity.

28 There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, when ye ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourſelves* thruſt out.

29 And they ſhall come from the eaſt, and *from* the weſt, and from the north, and *from* the ſouth, and ſhall ſit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And, behold, there are laſt which ſhall be firſt, and there are firſt which ſhall be laſt.

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reſtored her; and being made ſtraight, ſhe glorified God before them all for this unexpected deliverance. But the ruler of the ſynagogue, who hated the doctrine, and envied the honour of Chriſt, yet attempting to veil his enmity with the appearance of ſingular piety, told the people in a very angry manner, that they ought to come for healing on other days, and not on the holy reſt of the ſabbath: as if the woman had come to the ſynagogue on purpoſe for a cure; or as if a word and a touch, attended with ſo powerful and beneficent an effect, could be a violation of the command to hallow the ſabbath! The malice and hypocriſy of the man were therefore evident, and our Lord ſeverely rebuked him; ſhewing, that none, even of the Scribes and Phariſees, ſcrupled to water their cattle on the ſabbath-day; though it was attended with ſome labour, and was only neceſſary to preſerve the animals from the uneaſineſs of a day's thirſt, or the owner from ſome temporal loſs, that might reſult from it: and could it then be queſtioned, whether it were right to relieve a rational creature, a deſcendant of Abraham, and perhaps an heir of his faith, from her long continued calamity on that holy day; even if it had been effected by labour, which it was not? This reply was ſo ſatisfactory and concluſive, that it ſilenced and put to ſhame the ruler, and all the other adverſaries of Jeſus; and cauſed the people to rejoice in his glorious miracles, as ſo many proofs of his being the promiſed Meſſiah. (Notes, &c. c. xii. v. 1—13.)

V. 18—21.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 31—33.)

V. 22—30.] We ſeem now to come to Chriſt's laſt journey from Galilee towards Jeruſalem, in which he took a large circuit, and ſpent conſiderable time. In ſome of the cities or villages, through which he paſſed, a perſon aſked him, whether "there were few that "would be ſaved?" That is *from* final condemnation, and *unto* everlaſting life. Perhaps the man inferred this from his doctrine, and was prejudiced againſt him on that account; or he deemed this inconſiſtent with the preceding parables. However it was a *curious* queſtion, though it does not appear that the man had any ill deſign in it. Our Lord therefore did not ſee good *directly* to anſwer him; but took occaſion to inculcate a very important exhortation. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 13, 14.) "The "ſtrait gate" is the paſſage from the broad way to deſtruction into the narrow way to life; that is, a ſinner's converſion and reconciliation to God, by repentance and faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Many difficulties muſt occur in thus "paſſing from death unto life:" the gate is beſet with enemies; and much muſt be left behind, broken off, broken through, overcome, and attained to, in getting in at it: yet without this there can be no ſalvation. They therefore, who would be ſaved, muſt "ſtrive to "enter in at it;" they muſt ſtruggle with all their force, and employ all their attention and circumſpection; as thoſe did, who wreſtled in the olympic games. To excite them to this, Chriſt ſolemnly aſſured them, that "many "would ſeek to enter in and would not be able:" ſome ſeek admiſſion into God's favour, and eternal happineſs, without converſion or faith in the divine Saviour; others ſeek theſe bleſſings in a ſlothful manner, or in the uſe of ſuch means as God hath never appointed; others with reſerves for their worldly intereſt, reputation, or ſinful pleaſures, or for avoiding reproach and perſecution: in ſuch ways many come ſhort of ſalvation; notwithſtanding convictions, temporary ſeriouſneſs, and ſome kind of diligence, partial reformation, &c. But it is by procraſ-

31 The ſame day there came certain of the Phariſees, ſaying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

32 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I caſt out devils, and I do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third *day* I ſhall be perfected.

33 Nevertheleſs, I muſt walk to-day and to-morrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem.

34 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, which killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate: and verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me, until *the time* come when ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

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tination eſpecially, that men are at length reduced to ſeek to enter in, and not be able; as they do not begin in good earneſt to ſeek till it be too late. Whilſt life laſts, the Maſter of the houſe, the Lord Jeſus, ſits as it were, at mercy's gate, over which it is written, "Knock and it "ſhall be opened to you:" but at length he riſes up, and by cutting off a ſinner in his unconverted ſtate, he ſhuts the door againſt him, and bars it forever. Many therefore, even of thoſe who then heard Chriſt, would firſt *begin* to knock at the gate, and to ſeek ſalvation from him, when it would be too late: and whatever preſumptuous confidence they had before entertained, or whatever plea they might have to urge; they would in nowiſe prevail for admiſſion: for though they could truly ſay, that they had ſat at table with him, or welcomed him to their tables, and that He had taught in the ſtreets of their cities; yet he would diſown all acquaintance with them, and drive them from him as workers of iniquity. And at that tremendous ſeaſon, their anguiſh and miſery would be enhanced, by beholding the happineſs of patriarchs and prophets; yea of vaſt numbers of the Gentiles from every quarter of the globe; who would be ſaved by repentance and faith in Him, whilſt they periſhed through unbelief, and impenitence; for the firſt would be laſt, and the laſt firſt. (Notes, &c. *Prov.* c. i. v. 20—33. *Iſaiah,* c. lv. v. 7, 8. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 21—23. c. viii. v. 11, 12. c. xx. v. 1—16.) In this addreſs our Lord evidently declared to the people, that on him their admiſſion into, or excluſion from life and happineſs entirely and abſolutely depended.

V. 31—35.] Chriſt ſtill continued within Herod's juriſdiction; and his miracles, doctrine, and reputation ſeem to have given great uneaſineſs to that wicked prince; who probably menaced Him, rather in hopes of driving him to a diſtance, than with any intention of proceeding againſt him. The Phariſees alſo of thoſe parts wanted to remove him from them, and therefore they warned him to go thence, for otherwiſe Herod would certainly put him to death. But Chriſt bade them go and inform that fox, (that ſubtle, inſinuating, and miſchievous man,) that He ſhould proceed with his work without regarding him: he muſt continue to work merciful miracles for a very ſhort time longer, as it were that day and the morrow; and then, as on the third day, he ſhould be perfected by his ſufferings, which would complete his work on earth, and make way for his entrance upon, and performance of his work in heaven. Nevertheleſs, though his time was ſhort, he *muſt needs* go openly from place to place whilſt it laſted: and though he certainly ſhould ſoon be put to death; yet that would not be by the hands of Herod in Galilee, for it could not be that a prophet ſhould periſh, or be murdered, "out of Jeruſalem." That city had, as it were, an excluſive claim to the guilt and infamy of murdering God's prophets; and it was not proper that the great Prophet of the church ſhould lay down his life in any other place. As John Baptiſt and others had been ſlain elſewhere; it is evident that this ſentence muſt not be taken more ſtrictly than this: it was a general rule, and Chriſt would not be an exception to it. This meſſage was in fact a defiance ſent to Herod: but his wickedneſs in ſlaying John Baptiſt, contrary to the conviction of his own conſcience, being added to all his other crimes, rendered it improper for our Lord to ſhew any regard to him. This alſo occaſioned Him to ſpeak of the guilt, and approaching ruin of Jeruſalem and its inhabitants for rejecting his ſalvation, that in language hath already been conſidered, as it was ſpoken on another occaſion. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiii. v. 37—39.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As no place or employment can ſecure us from the ſtroke of death; we ſhould always be habitually preparing for it: and inſtead of conſidering the ſudden, or extraordinary removals of others, as proofs that they were ſinners above other men, becauſe they ſuffered theſe things; we ſhould endeavour to improve ſuch diſpenſations as warnings to ourſelves: for when dire calamities are reported, it may be ſaid to ſinners of every age and nation, that "except they repent they ſhall all likewiſe "periſh." They, who hear the goſpel, and aſſociate with the people of God, and yet continue impenitent and unconverted, are the barren fig-trees in the Lord's vineyard: from time to time he comes ſeeking fruit on them; but finding none, he will at length condemn them to be cut down as cumberers of the ground; that they may no longer diſgrace his church in the eyes of thoſe who are without, nor prevent the fruitfulneſs of thoſe within. Indeed when miniſters behold ſuch barren trees in their congregations, (alas how numerous are they!) And when they fear that they are about to be cut down and caſt into the fire; they are led both by inclination and duty to pray that they may be ſpared a little longer, and they deſire to uſe every means for their ſalvation with redoubled aſſiduity: yet if at laſt they continue unfruitful, they muſt acknowledge the juſtice of the

CHAP. XIV.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Healing a man, who had the dropſy, and vindicating his doing it on the ſabbath-day, 1---6. 2*d. By a parable teaching his hearers humility; inſtructing them in charity to the poor; and ſpeaking the parable of the great ſupper, of the perſons who excuſed themſelves from accepting the invitation, and of the manner in which gueſts were*

ſentence, by which they are removed to make way for more uſeful plants. (*Rom.* c. ix. v. 1—3. c. x. v. 1.) Indeed it behoves every one of us to enquire how long we have been favoured with the means of grace, and been borne with by the long-ſuffering of God; and to examine whether we are bearing fruit to his glory and the good of men, or are ſtill mere cumberers of the ground? Such enquiries are peculiarly proper to be made at the beginning of a new year, or the return of any other periodical ſeaſon. And when any perſons are reſtored from ſickneſs, and ſpared a little longer, in anſwer to the prayers of miniſters or chriſtian friends; ſurely they ſhould take their admonitions in good part, and ſeek to profit by their labours for their ſalvation; remembering how ſhort their reſpite may be, and how ſoon they may be cut down, if they are not now rendered fruitful. But alas many ſuch perſons deſpiſe and revile thoſe, who pray and labour for their ſalvation, and watch for their ſouls, as thoſe who muſt give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief.

Though we muſt not reſt in means and ordinances, yet we ſhould be thankful for, and attend upon them: if we would have a bleſſing from Chriſt, we muſt frequent the aſſemblies of his people, eſpecially on his holy day: and if we come thither with pain and trouble; yet we ſhall have no cauſe to repent of our attendance. We are not concerned, nor competent to determine what influence ſatan has in occaſioning or increaſing our bodily diſeaſes: but we know that he hath bound our ſouls with the chain of our own ſinful propenſities, ſo that we are not able in any wiſe to lift up, or liberate ourſelves; and this hath been the caſe with numbers for many years, whilſt their evil habits have continually been ſtrengthening, and rendering their caſes more hopeleſs. But if Jeſus ſpeak the word, and put forth his healing power, even theſe will immediately be looſed, and their crooked judgments and diſpoſitions rectified; and they will without delay be able and willing to glorify God by word and deed. This deliverance is moſt frequently wrought on the Lord's day: and whatever labour tends to put men in the way of receiving this bleſſing, or is inſtrumental in its being communicated to them, muſt peculiarly accord to the pious and beneficent intention of that ſacred day of reſt. But they, who hate the goſpel and its bleſſed effects, will find ſome objection to make againſt every inſtance of the power of divine grace; and when this is accompanied by a pretended exactneſs in externals; the hypocriſy of it may often be ſhewn, by obſerving that they do the ſame things for their own ſecular intereſt, which they blame others for doing in order to promote the ſalvation of ſouls. But evident good works, connected with a blameleſs converſation, and defended by convincing arguments, muſt at length ſilence the moſt malicious adverſaries, and bear teſtimony to men's conſciences of the power and preſence of God with us: and let enemies be ever ſo numerous or malicious, his kingdom will continue to increaſe in the world, till it fill the whole earth; and in every renewed ſoul, 'till it have perfectly communicated its heavenly ſavour to all its faculties, diſpoſitions, and affections.

But when we reflect on the immenſe multitudes of the human ſpecies, it is very awful to conſider how few of them appear to be in the way of ſalvation, which is marked out in the word of God. Yet let us rather look to ourſelves, than waſte our time in calculations, or curious enquiries about others: it will not avail us how few, or how many ſhall be ſaved, if we be not of that number; and if we be, we ſhall at length approve of the appointments of God in this and every other reſpect. Every unconverted ſinner ſhould then ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, by earneſt prayer, by reſiſting temptations, by avoiding all occaſions of committing ſin, or ſtupifying his conſcience, and by attending diligently on every means of grace: and every one of us ſhould continue thus to labour and wreſtle, that we may make our calling and election ſure. We may alſo ſeriouſly recollect, that Jeſus hath declared that "many ſhall ſeek "to enter in, and ſhall not be able." We are indeed aſſured that none ſhall ſeek the Lord, when and where he may be found, as in Chriſt, and on a throne of grace, by humble faith, and fervent prayer, and at laſt fail of obtaining the bleſſing: but let all men beware of a proud, a ſlothful, an hypocritical, a partial ſeeking; and above all of procraſtination: for many never begin to knock at mercy's gate, till it be ſhut againſt them for ever. How dreadful then will be the diſappointment of thoſe, who hoped and intended ſome time to enter the ſtrait gate; but who deferred the grand concern from carnal motives, till it became too late, and the door was for ever ſhut againſt them! In vain will they call Chriſt Lord, Lord, and intreat him to open to them: in vain will they plead, that they heard his miniſters, and frequented his table: for he will utterly diſregard their pleas, and refuſe all pity to their anguiſh; whilſt he ſhall bid them depart from him as workers of iniquity, whom he never acknowledged to be in the number of his redeemed people: and even the felicity of thoſe, with whom they formerly aſſociated, as well as that of others, whom they diſdained, will add poignancy to their miſery and deſpair. As there were ſuch perſons amongſt Chriſt's hearers, amongſt thoſe whom he fed by miracle, or with whom he ſat down to meat; and as there was a Judas even among his own apoſtles: we ought ſurely to addreſs our congregations as Chriſt did his, to put the caſe that many of them may at laſt be found in this awful condition, and to enforce our warnings and exhortations by ſuch alarming topics: but eſpecially we ought to examine ourſelves, and not to take things for granted by an unwarranted confidence, where ſuch infinite intereſts are at ſtake. However none ought to yield to deſpondency, *brought in, &c.* 7---24. *3d. Shewing them the abſolute neceſſity of ſelf-denial, and a willingneſs to renounce the world; inſtructing them by ſimiles to count the coſt, before they became his diſciples; and ſhewing the worthleſsneſs of graceleſs profeſſors, and miniſters,* 25---35.

AND it came to paſs, as he went into the houſe of one of the chief Phariſees to eat bread on the ſabbath-day, that they watched him.

2 And behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropſy.

3 And Jeſus anſwering, ſpake unto the lawyers and Phariſees, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath-day?

4 And they held their peace. And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him go;

5 And anſwered them, ſaying, Which of you ſhall have an aſs or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not ſtraightway pull him out on the ſabbath-day?

6 And they could not anſwer him again to theſe things.

7 And he put forth a parable to thoſe which were bidden, when he marked how they choſe out the chief rooms; ſaying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any *man* to a wedding, ſit not down in the higheſt room, leſt a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come and ſay to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with ſhame to take the loweſt room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and ſit down in the loweſt room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may ſay unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then ſhalt thou have worſhip in the preſence of them that ſit at meat with thee.

11 For whoſoever exalteth himſelf ſhall

either with reſpect to himſelf or others: for "behold "there are laſt who ſhall be firſt, and firſt who ſhall "be laſt:" and though few of our immediate connexions may appear to be in the way of ſalvation; yet there will be others brought from every part of the earth, and the multitude will in all be immenſely large.

It does not in general behove us to ſpeak diſreſpectfully of any, who are inveſted with authority; yet apoſtates, perſecutors, and crafty diſſemblers may on ſome occaſions be ſpoken of in their true characters, that men may beware of them; and we muſt not flatter the wicked, or fear any man, when performing our bounden duty. We too ſhould go about doing good, whilſt our appointed ſpan of life endures: and when that expires, we ſhall be perfected in holineſs, and felicity. But how black a mark of human depravity was the ſtrange circumſtance of Jeruſalem's being the ſlaughter-houſe of God's prophets, and the very place where his beloved Son was crucified! Alas, the viſible church hath generally been the grand ſcene of perſecution; and they whom the Saviour hath with perſevering tenderneſs invited to take ſhelter under the ſhadow of his Almighty Wings, have not only contemptuouſly refuſed his kindneſs; but have hated and perſecuted thoſe, who brought the invitation. Thus men bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, as well as the forfeiture of all their privileges: but let us ſhun this fatal rock, and learn thankfully to welcome, and to profit by all thoſe, who come in the name of the Lord, to invite us to partake of his great ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1—6.] (Notes, &c. c. xi. v. 37—39. c. xiii. v. 11—17.) This Phariſee, (as well as ſeveral others, who invited Jeſus to their houſes,) ſeems to have had an inſidious deſign in entertaining him; and to have combined with ſeveral others of his brethren in endeavouring to entangle him. But our Lord would not be deterred from healing a man, afflicted with the dropſy, (who perhaps came thither for that purpoſe;) though he knew what clamours they would raiſe againſt him for doing it on the ſabbath-day. When they therefore had refuſed to anſwer his queſtion reſpecting the lawfulneſs of doing this; he took him aſide, and having healed him he ſent him away: and then he ſhewed them that compaſſion for an animal, or regard to their own property, would have induced any of them to far more labour, than what they blamed in him, where the life or comfort of a brother was concerned. This ſilenced their objections, though it did not ſubdue their enmity.

V. 7—11.] The Scribes and Phariſees ſeem not to have attended even to that ſemblance of humility, with which numbers veil their pride and ambition that they may more ſucceſsfully gratify it: but being invited to dinner on this occaſion, they openly contended for precedency, probably on the ſcore of their reputation for wiſdom, learning, or piety, or on account of their rank and authority: and they choſe out for themſelves the chief ſeats, thus claiming the higheſt reſpect as juſtly due to them. This diſgraceful competition aroſe from a hateful and ruinous frame of mind; and it was a mere ſhadow of that ſpiritual pride and ambition, which hath excluded numbers from the kingdom of Chriſt, hath produced the moſt lamentable effects in the viſible church, and hath done immenſe injury even to many true chriſtians and miniſters. Our Lord therefore, in a mild, yet deciſive manner, reproved the vain-glory of the gueſts, and taught his diſciples the ſpirit and conduct proper for them, by a parable, addreſſed, as it were, to each of them. (*Prov.* c. xxv. v. 6, 7.) If any of them ſhould be invited to a wedding, (which was the principal feſtive be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.

12 Then ſaid he alſo to him that bade him, When thou makeſt a dinner or a ſupper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinſmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

13 But when thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot recompenſe thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.

15 And when one of them that ſat at meat with him heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Bleſſed *is* he that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 Then ſaid he unto him, A certain man made a great ſupper, and bade many:

17 And ſent his ſervants at ſupper-time to ſay to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *conſent* began to make excuſe. The firſt ſaid unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it: I pray thee have me excuſed.

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occaſion amongſt them;) he was cautioned againſt imitating the Scribes and Phariſees, by aſpiring to the higheſt place; leſt a more honourable perſon ſhould be preſent, whom the maſter of the feaſt ſhould deem entitled to the precedency. In this caſe, being required to give place to his ſuperior, and the intermediate places being pre-occupied, he would be ſent with diſgrace to take the loweſt ſeat. On the contrary it would be his wiſdom to ſit down at firſt in the loweſt place, as claiming no honour and pre-eminence; and then the maſter of the houſe might deem it proper to deſire him to go up higher, which would procure him reſpect, and deference amongſt the other gueſts. Thus the believer ſhould deem it honour enough for him, a poor ſinful and rebellious creature, to be admitted amongſt the redeemed of the Lord, in the loweſt form; and ſhould not contend for eminent ſtations, authority, or reputation in the church; for ſuch ambition only tends to diſgrace: but he ought, in unaffected humility, to take the loweſt ſtation, or the meaneſt ſervice, preferring others to himſelf: thus in due time he may obtain the honour that cometh from God; be had in eſtimation even amongſt his fellow chriſtians; and he will have the approbation of angels and men at the day of judgment. For it is an univerſal rule of God's government of the world, of his viſible church, and of true chriſtians; and of his dealings with every individual, in reſpect of the various incidents, and actions of their lives; that "he abaſes thoſe, who endeavour to exalt themſelves; and advances thoſe, who abaſe themſelves," as conſcious of their actual and comparative vileneſs, and worthleſſneſs, and as willing to be little, deſpiſed, neglected, and ſubjected to others. The former are God's rivals for honour; and are alike averſe to the authority of his law, the grace of his goſpel, and the diſpenſations of his providence: the latter are prepared to exerciſe every gracious diſpoſition, to ſubmit to the Lord in all reſpects, and to be the proper inſtruments of promoting his glory.

V. 12—14.] The Phariſee, who entertained Chriſt, ſeems to have been a perſon of eminence; and he had probably prepared an expenſive entertainment for the company, (though this was on the ſabbath day and muſt have been attended with *labour* alſo;) and probably the Phariſees were as oſtentatious in their feaſts as in their faſts. Our Lord therefore ſaw it proper to point out the criminality of this practice alſo, by a counſel addreſſed immediately to the perſon, who had invited him: and He exhorted him, when he made a feaſt, not to collect together his rich friends, relations, or neighbours, (for the epithet *rich* belongs equally to them all;) but on the contrary to invite the poor, and thoſe who were diſabled from getting the neceſſaries, or comforts of life; a great number of whom might be *feaſted* with the ſame expence, that would be incurred to entertain a few of the rich. In this manner he would be bleſſed: as his gueſts could not recompenſe him, except by their prayers; and he would therefore receive his reward at the reſurrection of the juſt. It is not to be ſuppoſed that Jeſus meant abſolutely to prohibit his diſciples from entertaining their wealthy friends, &c: but it may readily be remarked, that ſuch perſons, as are moſt applauded for their uſeleſs generoſity in this reſpect, are ſeldom very eminent for real charity, and are ſometimes defective in honeſty: this profuſion ſerves only to gratify a man's vanity and pride, and the ſenſual appetites of his friends; who in return are tempted to run into ſimilar extravagance, of which the conſequences are often very fatal. Such expences cannot be incurred from love to God, or regard to his authority, favour, or glory; therefore no recompence can be expected from him; and human applauſe, or a ſimilar banquet in return, is the only reward, to which they are entitled. Whereas when a man from proper motives expends his wealth in relieving the diſtreſſed and indigent; he derives the greateſt ſatisfaction imaginable from this uſe of it, and his gracious Lord will abundantly reward it in another world. It certainly is not meant, that God will recompenſe at the reſurrection of the juſt, a proud, and unbelieving liberality to the poor: but our Lord ſpake for the inſtruction of his diſciples; and the leſs *they* ſpend in "conformity to the world," by ſuch luxurious feaſting of the rich; the more they will have to employ in feeding the poor, and in all thoſe fruits of faith and love, which are by Chriſt Jeſus to the praiſe and glory of God.

V. 15—24.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 1—14.) Perhaps the perſon, who made this remark, meant to divert the converſation to another ſubject; or our Lord's diſcourſe might ſuggeſt it to him. He ſeems to have

19 And another ſaid, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excuſed.

20 And another ſaid, I have married a wife; and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that ſervant came and ſhewed his lord theſe things. Then the maſter of the houſe, being angry, ſaid to his ſervant, Go out quickly into the ſtreets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the ſervant ſaid, Lord, it is done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord ſaid unto the ſervant, Go out into the high-ways, and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my houſe may be filled.

24 For I ſay unto you, That none of thoſe men which were bidden ſhall taſte of my ſupper.

25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and ſaid unto them,

26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.

27 And whoſoever doth not bear his croſs,

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alluded to the ſatisfactions to be enjoyed in the days of the Meſſiah, under the figure of "eating bread in the "kingdom of God;" though the thought might occur to him from what Chriſt had ſpoken of the reſurrection of the juſt. "Eating bread" was a common expreſſion for any kind of meal, however plentiful or luxurious: and the man ſeems to have had carnal apprehenſions of the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom. Our Lord, therefore, to ſhew him how ill ſuited theſe expected pleaſures would prove to the taſte of the Jews in general, and to deſcribe their preſent and future conduct reſpecting his goſpel, ſpake to them the following parable. The great ſupper repreſented the plenteous proviſion made for the ſouls of men in his redemption: the previous invitation of many may denote the promiſes and prophecies of his ſalvation to the Jews of old, the miniſtry of John Baptiſt, and that of Chriſt and his apoſtles, &c. The ſervants being ſent to call thoſe who had been bidden when "all things were ready," may ſignify the preaching of the apoſtles and evangeliſts after Chriſt's aſcenſion. The concurrence of the invited perſons in deſiring to be excuſed from attendance, though on different pretences, may repreſent the general rejection of the goſpel by the Jewiſh nation, eſpecially by their rulers, Teachers and Phariſees: the ſervants being then ſent forth into the ſtreets and lanes of the city, to call in the poor, lame and blind, &c, may intimate the ſucceſs of the goſpel amongſt the publicans, and common people of the Jews; and amongſt thoſe who were diſperſed in other countries, and the proſelyted Gentiles: and when the ſervants were ſent out into the high-ways and hedges, to fetch in the poor ſtrangers and travellers, &c, the calling of the Gentiles ſeem to have been principally intended; with whom the church hath ſince been repleniſhed, whilſt the Jews, who were firſt invited, are excluded from it. However the whole parable may be applied to the preaching of the goſpel, and the reception that it meets with in every age. It may be further obſerved, that the excuſes here ſtated were all taken from things lawful in themſelves; yet from the manner of their being attended to, they became the occaſion of the greateſt contempt being ſhewn to the feaſt, and to him who made it. Nothing could be more frivolous, than for one man to go to ſee his eſtate, and another to prove his oxen, (after they had been bought,) juſt at the hour when they were invited to the feaſt; when they might eaſily have deferred ſuch matters to another time. The man, who pleaded, "that he had married a wife, and "therefore could not come," is ſuppoſed by ſome to have meant that his own marriage feaſt was fixed for the ſame time: but as the marriage was paſt, the feaſt alſo may be ſuppoſed to have been over: however it repreſents to us, that a carnal mind gives every thing the preference to Chriſt, and his ſalvation, inſtead of uſing every thing in ſubſerviency thereto: and all theſe excuſes teach us, that contempt of ſpiritual bleſſings, and inordinate attachment to worldly objects, are the real cauſes of men's negligence and procraſtination in religious matters: and the circumſtances of thoſe, who deſired to be excuſed, (when compared with the poverty of them, who were the gueſts at laſt,) remind us that pride and ſelf-ſufficiency are incompatible with the faith of the goſpel. The ſervants were ordered *to compel* thoſe from the high-ways and hedges to come in: it would be abſurd to underſtand this of compulſive force, which would be a ſtrange way of bringing men to a banquet! But it might be ſuppoſed that ſuch poor travellers or beggars would not readily be convinced that the feaſt was intended for them; and therefore earneſt and preſſing invitations would be peculiarly proper. It is certain that it never was our Lord's meaning that men ſhould be brought to embrace his goſpel by ill uſage, and perſecution, which can have no effect, unleſs to make them hypocrites: but he would have his miniſters uſe moſt earneſt and affectionate invitations, perſuaſions, and expoſtulations, and whatever can convince the underſtanding, or affect the heart; and eſpecially when they addreſs ſuch, who by the greatneſs of their guilt may be tempted to deſpair of mercy.

V. 25—27.] As our Lord journeyed towards Jeruſalem great multitudes flocked about him: but he knew that they had generally very erroneous notions of his kingdom, and were not prepared to make the needful ſacrifices, or to encounter all dangers and difficulties, which would be requiſite, in order to become his true diſciples: if therefore they followed him in their preſent tem-

and come after me, cannot be my diſciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, ſitteth not down firſt and counteth the coſt, whether he have *ſufficient* to finiſh *it*?

29 Leſt haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finiſh *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finiſh.

31 Or what king, going to make war againſt another king, ſitteth not down firſt, and conſulteth, whether he be able with ten thouſand to meet him, that cometh againſt him with twenty thouſand?

32 Or elſe, while the other is yet a great way off, he ſendeth an ambaſſage, and deſireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewiſe, whoſoever he be of you that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple.

per; they would leave him in the time of trial, to the diſcredit of the cauſe, the diſcouragement of others, and the ruin of their own ſouls. He therefore turned himſelf, and addreſſed them in ſuch a manner, as ſeemed calculated to drive them all from him: aſſuring them, that though they came to hear him; yet they could not be his diſciples, except they hated their deareſt relatives, and even their own lives. In a certain ſenſe, and degree we are required to love theſe relations, and to take care of our own lives. But we muſt not love any object in competition with Chriſt, and his ſalvation; nor ſhall we, if we feel our need of Him, and have a proper value for him. As we muſt therefore love our neareſt relatives leſs than Chriſt, and muſt give his favour, will, and glory a decided preference to their approbation, intereſt or comfort: ſo we may often be required to act towards them as though we hated them; diſobeying their injunctions, thwarting their inclinations, rejecting their intreaties, renouncing the comfort of their ſociety, or turning it into bitterneſs by exciting their reſentment: without which we cannot at all times profeſs the truth, receive the inſtructions, or obey the commandments of Chriſt. Nay at ſometimes we may be called to be cruel to ourſelves, (in reſpect of our temporal life,) as well as to our friends; expoſing ourſelves to perſecution, torture, and death, if we will obey Chriſt: and unleſs we are habitually prepared, by a deep ſenſe of our need of his ſalvation, and of our immenſe obligations to Him, to venture every conſequence, and meet any extremity, rather than forſake him, we cannot be his diſciples: for in that caſe we ſhall refuſe to bear our croſs, and to go after him. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. v. 37—39. c. xvi. v. 24—28. *Mark*, c. viii. v. 34—38.)

V. 28—33.] To ſhew the neceſſity of the people laying this to heart, and the propriety of his urging it upon them, our Lord next enquired, whether every man of common prudence did not calculate the expence, before he began to erect a tower; that he might form a previous judgment of his being able to complete the work? For if a man neglected this rule, and having begun to build, was afterwards compelled by poverty to leave the edifice unfiniſhed; he would not only loſe all his labour and expence, but the building itſelf would remain a monument of his indiſcretion, and excite the deriſion and mockery of all, that beheld it. Thus, if a man ſhould profeſs himſelf a follower of Chriſt, without conſidering what loſſes, trials, ſelf-denial, or ſufferings it might expoſe him to, or how he might be enabled to endure them: his conſtancy would at length fail; all he had given up, or paſſed through would be in vain, and his apoſtacy would render him contemptible and miſerable. The ſame might alſo be illuſtrated by the caſe of a prudent king, who would not declare war, or perſiſt in a competition with a more powerful monarch, without conſidering whether his reſources, ſituation, or alliances were ſuch, as to give him a reaſonable proſpect of ſucceſs: otherwiſe he would endeavour, whilſt his enemy was at a diſtance, to obtain the beſt terms of peace with him that he could. To become Chriſt's diſciple implies a declaration of war againſt ſatan, ſin, and this evil world, which are far too powerful for any man to withſtand in his own ſtrength: unleſs a ſinner therefore be led to ſuch a conviction of his own weakneſs, and of the power of theſe enemies, as to ſeek help from the Lord; he will never be able to ſtand his ground, and might as well never attempt it: and in all caſes the warfare will be attended with ſo many hardſhips, perils, and loſſes; that if a man be not aware of them, and inſtructed how to ſupport them, he will never be able to continue to the end. Though it be therefore deſperate for him to remain in his preſent ſtate of ſubjection to his enemies; yet it will rather make the matter worſe for him to take up a mere profeſſion of the goſpel, without that ſincerity, humility, and entire dependance on Chriſt, which alone can give him victory in the conflict. Some expoſitors indeed explain this laſt illuſtration concerning the impoſſibility of a ſinner's making any oppoſition to the power of God, who is coming to puniſh him for his rebellion; and as a warning to them to make their peace with him, whatever loſs or ſuffering might be the conſequence of it: but the application of it ſeems to favour the former interpretation; for "*likewiſe*" or in like manner, "whoſoever he be of you," ſaid Jeſus, "that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple." It is not neceſſary, nor would it in general conſiſt with a man's duty, to leave his buſineſs, and relatives, or to quit poſſeſſion of his eſtate, &c: but we muſt be prepared for it, whenever the commandment, or the providence of God may call us to it. In this way a profeſſed diſciple of Chriſt will be repeatedly put to the trial; he will be called to blaſt his opening proſpects of preferment, reputation, or riches; to renounce worldly pleaſures, to forego relative comforts and agreeable friendſhips, and to bear loſſes, reproaches, and various hardſhips for the ſake of Chriſt: and in times of perſecution, (ſuch as were at hand when this was ſpoken, and

34 Salt *is* good: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſeaſoned?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men caſt it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

for which we ſhould always be ready;) he may be required to leave his country, friends, and poſſeſſions, to become an exile or a captive, and to part with his liberty or his life; or he cannot follow Chriſt as his true diſciple. The judgment, and diſpoſition of a martyr every chriſtian muſt poſſeſs: theſe will be evinced in leſſer matters continually; and when it becomes neceſſary God will ſtrengthen them, and enable a man to bear the greateſt extremities for his ſake. Many things may hereafter be expedient and uſeful, which are not eſſential to a man's being a chriſtian: but this decided preference of Chriſt, in his whole character and all his offices, to the whole world, and to life itſelf, when placed in competition with Him, is the very heart, or the moſt vital part of chriſtianity, without which a man can be nothing better than a mere profeſſor: to inſiſt therefore on this, from the firſt, in the moſt peremptory manner, is perfectly conſiſtent with the rule of "not putting new wine into old bottles," which only reſpects thoſe things that may be uſeful, but are not eſſential. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. ix. v. 16, 17.)

V. 34, 35.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 13. *Mark,* c. ix. v. 49, 50.) Without that gracious preparation of heart, that hath been deſcribed, profeſſors or preachers of the goſpel can only be as "Salt that has loſt its "ſavour," which inſtead of preſerving other bodies from corruption, or giving them a pleaſant reliſh, is itſelf moſt incurably taſteleſs and worthleſs: ſuch men can be no real credit or advantage to the church, or to the world; and they are generally more incurable in their preſumption and impenitence, than any other deſcription of ſinners: after a temporary profeſſion they generally decline, till they totally apoſtatize, or loſe nearly all appearance of religion; and they continue irrecoverable in their declenſions, or run into and try to propagate deſtructive hereſies; ſo that they turn out the moſt worthleſs, and contemptible of men: and as this ſubject is of univerſal importance, it demands the ſerious attention of every one "that hath ears to hear!"

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We muſt not allow even the hoſpitality of thoſe, who appear friendly, to interrupt us in our work, or to induce us to be unfaithful to the truth, or to the ſouls of men: though the contrary conduct will probably draw upon us the cenſure of rudeneſs or ingratitude. It requires reiterated and particular inſtruction to bring men to underſtand the proper connexion of piety and charity in the obſervation of the ſabbath; and the diſtinction between real works of neceſſity, and thoſe that are only made ſo by habits of ſelf-indulgence: and the "wiſdom "that is from above" is requiſite to teach us ſuch perſeverance in well doing amidſt malicious and watchful oppoſers, as may ſtop their mouths even when their hearts are not changed. Miniſters ought to copy Chriſt, in embracing every opportunity of introducing inſtructive diſcourſe in all companies, to which they are admitted; and in taking occaſion even from men's follies and miſtakes, to make uſeful remarks. No diſpoſition of the depraved heart of man is more odious and fooliſh, or more univerſal, than pride in its various exerciſes. Yet the vain ambition of honour which is not a man's due, expoſes him to contempt even amongſt his competitors for the ſame diſtinctions; and they count him as a rival, whom they delight to degrade, and mortify; whilſt modeſty commonly tends to reſpect and attention. It is indeed far more honourable for a man to begin low, and to be unaſſuming; and then to be advanced by the verdict, and with the conſent of others; than to aſſume a rank, and advance pretenſions, to which he is ſingular in deeming himſelf entitled; and from which he is likely to be degraded with ſhame, and contempt. But when we know our real character in the ſight of God, and are made well acquainted with our own hearts; we ſhall proportionably be diſinclined to aſpire at the chief places in the church, and ſhall be contented and thankful for the moſt obſcure, and be made willing to have others honoured, and ourſelves neglected and ſlighted in the compariſon. This is in reality a far better way of being made uſeful, and honourable in the Lord's due time, than to aſpire after high-ſounding titles, or places of authority, popularity, and precedency; which cannot be coveted, without forgetting what poor, guilty, polluted, weak, and fooliſh creatures we are. And this forgetfulneſs tends to abaſement and degradation, by the invariable rule of God's dealings with us.

But would any unbiaſſed obſerver of mankind have ſuppoſed that Chriſt had laid down ſuch a rule for the conduct of all his diſciples, as we here meet with? (v. 12—14.) Who almoſt, whether he can or cannot afford it, doth not make expenſive feaſts for his rich friends, and relations? What large ſums are generally waſted in this manner, compared with the ſcanty pittance that is given to the poor? Yet what good can be expected from ſuch a profuſion, that is worthy to be put in competition with "a recompence at the reſurrection of the "juſt? Whilſt therefore ſo many prefer the vain commendation or cuſtoms of the world, or an interchange of feſtive indulgence, to the approbation of Chriſt; let us obſerve his precept of feaſting the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, from love to Him, and to them for his ſake: and let us remember, that it is peculiarly bleſſed to do good to thoſe, who cannot recompenſe us, and to labour in thoſe ſervices, for which we receive nothing from man; for the Lord hath engaged himſelf by promiſes, to recompenſe us in theſe things, and his rewards are unſpeakably moſt valuable. Let us alſo conſider the example of Chriſt as it is a comment on this precept: He too hath made a great ſupper, by impoveriſhing himſelf, and dying upon the croſs for our ſins; that he might feaſt us with holy conſolations, and ſubſtantial enduring felicity. But was this rich proviſion made for the wiſe, and the righteous? By no means: but for ſinners, rebels, and enemies to God; for the "poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind." Indeed

CHAP. XV.

Contains Jeſus taking occaſion, from the murmurs of the Phariſees, to ſpeak 1ſt. The parable of the loſt ſheep being ſought, and brought back, 1---7. *2d. That of the loſt pieces of ſilver being found,* 8---10. *3d. That of the Prodigal Son returning home again, and of the diſpleaſure of his elder brother,* 11---32.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and ſinners for to hear him.

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many are invited; yea many are ready to ſay, "bleſſed is he, that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" But the poor in ſpirit, the broken-hearted ſinner alone, will reliſh this ſpiritual feaſt: and whilſt the ſervants from age to age are employed to invite gueſts, and to aſſure "them that all things are ready," and that pardon, peace, grace, and eternal life are freely beſtowed on all, who apply for them, in the name of Chriſt; inſtead of thankfully accepting the invitation, even they, who proceed not to greater inſtances of contempt and enmity, "begin with one conſent to make excuſe," and deſire leave to continue in ſin, and under condemnation, at leaſt for ſome time longer. They have no deſire after this feaſt, nor any regard to him, who prepared it; therefore they are not fearful of being excluded; and thus any worldly engagement, amuſement, or attachment ſuffices as a pretence for "neglecting ſo great ſalvation." And not only do men deſtroy their ſouls for great ſecular advantages, or by groſs outward ſins: but they ſo miſplace even lawful things, and act ſo carnally even in the ordinary affairs of life; that they periſh by ſuch matters, as might have been attended to with greater advantage, had they "ſought *firſt* the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs!" Alas, that men ſhould be ſo ſenſibly alive to their little temporal intereſts, to their credit among their neighbours, and to the ſucceſs of their carnal projects; and yet ſhould be ſo careleſs, where the favour or wrath of God, and eternal happineſs or miſery are at ſtake! But the God of this world blinds their minds, and renders them inſenſible to the awful conſequences of their procraſtination, till the Lord gives ſentence againſt them, "that," after the repeated invitations which they have rejected, "they ſhall never taſte of his ſupper." Such things grieve the hearts of faithful miniſters, who go and complain to their Lord of the folly and perverſeneſs of their hearers: but though he is angry with obſtinate unbelievers, he will not ſuffer the feaſt to be provided in vain: if the rich, the learned, the ſelf-wiſe, and ſelf-righteous put it from them with neglect, and diſdain; he bids his ſervants go without delay into the ſtreets, and lanes of the city, and bring in thence the publicans, and harlots: and as "yet there is abundance of room," and plenty of proviſions; he orders ſome of them to go without the precincts of the viſible church, to bring in the ſinners of the Gentiles, that have never yet heard of his name, until his houſe be filled with gueſts. Oh that He would be pleaſed to inſpire many miniſters with that zeal and love, which would animate them to "compel ſinners to come in;" and to be earneſt, affectionate, ſolemn, and awful in calling the vileſt of tranſgreſſors to repentance, and faith in Chriſt! But alas, ſome, miſtaking God's ſecret decrees for *their* rule of duty, and confounding man's indiſpoſition to good with the Lord's right to demand it of him, are thus reſtrained from exhorting, inviting, and perſuading ſinners at all; and far greater numbers are contented with a cold unmeaning harangue; as if they did not wiſh to be thought in earneſt in calling men to that feaſt, for which it is to be feared themſelves have no appetite.

However though man ought to uſe means with all aſſiduity and earneſtneſs, God alone can prevail with ſinners to partake of his ſalvation. Great multitudes may indeed attend on the preached goſpel; and the opportunity ſhould be embraced, of warning, and inſtructing them with all faithfulneſs: but without they are made ſupremely to value ſpiritual bleſſings, and to feel their periſhing need of Chriſt; they will by no means become his true diſciples. Indeed many ſtate this matter very conveniently; and by ſmooth words they induce men to conclude, that they may enjoy the world, and the privileges of the goſpel at the ſame time: and whilſt many "follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth is evil ſpoken of:" it is almoſt become obſolete, (at leaſt very unfaſhionable, even where ſome doctrines of the goſpel are preached,) to declare the neceſſity of acting as if we hated our neareſt relatives, or our own lives, if we would be Chriſt's diſciples. It is to be feared, that many dream that they are intereſted in the croſs of Chriſt, who were never willing to bear the croſs for him; and who neither renounce their worldly intereſts, nor mortify their luſts, in order to follow him! But unleſs we mean to build a Babel, to be an eternal monument of our folly and madneſs, we muſt count our coſt when we take up a profeſſion of the goſpel. It may coſt us our lives, and it will expoſe us to loſſes, difficulties, and hardſhips: and if we are not prepared to give up iniquitous gain, forbidden indulgences, and the friendſhip of the world; and to bear ridicule and reproach, the diſpleaſure or loſs of friends, and many things of this kind, how ſhould we be able to forſake all, and lay down our lives for Chriſt? But whilſt men ſhrink from the perils, and ſufferings of a warfare with ſin and ſatan; let them alſo reflect how dreadful their caſe muſt be, if they continue expoſed to the wrath of God! If on any terms, they have made their peace with Him, they may bear, reſiſt, and overcome every thing by his grace; but who can help them againſt His omnipotent indignation? Theſe conſiderations therefore ſhould not deter them from following Chriſt; but ſtir them up to ſeek help from Him to do it effectually and conſtantly: that they may not be as ſalt, that has loſt its ſavour, which is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill. May we then ſeek to be diſciples indeed, and be careful not to grow ſlack in our profeſſion, or afraid of the croſs; that we may be the good ſalt of the earth, to ſeaſon all around us with the ſavour of Chriſt and his heavenly truth!

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1, 2.] Some expoſitors, on what ground I know not, ſuppoſe our Lord to have been at

2 And the Phariſees and Scribes murmured, ſaying, This man receiveth ſinners, and eateth with them.

3 And he ſpake this parable unto them, ſaying,

4 What man of you, having an hundred ſheep, if he loſe one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderneſs, and go after that which is loſt, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his ſhoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, ſaying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my ſheep which was loſt.

7 I ſay unto you, That likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, which need no repentance.

8 Either what woman, having ten pieces

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this time beyond Jordan, on the borders of the Gentiles; and that many of them attended his miniſtry: but this is uncertain, and improbable: for “he received “and *eat with*” the ſinners here mentioned; and if he had eaten with Gentiles, his apoſtles would hardly have ſcrupled it after his aſcenſion, as they evidently did. However the publicans and other notorious ſinners in the neighbourhood, with one conſent, came to *hear his inſtructions*, (and not merely to gratify their curioſity, or to obtain the cure of their diſeaſes;) probably many of them were touched with a ſenſe of their need of repentance and forgiveneſs: and our Lord not only inſtructed them, but ſat at table with them, without any ſcruple, as he had been uſed to do in other places; (c. v. ver. 29, 30.) This excited the murmurs, and reproaches of the Phariſees, &c, who obſerved him, with aſtoniſhment and indignation, to act in a manner ſo contrary to their proud maxims. As theſe perſons were generally regarded to be oracles of wiſdom, and models of piety, their frown was likely to diſcourage the poor trembling ſinners that were preſent: but to prevent this effect, as well as to check and expoſe the arrogant ſpirit of the Phariſees, Jeſus vindicated his own conduct, and deſcribed the gracious dealings of God with ſinners, in three parables; which all agree in many of the ſame great outlines, though they place the ſubject in different lights, to make it more clearly underſtood.

V. 3—7.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xviii. v. 12—14.) The loſt ſheep in this emblem repreſents the ſinner, as departed from God, and expoſed without help to manifold dangers and certain ruin, if not brought back to him: yet as utterly indiſpoſed to return. Chriſt is the Owner or Shepherd of his choſen, and purchaſed flock, and counts them his property even when in their ſinful ſtate. As a man would leave the reſt of his flock in the paſtures of the wilderneſs, being comparatively in a ſafe ſtate, to go and ſeek one loſt ſheep: ſo Chriſt is particularly earneſt in bringing home ſinners to his church from their perilous wanderings; and he conſiders this as much his work, as taking care of thoſe, who are already brought back. The Owner of the flock ſought the loſt ſheep till he found it, and then laid it on his ſhoulders rejoicing: thus Chriſt by his word and providence ſeeks out the loſt ſinner, and by his Spirit overcomes his unwillingneſs to return to God; by his power he delivers him from the bondage of Sin and ſatan, and carries him above the temptations of this evil world; and he rejoices in thus bringing him back to the favour and ſervice of God, by repentance, faith, and true converſion. The man, who had found and brought home his loſt ſheep, is deſcribed as calling upon his friends and neighbours to rejoice with him, “becauſe he had found his “loſt ſheep,” (and not becauſe the other ninety nine had not ſtrayed:) thus our Lord declared, that there is “joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth:” the Lord himſelf rejoices, and all his holy worſhippers rejoice with him on that account; even “more than over “ninety, and nine juſt perſons, who need no repent-“ance. This may be differently explained. Angels are perfectly righteous, and need no repentance: yet the repentance of a ſinner on earth, taken in connexion with its cauſes and conſequences, redounds more to the glory of God, and therefore cauſes more joy in heaven, than the continuance of angels in their primitive ſtate of rectitude. Some believers have been preſerved from that degree of outward vice and impiety, to which others have been left: but the converſion of the latter, being more unexpected and ſurpriſing, as well as the more ſignal diſplay of divine power, and mercy, may be conſidered as exciting far louder acclamations of joy and praiſe; than that of ſuch as comparatively “needed no “repentance.” Every chriſtian in his turn has occaſioned this joy in heaven; but it is the cauſe of renewed joy, when another, and another is brought to repentance; and this joy is more ſenſibly felt and expreſſed every time one more is added to the company of the redeemed, than it is on account of the ninety and nine that are already brought home, and have no further occaſion for that entire repentance from dead works, which the newly awakened ſinner exerciſes: even as a father rejoices more in the unexpected recovery of one ſon, who was given over for dead; than in the health and ſafety of his other children, whom yet he loves with equal tenderneſs. But I apprehend that our Lord intended more immediately to addreſs the Phariſees, according to their own opinion of themſelves: they proudly fancied that they needed no repentance; yet the converſion of one publican or harlot was far more pleaſing, and honourable to God, and matter of far more joy in heaven; than the proud formality and decency of any number of them, who yet fancied themſelves to be excluſively the ſheep of his paſture: and the Publican's tears of godly ſorrow, and broken cries for mercy, were far more acceptable, than all their long prayers, and oſtentatious auſterities.

V. 8—10.] The purport of this parable ſeems nearly the ſame, with that of the preceding: it ſhews the vaof ſilver, if ſhe loſe one piece, doth not light a candle, and ſweep the houſe, and ſeek diligently till ſhe find *it*?

9 And when ſhe hath found *it*, ſhe calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, ſaying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had loſt.

10 Likewiſe, I ſay unto you, There is joy in the preſence of the angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth.

11 And he ſaid, A certain man had two ſons:

12 And the younger of them ſaid to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.

13 And not many days after, the younger ſon gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there waſted his ſubſtance with riotous living.

14 And when he had ſpent all, there aroſe a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himſelf to a citizen of that country; and he ſent him into his fields to feed ſwine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the huſks that the ſwine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himſelf, he ſaid,

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lue Chriſt puts upon the ſouls of his people, though others might deem them worthleſs and contemptible: they are his property, the fruit of his toil, and ſufferings; and he will uſe proper means to find them out, and bring them home to his church; and then all who love him will be called to rejoice with him on that account: ſo that "there is joy in the preſence of the angels of God, "over one ſinner, that repenteth." The true repentance of a ſinner implies his deliverance from eternal miſery, and his being made an heir of everlaſting felicity: it is a trophy of Chriſt's victory over the powers of darkneſs, and a bleſſed effect of his atoning ſacrifice: a monument is thus raiſed up to the glory of divine mercy and grace, that ſhall continue to all eternity: a worſhipper of God is added to his church, who will glorify Him for ever: a man, who before was unprofitable and miſchievous, and who would otherwiſe have ſubſerved the cauſe of ſatan, during the reſt of his life on earth, is now made the diſciple and ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, to do his will, and promote his goſpel, by his example, prayers, endeavours, and the uſe of his abilities, as long as he lives. If then angels love the Lord, and hate iniquity; if they are free from pride, enmity and envy, and filled with benevolence; they muſt rejoice exceedingly with the divine Saviour, whenever they are made acquainted with any work of his grace, which is of ſuch vaſt and everlaſting importance, as even the repentance of one ſingle ſinner. And it is very reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they *actually* are informed of ſuch matters; and are *literally* rejoicing and praiſing God in heaven continually, on account of ſinners being brought to mourn for, and confeſs their ſins here on earth. All true chriſtians rejoice and praiſe God for the appearance of this happy change in the temper, and conduct of any perſon, within the circle of their acquaintance; in exact proportion to the degree of their humility, zeal, and love: theſe diſpoſitions are perfect in the angels, and the gracious change may be fully certified to them; we may therefore conclude, that their acclamations of joyful praiſe will be proportionably fervent and rapturous, moſt honourable to God, and an acceſſion to their own felicity. This was a proper conſideration to ſuggeſt to the Phariſees; that they might ſee, as in a glaſs, the hatefulneſs of their own temper and conduct: and nothing could be more ſuited to give encouragement to the poor ſinners, who came to hear our Lord's inſtructions.

V. 11—16.] The following parable places the ſame ſubject in another light, and explains it in a more copious manner. The former parables particularly deſcribed the means, by which the Lord brings ſinners to repent: this eſpecially ſhews the nature of repentance, and the Lord's readineſs to welcome and bleſs all, that thus return to him: in them we ſaw the expoſed helpleſs condition of the unconverted; in this we perceive alſo the ingratitude and rebellion, by which they are reduced to, and deſerve that miſery. The father evidently repreſents God himſelf, as the Creator and bountiful Benefactor of all mankind; and as continually ſhewing a diſpoſition to ſave and bleſs ſinners, who return to him, and truſt in his mercy. Some ſuppoſe the two ſons to mean the Jews and Gentiles; but they rather ſeem to denote moral, or phariſaical perſons, and thoſe that have been openly irreligious and profligate. The caſe of the younger ſon is firſt and more largely deſcribed. We are led to conſider him, as having been well educated, and kindly treated by a pious, prudent, and affectionate father, in whoſe family every profitable indulgence was granted: but, without any cauſe, he ungratefully, and improperly demanded the portion of his goods that fell to his ſhare. This accords to the fooliſh, and perverſe conduct of many children; who grow weary of the good rules and ſubordination of their parent's family, and want to be from under their rule, and out of their ſight; proudly imagining that they can manage far better themſelves, than their parents do for them: and inſtead of being thankful for their former perſevering care and tenderneſs; they deem themſelves intitled to demand from them "a portion of goods," as if they had a legal claim to it. But it alſo aptly deſcribes the temper of ſinners reſpecting God: notwithſtanding his providential kindneſs, and the reaſonableneſs of his commands; they caſt off all regard to his authority, and endeavour to break looſe from the

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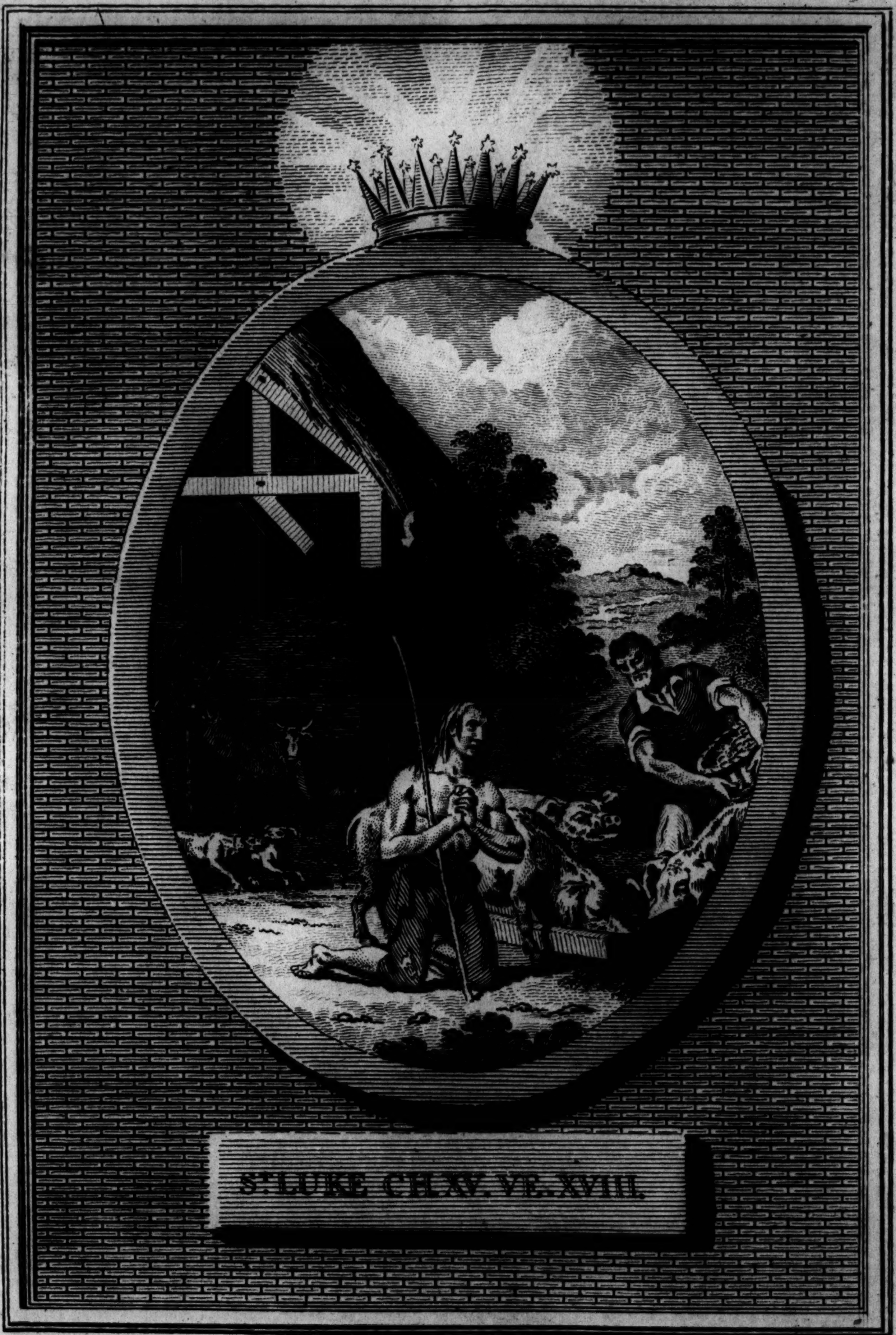

St. LUKE CH. XV. VE. XVIII.

Dayes del.

Grignion sc.

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How many hired ſervants of my father's have bread enough, and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger!

18 I will ariſe, and go to my father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy ſon: make me as one of thy hired ſervants.

20 And he aroſe, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him.

21 And the ſon ſaid unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon.

22 But the father ſaid to his ſervants, Bring forth the beſt robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and ſhoes on *his* feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my ſon was dead, and is alive again; he was loſt, and is found. And they began to be merry.

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remaining impreſſions of a religious education, (when they have been favoured with one;) they deem themſelves entitled to a large ſhare of worldly poſſeſſions, and murmur if not indulged with them; and they fancy, that they ſhall beſt enjoy themſelves, when they moſt forget or rebel againſt God. The father's diviſion of his ſubſtance between his ſons may be conſidered as an illuſtration of his kindneſs to them, and an aggravation of the prodigal's guilt in leaving him: and it ſhews that God often indulges men in their carnal inclinations, that they may be more inexcuſable in their rebellion, and may know by experience the folly of their own choice. The younger ſon is then deſcribed as journeying with all his property, into a far country, as if he were going to traffic with it; but in fact that he might receive no more counſel or controul from his father: this repreſents the proſperous ſinner's increaſing impiety, and diſregard of God; and the prodigal's waſting his ſubſtance in riotous living, ſhadows forth the abuſe that men make of God's providential bounty, by ſpending it on their luſts, and the manner in which they often ruin their health, and ſhorten their lives by their exceſſes. The prodigal is next deſcribed, as having ſpent all: and a famine at the ſame time prevailing in the land, he was ſoon deſerted by his companions and flatterers, and began to be in want. This ſhews the waſting nature of ungodly pleaſure and proſperity, and the natural effects of ſin to make men miſerable; and that the Lord often viſits the ſinner with additional afflictions, eſpecially when he intends to bring him to repentance. But the prodigal was yet too proud to return home diſgraced and impoveriſhed to his offended father, and to ſubmit to him: and therefore he hired himſelf as a ſervant to a perſon in that diſtant country, who, deeming him fit for no other ſervice, ſent him into his fields to feed ſwine. This was a mean and vile employment in itſelf; but amongſt the Jews, to whom thoſe animals were ceremonially unclean, it might be conſidered as the greateſt debaſement imaginable, eſpecially to one who had been brought up in affluence: yet as if the hardſhip and diſgrace had been too little, he was not allowed to ſatisfy the cravings of his appetite with the huſks, on which the ſwine fed; though for want of other food, he earneſtly deſired it; ſo that he was reduced to the extreme danger of periſhing with hunger. Thus the ſinner, when ſmarting under the effects of his tranſgreſſions; inſtead of repenting and humbling himſelf before God, often plunges ſtill deeper into the baſeſt crimes, and ſells himſelf to ſatan, that moſt cruel of maſters, to work iniquity of the baſeſt kind: and yet by all his drudgery in this vile ſervice, he ſometimes can ſcarce obtain the meaneſt ſuſtenance, and grows continually more and more deſpicable and miſerable; having nothing but deſtruction continually before his eyes.

V. 17—24.] Having viewed the poor prodigal in his moſt abject ſtate of ſervitude and miſery, we next are led to conſider his recovery from it. This is introduced by "his coming to himſelf:" he had been infatuated, and frantic, and had acted as a man bereft of his underſtanding; having been blinded both to his intereſt and obligations: but, by means of his afflictions, he was brought to reflect on, and to form a more juſt opinion of his own conduct. This is a turning point in the ſinner's converſion: the Lord opens his eyes, and convinces him of ſin, and then he views himſelf, and every object around him in a new and contrary light, to what he did before. The firſt thought that occurred to the prodigal, "when come to himſelf," related to the plenty, in which his father's menial ſervants lived, and his own miſery, compared even with *their* condition: there were many of them, yet they had bread enough and to ſpare; whilſt he, who once lived as a ſon in that happy family, and might ſtill have done ſo had it not been for his own ſin and folly, was periſhing with hunger. Thus the convinced ſinner perceives that the meaneſt ſervant of God is far happier than he is; that his own wickedneſs hath reduced him to a ſtate of miſery and extreme peril; from which he cannot eſcape, except he return to the Lord. Accordingly the prodigal reſolved to "ariſe, "and go to his Father," acknowledging that in his ungrateful diſobedience to Him, he had ſinned againſt the God of Heaven alſo; that he was not deſerving to be admitted into his family as a ſon, or to enjoy again his forfeited privileges; and intreating him not to leave him to periſh, but to employ him in the work, and to give him the maintenance of an hired ſervant: in this reſolution he drew his whole encouragement from the recollection of his father's goodneſs, and tender regard to him, which at the ſame time aggravated his own criminality in leaving him. Thus convinced ſinners are

25 Now his elder ſon was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the houſe, he heard muſick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the ſervants, and aſked what theſe things meant.

27 And he ſaid unto him, Thy brother is come: and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, becauſe he hath received him ſafe and ſound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

29 And he anſwering, ſaid to *his* father, Lo, theſe many years do I ſerve thee: neither tranſgreſſed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gaveſt me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends;

30 But as ſoon as this thy ſon was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou haſt killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he ſaid unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loſt, and is found.

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led to hope in the mercy of that God, againſt whom they have rebelled; and are excited to return to him with penitent confeſſion, and earneſt ſupplications: and whenever they are brought to this ſpirit, they may addreſs him as a kind Father, though conſcious that they are unworthy to be called his children. According to his purpoſe, the prodigal aroſe, and not deeming himſelf bound by his engagement to his cruel maſter, he ſet out on his journey home, nor ſtopped till he came thither: though in ſuch a caſe we may conceive how he muſt be diſtreſſed with fears, leaſt his father ſhould reject, or upbraid him, as well as have many other hardſhips to endure. But when he was yet at a diſtance, his father, (who is repreſented as regretting his abſence, and deſiring his return,) ſaw and knew him; and forgetting all his ſon's provocations, and regardleſs of his own years and dignity, being full of compaſſion he *ran* and fell on his neck and kiſſed him; expreſſing his joy at his arrival, though in that ſqualid condition, and his entire reconciliation to him. Whilſt the ſon, being the more aſhamed of his own miſconduct, by means of his father's kindneſs, acknowledged his guilt and unworthineſs in the words he had premeditated; ſave that he omitted the latter clauſe, either interrupted by his father, or not deeming them neceſſary, ſeeing he was welcomed as a ſon. Thus the penitent ſinner reſolutely quits the bondage of ſatan and his ruinous luſts, and returns to God by faith and prayer, amidſt a variety of fears and diſcouragements: and when he is prepared for that bleſſing, the Lord readily meets him with unexpected tokens of his forgiving love. Theſe tend ſtill farther to humble his heart, though they inſpire him with more confidence of hope in the mercy of his gracious Lord. Whilſt the prodigal was confeſſing his guilt, the father ordered the ſervants to bring "the "beſt robe," that he might be clothed as became his beloved ſon, and to "put a ring on his hand, and ſhoes on "his feet;" and then to prepare a feaſt for him and them, that they might rejoice together over one who had been as dead, and loſt to his family and friends, but was now returned alive and well. So the humbled ſinner is clothed in the robe of the Redeemer's Righteouſneſs, made partaker of the Spirit of adoption, prepared by peace of conſcience and goſpel grace, to walk with pleaſure in the ways of holineſs, and feaſted with divine conſolations; whilſt the whole family of God rejoices at his being reſtored as a child to his father's houſe, and recovered from the death of ſin to the life of righteouſneſs. (*Pſ.* xxxii. v. 3—5. *Jer.* c. xxxi. v. 18—20.)

V. 25—32.] In the ſubſequent part of this parable we have the character of the Phariſees delineated, in reſpect of their moſt prominent feature. Had they been as righteous as they deemed themſelves, their conduct towards the publicans, &c, would have been unreaſonable and odious. On this ground our Lord here remonſtrated with them; as in other places he expoſed their hypocriſy and wickedneſs. The elder ſon is repreſented as having been in the field, employed in ſome labour, when his brother arrived at home: but when he returned, and heard the uſual expreſſions of feſtive rejoicing, he enquired the reaſon of it; and being told, that his brother was come, and that his father had made the feaſt for joy, that he had received him in health and ſafety; he was angry and would not go in. This repreſented the Phariſees, (though not them alone;) they were exact in external duties, but proud of their goodneſs: they deemed themſelves the peculiar favourites of heaven, and could not endure that publicans and abandoned ſinners ſhould receive any encouragement: they not only abhorred them when living in ſin, but even when they appeared penitent. They would not eat with them, and deemed it very criminal in Jeſus, that he would do it: and they rejected the goſpel with the more diſdain, becauſe they were admitted to ſhare its bleſſings: as the Jews alſo did afterwards, when the Gentiles were called into the church. Thus when angels, and the Lord of angels were rejoicing over penitent and pardoned ſinners; they envied, murmured and raged at it! The father is next deſcribed, as going out to intreat his ſon to come in, and ſhare the feaſt: but he anſwered with boaſtings, and complaints. He had done the work of a ſervant for many years, and had never at any time diſobeyed his father; yet he had never given him ſo much as a kid, that he might feaſt with his friends: but now that his prodigal ſon, (whom *he* diſdained to acknowledge *as a brother*,) was returned home, after having conſumed his wealth, and impoveriſhed the family by his debaucheries; he had killed for him the fatted calf! This repreſents the condeſcenſion of the Lord, in perſuading even

CHAP. XVI.

Contains 1ſt. The parable of the unjuſt but politic ſteward, and the application of it, 1---13. *2d. Jeſus anſwering the Phariſees, who derided him; and ſpeaking of the introduction of the goſpel diſpenſation, &c.* 14---18. *3d. The parable of the rich man, and Lazarus,* 19---31.

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proud objectors to accept of his ſalvation; and the arrogant manner, in which ſuch invitations are often received. The Phariſees ſuppoſed that there was great merit in their ſtrict and conſtant ſervices; and becauſe they were not guilty of the outward ſcandals, which they charged upon the publicans, they deemed themſelves to be free from all blame: yet they had never experienced thoſe joys in religion, to which the penitent ſinners profeſſed to be admitted; and they could not endure that more favour ſhould be ſhewn ſuch vile wretches, than they had received. It is well known that the Jews in general were of the ſame ſpirit, reſpecting the converted Gentiles: and numbers in every age object to the goſpel and its preachers on ſimilar grounds. To this proud, rude, ungrateful reply, the father meekly anſwered; that as his ſon, he was ever with him, ſharing the proviſions of his family, and continually receiving tokens of his favour; and that he was the acknowledged heir of all his ſubſtance; though no feaſt had expreſſly been made on his account, becauſe he had never left home. But that it was meet that they ſhould all rejoice over his *brother*, who had ſo unexpectedly been reclaimed from his evil courſes, and reſtored to the family, as one, that was alive from the dead. This has chiefly perplexed expoſitors in applying the latter part of the parable: yet the difficulty will vaniſh, if we advert to the general ſcope of it. If it were indeed true that the Phariſees were the favourites of heaven, and had always been ſo obedient and deſerving, their preſent privileges would be continued to them, and their future inheritance would be ſecure, and undiminiſhed by the favour ſhewn to the publicans. The ſame would have been the caſe with the Jews, notwithſtanding the calling of the Gentiles, if they had been indeed the children of believing Abraham. So that they could not be deprived of the bleſſing, except they were found to be unbelievers, hypocrites, and ungodly. In the mean time it was meet, that all God's ſervants ſhould rejoice in the repentance, and reconciliation of the poor publicans and harlots, by which God would be glorified, and immortal ſouls ſaved: they were of the ſame nature and nation with the Phariſees who diſdained them; and the leſs hope there had been of their converſion, the more it ought to be rejoiced in. Thus our Lord cloſed the ſubject, not ſeeing good at that time to puſh the argument further againſt the Phariſees; whom he left to contemplate as in a glaſs the unreaſonableneſs of their own conduct; that they might be induced to give up their objections, and to apply for a ſhare in the bleſſings of his goſpel: even as the father intreated his refractory ſon to come in and partake of the feaſt. Many indeed are in a meaſure infected by the ſame ſpirit; but the pride and contempt of others, which characterize every ſpecies of Phariſees, was certainly meant to be expoſed. As the elder ſon is not repreſented to have returned any anſwer to his father; and it is not ſaid, that he went in, or that he did not: we may ſuppoſe our Lord to mean, that they ought to be ſatisfied with this ſtatement of the matter, and that ſome of them would be ſo; but that others would remain ſullen and untractable, after all that could be ſaid to convince them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the vileſt ſinners draw near to hear the goſpel, they ſhould be addreſſed with compaſſion as well as plainneſs of ſpeech, and never be driven away with contempt and upbraidings: nor ſhould we ever ſhun to go amongſt them for their good, however the ſelf-wiſe and ſelf-righteous may murmur at, or revile us. Nay it is reaſonable for us to beſtow peculiar attention to them; as the loſt ſheep excites the ſhepherd's chief regard; and his labour in ſeeking, and joy at finding it, are far greater, than he exerciſes about the ſheep that remain in the paſture. Indeed we all have been as ſheep going aſtray; and He, on whom "was laid the iniquities of us all," comes to ſeek us, one after another, and rejoices in uſing his almighty power in bringing us back to his choſen flock; and he requires all, who have been thus reſtored, and all who love him, to rejoice over every ſuch inſtance of his abundant grace. Let us then leave it to thoſe, who fancy that they have "made themſelves to differ," or "that they need no repentance," to refuſe their tribute of joyful praiſe on ſuch occaſions: we know, (if we are indeed true believers,) that there is joy in heaven over every weeping penitent, more than over ninety and nine ſuch proud, and formal profeſſors. But ſhall the Lord do ſo much, and employ ſo many means and inſtruments to bring ſinners home to himſelf: ſhall chriſtians, miniſters, angels, yea the Lord of angels deem the repentance of one ſinner a matter of ſuch vaſt importance, and ſuch cordial rejoicing; and ſhall they themſelves not think it worth their while to beſtow any pains in ſeeking for this ineſtimable bleſſing? Shall they not deſire to cauſe holy joy in heaven by repenting, who have excited a malignant joy in hell by their crimes? What immenſe encouragement alſo does this aſſurance give the weeping penitent to apply to the compaſſionate Saviour? And what care ſhould we all employ to be aſſured, that our repentance is "unto ſalvation not to be repented "of?" We may alſo conclude with certainty, that the powers of darkneſs will never be allowed to rejoice in the final ruin of thoſe, over whom angels have thus rejoiced; and we may be excited to employ our labours, and pour out our prayers with all earneſtneſs, for the converſion of ſinners around us; for if one only ſhould be reſcued by our means from deſtruction, and brought into the way of everlaſting felicity, it will immenſely over-pay all the labours of our whole lives.

Whilſt we allow, that ſome ſinners run to greater lengths in rebellion and impiety, than others do: we may all of us diſcern ſome features of our own character in that of the prodigal ſon. Have we not counted the ſervice of God a burden, and his commands and reſtraints grievous? Have we not coveted a worldly por-

AND he ſaid alſo unto his diſciples, There was a certain rich man which had a ſteward; and the ſame was accuſed unto him that he had waſted his goods.

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tion, and indulged a diſpoſition to be independent of God? Have we not murmured when outward abundance hath been with-held, and abuſed the bleſſings beſtowed upon us? Have we not gone far from God, and endeavoured to forget him, when we were indulging our appetites and paſſions? Whilſt many have been ruined by proſperity in ſin: may not ſome of us be thankful, that we have been afflicted, and diſappointed; that our expected enjoyments have been embittered, the materials of them torn from us, and our own iniquities made to correct us? Yet even in this caſe have not *ſome of us*, have not numbers, plunged ſtill deeper into wickedneſs, and become more entirely the ſervants of ſatan, in the very midſt of their ſufferings? Let us alſo reflect for a moment on the waſting nature of earthly enjoyments; the inſtability of outward proſperity; and the unfaithfulneſs of companions in vice, who readily leave thoſe to periſh, whom they have once flattered and careſſed for their own ſelfiſh purpoſes. And what a vile maſter is ſatan, who allures men into his ſervice, by the hopes of ſenſual and worldly pleaſure; and then reduces numbers of them to the moſt abject ſtate of penury, diſeaſe, contempt and wretchedneſs imaginable! But the change in the prodigal's ſituation, when from the credit and indulgences of his father's family he was reduced to the filthy and diſgraceful work of feeding ſwine, and to the want even of huſks to ſatisfy his hunger, but feebly ſhadows forth the fall of man by ſin from the image, favour, and enjoyment of God, to be a condemned rebel, a ſlave of ſatan, an heir of hell, and a veſſel of wrath fitted for deſtruction. Yet how few are ſenſible, that this is their real ſtate and character! Happy are they, who by means of any afflictions are "brought to themſelves," and made to ſee the madneſs and folly of their rebellion againſt God! With what new eyes do they then begin to behold the divine character and law; their own obligations and conduct, their intereſt and duty, their ſtate and proſpects! The ſinner, when "he comes to himſelf," will be made ſenſible that he is a wretch undone; and that the meaneſt of thoſe ſervants of God, whom he formerly deſpiſed, is happy compared with him: he will diſcover that there is no hope of eſcaping deſtruction, except by repentance, and returning unto God; and the diſcovery of the riches of his goodneſs and mercy will give him his ſole encouragement to repent, and hope for pardon of his ſins; he will ſee and confeſs the greatneſs of his guilt, and the manifold aggravations of that conduct, which before he excuſed, or gloried in; he will allow himſelf to be utterly unworthy of thoſe bleſſings, which from the goodneſs of God he enjoyed, and ſo ungratefully deſpiſed; and he will be rendered willing to ſubmit to any abaſement or ſelf-denial, if he may but be admitted into the number of the Lord's ſervants, and be preſerved from impending deſtruction. Nor will he reſt in recollections, ſpeculations, or good purpoſes, to be ſome time realized: but he will ſee that no time is to be loſt; and without delay will ariſe from his ſtate of ſloth, or deſpondency; he will break his league with ſatan; he will encounter difficulties with reſolution and perſeverance; he will ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, uſe the means of grace, and ſet about the mortification of ſinful propenſities, and the performance of ſelf-denying duties, even upon a peradventure the Lord may have mercy upon him: and he will proceed in this courſe, though harraſſed with fears, leſt his ſins ſhould be unpardonable, or leſt he ſhould finally be rejected. But when our gracious Lord hath thus humbled ſinners, and led them to juſtify Him by condemning themſelves, to ſubmit to his will, and to apply for mercy in his appointed way; he will not delay to come to their relief and comfort. He ſees all their remorſe, and anguiſh, he witneſſes their groans, and tears, he hears and accepts their broken petitions, and confeſſions; (*Job*, c. xxxiii. v. 27, 28;) and He will never upbraid thoſe, who loathe and abhor themſelves. But where this genuine repentance is wrought, it will be increaſed by every freſh diſcovery of the Lord's goodneſs and mercy; and tokens of forgiveneſs will render the heart more contrite, godly ſorrow more ingenuous, and confeſſions of guilt more unreſerved. Thus a bleſſed reconciliation takes place between an offended God, and a vile tranſgreſſor of his laws: and whilſt the broken-hearted penitent feels himſelf unworthy of the leaſt favour; his heavenly Father puts him in full poſſeſſion of all the bleſſings of his ſalvation, ſeals him with the Spirit of adoption, and comforts him beyond his largeſt hopes. Thus he is encouraged, animated, and even conſtrained by redeeming love, to walk with pleaſure in the ways of holy obedience: and his ſervices will be as much ſuperior to thoſe of formal Phariſees, as his joy in the Lord exceeds their conception, and experience. Then angels, and ſaints rejoice, that the loſt ſinner is found, that the dead is raiſed, and that the rebel is reconciled. And let it be here hinted, that this is an example, which parents eſpecially are called to imitate in their conduct towards their children; when having been very diſobedient and profligate, they come to themſelves, and deſire to return to their duty, and to obtain forgiveneſs of the paſt.

But how hateful muſt that diſpoſition be in a ſinner, which leads him to murmur and repine at an event, that fills all the holy inhabitants of heaven with rejoicing! Which excites him to deſpiſe and abhor thoſe, for whom the Saviour ſhed his precious blood, who are the objects of the Father's ſpecial choice, and who are made the temples of the Holy Ghoſt! And which induces a worm on earth to diſdain *him* as a brother, whom God hath numbered amongſt his beloved children! It is very wrong to deſpair of, and diſdain thoſe, who are at preſent living in the moſt abandoned profligacy, and impiety: who can tell, but they may be brought to repentance? For where ſin hath abounded, grace much more abounds. We ought therefore to hope, to pray, and to labour for their converſion; and to remember that God alone hath made us to differ, if indeed we do differ. But to diſdain thoſe, who do repent, believe, rejoice in God, and live to his glory, becauſe of thoſe crimes, 2 And he called him, and ſaid unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy ſtewardſhip; for thou mayeſt be no longer ſteward.

3 Then the ſteward ſaid within himſelf, What ſhall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the ſtewardſhip: I cannot dig; to beg I am aſhamed.

4 I am reſolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the ſtewardſhip, they may receive me into their houſes.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and ſaid unto the firſt, How much oweſt thou unto my lord?

6 And he ſaid, An hundred meaſures of oil. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and ſit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then ſaid he to another, And how much oweſt thou? And he ſaid, An hundred meaſures of wheat. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourſcore.

8 And the lord commended the unjuſt ſteward, becauſe he had done wiſely: for the children of this world are in their gene-

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which are now buried in the depths of the ſea! This I ſay muſt ſpring from moſt hateful pride, ſelf-preference, and ignorance of a man's own heart. Where it is entire, it far more than counterbalances all external decency of conduct: and the man who boaſts of his unremitted obedience, as if he had never tranſgreſſed God's commandments; who complains of the Lord's dealings with him, as if he were not ſuitably rewarded; who grudges the favour ſhewn to returning prodigals, whoſe company he diſdains; and who quarrels with the goſpel for giving them encouragement: this man is of a more hateful diſpoſition, than the profligates whom he abhors, and as far from the ſpirit of Chriſt, and the temper of angels, as the vileſt debauchee on earth; however moral he may be in his outward conduct, or whatever exactneſs he may obſerve in his forms of godlineſs. But there may be a degree of the ſame hateful temper in men of a better character; and it will ſubſiſt with any creed, or any formularies of worſhip. Many believers are apt to limit the mercies of God, and to give up as hopeleſs ſuch perſons, who are abandoned to thoſe crimes, from which they have been graciouſly preſerved: many chriſtians, who have gone on from their firſt converſion for a number of years, without any remarkable backſliding, or inconſiſtency of conduct, ſeem to have little tenderneſs for thoſe, who have been foiled by temptation, even when they give evidence of deep repentance. Many look with ſhyneſs or ſuſpicion on ſuch of their brethren, however deep their repentance hath been, or however unexceptionable their preſent walk is, who have been reclaimed from very immoral practices; and ſometimes they are even ſurpriſed or offended, to ſee them aſſured of their acceptance, and rejoicing in the Lord! And ſome may be obſerved who are tender enough to them, whoſe eaſily beſetting ſin accords with their own; but who have ſcarce any patience with thoſe, whoſe in-dwelling ſin betrays itſelf in things, to which they feel little or no temptation. In theſe, and numberleſs ways the remains of the Phariſee may be diſcerned; and every feature of his countenance is moſt hateful, in a perſon, who muſt be ſaved of unmerited grace, or elſe periſh for evermore. If a man be a true chriſtian, his preſent privileges and future inheritance will not be diminiſhed, by the admiſſion of the vileſt profligates to the ſame felicity: yet the prevalence of ſelf-preference on any ground whatſoever, of contempt, of envy, and ſuch other malignant tempers gives proportionable ground to ſuſpect that a man is a ſtranger to the true grace of God; and ſhould warn him to look to himſelf, leſt he ſhould at laſt be totally excluded from that inheritance, to which he deems himſelf to have almoſt an excluſive title. But how adorable is the condeſcenſion of the Lord, in thus continuing to reaſon the caſe with perverſe worms of the earth, and in beſeeching them to accept of the bleſſings of his ſalvation! Happy will it be for thoſe who are at length won over thankfully to accept of his invitation, and to come to the feaſt and rejoicing, of which repenting prodigals participate, and in which adoring archangels join! But as for thoſe, who perſiſt in their enmity and contempt; their boaſtings will ſpeedily be ſilenced, and their portion allotted them "with the devil and angels;" with whom alone they accord in repining, when "thoſe that were dead are "alive again, and thoſe that were loſt are found."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—8.] This parable was addreſſed to the diſciples, but in the hearing of the Phariſees. The rich man repreſented the Lord himſelf, the ſole Proprietor of all things; by the ſteward was intended the man, who is intruſted with worldly riches, and miſemploys them. Every man is in ſome meaſure the Lord's ſteward, and all his poſſeſſions, and endowments are intruſted to him, that he may with them glorify God, and do good to men: and an account will be required in a little time of his uſe of them; when many will be found like the ſteward in this parable, who was accuſed to his Lord, "that he had waſted his goods:" he had employed his maſter's property upon his own indulgence, had ſuffered it to be embezzled by others, or had waſted it by bad management. Thus when men ſpend their riches in the gratification of their appetites, pride, vanity, or curioſity; when they laviſh them upon thoſe who do not want them, and in ſuch expences as tend to encourage vice or folly; in ſhort, when they do not obey the commandments, and ſeek the honour of God in uſing them; they ſtand accuſed of waſting their Lord's property that is intruſted to them; though they neither amaſs wealth by rapine, and injuſtice, nor hoard it penuriouſly; nay though they obtain a high reputation for generoſity: for that muſt be waſted, which is ſpent to no good purpoſe. (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 14—30.)

ration wiſer than the children of light.

9 And I ſay unto you, Make to yourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs: that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much: and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true *riches*?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who ſhall give you that which is your own?

13 No ſervant can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.

The Lord is next deſcribed as calling his ſteward to him, and expoſtulating with him about his conduct, and as he could neither deny the charge, nor excuſe himſelf, he was ordered to make out his accounts, and quit his ſtewardſhip: this teaches us, that an account will be required of us, concerning our uſe of worldly poſſeſſions; that men will not be able to vindicate their waſte, or improper expenditure of them; and that death will ſhortly turn every man out of his ſtewardſhip: in the mean time the word of God, the miniſters of Chriſt, and the voice of conſcience call upon us to prepare for that approaching ſeaſon. When the ſteward heard this deciſive ſentence, from which he knew there was no appeal, and of which there would be no reverſal; he began to conſider in what manner he might ſo employ his preſent advantages, that they would ſtand him in ſtead, when diſmiſſed from his place: otherwiſe he foreſaw that his caſe would be very wretched; as he had never been uſed, and therefore was not able " to dig," or to get his living by hard labour; and he was aſhamed to beg his bread, after having lived ſo long in credit and plenty. This repreſents the wretched ſtate of ungodly men, when " put out of their ſtewardſhip" by death; and it inſtructs us in the neceſſity, which there is for every one, who would eſcape final miſery, to employ his time and talents; whilſt life continues, in ſuch a manner, as may beſt promote his eternal welfare. Accordingly the ſteward deviſed a plan well ſuited to his purpoſe, and conſiſtent with his character. In ſhort he determined to ſeduce his Lord's debtors to concur in defrauding him, for their own advantage: by this meaſure he could at his Lord's expence confer an obligation upon them; and being accomplices in the fraud, they would be reſtrained from informing againſt him; and yet if they ſhould refuſe to give him aſſiſtance in his diſtreſs, he would have them in his power, and as a deſperate man who had nothing to loſe, he could inform againſt them, to the great injury of their character and property. Thus he made himſelf ſure, that they would one after another entertain him in their houſes, or provide for him ſome other method of ſubſiſtence. Accordingly he called them to him, ſeparately, and ordered one of them, without delay to give a note of hand, as we ſay, for half of what he really owed, inſtead of one for the whole; and another with the deduction of one fifth, and ſo to the others. When therefore this project came to light, his Lord commended the unjuſt ſteward, not for his iniquity, but for his policy: he could not deny but it was a well concerted plan of providing againſt the time of approaching diſtreſs; and *in this reſpect alone* is it propoſed for our imitation. Therefore our Lord added, that " the children of this world " are wiſer in their generation, than the children of " light. Worldly men, who make temporal things their choice, and primary object, are more prudent, in reſpect of their preſent intereſts, and their life on earth, than the children of light, the people of God, are, in reſpect of their eternal concerns. In the choice of their object they are emphatically fooliſh: but in the ſelection of means, in aſſiduity and perſeverance, in ſubordinating every other concern to their favourite purſuit, and rendering every thing ſubſervient to it, in politic contrivances to prevent diſappointment, to get over untoward circumſtances, and to educe advantage from them; in theſe and various other particulars they are exceeding wiſe *in their generation*, yea far wiſer even than real believers, who are not ſo ſingly given up to the purſuit of their great object, nor ſo active, ſagacious, and unremitting in the choice and uſe of means, in order to the attainment of it. Much more then, are they wiſer than men in general are about their religious concerns; or than profeſſors of the goſpel are, in the improvement of their advantages.

V. 9—13.] Theſe verſes contain our Lord's application of the preceding parable. He took occaſion from it to counſel his diſciples to " make to themſelves friends " of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs;" that is of thoſe worldly riches, which men idolize, as if they worſhipped a deity called mammon; and in getting, keeping or ſpending of which, they commit all kind of unrighteouſneſs: though ſome interpret the expreſſion, of the deceitfulneſs of riches, which impoſe upon thoſe, who expect happineſs from them. However chriſtians are directed ſo to uſe thoſe riches, which others make the occaſions of ſuch manifold evils, in " making to themſelves friends;" that is they are required to expend them in acts of piety and charity, that many being benefited by them, may pray for bleſſings on them, as their benefactors. This uſe of riches is the proper evidence of men's faith and love; and " when they fail, they" whom they have relieved, " will receive them into everlaſting habitations. This allndes to the ſteward's *failing* of his former reſources, by being diſcharged from his place; yet having made himſelf friends by his uſe of his maſter's property, he was thus received into their houſes. Thus when the believer *ſhall fail*, and be removed from his ſtewardſhip by death; they, whom he hath made his friends by charities, " will receive him " into everlaſting habitations." Not that this will merit

14 And the Phariſees alſo, who were covetous, heard all theſe things; and they derided him.

15 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are they which juſtify yourſelves before men, but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly eſteemed among men, is abomination in the ſight of God.

16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: ſince that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man preſſeth into it.

17 And it is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 Whoſoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whoſoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* huſband, committeth adultery.

19 There was a certain rich man, which

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that bleſſed recompence; or that the poor, whom he hath relieved, can have the diſpoſal of it: but as the cries of the oppreſſed and neglected poor will teſtify againſt unfaithful ſtewards to their condemnation; ſo the prayers of the widows and orphans for their pious benefactors will teſtify for them, that they were faithful ſtewards; and ſuch as have died before them, may be conſidered as ſtanding ready to welcome them to their everlaſting habitations, when they quit this world. (c. xiv. v. 14. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 34—40. 1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 17—19.) But as moſt of Chriſt's diſciples were then, and generally are comparatively poor; ſo they might have deemed themſelves unconcerned in this exhortation: and therefore He aſſured them, that if any man were faithful in a very little, and conſulted his Lord's will and honour in the uſe of it; he would be as certainly accepted and rewarded, as if much had been committed to him; and the ſame diſpoſition of mind would alſo render him faithful, if he ſhould afterwards receive more. On the other hand, he who was unjuſt in the leaſt, ſpending even ſmall ſums upon his own vanity and indulgence, and thus robbing God, and the poor, would as certainly be condemned, as if he had been an unfaithful ſteward in abuſing a larger property; and the ſame temper of mind would render him unjuſt in much, if it were committed to him: and if they were unfaithful in their uſe of "the unrighteous mammon, who would commit to their truſt the true riches?" "The true riches" ſignify thoſe bleſſings, which ennoble and ſatisfy the ſoul for ever: faith gives the ſinner a title to theſe riches, and grace is the earneſt of, and meetneſs for them: but faith and grace always render a man proportionably faithful in the unrighteous mammon. If therefore a man ſpend his riches upon himſelf, or hoard them in avarice; what evidence can he have that he is an heir of God through Chriſt? Or what reaſon to expect, that God will give him that eternal felicity? But the verſe may ſignify, that they who did not act faithfully as ſtewards of this world's riches, were not proper perſons to be made "ſtewards of the myſteries of God, to whom are committed the true riches, that they may by their faithfulneſs make many rich." (2 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 10.) Moreover, if they were not faithful in thoſe things, which were intruſted to them for a time, and of which an account muſt be rendered: how could they expect their Lord to give them at laſt an inheritance to be their own for ever, by an unalienable tenure? For what prudent man would give an eſtate to his ſteward, when he had been diſhoneſt and unfaithful to the truſt which had been repoſed in him? This application of the parable, our Lord cloſed by repeating a ſolemn warning, which hath already been conſidered. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vi. v. 24.)

V. 14, 15.] The Phariſees were addicted to covetouſneſs in proportion as they were exempt from licentiouſneſs. They were greedy of gain, and often got it by extortion and injuſtice; and they either ſpent it upon, or hoarded it for themſelves. When therefore they heard our Lord diſcourſe in this manner on the uſe of riches, they treated his inſtructions with the utmoſt deriſion and contempt; ſneering at Him, "as a poor viſionary, who did not underſtand human life, or only appeared to deſpiſe the world, becauſe, (as they ſuppoſed,) it was out of his reach." (Doddridge.) But he calmly replied to their diſdain, that they were indeed a ſet of men, who juſtified themſelves and their own conduct by various plauſible pretences, and managed to preſerve a fair appearance before men; but "God knew their hearts," which were full of hypocriſy, pride, and wickedneſs: and though their forms, auſterities, ſuperſtitions, and traditions were "highly eſteemed amongſt men," as if they were of great excellency; yet they were an abomination in the ſight of God. This is alſo the caſe with a variety of endowments, diſpoſitions, and atchievements, which men highly eſteem, but which God abhors: ſuch for inſtance, as the thirſt for glory; ambition of conqueſt, and victory; a deſire of revenge, called a quick ſenſe of honour; a diſpoſition to graſp after riches as the grand object, if not attended with groſs injuſtice, or exceſſive penuriouſneſs; and a laviſh generoſity, though not directed to any valuable purpoſe. In theſe, and innumerable other inſtances, God abhors what man highly eſteems.

V. 16—18.] (Notes, &c, *Matt.* c. v. ver. 31, 32. c. xi. v. 12, 13. c. xix. 3—9. *Mark*, c. x. v. 11, 12.) The Phariſees were very zealous for the ceremonial law, as well as for their own traditions; and they oppoſed Chriſt from the ſuppoſition that his doctrine was contrary to it: but he intimated to them, that a more ſpiritual diſpenſation was about to be introduced. The law, and the prophets, who explained and enforced the law, continued in full force, till John, the fore-runner of the Meſſiah, began his miniſtry: ſince that time the kingdom of God had been preached; and though the Phariſees oppoſed it, yet great numbers were earneſtly preſſing into it, that they might ſhare its privileges. However they were not to ſuppoſe, that this new diſpenſation would interfere with the honour of the law of Moſes; for it would be eaſier for heaven and earth to was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of ſores.

21 And deſiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his ſores.

22 And it came to paſs, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom: the rich man alſo died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom.

24 And he cried, and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me; and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

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paſs away, than for one tittle of that law to fail of anſwering its intended purpoſe. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. v. 17—20.) The ceremonial law would not fail of being accompliſhed in Him, the great Antitype, which it prefigured: the moral law would be magnified by his obedience unto death; and eſtabliſhed in its full authority by his religion, as well as vindicated from their corrupt interpretations. But what they contended for as *the law* was in fact a perverſion of it: this our Lord ſhewed in one inſtance, which hath been before conſidered: for in this matter the real import of the *moral* law, was very contrary to their doctrine, which they grounded on a miſinterpretation of a *judicial* regulation, a *permiſſion for the hardneſs of their hearts.* So that whilſt they amuſed the people with a pretended zeal about the law; they were in fact ſupplanting its authority, and perverting its meaning by their traditions. This ſeems to be the connexion of this paſſage.

V. 19—21.] Our Lord, having thus anſwered the Phariſees, proceeds here to illuſtrate more fully the guilt and madneſs of men's waſting riches upon their luſts, and to contraſt the caſe of the proſperous ſinner with that of the afflicted believer. This he does by a parable, or deſcription, which is intereſting and affecting in the higheſt degree: a parable indeed it muſt be, as to many of it's circumſtances; yet in its grand outlines it is doubtleſs verified continually. The rich man here deſcribed is not charged with having acquired his wealth by iniquity: and though he was clothed in the moſt coſtly attire, and lived in ſplendour and luxury every day; yet it is not ſtated, that he ruined his family, or defrauded his creditors, as numbers do, who live in this ſtyle. Nor is it ſaid that he was an adulterer, a drunkard, or a blaſphemer. He is repreſented as a Jew “of the ſtock of “Abraham;” and therefore may be conceived to have had a form of godlineſs: and he was ſo far from being a miſer, that he kept a noble houſe, and an elegant table; had every thing about him in the moſt faſhionable ſtyle, and entertained his gueſts in a moſt hoſpitable manner: ſo that he would doubtleſs be highly extolled for his princely generoſity. But he was an unfaithful ſteward, who forgot that his eſtate was entruſted to him by the great Lord of all; and he ſpent it in ſelf-indulgence of one kind or other. He waſted his Lord's goods, neither uſing them to his glory, not to the real advantage of mankind; though he doubtleſs patronized many of thoſe, who are caterers to the luſts of the fleſh and to the pride of life. However honourable he might therefore be in the world's eſtimation (v. 15;) he was not deemed worthy of a name in the word of God; yet this was granted to the poor beggar, that lay at his gate. He was called Lazarus, which ſome explain to mean “Helpleſs,” and others “God my helper;” and in either conſtruction it ſuited both his caſe, and his character. He was without help among men, but he truſted in God, and he was his helper. This man, having no property, or power to labour, was ſcantily ſupported by begging, “He could not dig, but to beg he was not aſhamed:” and he was laid at the rich man's gate, that being put in his way he might move his compaſſion. He was not only deſtitute, but covered with grievous ulcers; and he deſired, and craved to be fed with the crumbs, or the moſt refuſe broken victuals, which fell from the rich man's table, ſuch as were either thrown away or eaten by the dogs. And though it is not ſaid, that none were given him; yet it is implied, that he had not his hunger ſatisfied with them, being diſdained and loathed by the rich epicure. At the ſame time he had no ſurgeon to dreſs, nor ointment to mollify, nor garments to cover his ſores; ſo that the dogs came, and licked them; as more compaſſionate than their maſter, who kept them for his pleaſure or pride, rather than he would feed a poor ſtarving fellow creature. If the proſpect had been no further opened, the rich man might have been deemed an enviable perſon, and the beggar moſt wretched, and only claiming deep compaſſion. But as the former was a proud unbeliever, who idolized the world, and was a ſlave to his luſts, and ripening for deſtruction by means of his proſperity; and as the latter was a humble believer, who had peace with God and his own conſcience, and the hope of heaven, to ſupport him under his afflictions, which were working together for his eternal good: ſo we muſt decide that the rich man was moſt miſerable, and the poor man happy, and entitled to our warmeſt congratulations. Indeed the leading intention of the parable is to ſhew that the moſt afflicted believer is far happier, in life, death, and for ever, than the moſt proſperous unbeliever.

V. 22—24.] The beggar was ſoon delivered from his ſufferings, by the friendly ſtroke of death; and as his body had not been the great object of his care, ſo no account is given us how it was diſpoſed of: the ſurvivors for their own ſakes would put it ſomewhere out of the way, where it would ſleep at eaſe till the reſurrection. But angels, who are all “miniſtering ſpirits to the heirs “of ſalvation,” waited round him in his dying hours, and when he reſigned his ſpirit, they conveyed it into Abraham's boſom. The joys of heaven are here repreſented as a feaſt; Abraham the father of the faithful is

25 But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beſides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that *would come* from thence.

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placed, as it were, at the head of the table: ſo that Abraham's boſom denotes a place in heaven near to that diſtinguiſhed patriarch; and intimates that the beggar was an eminent believer, a ſaint of ſuperior excellency. About the ſame time the rich man alſo died; for death is no reſpecter of perſons: and as he had ſo indulged and decorated his body, to the neglect of his ſoul; ſo he had a funeral ſuited to his rank. According to modern cuſtoms, in that *ſilliest of all vanities*, we may imagine to ourſelves his poor lifeleſs clay lying in ſtate, ſurrounded with all the appendages and *inſignia* of nobility; and then, after a proper time for the diſplay of this oſtentation, conveyed with a pompous proceſſion to a magnificent tomb, to be there depoſited with great ceremony and diſtinction. We may ſuppoſe that ſome venal orator would deliver a fulſome panegyric on his noble birth, honourable titles and atchievements, his diſtinguiſhed virtues and princely generoſity: and at length that the ſepulchre would be adorned with ſome inſcription, replete with adulation, after which the corps would be left to corrupt and turn to duſt, like the remains of inferior ſinners. But all this time his ſoul, all of him that could feel or reflect, was in hell, in the place of ſeparate ſpirits, condemned to torment and miſery. In this dreadful ſtate he lifted up his eyes, which before he had ſhut againſt the truth of his caſe and character, and diſcovered his own miſery when it was become too late to eſcape it. Among other objects he is repreſented as ſeeing Abraham afar off, and poor deſpiſed Lazarus reclining on his boſom, and enjoying the moſt perfect reſt, and moſt exquiſite ſatisfactions: and this view of Lazarus's felicity, joined to the ſad reverſe, which himſelf experienced, muſt add to his inward anguiſh and torture.

V. 24—26.] We need not determine whether condemned ſpirits really do know, or ſee what takes place in the realms of bliſs, or the contrary: the repreſentation is intended to ſhew the hopeleſs miſery, and unavailing deſires, to which they are reduced. The Jews were prone to confide in their relation to Abraham, though not partakers of his faith: but when the rich man in hell claimed him for his father, Abraham did not deny the relation; yet he ſhewed him no compaſſion: he deſpaired of mercy from God; yet cried to Abraham, to have mercy on him; as if he had been more merciful than his Maker, or was either able or willing to help the irreconcileable enemies of God! This is the only ſcriptural inſtance of a prayer offered to a departed ſaint; and it gives ſmall encouragement to that prevalent ſpecies of idolatry. He did not expect that Abraham could help him out of that place of torment; or give him any durable relief in it; but he deſired that "Lazarus might dip the tip of his "finger in water to cool his tongue, &c." A man ſcorched by intenſe heat, and parched with exquiſite thirſt, might crave ſuch a ſmall, and momentary alleviation of his torture, though it could avail him very little: thus this poor condemned ſinner craved a tranſient abatement of his exquiſite miſery, being all that he could hope for. His requeſt was almoſt the language of deſpair, and made way for it. His deſire that Lazarus might be ſent, to do him this ſervice, may either intimate that he retained his imperious haughty ſpirit, in his deepeſt miſery; and perhaps thought that Lazarus had been under great obligations to him for thoſe ſcanty morſels, that ſometimes had been given him at his gate; or elſe it implied a conviction that Lazarus had been a benevolent godly man, who wiſhed him well, and was glad to do any one a ſervice, when he had it in his power. Some have thought that the particular mention made of the tongue, might be an intimation, that as this member is peculiarly inſtrumental in promoting wickedneſs and impiety, ſo his ſufferings were greatly enhanced by the ſins which he had committed in his profane and profligate diſcourſe. However Abraham anſwered him in ſuch a manner, as to put an end to his feeble hopes. He allowed that he was his ſon according to the fleſh: but then he was to "remember that he had received his good things." Riches, ſenſual pleaſures, and the pride of life were the good things, that he had choſen, in preference to the favour and image of God, and heavenly happineſs. In this choice he had been gratified; he had in his life-time received and ſpent his portion, and he was to expect no more good. In like manner Lazarus had received, and endured his evil things: he had feared ſin and the wrath of God, more than pain, poverty, or contempt; he had choſen ſanctified affliction rather than unſanctified proſperity; he had endured his afflictions patiently, and profited by them; and they were now terminated, and he was comforted in heavenly felicity, whilſt the rich man was tormented in the flames of hell. This was not for having worldly riches, for Abraham was rich; but for idolizing and abuſing them, inſtead of uſing them as God's ſteward to the glory of his name, and ſeeking God himſelf for his portion. To complete the horror of this anſwer, he further aſſured him, that there was a great chaſm fixed between the places of happineſs and miſery: ſo that if an inhabitant of heaven deſired to go to the relief of one that was in the place of torment, it would be impracticable for him: even as it would be for the condemned ſinners to leave their priſon, and enter the realms of happineſs: ſo that both of them were finally and eternally fixed in their reſpective ſtates, by the unchangeable decrees of God. Many in different ages have endeavoured, as it were, to fill up, or make a bridge over, this great gulph, and vaſt multitudes have wiſhed them ſucceſs in the enterprize; as this is their only hope of eſcaping the rich man's doom: but it is as vain, as *his* expectation of a drop of water from Lazarus was. They muſt ſurely be blinded in a moſt awful manner by the God of this world, who expect the Lord to break his word, that he may deliver thoſe from deſtruction, who have

27 Then he ſaid, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldeſt ſend him to my father's houſe:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may teſtify unto them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham ſaith unto him, They have Moſes and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he ſaid, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he ſaid unto him, If they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſuaded though one roſe from the dead.

lived and died in the obſtinate rejection of his great ſalvation!

V. 27—31.] Abraham's anſwer is ſtated to have put a final period to the rich man's forlorn hope; though many of his ſucceſſors in impiety hope on in defiance of it. However he ſtill claimed Abraham as his father, and ſuppoſed, that though he could not interfere to mitigate his torture, he might prevent the increaſe of it: and as he knew there was a paſſage open between heaven and earth, though none between heaven and hell, he deſired Lazarus might be ſent to his father's houſe; (ſuppoſing that he would gladly go on ſo benevolent an errand;) for he had five brethren, who were living in the ſame ungodly diſſipation, luxury and magnificence, as he had done, and were in the way to the ſame place of torment: he deſired therefore that Lazarus ſhould go, and teſtify to them concerning the awful realities of the inviſible world, and ſo excite them to repentance, that they might eſcape the wrath to come. It is intimated in this repreſentation, that the rich man died young: for nothing is ſaid of a family left behind him, and his brethren are ſuppoſed to be living together in their father's houſe, as joint heirs of his eſtate. We cannot imagine that there is any charity, or even natural affection in hell: we muſt therefore either conſider this as a mere circumſtance intended to introduce the ſubſequent inſtructions; or elſe we muſt conclude, it to imply, that they, whoſe example, diſcourſe, or ſeductions have been the means of leading others into infidelity, impiety, profligacy, or other ruinous vices, will be rendered more miſerable hereafter by the upbraidings of thoſe, whoſe ſouls they have murdered: they would therefore moſt willingly prevent their deſtruction, for fear of an addition to their own intolerable miſery. Many admired writers would *now* be willing to publiſh recantations of their ſceptical, heretical, or licentious works: many actors would wiſh to come upon the ſtage again, to act a different part from thoſe, by which they inflamed the paſſions, and corrupted the principles and morals of mankind; and many falſe teachers to ſtand up for a more orthodox creed, than what they once propagated. For men will be accountable for all the effects of their conduct, however wide they may ſpread, or durably they may laſt; even as he who wickedly ſets fire to a houſe, is anſwerable for the burning of a city, if it ſpreads ſo far. In anſwer to this requeſt Abraham obſerved, that "they had Moſes, and the prophets, whom they might "hear and attend to:" in their writings the future ſtate, the day of judgment, and the way of ſalvation were declared, and men were warned, exhorted, and invited, as much as was neceſſary: ſo that if they would not hear them, their deſtruction would be of themſelves alone. To this the other replied, that ſurely they would regard one, who went to them from the dead, and be induced by his teſtimony to repentance; as the terror of his appearance, and the awfulneſs of his warnings, eſpecially coming from a perſon, whom they had known in his life-time, would produce a ſalutary effect upon them: but Abraham cloſed the converſation, by declaring that even this would not *perſuade them.* They might be amazed, affrighted, and reſtrained by ſuch an apparition: but they would not be influenced to renounce ſin and the world, to mortify their luſts, to humble themſelves before God, to truſt in his mercy, and devote themſelves to his ſervice. Such external demonſtrations and alarms would not change their hearts, without which there could be no true repentance, and they had ſufficient means of conviction and inſtruction, if they were diſpoſed to attend to it: and indeed God is generally pleaſed to employ his word as the inſtrument of his ſaving change; and not ſuch terrifying appearances. It is obſervable that many of thoſe, who witneſſed the reſurrection of Lazarus, did not believe in Chriſt, by means of that ſtupendous miracle: the Roman ſoldiers, who ſaw many circumſtances of our Lord's reſurrection, immediately after agreed for hire to propagate the moſt notorious falſhood; and the Jews perſiſted in their impenitence, amidſt the multiplied demonſtrations of that ſame event. And indeed there are circumſtances occur in every age, which ſufficiently evince, that no terrors, arguments, or convictions can effect true repentance, without the ſpecial grace of God renewing the ſinner's heart.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is indiſputable that the wealthieſt of men are only ſtewards to the great Lord of all: yet few indeed of them conſider the matter in this light; and numbers are continually "accuſed to him of having waſt"ed his goods." The Lord is alſo frequently calling to them by his providence, and his word, and enquiring, "How it is that he hears ſuch things of them?" And reminding them that ſhortly, "they muſt give account "of their ſtewardſhip, and be no longer ſtewards." If no ſuitable preparation be made for that ſolemn event, the terrors and conſequences will be awful beyond conception; we ſhould therefore *now* ſeriouſly enquire what we ſhould do, that when put out of our ſtewardſhip, we may be received into a better habitation? The Lord himſelf hath ſhewn us what is good in this matter: and though we need the prudent foreſight, yet we have no occaſion for the carnal policy of the unjuſt ſteward; for the way of acceptance and of duty are plainly marked out for us. Indeed many ſeem to ſay, "I cannot dig, and to beg I am aſhamed:" they cannot enter into heaven by obeying the law, and are too proud to aſk it "as

CHAP. XVII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Cautioning the diſciples to avoid offences, and to forgive one another; ſhewing the efficacy of faith, and inculcating humility by a parable, 1---10. *2d. Cleanſing ten lepers, of whom one only, and he a Samaritan, returned to give him thanks,* 11---19. *3d. Shewing the ſpiritual*

“the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt!” Nay they are equally indiſpoſed to labour for the meat, which endureth unto everlaſting life, and to ſeek the bleſſing by fervent prayer. But the true believer, though he knows that he can do nothing of himſelf, will yet “work out “his ſalvation with fear and trembling;” depending on God “to work in him to will and do, of his good pleaſure;” and he will deſire to evidence his faith in Chriſt by love to his brethren. Inſtead therefore of “waſting “his Lord's goods,” he will endeavour “to make himſelf “friends with the mammon of unrighteouſneſs,” that he may know that everlaſting manſions are prepared for him, when fleſh, and heart ſhall fail. But alas, in this as well as in many other inſtances, “the children of this “world are wiſer in their generation, than the children “of light:” and though the ſecurity, and advantage to a man's preſent comfort, to his family, and in reſpect of eternity, of communicating gladly and largely to the relief of the neceſſitous, be demonſtrable: yet how ſcantily do moſt profeſſors “lend to the Lord,” in compariſon of the ſums waſted in needleſs embelliſhments and indulgence! It would be well, if the children of light would in ſuch matters learn wiſdom from the men of the world: and having choſen their object, would purſue it as ſingly, and conſtantly, as they do their worthleſs intereſts. In this caſe, what a privilege would wealth be! How much good might be done to man! How much honour would redound to the goſpel! How many thankſgivings would be rendered to the Lord! And how many prayers by thoſe, whoſe ſouls and bodies were benefitted, for the felicity of their benefactors! (2 *Cor.* c. ix. v. 6—15.) And with what ſatisfaction might the faithful ſteward expect the hour of diſſolution, or the coming of his Lord, and anticipate the joy of being then welcomed by ſuch friends to the regions of perfect felicity! Nor ſhould thoſe in narrower circumſtances forget, that they too are the Lord's ſtewards. Something we all might ſpare, (that is now waſted,) with which to evince our faithfulneſs in a little: and this would equally enſure our gracious recompence, as the larger liberalities of our more wealthy brethren. If men ſpend their little upon themſelves, and be unjuſt ſtewards therein; they will ſurely be condemned, when turned out of their ſtewardſhip. But there are other things beſides the unrighteous mammon, in which men may prove themſelves faithful, or unfaithful. Some may ſay “ſilver and gold I have “none:” yet being entruſted with a ſtewardſhip of the true riches, they may in their deep poverty be more uſeful, than thoſe who are entruſted with great worldly riches; and need not envy their advantageous ſituation. But ſurely they are unfit to be entruſted with the true riches, who are unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon! Even as they muſt be preſumptuous, who expect God to give them the eternal inheritance, though they waſte and abuſe the talents committed to their ſtewardſhip. In vain therefore do men pretend to ſerve two maſters, or to worſhip God and Mammon: if the Lord be God let us decidedly ſerve him, and devote all we have to his glory. When miniſters, who have the honour to reſemble their Lord in poverty, diſcourſe on ſuch topics; the covetous, whether Scribes, Phariſees, Sadducees, or Herodians, will be ſure to deride them as viſionaries, who meddle with matters, of which they have no knowledge. But they little think how entirely the ſervant of God diſregards their contempt and ridicule, and pities their ungodly proſperity. Many of this character are zealous profeſſors of goſpel truth: and if miniſters preach againſt covetouſneſs, or reprove them for it, or exhort them to liberality; they will juſtify themſelves by a variety of excuſes, and call their ſelfiſhneſs by ſoft names; and ſo make the matter out *before men*, as well as they can: but God knoweth the wickedneſs of their hearts; and to him it muſt be left, when we have reminded them, that “thoſe things, which are highly eſteemed among men, “are abomination in the ſight of God.” Such covetous ſticklers for the forms of godlineſs, are commonly the bittereſt enemies to the power of it: and whilſt thoſe, who know the worth, and the danger of their ſouls, are preſſing through difficulties and temptations, into the kingdom of God; they will be carping at the miniſter's doctrine, or exhortations, explaining away ſuch ſcriptures as run counter to their ſins, making void the law of God by their own notions or traditions, and attempting to prejudice better diſpoſed perſons againſt the truth.

It is indeed aſtoniſhing, that any man can read and profeſs to believe this chapter to be the word of God; and yet ſpend his life in thoſe very courſes, of which the conſequences are ſo awfully, and expreſſly declared. Yet what numbers are there in our proſperous cities of theſe “rich men, who are clothed in purple and fine “linen, and fare ſumptuouſly every day!” And how many more would there be, if men could attain the objects of their wiſhes! The moſt of thoſe, who do not reſemble this rich ſinner, are either reſtrained by penurious avarice, or by a poverty connected with murmurs, envy, and grudging. Multitudes go to the utmoſt limits of their ability, nay beyond what they can afford, and then fret continually to ſee themſelves out-done by their more proſperous neighbours! What man of common ſenſe would deliberately prefer the rich man's lot, in life, death and eternity, to that of Lazarus: yet who almoſt prefers “ſuffering affliction with the people of “God, to the enjoyment of the pleaſures of ſin for a “ſeaſon?” Alas, moſt men endeavour to forget or diſbelieve ſuch declarations, that they may not be diſturbed by painful reflections, in their purſuit of worldly gratifications: ſo that they refuſe to lift up their eyes, till they drop into hell; and then they curſe and bewail their own madneſs and folly, and envy the condition of the meaneſt beggar, whom here they have ſcorned, loathed, and neglected! But it is vain for a man to expect mercy from God, who hath no mercy on the poor:

nature of his kingdom, and predicting its eſtabliſhment, in conſequence of his own ſufferings, and in connexion with the ruin of the unbelieving Jews, 20---37.

THEN ſaid he unto the diſciples, It is impoſſible but that offences will come; but woe *unto him* through whom they come!
2 It were better for him that a milſtone

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and even if his luxury and ſplendour be not ſupported by rapine, oppreſſion, and murder, (of which even ſome men called chriſtians are moſt infamouſly guilty;) yet, “if any man have this world's goods, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him;” he has no right to call himſelf the diſciple of the bleſſed Jeſus. Let no man therefore deceive himſelf by vain words: ſatan the father of lies ſuggeſts to his prophets many devices, by which to evade the inferences deducible from ſuch paſſages: but they may all be anſwered at once. He, that ſaid, “heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away,” hath here ſtated to us, that when a man dies his ſoul immediately is received into heavenly felicity, or caſt into the fire of hell; that whilſt the bodies of rich ſinners are entombed with vain oſtentation, “they lift up their eyes in hell, being in torment;” that neither God, nor ſaints, nor angels will ſhew them any more mercy; that even pious parents, who have prayed for, and wept over their children here, will hereafter approve of their final condemnation; that not the leaſt mitigation of their miſery can be obtained, not “a drop of water to cool the burning tongue of thoſe tormented in that flame,” can be procured, by all their cries and intreaties; that with the dying ſinner's breath all his hopes expire, and an end is put to all “his good things;” and that “a great gulph is fixed,” and all eſcape is rendered for ever impoſſible. Plauſible objections to, or flat contradictions of, theſe awful truths, may be advanced; and they “who ſpeak according to the oracles of God,” will be ridiculed and reviled as melancholy or malevolent men: for numbers feel it *their intereſt*, (according to the tenor of their preſent conduct,) that any ſcheme ſhould be true, rather than that of revelation: but when one after another dies, and lifts up his eyes in hell; they will awfully find whoſe words have been accompliſhed; the Lord's, or thoſe who dared to contradict him. Inſtead therefore of preſumptuouſly ſpeculating on the brink of this tremendous precipice, (like him, who loſt his life, by attempting to diſcover the ſource of the flames of Mount Etna;) let us copy the example of thoſe, who fled from the gaping earth, “leſt it ſhould ſwallow them up alſo! (*Num.* c. xvi. v. 34.) If there were only a peradventure of a man's ſinking from ungodly ſelf-indulgence into everlaſting miſery; or of obtaining eternal life by any poſſible ſelf-denial; a wiſe man would ſurely relinquiſh, (if it were needful) the greateſt affluence, ſubmit to abject penury, embrace a dunghill, and endure ſeverer miſeries than thoſe of Lazarus, without a murmur or heſitation. But the matter is as certain as the word of God, who cannot lie: and the rich are not, in common caſes, required to leave their eſtates, or to forego any real comfort of them; nay the temperance and moderation commanded them, tend to increaſe the meaſure of their actual enjoyment: whilſt the liberal diſtribution, to which they are exhorted, leads to additional pleaſures, almoſt as much ſuperior to the epicure's gratifications, as the felicity of an angel exceeds that of the loweſt animal. But ſhould the Lord call us to endure poverty, pain, and ſickneſs; he will not leave us comfortleſs: it is poſſible that a believer “may be laid at a rich man's gate full of ſores, and deſire in vain to be fed with the crumbs from his table;” but it is not poſſible, that he ſhould be deprived of the mercy of his heavenly Father. He may be unattended, in pain and ſickneſs, by phyſicians, friends, or ſervants: but angels will miniſter to him, and watch around his dying bed; and the Spirit of God will communicate his effectual conſolations: and ſhould want, or neglect, (which rarely happens,) ſhorten his life; he will only be the ſooner removed from “his evil things,” and introduced to the enjoyment of complete felicity: ſo that in every poſſible caſe, they, and they only, “are bleſſed, who have the Lord for their God.” It is alſo vain for men to imagine that other evidence, or means of inſtruction would induce them to repentance, whilſt they neglect “the word of God!” They, who have periſhed in ſin, could indeed come and tell ſuch a tale of woe, as would harrow up the ſoul with horror, or drive men to diſtraction; and probably they would, if at liberty, try in this way to prevent their own increaſing miſery: the ſouls alſo of departed ſaints could relate aſtoniſhing things of their own bleſſedneſs and of the miſery of the damned: and ſinners on earth, or in hell may fancy, that this would bring men to repentance. But the teſtimony of the Lord is more ſure, and giveth wiſdom to the ſimple, and is the beſt means of converting ſouls: though the witneſs of ſaints, or angels be great, the witneſs of God is greater: the ſame things are teſtified to in God's word, that would be told us, by “one that ſhould come from the dead;” he that rejects this teſtimony makes God a liar, and further proof would be improper: an apparition might produce a greater temporary alarm; but it would not afford ſo ſolid, and permanent a ground of conviction: and therefore if men believe not Moſes, and the prophets, neither would they be perſuaded, though one “roſe from the dead.” Inſtead therefore of indulging ſuch unwarranted ſpeculations; let every one take heed to the ſure word of ſcripture; and pray to God for that new heart, and humble ſpirit, without which all means muſt prove ineffectual: and let us conclude by ſeriouſly enquiring, “what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul.”

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1—4.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xviii.) We ſhould forgive thoſe, who do not repent, ſo as to pray for them, and to wait our opportunity of doing them good: but our friendly intercourſe with ſuch, as have been evidently injurious, and obſtinately perſiſt in it, muſt be in ſome meaſure interrupted.

were hanged about his neck, and he caſt into the ſea, than that he ſhould offend one of theſe little ones.

3 Take heed to yourſelves: if thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; thou ſhalt forgive him.

5 And the apoſtles ſaid unto the Lord, Increaſe our faith.

6 And the Lord ſaid, If ye had faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay unto this ſycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey you.

7 But which of you, having a ſervant plowing or feeding cattle, will ſay unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and ſit down to meat?

8 And will not rather ſay unto him, Make ready wherewith I may ſup, and gird thyſelf, and ſerve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou ſhalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that ſervant becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all thoſe things which are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 And it came to paſs, as he went to Jeruſalem, that he paſſed through the midſt of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which ſtood afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and ſaid, Jeſus, Maſter, have mercy on us.

14 And when he ſaw *them*, he ſaid unto them, Go ſhew yourſelves unto the prieſts. And it came to paſs, that as they went, they were cleanſed.

15 And one of them, when he ſaw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, Were there not ten cleanſed? but where *are* the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, ſave this ſtranger.

19 And he ſaid unto him, Ariſe, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

20 And when he was demanded of the Phariſees when the kingdom of God ſhould

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V. 5, 6.] (Notes, &c, *Matt.* c. xvii. v. 20, 21.) The apoſtles ſeem to have perceived the excellency, and the difficulty of the conduct preſcribed to them; and that faith in the divine mercy and grace was the principle from which it muſt proceed: they therefore beſought Jeſus to "increaſe their faith." This implied a full perſuaſion, that he was able thus to influence their minds, and to remove thoſe impediments to the vigorous exerciſe of faith, which they could not. (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 24.) Yet true faith is "of the operation of God;" and therefore, according to ſome men's ſyſtems, he ought to have reproved them for attributing too much to him: but on the contrary his anſwer evidently implied an approbation of their petition; and was a further recommendation to them of that powerful principle, to which "all things are poſſible." The idea of a tree being planted, taking root, and growing in the unſtable ocean, is a moſt emphatical figure to repreſent to us "that by "faith we may do all things, through Chriſt, which "ſtrengtheneth us."

V. 7—10.] Our Lord here ſhewed his diſciples their need of deep humility, in order to the effectual exerciſe of faith, and to be proſpered and accepted in their work. A man, who poſſeſſed and maintained a ſervant, would deem himſelf entitled to his ſervices, one after another through the day; and yet would not thank him for them at night, though he had been faithful, and obedient in them. But the Lord hath ſuch a property in every creature, as no man can have in another: and he can never be indebted to them for their moſt conſtant and unremitted ſervices. The perfect obedience of angels, who do all that is commanded them, leaves them unprofitable ſervants, who have only done their duty, without having at all benefitted the Lord. The ſervices of redeemed ſinners therefore, who never perform their whole duty; who are under peculiar obligations to obedience; and do no good thing, except by his grace, can never *deſerve* any recompence, or give any ground for boaſting. A conſtant ſucceſſion of ſervices, and an unreſerved obedience, with the deepeſt ſenſe of dependance, unworthineſs, and obligation to the Lord, are therefore here inculcated.

V. 11—19.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 1--4.) Somewhere on the confines of Galilee, and Samaria theſe lepers met Chriſt, in his laſt circuit. They were companions in diſtreſs, and therefore they aſſociated together, though one of them was a Samaritan. Having heard of Chriſt's miracles, they earneſtly begged of him to come, he anſwered them and ſaid, The kingdom of God cometh not with obſervation.

21 Neither ſhall they ſay, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

22 And he ſaid unto the diſciples, The days will come, when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ye ſhall not ſee *it*.

23 And they ſhall ſay unto you, See here; or, ſee there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.

24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, ſhineth unto the other *part* under heaven; ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be in his day.

25 But firſt muſt he ſuffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, ſo ſhall it be alſo in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark; and the flood came, and deſtroyed them all.

28 Likewiſe alſo, as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded:

29 But the ſame day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed *them* all.

30 Even thus ſhall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 In that day, he which ſhall be upon the houſe-top, and his ſtuff in the houſe, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewiſe not return back.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whoſoever ſhall ſeek to ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; and whoſoever ſhall loſe his life, ſhall preſerve it.

34 I tell you, in that night there ſhall be two *men* in one bed; the one ſhall be taken, and the other ſhall be left.

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paſſionate their caſe, and cleanſe their leproſy; having ſome general belief of his power to perform the miracle, though moſt of them ſeem to have been deſtitute of ſaving faith. Jeſus therefore ſent them to the prieſts, ſome of whom probably lived in that neighbourhood: and being cleanſed by the mighty power of Chriſt, when at a diſtance from him, they aſcertained their cure before the prieſts, and returned home. But one of them, who was a Samaritan, being more deeply affected with the mercy vouchſafed him, came back to Jeſus, glorifying the God of Iſrael; and returning thanks to his gracious Benefactor, caſt himſelf proſtrate at his feet. This gave our Lord occaſion to remark, as with ſurpriſe, that this ſtranger alone had returned to give glory to God; whilſt the nine others, who had been cleanſed, though they were Jews, had failed of rendering him this tribute of gratitude. The Samaritan alone ſeems to have believed in Jeſus, as the Meſſiah, the Saviour of ſinners: and this faith, united with a conſciouſneſs of his own unworthineſs, produced this difference in his conduct. He was therefore diſmiſſed, with the aſſurance, that his faith had ſaved him: the others obtained the outward cure, he only got the ſpiritual bleſſing.

V. 20—23.] The Phariſees underſtood that Jeſus's doctrine implied a claim to the character of the promiſed Meſſiah; and, according to their notions of temporal victory and dominion, they wanted to know of Him, when the kingdom of God ſhould come? To this he replied, that it would not come with outward obſervation, or with oſtentatious ſplendour, and authority: nor would it be needful to point it out to men by ſuch external ſigns as they expected; for behold; the kingdom of God was even then *among them*; or rather *within* them! It was a ſpiritual kingdom, ſet up in the heart by the power of divine grace. This was already effected in the caſe of many of thoſe, whom the Phariſees deſpiſed; and it muſt be wrought *in* them alſo, or they would have no advantage from the kingdom of the Meſſiah. To this He ſubjoined to his diſciples, that they would ſoon be deprived of his perſonal preſence: and whilſt they wiſhed in vain for one of the days which they now enjoyed, or waited for the days of the Son of man, when he ſhould come to ſet up his kingdom; they would be tempted to follow thoſe ſeducers, who would then pretend to be the Meſſiah; but they muſt carefully reject their ſolicitations. The latter part of this chapter coincides with another paſſage, that hath already been conſidered; a few hints will therefore ſuffice in this place. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiv.)

V. 32—36.] (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xix.) Lot's wife left Sodom, yet loſt her life by looking back to thoſe poſſeſſions, &c, which ſhe was called to forſake: and thus ſhe was made a perpetual warning to men in every age, not to indulge a wiſh for thoſe ſinful intereſts, which religion bids them renounce, leſt they ſhould be drawn aſide to their deſtruction. Our Lord further reminded the diſciples, that in the day, when he ſhould be revealed to execute vengeance on the Jews, thoſe profeſſed chriſtians, who had ſought to preſerve their lives by forſaking their religion, would periſh miſerably; whilſt thoſe who were willing to loſe their lives for his ſake, ſhould be marvellouſly protected; (*Matt.* c. xvi. v. 25.) Providence would indeed ſingularly interpoſe, "in that night," in the depth of the diſtreſs coming on the Jews, to preſerve the remnant of believers, that were living amongſt them: inſomuch that when two perſons were ſleeping, or working together in the ſame place; the

35 Two *women* ſhall be grinding together; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two *men* ſhall be in the field; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they anſwered and ſaid unto him, Where, Lord? And he ſaid unto them, Whereſoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Romans would ſeize upon, or kill the one, and the other would eſcape in ſome unexpected manner. The whole paſſage may be accommodated to the day of judgment, and the eternal ſtate of men in every age: but many expreſſions forbid us to give that as the primary interpretation of it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we adore the depths of the divine judgments, in the *permiſſion* of ſuch ſcandals in the church, as harden multitudes in their unbelief; and whilſt we allow, that it is impoſſible, (without conſtant miracles,) but that offences muſt come: let us recollect that theſe conſiderations will not exculpate thoſe, by whom they come. We ſhould therefore fear, more than death, every action, that may ſcandalize the goſpel, or even ſtumble one weak believer: and we ſhould avoid *all appearance of evil*, in every caſe, when we can do it without committing *real evil*. Whilſt we endeavour to be harmleſs, and to do good in our general conduct; we muſt alſo "take heed "to ourſelves," not to yield to reſentment againſt ſuch as injure us. If then our brother has really treſpaſſed againſt us, we ſhould privately, and meekly expoſtulate with him; and if he repent, we ſhould cordially forgive and be reconciled to him, without inſiſting rigorouſly on ſatisfaction: nay if this ſhould even be repeated many times in a day, we muſt not allow our amity to be interrupted by it; provided the private wrong doth not involve in it a public ſcandal: for thus the peace of the church, and the good of ſouls may beſt be promoted, to which all other conſiderations ſhould be ſubordinated. But this ſtrict precept is alſo replete with encouragement to the humble believer. He is often betrayed more than "ſeven times a day" into thoſe things, which need repentance and forgiveneſs: and this conſciouſneſs, which covers him with ſhame, would alſo ſink him into dejection; did he not recollect that his gracious Lord would not require him ſo conſtantly to forgive his offending brother, were he not ready alſo in like manner to forgive his offending children: and though this reflection will not encourage him to continue in ſin, but rather lead him to repentance; yet it will ſupport him in his painful conflict, by reaſon of which he grieves that "he cannot "do the things that he would." But when we would follow the example of our forgiving Lord, or perform any duty that runs counter to corrupt nature, we ſhall perceive our need of faith; both to realize our motives to obedience, and to lay hold on an Almighty Arm for aſſiſtance in it. Then the believer will alſo feel the weakneſs of his faith, and his inability to ſtrengthen it; and will be led to look unto Jeſus, both as the Author, and the Object of faith, beſeeching him to increaſe that precious grace, on which the exerciſe of all others depends: and the Lord will not refuſe to anſwer his requeſt, that being ſtrengthened in faith, he may glorify God, in every ſervice to which he is called. But we ſhould always obſerve that faith, and ſelf-confidence are incompatible; and that it is impoſſible to rely on the power, truth, and love of the Lord, unleſs we feel our own weakneſs, and unworthineſs. We all ought indeed to be the ſervants of the Lord our Creator, in whom we live and move, and are, and to devote all our time and powers to Him; and we are juſtly condemned for not doing all the things that were commanded us. Chriſtians alſo are ſervants to their redeeming God, and are bound to obedience by ſtill more immenſe obligations. We ſhould therefore ſerve him in our ſeveral places, without intermiſſion: one duty ſhould ſucceed another, throughout every one of our days; and every perſonal intereſt or indulgence ſhould be poſtponed, and give place to his glory, and his command: yet at laſt we *merit* no reward, and have nothing to boaſt of; but muſt ſtill ſay, "we "are unprofitable ſervants, we have done that which "was our duty to do;" and at the ſame time we muſt humbly confeſs our guilt, in every inſtance, in which we have come ſhort of this perfect obedience. But were it poſſible for a man to ſerve God, as Paul did, or even as Gabriel doth; and then to become exalted in an opinion of his own worthineſs, or excellency; this would tarniſh all, and he would "fall into the condemnation "of the devil," as ſetting up for himſelf, and robbing God of his glory. How horribly impious then, how ſacrilegious muſt it be, for ſinners to boaſt of their poor polluted ſervices, as if they could atone for their ſins, make God their Debtor, or purchaſe heavenly felicity!

Through pride, ingratitude towards God came into the world: of the vaſt multitudes, who were created, and are upheld by his power, and who feaſt upon his bounty; how few are thankful for his goodneſs! When men's vices bring ſickneſs upon them; and the Lord in mercy again reſtores their health, moſt of them immediately uſe their returning vigour in adding to their former provocations. Of the numbers diſcharged cured from our various hoſpitals, how few "return to give glory to "God," "not only with their lips, but in their lives!" Even of thoſe, who cry unto him in their diſtreſs, and intreat him, mercifully to ſpare them, how few afterwards "praiſe him for his goodneſs, and live to his glory!" Of thoſe, whom miniſters viſit in their ſickneſs, and who give ſome indications of repentance; how large a proportion, when they recover in anſwer to their prayers, live only to diſappoint their expectations! In this caſe it may generally be ſaid; "were there not ten "healed? But where are the nine?" And of thoſe, who enjoy the beſt means of grace, and make ſome general profeſſion of ſeeking mercy from Jeſus; how few are there, who glorify God, by living according to this profeſſion! All this ſprings from the want of a broken heart, the feeling ſenſe of their need of a free ſalvation, and a real application to Chriſt to cleanſe them from the leproſy of ſin. For when a man is convinced of his guilt, and pollution; and that he muſt for ever be excluded from the company of God and his ſaints, unleſs

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Teaching the diſciples to pray without fainting, and with humility, by the parable of the unjuſt judge and the importunate widow, and by that of the Phariſee and the Publican, 1--14. 2d. Receiving and bleſſing little children, and ſhewing that his diſciples muſt be like them, 15---17. 3d. Detecting the covetouſneſs of a young ruler, ſhewing the danger of riches, and encouraging thoſe, who renounce them for his ſake, 19---30. 4th. Predicting his own death, and reſurrection; which the diſciples did not underſtand, and opening the eyes of a blind man near Jericho, 31---43.

AND he ſpake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always *to* pray, and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

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he be cleanſed by the divine Saviour; he will earneſtly apply for this important mercy; he will uſe the means of grace, and obſerve the Lord's directions in humble expectation; and when he experiences the comfort of his forgiveneſs, and the power of his new-creating Spirit, he will glorify God, and moſt thankfully adore the gracious Saviour. This is the ſource of gratitude in our ſinful hearts; it ſprings from deep humility, and lively faith; and it produces fervent praiſes, and chearful obedience. Thus ſtrangers are brought nigh to the Lord; poor Samaritans get before, put to ſhame, and condemn proud Iſraelites; they who have greatly ſinned, love much, becauſe much hath been forgiven them; and whilſt they give the whole praiſe to the Lord, he delights in communicating comfort unto them. Nor let us forget, that we cannot honour the Father, except we honour his beloved Son; and that when we bow to Jeſus in adoring gratitude, then we moſt acceptably give glory unto God.

Whilſt the cauſe of Chriſt is thus gaining ground, in the cleanſing of lepers, and the ſalvation of ſinners, proud Phariſees may pretend to be waiting for, and enquiring after the kingdom of God; though they oppoſe the progreſs, that it makes *among them*, and deſpiſe thoſe, who have it ſet up *within them*. They are looking for ſome outward ſplendour, carnal wiſdom, or temporal dominion: but the kingdom of God is too ſpiritual and refined for their groſs perception. For it conſiſts not in meats and drinks, in veſtments and temples, in ſects or parties; but "in righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in "the Holy Ghoſt." Many, who now deſpiſe the days of the Son of man, and refuſe to hearken to his goſpel, when faithfully preached to them, will at length dolefully deſire, and wiſh they might ſee one more ſuch day, and have one more invitation given them to accept of his ſalvation; but this will for ever be in vain: and even here, they who deſpiſe the truth, commonly become the dupes of deſtructive lies, and are given up to ſtrong deluſions. Our bleſſed Redeemer hath finiſhed his ſufferings, and aſcended into his glory. The generation to whom he preached, and among whom he wrought his miracles, rejected and crucified him: but his day of vengeance ſoon arrived; and his powerful indignation like lightning, was diffuſed throughout the land, and the Jews were deſtroyed amidſt their carnal ſecurity and ſenſual indulgence, by as tremendous judgments, as the deluge had been, or as the fire and brimſtone, which deſtroyed Sodom, and Gomorrah. Yea divine vengeance followed even the ſcattered remnant of them, as eagles reſort where the carcaſes are laid; and in ſome ſenſe they are purſued in the ſame manner to this day. Yet at the ſame time, the remnant, who obeyed the word, and relied on the promiſe of Chriſt, were as remarkably preſerved. But hath not the Saviour been rejected by other generations alſo? And is there not a ſtill more awful day coming, when He ſhall appear to judge the world? In this we are all intereſted: for death is every man's ſummons to that tribunal, after which no change in his ſtate, or character can take place. But alas, moſt men live now, as they did in the days of Noah, and of Lot; notwithſtanding all the warnings of God's word, to prepare to meet him in judgment! They are generally given up to their worldly intereſts, or pleaſures, as if life had no period, or there were no future judgment: in this courſe they proceed, till death like the deluge, or the fire from heaven, ſweeps them into deſtruction! And thus will it alſo be in the day, when the Son of man ſhall be revealed. But let thoſe, who profeſs themſelves to be Chriſt's diſciples, make haſte to eſcape for their lives, to get into the ark, to flee from Sodom, to renounce all for Chriſt, to prepare to meet their God! Let us all remember Lot's wife: that we may no longer hanker after thoſe things, which we have left behind, nor be tempted to draw back unto perdition: let us venture our lives and ſouls in the Lord's hands; and only fear being deluded into ſinful methods of ſeeking preſent ſecurity; and then we ſhall certainly be "kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalva"tion." The time is ſpeedily coming, when they who have lived together in families, been united in the moſt endeared relations, partners in the ſame employments, or even partakers of the ſame religious ordinances, will, in numberleſs inſtances, be finally and eternally ſeparated; whilſt one ſhall be taken to heaven, and another left to periſh for ever in hell! For as the meſſengers of the Lord's mercy will gather together his elect, from the four winds of heaven, into his kingdom of complete felicity: ſo the executioners of his vengeance will purſue the wicked to every place, whither they may flee to hide themſelves, that they may caſt them into the furnace of his fiery indignation. "Viſit then our ſouls, "O Lord, with thy ſalvation, and remember us with "the favour, which thou beareſt to thy choſen people!"

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1—8.] This parable is prefaced by a brief expoſition of it. It was ſpoken, "that men "ſhould pray always and not faint:" they ought to pray conſtantly at ſtated times; to be always in that ſpirit of humble dependance, deſire and expectation, which give life to prayer: to be frequently offering ejaculatory petitions; and to be always ready for prayer,

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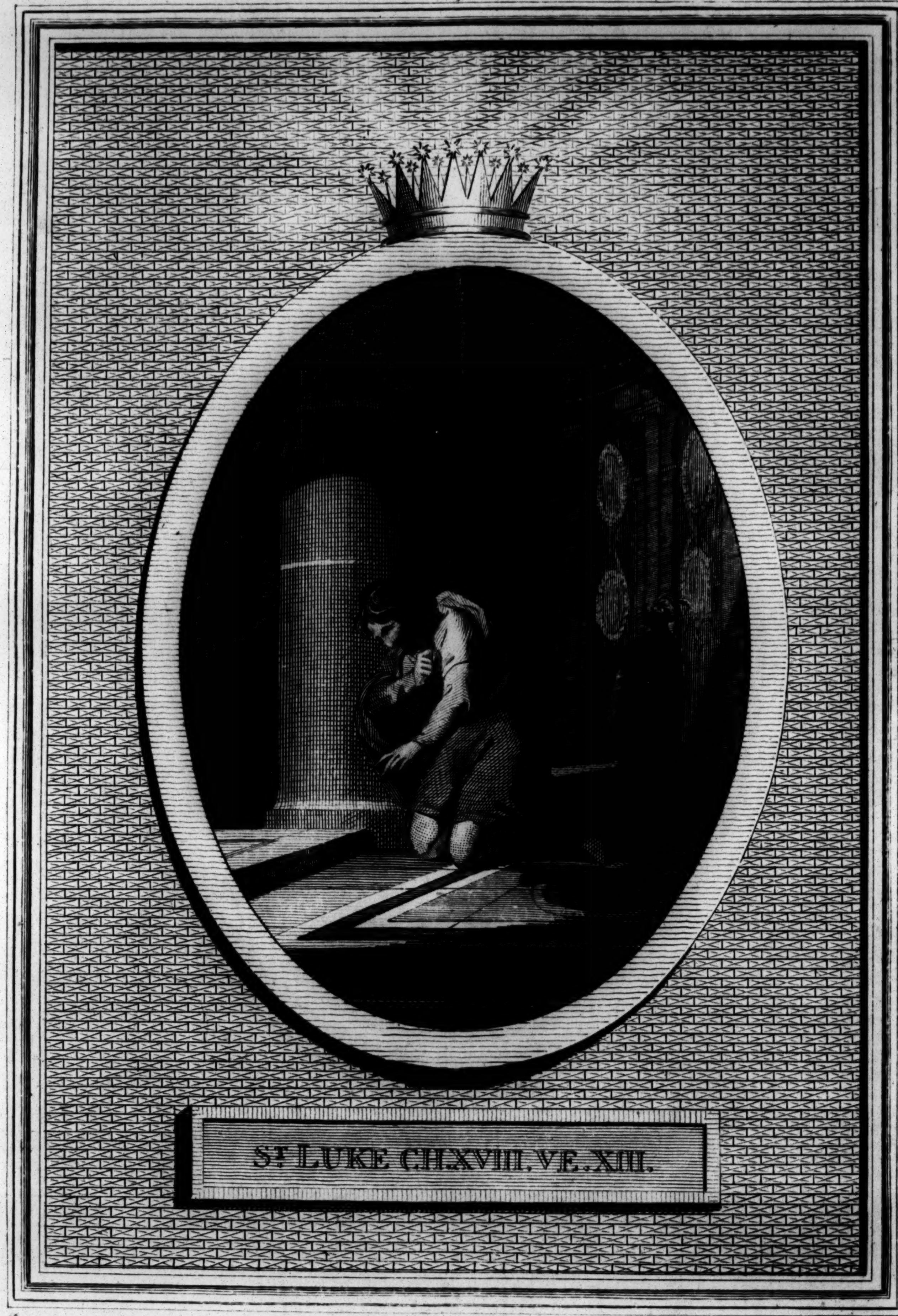

St LUKE CH.XVIII. VE. XIII.

Richter del. *Page sc.*

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3 And there was a widow in that city; and ſhe came unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of mine adverſary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he ſaid within himſelf, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet becauſe this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me.

6 And the Lord ſaid, Hear what the unjuſt judge ſaith.

7 And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them.

8 I tell you, that he will avenge them ſpeedily. Neverthelecſs, when the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he ſpake this parable unto certain which truſted in themſelves, that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phariſee, and the other a Publican.

11 The Phariſee ſtood, and prayed thus with himſelf, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I faſt twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs.

13 And the Publican, ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner.

14 I tell you, This man went down to his

ſecret, ſocial, or public, when opportunity is afforded: and they ought not to faint, through delays, diſappointments, difficulties, temptations, perſecutions, ſharp conflicts with in-dwelling ſin, or even being foiled repeatedly in thoſe conflicts. But we muſt alſo allow, that Chriſt, in giving this general rule, ſeems to have had a particular reference to the ſtate of his diſciples, under thoſe perſecutions, which awaited them from the unbelieving Jews, previous to his coming with power to ſet up his kingdom, and execute vengeance on their enemies. For this, they were to pray without fainting, to encourage which, He ſtated the caſe of a magiſtrate, who neither regarded the favour, will, or glory of God, nor feared his wrath; and who cared not for the welfare, or the opinion of men; but determined cauſes, merely as ſuited his intereſt, conveniency or caprice. To this man a widow made application for protection againſt her oppreſſor, and for his puniſhment; and as often as he appeared in public, ſhe renewed her demand: but as he cared not for the wrong done her; as he could hope for no profit, and had nothing to fear from her; ſo for a time he refuſed to do her juſtice. At length however he revolved the matter in his mind; and though he was conſcious of, and even gloried in, diſregarding both God and man: yet he determined to defend her, and puniſh her adverſary, leſt ſhe ſhould weary, or *ſtun him*, with her continual applications. Now if an unjuſt judge, without any other motive, might be induced to do an action contrary to his character and inclination, for a perſon whom he neither loved nor feared, merely by an importunity, which he hated: how much more would God, who is perfect in juſtice truth and goodneſs, anſwer the perſevering prayers of his people, whom he loveth, (even thoſe prayers in which he delighteth,) by fulfilling thoſe promiſes, which he hath given for the glory of his name, and in ſuch interpoſitions as accord to his own holy excellency? He might indeed bear long with them, and leave them to pray for a long time, under troubles, and diſcouragements, to prove their ſincerity, and to increaſe their graces; but he would doubtleſs anſwer them in due time, deliver them from their afflictions, and *ſpeedily* avenge them on their enemies; (for vengeance belongeth to Him:) this will be ſpeedily; as it will come ſoon enough for every good purpoſe, and in a ſudden and unexpected manner. The concluding clauſe may be differently interpreted: probably our Lord meant, that when he came to deliver the church, and to avenge his people on their Jewiſh perſecutors; he ſhould find but little faith in the land. The Jews would be hardened in unbelief; and the chriſtians, having been harraſſed by long perſecutions, would be ready to doubt of the performance of his word; whilſt many profeſſors would draw back to perdition. It may alſo refer to the general weakneſs of the faith of his tempted and afflicted people, whilſt they are waiting for Him to come to their relief. Some think that a great prevalence of infidelity will take place, juſt before Chriſt ſhall come to judge the world; (*Rev.* c. xx. v. 7—9:) as it is probable there will before the introduction of the millennium.

V. 10—14.] (Notes, &c. c. xiv. v. 7—11. c. xv.) The perſons, to whom our Lord ſpake this parable, were confident that they were righteous accepted of God, and his peculiar favourites; and they deſpiſed others, who did not comply with their rules, as vile, and unholy: probably they were of the ſect of the Phariſees, and depended on their exemption from groſs immoralities, their attendance on the externals of religion, and their exact obſervance of the traditions of the elders. But, though men differ in the ground of their ſelf-preference, and proud confidence in themſelves; yet if they deſpiſe others, as blind, ignorant, profligate, &c, and are ready to ſay "ſtand by thyſelf, I am holier or wiſer than "thou;" they belong to the ſame company; even though they truſt to an acquaintance with, and aſſent to an evangelical creed, inſtead of ſuperſtitious auſterities, or a form of godlineſs. To theſe perſons our Lord ſtated, that two men went up to the temple about the ſame time, to perform their devotions in the courts thereof;

houſe juſtified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.

15 And they brought unto him alſo infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* diſciples ſaw *it*, they rebuked them.

16 But Jeſus called them *unto him*, and ſaid, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.

18 And a certain ruler aſked him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? none *is* good, ſave one, *that is* God.

20 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he ſaid, All theſe have I kept from my youth up.

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the one being a Phariſee, whom they looked upon as models of piety, the other a publican, whom they regarded as the vileſt of ſinners. The Phariſee, being full of ſelf-confidence, ſtood boldly in ſome part of the court, “by himſelf,” at a diſtance from other worſhippers, that might be noticed, or that he might not be polluted by them. In this ſituation he addreſſed God, profeſſing to *thank him*, that he was not as other men are, enumerating ſeveral vices, from which he boaſted that he was free, and ſome ſuppoſed duties, in which he was ſcrupulouſly exact; and viewing the publican at a diſtance with contempt, and abhorrence, he thanked God, that he was not like him. This was the ſubſtance of his addreſs, in which there was in fact no prayer at all; for a proud man cannot be a ſincere ſupplicant to God. But a humble believer too will ſay “God I thank thee, that I am “not like other men,” meaning that the whole difference internal, and external, between him, and the vileſt of thoſe, who diſgrace, civil ſociety, or are cut off from it by the hand of the executioner, is owing wholly to the providential reſtraints, or the ſanctifying grace of God: but at the ſame time he will have abundance of ſins to confeſs with deep humiliation; he will feel himſelf a guilty, polluted, weak, fooliſh, indigent creature; he will not readily conclude any one to be viler than himſelf, all circumſtances conſidered; he will pity, and pray for the moſt abandoned, and hope that they are penitent, whenever there are favourable appearances; and he will feel, that he is ſtill liable to be tempted to the moſt atrocious crimes, unleſs the Lord uphold him. Whereas “God I thank thee,” was but a word of courſe, in the Phariſee's mouth, as it muſt be in that of every proud man who uſes it: he ſpake as if he had not been a ſinner, either by nature or practice, and ſcarce any man were like him; and as if he were in no danger at all of falling into temptation and ſin. He ſpake of the publican, as of one, for whom there was no pardon, or as if it had been impoſſible he ſhould repent: he deemed him an intruder into God's courts, whoſe preſence polluted them; and he could not expatiate ſufficiently on his own tranſcendant goodneſs, without contraſting it with his ſuppoſed extortion, and injuſtice: there was neither confeſſion, or petition in his pretended prayer; but he was in his own opinion “rich, increaſed with goods, and had “need of nothing.” But the whole of his boaſting was about a very ſmall matter: a man may be exempt from the groſs crimes of robbery, extortion, and adultery; and yet be covetous, unmerciful, contentious, revengeful, proud, envious, deceitful; in ſhort like ſatan in all the leading features of his character. He may uſe uncommanded auſterities, faſt twice a week, be ſcrupulouſly exact in leſſer duties; and yet be deſtitute of judgment, mercy and the love of God: nay he may be a vile hypocrite, a perjurer, and even a ſenſualiſt: he may not be “like that publican;” yet he may be far viler than he. So that the characters are ſufficiently diſtinct, though the Phariſee pretended to ſay “God I thank thee,” amidſt his boaſting, reviling, contumelious contempt, and cenſorious judgments of better men than himſelf. But whilſt the Phariſee was thus employed, the publican, knowing himſelf to be a very grievous offender, “ſtood afar off,” in ſome corner of the place, as unworthy to come near the other worſhippers, and eſpecially to approach “that “holy man,” the Phariſee: and though his burdened conſcience, and inward fear and diſtreſs conſtrained him to pray: yet he preſumed not to lift up his eyes unto heaven; but with down-caſt looks, as one overwhelmed with ſhame; and ſmiting upon his breaſt, as full of ſelf-abhorrence, and indignation at the recollection of his crimes, he only found courage to ſay, “God be merci-“ful to me a ſinner.” Theſe emphatical words, when really the language of the heart, imply humiliation for ſin, repentance, ſubmiſſion to God's righteouſneſs, faith, and hope in his mercy: and with them the publican left his cauſe with God, and returned home to his houſe. But our Lord aſſured thoſe, “who truſted in themſelves, “&c;” that he was juſtified, or counted a righteous perſon before God, “rather than,” or in preference to, “the other.” The Phariſee, relying on the merit of his own goodneſs, and puffed up with an opinion of his ſingular holineſs, remained under the condemnation of the law, and a ſtranger to the grace of the goſpel: but the publican, by confeſſing his guilt, and crying for mercy as a ſinner, became partaker of the bleſſings of the new covenant of mercy and grace. The concluding declaration hath before been conſidered.

V. 15—30.] (Notes, *Matt.* c. xix. v. 13—30. *Mark*, c. x. v. 13—31.)

22 Now when Jeſus heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Yet lackeſt thou one thing: ſell all that thou haſt, and diſtribute unto the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very ſorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jeſus ſaw that he was very ſorrowful, he ſaid, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25 For it is eaſier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard *it* ſaid, Who then can be ſaved?

27 And he ſaid, The things which are impoſſible with men are poſſible with God.

28 Then Peter ſaid, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, There is no man that hath left houſe, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's ſake.

30 Who ſhall not receive manifold more in this preſent time, and in the world to come life everlaſting.

31 Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and ſaid unto them, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man ſhall be accompliſhed.

32 For he ſhall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully intreated, and ſpitted on:

33 And they ſhall ſcourge *him*, and put him to death; and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

34 And they underſtood none of theſe things: and this ſaying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.

35 And it came to paſs, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man ſat by the way-ſide begging:

36 And hearing the multitude paſs by, he aſked what it meant.

37 And they told him, that Jeſus of Nazareth paſſeth by.

38 And he cried, ſaying, Jeſus, *thou* ſon of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he ſhould hold his peace: but he

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V. 31—34.] (*Mark*, c. x. v. 32—34.)
V. 35—43.] (Notes, &c. *Mark*, c. x. v. 46—52.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We may learn the vaſt importance of inſtant perſevering prayer; the hindrances we ſhall meet with in it, and the diſcouragements often connected with it, from theſe repeated exhortations, "to pray always, and not "to faint:" and we are inſtructed to learn wiſdom from every object, and every incident, by the animating deductions made from the conduct of the unjuſt judge. Alas, that there ſhould be ſo many men, even in authority, who "neither fear God, nor regard man," and who glory in their impiety, and iniquity! No wonder, that cruel oppreſſions, and unrighteous decrees abound in cities and provinces: but what will they do, when God ſhall cite them to his tribunal, to avenge on them the cauſe of thoſe, whom they have injured, "becauſe it "was in the power of their hand to do it?" Whether importunity, or any other addreſs to their ſelf-love, will induce them to do juſtice, or not: yet God's elect may make their appeal to him, and he will ſurely plead their cauſe, againſt all their adverſaries. But we cannot conclude ourſelves to be of that number, except we are a praying people; yea unleſs "we pray always, and do "not faint," having no other hope or refuge than the Lord. We muſt not ſeek vengeance on *our enemies*; but ſhould rather pray for their converſion; yet we may, and ought to deſire the deſtruction of Chriſt's enemies, and the deliverance of his church from thoſe, who oppreſs or corrupt her. Whether we ſeek to be delivered from temptation, to have our iniquities ſubdued, and our ſouls comforted; or whether we pray for the peace of the church; we ſhall at length be anſwered, if we be earneſt, and importunate: and however long the Lord "bear with us," our requeſts will be granted in the beſt time, and perhaps when we leaſt expect it. However infidels may deride and defy the threatened judgments of God; (2 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 3, 4;) or however chriſtians may be tempted to deſpond concerning his promiſes, yet will they all be accompliſhed in the appointed ſeaſon: and the ſurpriſe of terror on the one hand, and that of joy on the other will then be nearly equal. But let us beware of preſenting proud devotions to the Lord: too many of different deſcriptions, "truſt in themſelves that they "are righteous," and take it for granted that they are the peculiar, and almoſt excluſive favourites of heaven; whilſt their contempt of others proves the haughtineſs, and uncharitableneſs of their hearts. Such men may addreſs the Lord in a high tone of confidence, and familiarity; they may profeſs to give him the glory: they may aver, that they are not extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or like the poor Publicans around them; and they may glory in their gifts, forms, notions, auſterities, &c; yet it will be proved, that "they have exalted them-cried ſo much the more, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.]

40 And Jeſus ſtood and commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, he aſked him,

41 Saying, What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee? And he ſaid, Lord, that I may receive my ſight.

42 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Receive thy ſight: thy faith hath ſaved thee.

43 And immediately he received his ſight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they ſaw *it*, gave praiſe unto God.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains 1ſt. The converſion of Zaccheus the Publican, 1---10. *2d. The parable of the nobleman going to receive a kingdom, the pounds entruſted to his ſervants, the account required of them, and the puniſhment of his enemies,* 11---27. *3d. Jeſus entering Jeruſalem riding on an aſs; anſwering the objections of the Phariſees; weeping over the city, and predicting it's deſtruction; driving the traders from the temple; watched by his enemies, and heard attentively by the people,* 28---48.

AND *Jeſus* entered and paſſed through Jericho.

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named

"ſelves," and therefore God will certainly abaſe them; and all their revilings, calumnies, and raſh judgments, &c, will fall on their own heads, and increaſe their final ſhame, and everlaſting contempt; except they are previouſly humbled in deep repentance, and come with deſpiſed Publicans for unmerited mercy. But "bleſſed "are the poor in ſpirit, for their's is the kingdom of "of God." The man, who abhors and condemns himſelf, who approaches God with deep ſelf-abaſement, and reverence of his holy majeſty; who looks into his paſt life, his preſent conduct, his heart, his duties, with humiliation of ſoul; who thinks every one better than himſelf, and muſt deſpair, were it not for the goſpel report of free ſalvation; who applies for mercy with a trembling heart, and with earneſt deſires, in the way, and through the name, that God hath revealed: this man will ſooner be heard and accepted, when he breathes out, "God be merciful to me a ſinner," than any oſtentatious Phariſee, with his long prayers, or boaſted ſervices: this is the path to honour, glory, immortality and eternal life; whilſt "pride goeth before deſtruction, "and a haughty ſpirit before a fall." Let us then take heed not to glory in ourſelves, or to deſpiſe others; let us alſo be careful not to diſcourage the weak, or the ignorant, or to deter men from coming themſelves, or bringing their children unto Chriſt; and let us recollect, that "except we receive the kingdom of God, as a "little child, we ſhall in no wiſe enter therein."

The beſt obedience of mere man to the holy commandment of God, muſt leave him under condemnation, inſtead of entitling him to the inheritance of eternal life. Men may compliment one another, as good; but in fact there is none good, no not one, our glorious Emmanuel alone excepted: the more confident they are, that they have kept all the commandments, or any of them from their youth; the plainer it is, that they lack underſtanding in the ſpiritual meaning of them; and that they are ſtrangers to repentance, to faith, to their true character, their own hearts, and their need of a free ſalvation. Their boaſted obedience alſo, when brought to the touchſtone will be found a mere outſide ſhew: the love of the world, in ſome form or other, lies at the root of their flouriſhing gourd, and will ſhortly wither it. Proſperity, authority, and reputation tend to feed this ruinous ſelf-flattery, as well as an attachment to earthly objects: many, who have ſerious thoughts depart very ſorrowful, becauſe they are very rich, and unwilling to part with, or diſtribute, their idolized treaſures, at the command and for the ſake of Chriſt. So that it would be impoſſible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; were it not, that with Him all things are poſſible. But we are as backward to learn the intended leſſons from the humiliation, the crucifixion, and the reſurrection of Chriſt; as the diſciples were to regard his declarations concerning thoſe events: and for the ſame reaſon; even becauſe ſelf-love, and a deſire of worldly objects, cloſe our underſtandings, and warp our judgments, ſo that we are left in the dark about the plain evident meaning of the ſcriptures, whilſt we are endeavouring to ſpy out ſome hidden ſenſe, that accords better to our pre-conceived opinions. Were it not for this, we ſhould all ſee, that we beſt conſult our preſent comfort, as well as our eternal good; when we renounce any earthly poſſeſſion, or enjoyment, at Chriſt's command, and for his ſake. Would we then rightly underſtand theſe things, we muſt come to him, like the blind man, earneſtly beſeeching him to open our eyes, and to ſhew us more and more clearly, the excellency of his precepts, and the preciouſneſs of his ſalvation: and then being ſaved by faith we ſhall learn to follow Him, glorifying God; and his other diſciples alſo witneſſing the change, will praiſe God continually on our behalf.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1—10.] Zaccheus ſeems to have farmed the taxes of a certain diſtrict; and he was therefore "the chief among the publicans;" having many others under him, who either rented of him ſmaller portions, or were employed as his ſervants to collect the taxes. Probably he was poſſeſſed of conſiderable property, before he engaged in this employment; as large ſecurities were required of thoſe, who thus farmed the revenue under the Roman governors; but he had doubtleſs greatly increaſed his wealth by this lucrative occupation. He ſeems not to have had much ſerious concern about religion, previous to our Lord's coming to Jericho; and his contrivance to get a ſight of him was probably the

Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he ſought to ſee Jeſus who he was: and could not for the preſs, becauſe he was little of ſtature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a ſycamore tree to ſee him: for he was to paſs that *way*.

5 And when Jeſus came to the place, he looked up, and ſaw him, and ſaid unto him, Zaccheus, make haſte, and come down; for to day I muſt abide at thy houſe.

6 And he made haſte, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they ſaw *it*, they all murmured, ſaying, That he was gone to be gueſt with a man that is a ſinner.

8 And Zaccheus ſtood, and ſaid unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore *him* four-fold.

9 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe, foraſmuch as he alſo is a ſon of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.

11 And as they heard theſe things, he added and ſpake a parable, becauſe he was nigh to Jeruſalem, and becauſe they thought that the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear.

12 He ſaid therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himſelf a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten ſervants, and delivered them ten pounds, and ſaid unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſage after him, ſaying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15 And it came to paſs, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded theſe ſervants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the firſt, ſaying, Lord thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he ſaid unto him, Well, thou

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reſult of curioſity alone. In what manner the words of Jeſus affected his mind we cannot tell; but without all doubt they were attended with a divine influence to humble, and change his heart, and to make way for the exerciſe of true repentance and living faith: he therefore gladly welcomed Chriſt to his houſe, and doubtleſs was further inſtructed, convinced, and determined by his diſcourſe. Whilſt the Phariſees, and others, as uſual, murmured at his inviting himſelf to be the gueſt of a man, whoſe employment and character were deemed ſo infamous, in preference to any of the prieſts, or Levites, &c, who reſided there: Zaccheus ſtood forth, in the midſt of the company; and avowing the change, that had taken place in his judgment and diſpoſition, he profeſſed his purpoſe of immediately devoting half his wealth to charitable uſes; and of making four-fold reſtitution to all thoſe whom he had wronged. The Publicans were uſed to charge the people more, than the real amount of their taxes; and then, if they refuſed to pay it, they “falſely accuſed them,” to the Romans, as diſobedient to their authority; and thus they obtained the aſſiſtance of the military to inforce their exorbitant demands: in every inſtance, that Zaccheus had thus taken any thing from any man, “by falſe accuſation,” he was determined to make the reſtitution required by the law in caſe of theft. It hath been argued, that he could not have got much of his wealth by extortion, or his eſtate would not have ſufficed for ſuch a reſtitution, after half of it had been given to the poor; eſpecially if he reſerved any part of it for himſelf: but it is more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he did not give half to the poor ’till after reſtitution had been made; as he could not previouſly conſider this wealth *as his own*, even to give away: and his previous property might alſo be conſiderable. However it is probable, that he lay under a worſe character than he really deſerved: yet the event ſeems to have been intended as an illuſtrious triumph of mercy and grace; and the whole narration implies that he was previouſly a bad man, as well as one of great wealth. But Jeſus, knowing the ſincerity and humility of his profeſſed ſubjection to the goſpel, declared, “that ſalvation was *that day* come “to his houſe;” he, and his family had before been eſtranged from it, but it was now come thither: “foraſmuch as he alſo was a ſon of Abraham,” not only according to the fleſh, but as being now made partaker of Abraham’s faith, and privileges: for this was indeed the very end for which He, “the Son of man,” was come into the world, even to ſeek out, and ſave loſt ſinners. (c. v. ver. 31, 32.)

V. 11—27.] This parable in general coincides with that of the talents, (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 14—30:) but in ſome things a difference may be marked. Our Lord now drew near to Jeruſalem, and his attendants, who were numerous, ſuppoſed that he was about to avow himſelf the Meſſiah, and to ſet up his kingdom in outward authority, and majeſty, according to their ideas of “the kingdom of God:” but to obviate ſuch erroneous concluſions, he gave them a parabolical repregood ſervant: becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the ſecond came, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he ſaid likewiſe to him, Be thou alſo over five cities.

20 And another came, ſaying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.

21 For I feared thee, becauſe thou art an auſtere man; thou takeſt up that thou layedſt not down, and reapeſt that thou didſt not ſow.

22 And he ſaith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked ſervant. Thou kneweſt that I was an auſtere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not ſow.

23 Wherefore then gaveſt not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with uſury?

24 And he ſaid unto them that ſtood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they ſaid unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I ſay unto you, That unto every one which hath ſhall be given: and from him that hath not, even that he hath ſhall be taken away from him.

27 But thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay *them* before me.

28 And when he had thus ſpoken, he went before, aſcending up to Jeruſalem.

29 And it came to paſs, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he ſent two of his diſciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over againſt *you*; in the which, at your entering, ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man ſat: looſe him, and bring *him hither*.

31 And if any man aſk you, Why do ye looſe *him?* thus ſhall ye ſay unto him, Becauſe the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were ſent went their way, and found even as he had ſaid unto them.

33 And as they were looſing the colt, the owners thereof ſaid unto them, Why looſe ye the colt?

34 And they ſaid, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jeſus: and they caſt their garments upon the colt, and they ſet Jeſus thereon.

36 And as they went, they ſpread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the deſcent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the diſciples began to rejoice and praiſe God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had ſeen;

38 Saying, Bleſſed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the higheſt.

39 And ſome of the Phariſees from among the multitude ſaid unto him, Maſter, rebuke thy diſciples.

40 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I tell you, that if theſe ſhould hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out.

ſentation of what was about to take place in thoſe reſpects. The nobleman ſignifies Chriſt himſelf, aſcending into heaven, to be exalted on the mediatorial throne, until his coming to judgment. The ten ſervants denotes his profeſſed diſciples, who were few in compariſon of the multitudes of his enemies, or of his ſubjects in the heavenly world. The pound given to each of them to occupy, or trade with, till his return, (value about 7l. ſterling,) repreſents the gifts, abilities, or poſſeſſions entruſted to each perſon, in the proper uſe of which, they may prove themſelves faithful ſervants, glorify their Lord, and do good, during their continuance on earth. The citizens, who hated him, repreſent eſpecially the Jewiſh nation, who hated the Perſon, doctrine, and kingdom of Chriſt, and did all they could to prevent it's eſtabliſhment. His return, after he had received the kingdom, ſeems to have had ſome reference to his coming to take vengeance on the Jews, &c: but it alſo repreſents the final judgment of all men. The account required accords almoſt exactly with what hath been already conſidered: except that, with the ſame ſum entruſted, ſome ſervants had gained more, ſome leſs, and were rewarded in proportion: and that the puniſhment of the avowed enemies of Chriſt, as well as that of hypocritical profeſſors, is repreſented.

V. 28—40.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxi. v. 1—16. *Mark*, c. xi. v. 1—11.)

41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

42 Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days ſhall come upon thee, that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide.

44 And ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another; becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation.

45 And he went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold therein, and them that bought;

46 Saying unto them, It is written, My houſe is the houſe of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the chief of the people, ſought to deſtroy him;

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

V. 41—44.] When Jeſus approached Jeruſalem, inſtead of being affected by the proſpect of thoſe indignities, and ſufferings, which there awaited him; he foreſaw the miſeries coming on that ungrateful, and perſecuting city, by the awful juſtice of God, with tears of melting compaſſion: ſaying, as with a wiſh or ardent deſire, expreſſive of his deep concern, "if thou hadſt, "&c," or, "Oh, that thou hadſt known, in this thy "day," (the time when the city was honoured and favoured with the preſence of her King, Meſſiah, the Son of God;) "the things, which belonged to thy peace," or proſperity! But that day was then expired, her doom was paſſed, her eyes were blinded, and every thing conducive to her welfare was judicially kept out of her ſight. Our Lord therefore concluded with predicting the ſiege and entire deſtruction of the city, and the miſerable havock made of its devoted inhabitants: becauſe they knew not the time of their gracious viſitation; but had rejected, and were about to crucify, their King.

V. 45—48.] (Notes, &c. *Mark,* c. xi. v. 15—18.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord illuſtrates by facts what he declares in words, concerning the omnipotency of his grace, and the exceeding riches of his pardoning love. (c. xviii. v. 24—27.) Many perſons are brought into the places where Jeſus diſpenſes his bleſſings, without any deſign of obtaining a ſhare of them: and curioſity, though idle and vain, is often over-ruled to bring men acquainted with the goſpel. Whatever puts a ſinner, as it were, in the Saviour's way, is a probable means of doing him good. Where the goſpel is preached, Jeſus ſtands and knocks at the door of a man's heart, demanding admiſſion, propoſing to be his gueſt, and promiſing a royal recompence for his entertainment: but unleſs his grace have prepared the heart for his reception, no one will "make haſte to "receive him joyfully:" when therefore this event takes place, though Phariſees murmur, angels rejoice, adoring the Redeemer's condeſcenſion, and congratulating the ſinner's felicity. Repentance is not to be eſtimated by terrors, or fears, but by its effects: where it is genuine, a new judgment and diſpoſition are produced, a new character is formed, and a new life is entered upon. The penitent ſinner gladly welcomes Chriſt; and whilſt he accepts of his free ſalvation, he devotes himſelf to his ſervice. If he poſſeſſes wealth, he will immediately think of becoming a faithful ſteward: and though he may not be called actually to leave all, and follow his Lord, (c. xviii. v. 22;) yet he will begin, without any expreſs command, to employ a large part of it on charitable uſes, in proportion to the degree of his faith and love. If the true penitent be conſcious of having defrauded others; he will not deem any thing his own, till he have made ample reſtitution, according to his ability and opportunity. When we ſee ſuch "fruits meet for "repentance," we may chearfully conclude, that ſalvation is come to the ſinner's heart, and that he is become a ſon of Abraham by faith in Jeſus Chriſt: and we may hope that mercy is intended to his family alſo. What thanks then do we owe to Him, who "came to ſeek, "and ſave ſuch as were loſt!" If we are in the way of ſalvation, he hath ranſomed our ſouls, ſought us out, and ſaved us; and the ſame way is open even to extortioners, and harlots: we ſhould therefore gladly uſe every means, or countenance every endeavour to promote the preaching of the goſpel, even to the vileſt of ſinners, (c. xv,) for all objections to ſuch deſigns ariſe from the dominion, or the remainder, of phariſaical pride, and ſelf-preference.

It behoves us alſo well to ſtudy the nature of the Redeemer's kingdom, that we may underſtand our preſent ſituation, and form juſt expectations in reſpect of the future. Our bleſſed Lord is indeed eſtabliſhed on his glorious throne; and it is vain for "his citizens," to ſend a meſſage after him, refuſing to ſubmit to his authority: yet many perſons, even from pretended regard to the honour and worſhip of God, (like the Jews of old,) ſpeak as if this matter was left to their option: they ſeem to think, that they may chooſe their own way of approaching God, or entering heaven; and might determine for themſelves by what judge, or according to what rule, their final doom ſhall be determined. Whereas theſe things are immutably ſettled, whether they chooſe to ſubmit or to rebel; and all, who will not have the Saviour to reign over them, ſhall be puniſhed as enemies to his Perſon, and kingdom; of which awful doom the vengeance executed on the unbelieving Jews was an

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Anſwering thoſe, who demanded of him, by what authority he acted; and ſpeaking the parable of the vineyard let out to wicked huſbandmen, 1---19. *2d. Shewing the lawfulneſs of paying tribute to Ceſar,* 20---26. *3d. Obviating the Sadducees' objection to the doctrine of the reſurrection, and putting all his adverſaries to ſilence,* 27---40. *4th. Enquiring of them how Chriſt was both David's Son, and David's Lord; and warning the people againſt the ambitious, and hypocritical Scribes,* 41---47. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxi. v.* 23---46. *c. xxii. v.* 15---46. *c. xxiii. Mark. c. xi. v.* 27---33. *c. xii.)*

AND it came to paſs, *that* on one of thoſe days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the goſpel, the chief prieſts and the ſcribes came upon *him*, with the elders,

2 And ſpake unto him, ſaying, Tell us, By what authority doeſt thou theſe things? or, Who is he that gave thee this authority?

3 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo aſk you one thing; and anſwer me.

4 The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay, Why then believed ye him not?

6 But and if we ſay, Of men; all the people will ſtone us: for they be perſuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they anſwered, That they could not tell whence *it was*.

8 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

9 Then began he to ſpeak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vine-

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earneſt and a ſhadow. Alas, the number even of his profeſſed ſervants is very ſmall, in proportion to that of his enemies of various deſcriptions: and their ability is often little, compared with the talents, and poſſeſſions, which ungodly men abuſe. Yet if in humble faith, chearful diligence, and patient hope, they occupy with their little, till their Lord comes; their reward ſhall be exceeding great, and exactly proportioned to the improvement made: though every faithful ſervant will allow, that the power, the opportunity, and the will to improve them, were wholly from the Lord; and that "his pound "hath gained the ten pounds." This union of faithfulneſs, diligence, and humility enſures a gracious acceptance; to every ſuch perſon the Lord when he cometh will ſay, "well done thou good ſervant; becauſe thou haſt "been faithful in a little, have thou authority over ten "cities." But whilſt ſuch views of the Redeemer's abundant grace will encourage the humble believer to increaſing diligence: hypocrites will be deterred from activity by hard thoughts of him, and a perſuaſion, that his ſervice is unprofitable. Whatever excuſes ſuch men now make for their indolence, or avarice, their mouths will ſoon be ſtopped; and their unimproved advantages will be taken from them, to enrich the faithful ſervants, "for unto every one that hath ſhall be given and he "ſhall have abundance; and from him that hath not, "even that he hath ſhall be taken away from him."

Would we then have confidence before Chriſt at his coming, we ſhould now obſerve his directions, and rely on his promiſes: and when "the Lord hath need of "ought" belonging to us, we ſhould readily devote it to his ſervice. But what will be the feelings of the multitude of the diſciples, when they ſhall ſee the Lord return in his glory to judge the world? How will they then "rejoice and praiſe God with a loud voice, for all "the mighty works, which they have ſeen!" In anticipation of this joy let us now gladly welcome every diſplay of his grace, in the converſion of ſinners, and the ſpread of his goſpel, exulting in the triumphs of our King, who cometh in the name of the Lord, and rejoicing that "there is peace for man in heaven, and glory "in the higheſt." They, who continue to object to ſuch ſongs of praiſe to Jeſus, for the ſucceſs of his goſpel, will wail and lament, when he ſhall appear to complete his people's ſalvation: and if there were none on earth to adore the diſplay of the divine perfections in the work of our redemption; the very ſtones muſt cry out, and upbraid the ingratitude and inſenſibility of mankind. But who can behold the holy Jeſus weeping over the city, where his precious blood was about to be ſhed, in the proſpect of the miſeries awaiting his inſulting murderers; without perceiving that the Image of God, in human nature, conſiſts very much in expanded benevolence, and melting compaſſion to the miſerable, even when their miſeries are moſt juſtly deſerved? Surely then, thoſe perſons, who take up certain doctrines of the goſpel in ſuch a manner, as to have their hearts rendered by them more callous towards their fellow ſinners; and who, (from topics grounded on God's *ſecret* purpoſes,) object to compaſſion for periſhing ſinners, or prayers for men in general, &c, have far more of the Phariſee in them, than of "the mind that was in Chriſt Jeſus." But let every one apply his mind to know, in the day of his viſitation, "the things, which belong to his eternal "peace: for though Jeſus wept over Jeruſalem, yet he did not fail to execute vengeance upon it; and though "he delighteth not in the death of a ſinner; but rather "that he ſhould repent and live;" yet he will ſurely accompliſh his moſt awful threatenings on all thoſe, who neglect his great ſalvation. May he then come, and cleanſe our hearts by his Spirit, that they be a holy temple unto the Lord: may he purify his church, and his holy ordinances, from all thoſe practices, and perſons, which pervert, or defile them! May his obſtinate ene-

yard,

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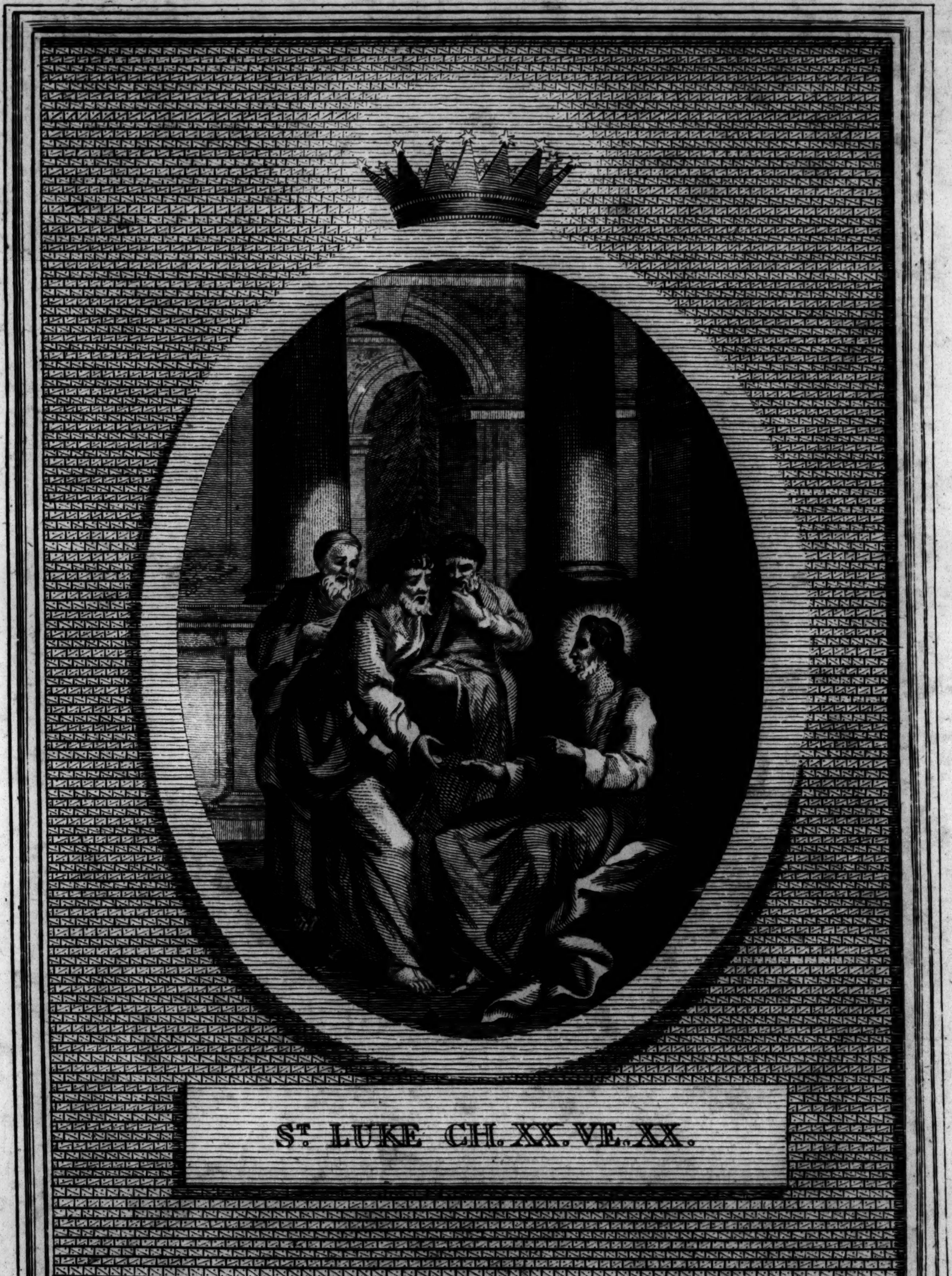

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yard, and let it forth to huſbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at the ſeaſon he ſent a ſervant to the huſbandmen, that they ſhould give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the huſbandmen beat him, and ſent *him* away empty.

11 And again he ſent another ſervant; and they beat him alſo, and intreated *him* ſhamefully, and ſent *him* away empty.

12 And again he ſent the third: and they wounded him alſo, and caſt *him* out.

13 Then ſaid the Lord of the vineyard, What ſhall I do? I will ſend my beloved Son: it may be they will reverence *him* when they ſee him.

14 But when the huſbandmen ſaw him, they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 So they caſt him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What therefore ſhall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He ſhall come and deſtroy theſe huſbandmen, and ſhall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it*, they ſaid, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and ſaid, What is this then that is written, The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner?

18 Whoſoever ſhall fall upon that ſtone ſhall be broken; but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 And the chief prieſts and the ſcribes the ſame hour ſought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had ſpoken this parable againſt them.

20 And they watched *him*, and ſent forth ſpies, which ſhould feign themſelves juſt men, that they might take hold of his words, that ſo they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou ſayeſt and teacheſt rightly, neither accepteſt thou the perſon *of any*, but teacheſt the way of God truly;

22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Ceſar, or no?

23 But he perceived their craftineſs, and ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me?

24 Shew me a penny. Whoſe image and ſuperſcription hath it? They anſwered and ſaid, Ceſar's.

25 And he ſaid unto them, Render therefore unto Ceſar the things which be Ceſar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his anſwer, and held their peace.

27 Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any reſurrection, and they aſked him,

28 Saying, Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and died without children.

30 And the ſecond took her to wife, and he died childleſs.

31 And the third took her; and in like manner the ſeven alſo: and they left no children, and died.

32 Laſt of all the woman died alſo.

33 Therefore in the reſurrection whoſe wife of them is ſhe? for ſeven had her to wife.

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mies be diſappointed, and not find what to do; whilſt ſinners on every ſide become attentive to his words of truth, and ſalvation!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XX.] Men often pretend to enquire into the evidences of Revelation and the truth of the goſpel; when they are ſecretly determined not to ſubmit to their authority, and are in fact only ſeeking plauſible apologies for their infidelity and diſobedience. But the fear of man and regard to their reputation deter them from avowing the real ſentiments, and purpoſes of their hearts. Such objectors ſhould be anſwered with pertinence, brevity, and caution: it is doing them too much honour in general, to enter into a formal controverſy with them: the beſt way is to addreſs their conſciences by apt illuſtrations; and ſo to detect thoſe corrupt affections of the heart, or ſins of the life, which are the real grounds of their diſlike to the Bible; but which they endeavour to conceal even from themſelves, "flattering themſelves in their own "ſight, until their iniquity be found to be hateful."

34 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed at the buſh, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

39 Then certain of the ſcribes anſwering, ſaid, Maſter, thou haſt well ſaid.

40 And after that they durſt not aſk him any *queſtion at all*.

41 And he ſaid unto them, How ſay they that Chriſt is David's ſon?

42 And David himſelf ſaith in the book of Pſalms, the LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43 Till I make thine enemies thy footſtool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his ſon?

45 Then in the audience of all the people, he ſaid unto his diſciples,

46 Beware of the ſcribes, which deſire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the higheſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the chief rooms at feaſts;

47 Which devour widows houſes, and for a ſhew make long prayers: the ſame ſhall receive greater damnation.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains Jeſus, 1ſt. Approviug the widow, who caſt two mites into the treaſury, 1---4. *2d. Predicting thoſe events, which were connected with, and ſubſequent to, the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; with ſuitable exhortations and promiſes: and a general account of his procedure, on the days preceding his crucifixion,* 5---38. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxiv. Mark, c. xii. v.* 41---44. *c. xiii.)*

AND he looked up, and ſaw the rich men caſting their gifts into the treaſury.

2 And he ſaw alſo a certain poor widow caſting in thither two mites.

3 And he ſaid, Of a truth I ſay unto you, That this poor widow hath caſt in more than they all.

4 For all theſe have of their abundance caſt in unto the offerings of God: but ſhe of her penury hath caſt in all the living that ſhe had.

5 And as ſome ſpake of the temple, how

In this way it may ſometimes be ſhewn, that they reſemble, in pride, perverſeneſs, ingratitude, enmity to God, and averſion to his holy ſervice, thoſe men who murdered the prophets, and crucified the Son of God; that they might eſtabliſh their own authority, and reputation, and live according to their own ungodly luſts without controul. But it behoves every one of us, who are favoured with the word and ordinances of God, to enquire, whether we make a proper uſe of our advantages, and act conſiſtent with our profeſſed ſubjection to the goſpel? For awful will be the doom, not only of builders, that reject Him, who is the Head-Stone of the corner, but of thoſe, who profeſs to "reverence the Son," and yet render not the fruits of the vineyard in due ſeaſon. When miniſters ſucceed in applying the word to the conſciences of obſtinate tranſgreſſors; they will be ſure to exaſperate them: and in return they will watch their opportunity, and aſſume every diſguiſe, to faſten ſome charge upon their characters, or to expoſe them to the diſpleaſure of the ruler. But the wiſdom from above will direct thoſe, who "teach the way of God truly," to avoid their ſnares; and they will inſtruct men in their duty to God, to the king, and to all men, in ſo clear a manner; that "they who are of the contrary part may have no evil thing to ſay of them." Ungodly men continually grow more and more like to "their father the devil, and the luſts of their father they will do;" but let us ſeek to be daily "transformed in the renewing of our minds," that we may be made meet for, and counted worthy to obtain the heavenly inheritance, where we ſhall be "equal to the angels, as the children of God, and the children of the reſurrection;" and "where the Lord himſelf will be our everlaſting Light," and our all-ſufficient Portion. Thither our Forerunner, the Son of David and his Lord, hath for us entered, who is at the right hand of God, and ſhall there remain, till all enemies be put under his feet. Let us therefore fear being found amongſt them; as all hypocritical profeſſors will be, and all infidels, and profligates: and let us beg of God to preſerve us from pride, ambition, covetouſneſs, and every evil thing; and to teach us to ſeek that honour which cometh from Him alone.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 5. *Goodly*, &c.] Joſephus ſays, that ſome of the ſtones of the temple were forty-five cubits long, five high, and ſix broad; and that the marble of it was ſo white, that it appeared at a diſtance like a mountain of ſnow: and ſeveral writers have mentioned it was adorned with goodly ſtones and gifts, he ſaid,

6 *As for* theſe things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.

7 And they aſked him ſaying, Maſter, but when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſign *will there be* when theſe things ſhall come to paſs?

8 And he ſaid, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

9 But when ye ſhall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs; but the end *is* not by and by.

10 Then ſaid he unto them, Nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom:

11 And great earthquakes ſhall be in divers places, and famines, and peſtilences; and fearful ſights, and great ſigns ſhall there be from heaven.

12 But before all theſe, they ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's ſake.

13 And it ſhall turn to you for a teſtimony.

14 Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer:

15 For I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor reſiſt.

16 And ye ſhall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends, and *ſome* of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to death.

17 And ye ſhall be hated of all *men* for my name's ſake.

18 But there ſhall not an hair of your head periſh;

19 In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.

20 And when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies, then know that the deſolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midſt of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 For theſe be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days! for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they ſhall fall by the edge of the

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various oblations of maſſy gold, which were affixed to the walls and pillars, beſides the immenſe riches contained in the treaſuries.

V. 11. *Fearful*, &c.] Joſephus gives a very particular account of many terrible appearances in the heavens; as a comet like a flaming ſword waving over Jeruſalem, and the appearance of contending armies in the air: theſe and many other extraordinary events excited great conſternation among the Jews, and were intimations of their approaching miſeries.

V. 15. *I will*, &c.] (*Exod.* c. iv. ver. 11. *Prov.* c. ii. v. 6. *Acts*, c. ii. v. 4. *Eph.* c. vi. v. 19. *Col.* c. iv. ver. 3.) In theſe, and many other texts, it is declared to belong to Jehovah to make, or open man's mouth, to give him wiſdom, and utterance, &c: yet Jeſus, when in his loweſt humiliation on earth, promiſed to give to his diſciples "a mouth and wiſdom, "&c." Such texts, though ſeldom produced in proof of Chriſt's Deity, are of vaſt importance: and the inference from them is perhaps leſs liable to be evaded, than thoſe which are deduced from expreſs declarations on that ſubject: as the learned, and ingenious enemies to that fundamental doctrine of chriſtianity have long been hunting for various readings, and perplexing criticiſms upon thoſe texts which they are aware will be brought againſt them: and are therefore moſt vulnerable where the attack is the leaſt expected. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. v. 17—20.)

V. 19. *In*, &c.] The apoſtles and other chriſtians were here exhorted to exerciſe patient reſignation to the will of God, patience in waiting the performance of his promiſes, patient continuance in well doing, and meek long-ſuffering under injuries: this would be *their* patience, that, required of them and peculiar to them: and by means of it, they would "poſſeſs their ſouls;" they would be enabled to preſerve the calmneſs, and chearfulneſs of their minds, amidſt their troubles; and be kept from being hurried about by violent terrors, and unruly paſſions, or driven from their hope in, and obedience unto God.

V. 24. *And*, &c.] Eleven hundred thouſand Jews are recorded to have fallen in the ſiege of Jeruſalem; beſides a vaſt multitude in other places: near an hundred thouſand were ſold for ſlaves, and reduced to the moſt abject captivity, in the moſt diſtant nations: the remains of that devoted nation have been diſperſed as capſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations: and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

25 And there ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the moon, and in the ſtars; and upon the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity; the ſea and the waves roaring;

26 Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken.

27 And then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.

28 And when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he ſpake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees;

30 When they now ſhoot forth, ye ſee and know of your own ſelves that ſummer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily I ſay unto you, This generation ſhall not paſs away till all be fulfilled.

33 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away; but my words ſhall not paſs away.

34 And take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting, and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and *ſo* that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

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tives, or in a moſt dependant oppreſſed condition, through the kingdoms of the earth, and yet have been preſerved a diſtinct people for above 1700 years! This unparalleled event was doubtleſs intended, among other reaſons, that they might be undeniable witneſſes, or monuments of the truth of the ſcriptures; of that part which they reject, as well as of that which they retain. Jeruſalem has ever ſince been trodden under-foot, or governed with deſpotic ſway by the Gentiles; by the Romans, Saracens, Mamalucs, Franks, and Turks, who poſſeſs it to this day. A law was made by the Roman Victors forbidding any Jew to dwell in their ancient inheritance, or to come within ſight of Jeruſalem: the foundations of the old city were plowed up, and a new city was at length builded by the conquerors, called Elia; and an idolatrous temple was erected in the place, where the temple of Jehovah had ſtood. In the days of Conſtantine and afterwards, the city was indeed poſſeſſed by chriſtians among others; but they were chiefly the *Gentile* converts, and the Jews were driven thence with great ſeverity. Julian the Roman emperor, an apoſtate from chriſtianity, attempted to rebuild the temple, and to induce the Jews to ſettle there again, in expreſs contempt and defiance of this prophecy; but his impious attempt was repeatedly fruſtrated, by the eruption of balls of fire from the earth, which deſtroyed his workmen. Great pains were taken ſome ages after, and many bloody wars were waged, in order to reſcue this holy city from the hands of the infidels, and to eſtabliſh there a chriſtian empire: but the ſucceſs of theſe ruinous, and infatuated wars was always very imperfect and ſhort-lived; and in general, Mahometans, (who are no better than Pagans,) have had poſſeſſion of it; the few chriſtians, who reſide there have little more of their religion, than the name, and are moſt grievouſly oppreſſed by the Turks: and the *Jews*, who are eſpecially to be oppoſed *to the Gentiles*, have always been driven from their ancient city, by every ſeverity. "The times of the Gentiles" ſeem to ſignify the times, that the Gentiles are to keep poſſeſſion of Jeruſalem, namely till the Jews be converted to Chriſt: then their "times will be fulfilled;" probably the Jews will be reſtored to their own land, and vengeance will be taken on thoſe, who oppoſe their return, (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. xxxviii, xxxix *Dan.* c. xi. v. 40—45. *Zach.* c. xiv:) for theſe events ſeem to be predicted, as introductory to the calling of the nations into the church. (*Rom.* c. xi. v. 15—25.) However this prediction hath already been ſo remarkably accompliſhed; that it may be ſaid to contain a full demonſtration of the truth of the chriſtian religion. It is obſerved by many expoſitors, that all the three evangeliſts who recorded theſe predictions, were dead, before Jeruſalem was deſtroyed: but the fulfilment of the prophecy to this preſent day conveys the moſt unanſwerable proof of it's divine original: and I am verily convinced, that if men were as impartial and unprejudiced in their religious enquiries, as they are in mathematical reaſonings; no one, that well conſidered this prediction, and examined its accompliſhment, could any more doubt of the truth of the goſpel, than learned men do of the Theorems in Euclid.

V. 25—28.] Theſe expreſſions, of which ſome were literally verified in thoſe events, that preceded, attended, and followed the taking of Jeruſalem; and others, were figurative of the ſubverſion of the Jewiſh civil and religious eſtabliſhment, may alſo be conſidered as typical of the awful ſolemnities, which will uſher in Chriſt's appearance to judge the world: and as the ruin of the Jews procured a reſpite to the perſecuted chriſtians; ſo the tremendous events, which make way for the "perdition of ungodly men," will introduce the complete redemption of believers from death, and every enemy.

V. 34—36.] Similar exhortations have been conſidered in the parallel ſcriptures, which may be underſtood

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of man.

37 And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

CHAP. XXII.

Contains 1ſt. The chief prieſts plotting Chriſt's death, and Judas bargaining to betray him, 1---6. *2d. Jeſus eating the Paſſover with his diſciples, &c, inſtituting the Lord's ſupper, and converſing with them, on various ſubjects,* 7---38. *3d. His agony in the garden, his prayer, and exhortations to the apoſtles; and his being betrayed, apprehended, and led away to the high prieſt, &c,* 39---54. *4th. Peter's repeated denial of Chriſt, and his bitter weeping for that ſin,* 55---62. *5th. Jeſus mocked, inſulted, arraigned, and condemned, &c,* 63---71. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxvi. Mark, c. xiv.)*

NOW the feaſt of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Paſſover.

2 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

3 Then entered Satan into Judas ſurnamed Iſcariot, being of the number of the twelve.

4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief prieſts and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promiſed, and ſought opportunity to betray him unto them, in the abſence of the multitude.

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as addreſſed to the primitive chriſtians, who were waiting for thoſe awful events; but they are equally applicable to thoſe great concerns, in which all men are intereſted. All exceſs, in eating, drinking, and other animal indulgence, hath a tendency, not only to oppreſs and diſorder the body, but to ſtupify and darken the powers of the underſtanding, and to render the affections carnal, and torpid. So that theſe ſenſualities, as well as the cares attending the purſuit of wealth, &c, unfit men for religious duties, and make way for the day of evil coming upon them unawares. As the Roman armies invaded Judea, and beſieged Jeruſalem, when they were not expected; and the Jews were every where taken, as a bird in the ſnare of the fowler: ſo death ſurpriſes moſt "men "that dwell on the face of the whole earth," in the ſame unprepared ſtate; and ſo will the day of judgment. It behoved the diſciples then, and it behoves us alſo, to take heed, not to be ſeduced *at any time* into ſuch exceſs, or worldly cares; but to watch and pray inceſſantly againſt ſuch temptations, and that we may be graciouſly accounted meet and proper perſons to be preſerved from the common deſtruction of ſinners, and to ſtand accepted before the Judge at laſt.

V. 37, 38.] Theſe verſes ſhew us, in what manner Chriſt ſpent the laſt days, preceding his crucifixion; early every morning, he came to Jeruſalem, and ſpent the day in the temple; and in the evening he retired to Bethany, to lodge at the houſe of Lazarus and his ſiſters. The people from curioſity, conviction, or expectation early reſorted to attend on his inſtructions: yet when he would not aſſume the outward dignity of the regal character, but ſuffered himſelf to be apprehended by his enemies; they turned againſt him, and joined in demanding his crucifixion!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord particularly notices the ſmall oblations, which ſpring from the love of his name, in the hearts of his poor people; becauſe men are apt to deſpiſe, and diſcourage them: "for man looketh at the outward appear-"ance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." The ſpiritual mind will not be ſatisfied but with a city and a temple, whoſe foundations cannot be ſubverted, and whoſe ornaments cannot be removed; foreſeeing the time, when the faſhion of this world will paſs away. Inſtead of curious enquiries and ſpeculations, every wiſe man will take heed that he be not deceived, or led to countenance deceivers, in the great concerns of eternity. Whatever calamities may be in the world, or perſecutions in the church, before the end come; we are ſure that it will be well with thoſe, who ſerve the Lord; and their very trials ſhall turn to them for a teſtimony. We ſhould therefore ſettle it in our hearts not to be anxious about ſuch matters, or afraid leſt we ſhould be put to ſhame before our enemies: for the divine Saviour will give all his diſciples "a mouth, and wiſdom, which none of "their enemies ſhall be able to gainſay or reſiſt." Whatever treachery, cruelty, contempt, or enmity we may meet with from men of all ſorts, for his name's ſake; nothing can in the leaſt harm us. Let us then poſſeſs our ſouls in patience; knowing that we are thereunto called; even to ſuffer patiently, as well as to be unwearied in doing good. The performance of ancient prophecies is very encouraging to us, whilſt we are waiting on God to perform to us his promiſes: for if "the days "of vengeance arrived, that all things, which were writ-"ten might be fulfilled:" ſurely the predictions of Zion's proſperity will alſo be accompliſhed, for our God delighteth in mercy: the ſcattered Jews around us, *unwillingly* preach to us the truth of chriſtianity, and prove, that "though heaven and earth paſs away, the words of "Jeſus ſhall not paſs away:" and they may alſo remind us, to pray for thoſe times, when neither the literal nor

7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the paſſover muſt be killed.

8 And he ſent Peter and John, ſaying, Go and prepare us the paſſover, that we may eat.

9 And they ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he ſaid unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there ſhall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the houſe where he entereth in.

11 And ye ſhall ſay unto the good-man of the houſe, The Maſter ſaith unto thee, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples?

12 And he ſhall ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed: there make ready.

13 And they went, and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover.

14 And when the hour was come, he ſat down, and the twelve apoſtles with him.

15 And he ſaid unto them, With deſire I have deſired to eat this paſſover with you before I ſuffer:

16 For I ſay unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and ſaid, Take this, and divide *it* among yourſelves:

18 For I ſay unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God ſhall come.

19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, ſaying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewiſe alſo the cup after ſupper, ſaying, This cup *is* the new teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for you.

21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table.

22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23 And they began to enquire among themſelves, which of them it was that ſhould do this thing.

24 And there was alſo a ſtrife among them, which of them ſhould be accounted the greateſt.

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the myſtical Jeruſalem ſhall any longer be trodden down of the Gentiles; and when both Jews, and Gentiles ſhall be turned to the Lord. If we would lift up our heads, as knowing that our redemption draweth nigh, in thoſe ſeaſons, when there ſhall be “diſtreſs of nations with “perplexity, the ſea and the waves roaring, men's hearts “failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things, “which are coming on the earth;” or in the day when “fleſh and heart ſhall fail;” or when “the powers of “heaven ſhall be ſhaken, and the Son of man ſhall be “ſeen coming in a cloud, with power and great glory;” we muſt continually be expecting and preparing for thoſe events. Even chriſtians have cauſe to be warned “to “take heed to themſelves, that they may never run into “exceſs, or be entangled by worldly cares:” otherwiſe thoſe days may come upon them unawares, which as a ſnare come upon, and ſurpriſe to their deſtruction the inhabitants of the earth. May we then watch, and pray always, that we may “be accounted worthy to eſcape” theſe fatal deluſions and “that we may be found, (of “Chriſt, when he cometh,) in peace, without ſpot and “blameleſs.” May we then begin, employ, and conclude each of our days, in hearing his word, obeying his precepts, and imitating his example; that whenſoever he cometh we may be found watching!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 15—18.] Though our Lord aſſuredly knew, that this paſſover would bring on immediately his moſt intenſe ſufferings; yet he ardently longed for it's arrival; that he might enter on that conflict, which would certainly end in a moſt glorious victory, productive of ſuch durable and happy conſequences to his people: and he deſired to join with his diſciples in that paſſover “before he ſuffered;” that he might more fully open his mind to them, and ſpeak ſuch things, as would tend to prepare them alſo, for the trials, that were before them. Moreover he informed them, that he ſhould no more partake of that ſacred feaſt; till it's typical meaning were fulfilled in his atoning ſacrifice, in the clear revelation of his goſpel, and in the eſtabliſhment of his ſpiritual kingdom. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xii.) Having ſaid this, He took the cup of wine, with which it was cuſtomary for the head of the family to begin the paſchal ſupper; and giving thanks for it, and the mercies then commemorated, he bade his diſciples divide it among them; as he ſhould no more drink of the fruit of the vine, 'till the kingdom of God ſhould come, or the goſpel diſpenſation ſhould be introduced: probably He did not drink of the wine, with which he inſtituted the Lord's ſupper.

V. 24—27.] Perhaps this unſeemly competition was ſecretly revived among the apoſtles, even at the laſt paſſover: the immediate introduction of “the kingdom of “God” ſeemed to be implied in what Chriſt had before

25 And he ſaid unto them, the kings of the Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them; and they that exerciſe authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye *ſhall* not *be* ſo: but he that is greateſt among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth ſerve.

27 For whether *is* greater, he that ſitteth at meat, or he that ſerveth? *is* not he that ſitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that ſerveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations:

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.

31 And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired *to have* you, that he may ſift *you* as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.

33 And he ſaid unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into priſon, and to death.

34 And he ſaid, I tell thee, Peter, the cock ſhall not crow this day, before that thou ſhalt thrice deny that thou knoweſt me.

35 And he ſaid unto them, When I ſent

ſpoken; and they might overlook all he had ſaid of his ſufferings, as what they could not underſtand. At leaſt He ſaw the ſame ambition working in their hearts; and to repreſs it, he had recourſe to arguments, ſimilar to what he had uſed on a former occaſion. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xx. v. 20—29.) Many of the moſt ambitious, cruel, and tyrannical of the Syrian, and Egyptian kings had affected to be called "Benefactors;" which title was a reproach to them, though it ſhewed what rulers ought to be: but the apoſtles, and chriſtian miniſters might not affect to be called benefactors, by aſſuming ſtate, or exerciſing dominion: but to be benefactors, by ſtooping to the meaneſt, and loweſt ſervices, by which they may do real good to others; and this without excepting the ſenior, or moſt eminent of them. When Chriſt ſaid, that he "was among them as he that ſerved;" he ſeems to have referred to the waſhing of the diſciples feet, which took place at the ſame time. (*John*, c. xiii.)

V. 28—30.] Chriſt would not at all countenance the carnal ambition of his diſciples; but he ſaw good to animate them with the proſpect of an honour worthy of their deſires. They had followed him with perſevering conſtancy, through all his humiliating trials, which were about to terminate in his crucifixion; and they would follow his example, and adhere to him, through all temptations even unto death: and as a reward for their faithful attachment, he engaged as by covenant to aſſign them a kingdom; even as the Father had covenanted to give him a kingdom, when he had paſſed through his ſufferings: and he would there admit them to ſhare the glory and felicity of his exaltation; even as a victorious monarch admits his valiant captains, and choſen friends to feaſt with him at his own table; and he would alſo admit them as aſſeſſors with him in judgment, eſpecially in paſſing ſentence on the twelve tribes of Iſrael, who would reject their miniſtry, as they had done His, and put moſt of them to death, as they were about to crucify him. Judas was not intended in this promiſe; but as twelve apoſtles were at firſt appointed, and as the vacancy was ſoon to be filled up, after he "was gone to his own place;" ſo the original number was here mentioned. (*Matt.* c. xix. v. 28.)

V. 31—34.] Perhaps Peter was here addreſſed by his former name, becauſe in the events referred to, his inſtability ſo little accorded to the ſignification of the name, which Chriſt had given him. Our Lord addreſſed him in particular, and in a very emphatical manner; though the other apoſtles were in a meaſure concerned in the information given him. Satan, their adverſary, had deſired, and earneſtly ſought permiſſion, to make his advantage of the approaching time of trial, and to aſſault them with moſt violent temptations: he probably hoped completely to prevail againſt ſome of them; or to bring ſuch a ſcandal on their characters, as might prevent their future uſefulneſs; or grievouſly to diſcourage and diſtreſs them. He wanted to "ſift them as wheat;" or to agitate their minds by his inward ſuggeſtions concurring with their outward perils, and difficulties, as the wheat is toſſed about in the ſieve: but whatever his intentions were, the Lord meant to permit him, by theſe means, to prove them, and even to promote their purity. (*Job.* c. i, ii. *Amos.* c. ix. v. 9.) However their diſtreſs and peril would be very great, and they would none of them be able to ſuſtain the ſhock unmoved: but Peter eſpecially would be ſo furiouſly aſſaulted, that if he were to be left to himſelf, he would fall, like Judas, to riſe no more. But He, who denounced the traitor's doom before his crime was perpetrated, aſſured Peter that "He had prayed for him, that his faith might not fail." His faith was grievouſly interrupted in it's exerciſe and effects, when he denied his Lord: but the principle of faith failed not in his heart: the Spirit of life did not finally leave Peter, who was a true believer; though He no more ſtrove with Judas, who was a mere hypocrite. Peter therefore fell ſhamefully; but he was ſpeedily brought, in the renewed exerciſe of faith, to mourn for his ſin, to hope in God's mercy, and to return to his ſervice: but Judas was left to utter apoſtacy, deſpair and ſuicide. When Chriſt had given Peter this intimation of his merciful intentions reſpecting him, which doubtleſs was one you without purſe, and ſcrip, and ſhoes, lacked ye any thing? And they ſaid, Nothing.

36 Then ſaid he unto them, But now, he that hath a purſe, let him take *it*, and likewiſe *his* ſcrip: and he that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment, and buy one.

37 For I ſay unto you, That this that is written muſt yet be accompliſhed in me, And he was reckoned among the tranſgreſſors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38 And they ſaid, Lord, behold, here *are* two ſwords. And he ſaid unto them, It is enough.

39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his diſciples alſo followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he ſaid unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a ſtone's caſt, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, ſtrengthening him.

44 And being in an agony, he prayed more earneſtly: and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 And when he roſe up from prayer, and was come to his diſciples, he found them ſleeping for ſorrow.

46 And ſaid unto them, Why ſleep ye? riſe and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.

47 And while he yet ſpake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jeſus to kiſs him.

48 But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of man with a kiſs?

49 When they which were about him ſaw what would follow, they ſaid unto him, Lord, ſhall we ſmite with the ſword?

50 And one of them ſmote a ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Suffer ye

ſupport to his faith, and hope, under the anguiſh of his bitter remorſe, after he had denied his Lord; he bade him, when thus renewedly converted, to ſtrengthen his brethren: and doubtleſs after his fall, and recovery, he was peculiarly earneſt in encouraging the diſciples to hope an happy event of their trials; and afterwards in animating them boldly to profeſs and preach the goſpel: and the leſſons, which he learned by thoſe events, would have a very ſalutary effect on his own ſpirit, and tend to qualify him eſpecially for encouraging and warning the tempted, the fearful, the deſponding, or the fallen, even to the end of his days. The diſcerning reader will perceive the traces of it, in his epiſtles, which are tranſmitted to us. However Peter, at that time was not prepared to attend to his Lord's warnings, being confident of his good intentions, and fooliſhly diſpoſed to "truſt in his own heart."

V. 35—38.] (*John*, c. xiv, xv. xvi. xvii.) To prepare the minds of the diſciples for approaching trials, our Lord was pleaſed next to call their attention to their paſt experience. He had ſent them out to preach the goſpel, without allowing them to make any proviſion for their journey: but they could not but ſay, that they had met with perſons, in every place, ready to entertain and ſupply them. However they muſt now expect to meet with a different reception; and muſt prepare to encounter hardſhip, oppoſition, and perſecution: inſomuch, that it would behove them to take with them ſuch proviſion as they had; and even ſwords for ſelf-defence would appear more neceſſary to them than their garments. It is plain that this was not intended literally, as a command or counſel; but merely as an intimation of the perils, that awaited them, and the preparation of mind that would be needful, that they might behave properly amidſt them. For all the prophecies, concerning the ſufferings of the Meſſiah, were about to be accompliſhed in Him; and to come to a ſpeedy end, in his being crucified as a malefactor: and as they would then be hated for his ſake, and would ſhortly be ſent forth to preach him, as the Lord and Saviour of the world; they muſt prepare to be deſpiſed, perſecuted, and put to death, as he was about to be. However at that time the apoſtles underſtood Him literally: and having two ſwords in the company, (which were then frequently worn by travellers to defend them againſt the robbers,) they ſhewed them to him, by way of expreſſing their readineſs to uſe them, and of aſking permiſſion to go, and procure more. But as he ſaid "it is enough," and diſapproved of Peter's uſing his ſword; ſo we are ſure, that he did not intend to be underſtood literally, but as ſpeaking of the weapons of their ſpiritual warfare.

V. 43. *Angel*, &c.] The appearance of an holy angel to our Lord, in this conflict with the powers of darkneſs, and when he was weighed down with the feeling of the wrath of God againſt our ſins, was an intimation of approaching victory. The angel could not efficaciouſly communicate ſtrength even to his human ſoul; but he might ſuggeſt encouraging topics: and it was doubtleſs a part of his humiliation, and an inſtance of his condeſcenſion, that he was pleaſed to be thus, "ſtrength-

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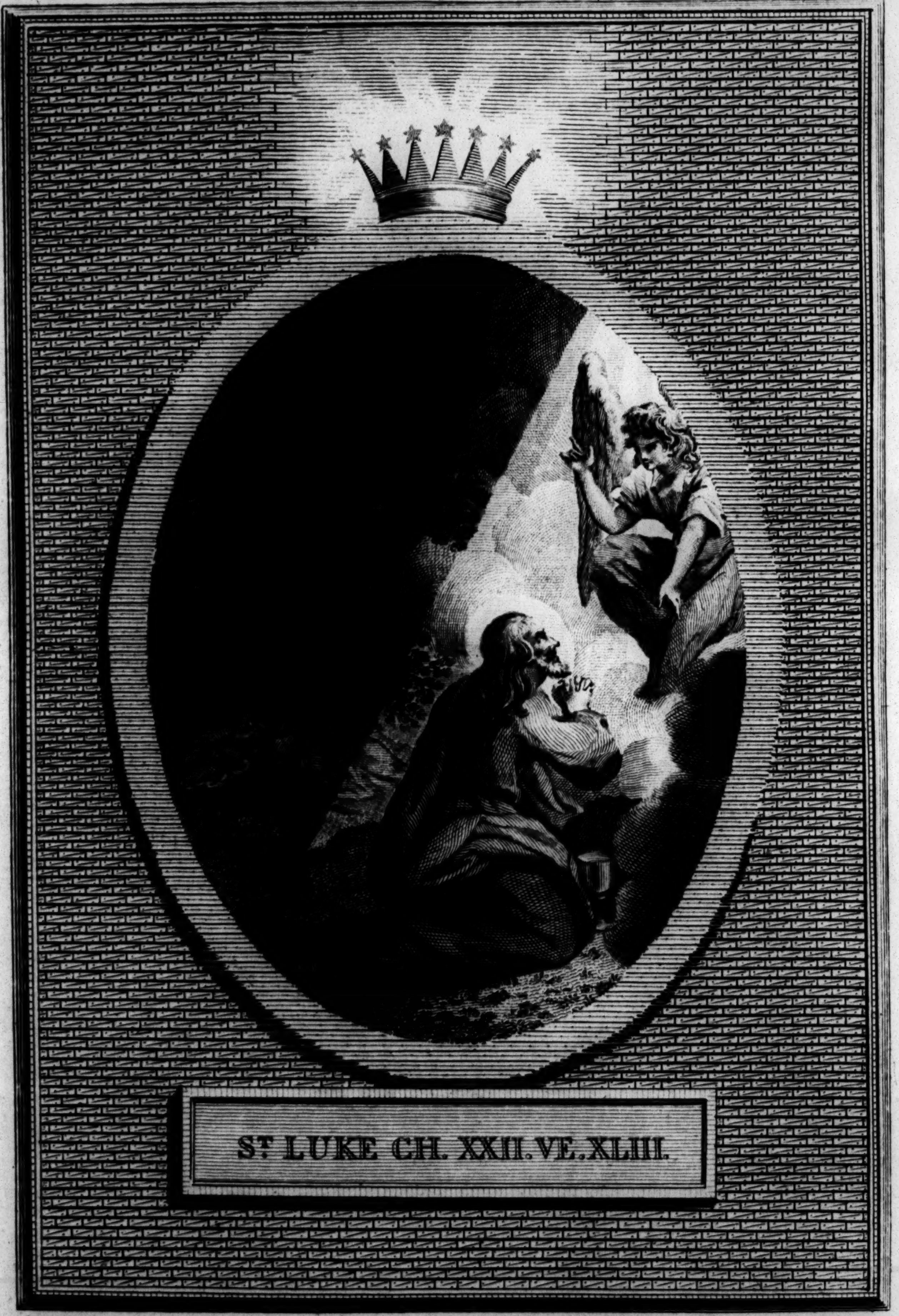
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thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then Jeſus ſaid unto the chief prieſts, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and ſtaves?

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye ſtretched forth no hands againſt me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs.

54 Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high prieſt's houſe. And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midſt of the hall, and were ſet down together, Peter ſat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he ſat by the fire, and earneſtly looked upon him, and ſaid, This man was alſo with him.

57 And he denied him, ſaying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while, another ſaw him, and ſaid, Thou art alſo of them. And Peter ſaid, Man, I am not.

59 And about the ſpace of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, ſaying, Of a truth this *fellow* alſo was with him; for he is a Galilean.

60 And Peter ſaid, Man, I know not what thou ſayeſt. And immediately, while he yet ſpake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter: and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

63 And the men that held Jeſus mocked him, and ſmote *him*.

64 And when they had blind-folded him, they ſtruck him on the face, and aſked him, ſaying, Propheſy, Who is it that ſmote thee?

65 And many other things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him.

66 And as ſoon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, came together, and led him into their council, ſaying,

67 Art thou the Chriſt? tell us. And he ſaid unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

68 And if I alſo aſk *you*, ye will not anſwer me, nor let *me* go.

69 Hereafter ſhall the Son of man ſit on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then ſaid they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he ſaid unto them, Ye ſay that I am.

71 And they ſaid, What need we any further witneſs? for we ourſelves have heard of his own mouth.

"ened" by "a miniſtering ſpirit," when "all the angels of God worſhipped him:" but "it became Him in all things to be made like unto his brethren."

V. 51. *Suffer*, &c.] Peter's raſh courage was likely to render a miracle neceſſary for his preſervation, and that of the other diſciples: but without a previous knowledge of our Lord's character, we could not have expected ſuch a one, as he wrought on this occaſion. Deſiring his furious adverſaries to "ſuffer thus far," the zeal of his followers, in oppoſition to their attempt, he immediately and perfectly reſtored the ear of Malchus, as it was before! Yet neither this evidence of his power, nor his kindneſs to ſo officious an adverſary, had any effect in ſoftening them, or withdrawing them from their purpoſe!

V. 52. *Captains*, &c.] Theſe are ſuppoſed to have been the leaders of the Prieſts, and Levites, who alternately kept guard at the avenues of the temple.

V. 53. *Power*, &c.] That was the hour, in which the enemies of Chriſt were allowed to prevail; becauſe it was the very time, when ſatan was to have power to bruiſe the heel of the "ſeed of the woman," who would at length cruſh his head. (*Gen*. c. iii. v. 15.)

V. 68. *Aſk*, &c.] That is, if I demand a reaſon of your unbelief, or require you to ſet me at liberty.

V. 70. *Son*, &c.] What Chriſt ſaid of himſelf as the Son of man, being underſtood as a declaration that he was the promiſed Meſſiah, occaſioned them to enquire, whether he were the Son of God; by which it appears that they expected that their Meſſiah would be the Son of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When ſinners have long ſtifled their convictions under the means of grace, and liſtened to temptation; ſatan is often permitted to take full poſſeſſion of them, and to hurry them into ſuch crimes, as bring ſwift deſtruction upon them. This is more likely to be the doom of hypocritical profeſſors and preachers of the goſpel, than of any other perſons; nor will any eminence of rank, gifts, or abilities in the leaſt preſerve them from it. The avarice of falſe friends ſometimes concurs with the malice of open enemies, in contriving plans of perſecution, and in getting over the obſtacles that they meet with from the fear of man; and they are very glad of each other's

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus accuſed before Pilate, ſent by him to Herod; keeping ſilence before him, inſulted by him and his ſoldiers, and ſent back again, 1---12. *2d. Pilate, convinced of Chriſt's innocence, trying to reſcue him, but at length at the deſire of the rulers, and the people, releaſing Barabbas, and delivering Jeſus to be crucified,* 13---25. *3d. Jeſus led away; Simon of Cyrene bearing his croſs; the women, &c, bewailing him; his prediction of the calamities coming on the Jews; his crucifixion between two thieves, and his prayer for his murderers,* 26---34. *4th. The people, rulers, and Roman ſoldiers mocking him, with one of the thieves; the aſtoniſhing converſion of the other thief; the land covered with darkneſs, Chriſt expiring, the Centurion's conviction, and the people's remorſe and grief for what had been done,* 35---49. *5th. Joſeph of Arimathea aſking for the body, and burying it, &c.* 50---56. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxvii. Mark, c. xv.)*

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aſſiſtance. However the faithful followers of the Lamb may confidently commit their cauſe to Him, who judgeth righteouſly: and, after his example, they ſhould attend on the ordinances of God in due ſeaſon, aſſured that no plots of their enemies can accompliſh more than "was "before determined" with a view to the glory of God, and the ſalvation of their ſouls. If then the Redeemer deſired the approach of his laſt more tremendous ſufferings; that he might furniſh an everlaſting feaſt for our ſouls, by his body broken, and his blood poured out for us: with what patience and chearfulneſs ſhould we meet our leſſer trials, through which we are to follow him to his kingdom above? We ſhould therefore continually remember his love, his ſufferings, and our obligations to him, both in that ordinance, which he hath appointed, and by our daily meditation on his word; that we may feel the conſtraining influence of love to him, who died for us, to purchaſe the bleſſings of the New Teſtament, which he ſealed with his blood. Let us then only beware of hypocriſy: and though the hand of traitors ſhould be with us either at His table, or our own; we ſhall be free from their woe, and be able to appeal to, and confide in the Lord with conſciouſneſs of our integrity.

But how unbecoming is ambition of being the greateſt, to the character of a follower of Jeſus, who took upon him the form of a ſervant, and humbled himſelf even to the death upon the croſs! Let us leave to thoſe princes of this world, who know not God, to luſt after dominion, and to retain flatterers, who may compliment them as benefactors; whilſt their mad ambition fills nations with blood, and miſery: we are to do good by ſtooping, and labouring, and to become benefactors indeed by being ſervants to all men for Chriſt's ſake, and after his example: nor is any one allowed to aſpire after other pre-eminence in his kingdom, than what ſprings from greater humility, ſelf-abaſement, diligence, and uſefulneſs. Thus following Chriſt in his temptations, we too ſhall obtain a kingdom, even as he hath been exalted to his mediatorial throne: and though we may not have all the diſtinguiſhed honour of the holy apoſtles; yet we ſhall be admitted to a fullneſs of joy, and a weight of glory, of which we at preſent can form no adequate conception. But in the way to this felicity we muſt expect to be aſſaulted, and ſifted by ſatan: if he cannot deſtroy us, he will endeavour to diſgrace, to pollute, or to diſtreſs us; and the Lord may ſee good to permit him to harraſs us grievouſly, and even to baffle us in ſome painful conflicts, that he may more prove, humble, and ſanctify us; and that he may ſhew the power of his grace in making us at length more than conquerors. It is not owing to our own wiſdom, and ſtrength, if we be not finally overcome; but to the interceſſion of our heavenly Advocate, who prayeth "for his people, as he doth not for the "world:" therefore their faith doth not fail; though it ſeem to be dead, it revives again; "though they fall "they are not utterly caſt down;" for they again look to the Lord, and he reſtores their ſouls. If we have any acquaintance with this conflict, and have been recovered, and as it were converted again, after having been ſorely foiled by temptation: we ſhall both be qualified, and diſpoſed to ſtrengthen our brethren, to caution and encourage them for the combat, to addreſs the weak and tempted with tenderneſs and compaſſion, and to reſtore in the ſpirit of meekneſs ſuch as have been overtaken in a fault.

But nothing ſo certainly forebodes a fall, in a profeſſed diſciple of Chriſt, as ſelf-confidence, connected with diſregard to warnings and contempt of danger. It may accord with our intentions to ſay; "I am ready to go "with thee to priſon, or to death; but it is not ſo eaſy to "ſtand our ground in the hour of temptation:" and unleſs we watch and pray always, we may be drawn into thoſe things in the courſe of the day, which in the morning we were the moſt reſolved againſt. Indeed our experience of the Lord's faithfulneſs and goodneſs in times paſt ſhould animate us to truſt both his providence, and grace for the future: for many of us muſt ſay to his praiſe, that when at his word we neglected ordinary methods of obtaining temporal proviſions, we in the event have wanted nothing: yet we ſhould not ſo preſume on his care, as to ruſh ourſelves needleſſly into danger; and we may expect, that as our faith is ſtrengthened, it will be more ſharply tried than heretofore. We ſhould then be continually preparing, and arming for the battle; that we may be able to ſtand in the evil day of ſharp temptation; and we ſhall find, that a believing acquaintance with God's word, that ſword of the Spirit, will be more needful for us, in our paſſage through the enemy's country, than even our ordinary raiment. We cannot expect to eſcape tribulation, and ill uſage, in a world, which numbered the Lord of glory with the vileſt tranſgreſſors, if we indeed profeſs his truth, and obey his commandments: but if we pray fervently that we may not enter into temptation, we ſhall either be preſerved from the ſeverer trials, or be enabled under them to ſay "not my "will, but thine be done." And ſurely, when we contemplate the Redeemer in an agony, praying more earneſtly, and his ſweat like great drops of blood pouring

CHAP. XXIII.

AND the whole multitude of them aroſe, and led him unto Pilate.

2 And they began to accuſe him, ſaying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Ceſar, ſaying, That he himſelf is Chriſt a king.

3 And Pilate aſked him, ſaying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he anſwered him and ſaid, Thou ſayeſt *it*.

4 Then ſaid Pilate to the chief prieſts, and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man.

5 And they were the more fierce, ſaying, He ſtirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he aſked whether the man were a Galilean.

7 And as ſoon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's juriſdiction, he ſent him to Herod, who himſelf alſo was at Jeruſalem at that time.

8 And when Herod ſaw Jeſus, he was exceeding glad: for he was deſirous to ſee him of a long *ſeaſon*, becauſe he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to have ſeen ſome miracle done by him.

9 Then he queſtioned with him in many words; but he anſwered him nothing.

10 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſtood and vehemently accuſed him.

11 And Herod with his men of war ſet him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and ſent him again to Pilate.

12 And the ſame day Pilate and Herod

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down to the ground, whilſt he was bruiſed for our iniquities; we ſhall pray alſo to be enabled "to reſiſt unto "blood, ſtriving againſt ſin," if we ſhould ever be called to it. But as our ſupineneſs often expoſes us to rebukes and chaſtenings; which are needful to excite us to our duty: ſo our intemperate zeal on ſome occaſions betrays us into as diſhonourable miſtakes, as our timidity does on others; for corrupt nature ſtill counteracts the tendency of grace, and warps our conduct to one extreme or another: we ſhould therefore aſk, and wait for the Lord's direction, before we act in difficult circumſtances. However he will prevent the moſt fatal conſequences of our errors, provided our hearts be upright: yet when we contraſt his temper and conduct with our own, we ſhall always ſee much to admire, and much to be aſhamed of. But neither the diſplays of his power, or of his love can intimidate or ſoften hardened unbelievers; for ſuch men could treat the divine Saviour, as if he had been a thief or a robber, even when he was working his gracious miracles before their eyes, or healing their wounds! But their hour, and power of darkneſs was of ſhort continuance; and ſuch will always be the triumphing of the wicked. To whatever part of the ſcene before us we turn our thoughts; we ſhall ſee proofs of the Redeemer's excellency, and of the deceitfulneſs, and deſperate wickedneſs of the human heart: but eſpecially let us contemplate him, amidſt all the inſults, and cruelties, which he meekly endured, looking with compaſſion, on his fallen diſciple; that we too may be excited to call our own ſins to remembrance, and to renew that godly ſorrow, which worketh repentance unto ſalvation, not to be repented of.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1—5. (*John*, c. xviii. v. 28—40.) The rulers of the Jews were determined, if poſſible to induce Pilate to put Jeſus to death: it was therefore neceſſary for them to accuſe him of ſome crime againſt the Roman government. Accordingly they ſpake of him in the moſt diſdainful language, as one, whom they had found perverting the nation, not only as to their religious principles, but alſo in reſpect of their ſubjection to civil authority: and, notwithſtanding his unexceptionable anſwer on that ſubject, a few days before, (c. xx, v. 19—26:) they directly accuſed him of forbidding the people to pay tribute to Ceſar. This ſhews with what intent they had propoſed to him that inſidious queſtion, and to what difficulties his anſwer had reduced them. However they were determined to draw this inference from his ſuppoſed claim to be the Meſſiah, the king of the Jews, though in direct contradiction to his own expreſs determination of that matter: hence alſo we learn what their views of the Meſſiah's kingdom were; and how ready they would have been to join any pretender, who could have given them a hopeful proſpect of deliverance from the Roman yoke. But though Pilate found from Jeſus himſelf, that He was come to be "the king "of the Jews:" yet he declared that he was perfectly ſatiſfied concerning his innocency, as to the charges brought againſt him. This rendered his accuſers ſtill more furious, and eager in their proſecution; fearing a diſappointment of their malice, and being enraged at the inſinuation, that they were ſeeking the death of an innocent man. They therefore further charged him, with having ſtirred up the people to revolt, by his preaching, throughout all the land; for he had begun in Galilee, and had proceeded, with a multitude of followers, 'till he arrived at Jeruſalem. Probably they referred to his public entrance into the city a few days before, and to his teaching in the temple, in contempt of their authority. Certain impoſtors had indeed before this ariſen in Galilee; and there, collecting followers, and exciting inſurrections, they had given the Romans conſiderable trouble: for which cauſe the rulers probably ſuppoſed Pilate would have been the more jealous of Jeſus, (Note, c. xiii. v. 1, 2:) but that governer well underſtood the difference between armed forces, and our Lord's inoffenſive followers; who were formidable to nothing but the hypocriſy and ambition of the Scribes, Prieſts, and Phariſees.

were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themſelves.

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief prieſts, and the rulers, and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man, touching thoſe things whereof ye accuſe him;

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I ſent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him:

16 I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and releaſe *him*.

17 (For of neceſſity he muſt releaſe one unto them at the feaſt.)

18 And they cried out all at once, ſaying, Away with this *man*, and releaſe unto us Barabbas:

19 (Who for a certain ſedition made in the city, and for murder, was caſt into priſon:)

20 Pilate therefore willing to releaſe Jeſus, ſpake again to them.

21 But they cried, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

22 And he ſaid unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cauſe of death in him: I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and let *him* go.

23 And they were inſtant with loud voices requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them and of the chief prieſts prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave ſentence, that it ſhould be as they required.

25 And he releaſed unto them him that for ſedition and murder was caſt into priſon, whom they had deſired; but he delivered Jeſus to their will.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the croſs, that he might bear *it* after Jeſus.

27 And there followed him a great com-

V. 6—12.] Pilate would gladly have avoded this buſineſs, in which his judgment and his apparent intereſts were likely to interfere with each other: when therefore he learned, that Jeſus had lived in that diſtrict, which Herod governed; he immediately ſent Jeſus and his accuſers to that prince, who was then at Jeruſalem, perhaps on account of the paſſover. Herod was rejoiced to ſee Jeſus, perhaps deſiring to ſatisfy himſelf, whether he were indeed John Baptiſt riſen from the dead, as he had once ſuppoſed: however he had long wiſhed to ſee him, (having heard many reports concerning his doctrine and miracles,) in hopes of having his curioſity gratified by beholding ſome effects of his extraordinary power. But our Lord ſaw good to keep a profound ſilence in his preſence, neither returning any anſwer to his multiplied queſtions, nor to the vehement accuſations of his enemies: ſo that Herod was entirely diſappointed in his expectations, and did not chooſe to have any hand in putting him to death, (having probably been greatly terrified on account of his murder of John Baptiſt:) he therefore contented himſelf with treating Jeſus as unworthy of his notice; except that he joined with his guards in deriding and inſulting Him. As a token of their ſovereign contempt of his pretenſions to be a king, they clothed him with ſome ſplendid garment, which had perhaps been worn by Herod; and he was ſent back thus attired to Pilate, that he might diſpoſe of him as he pleaſed. Probably the Roman ſoldiers took the hint from this inſult of Herod and his guard, to clothe Jeſus with a purple robe, and to put on him a crown of thorns, &c. As Pilate, and Herod, the one a Roman, the other a proſelyted Jew, and both very wicked men, governed adjacent regions: we need not wonder that they were jealous of each other, and that cauſes of enmity aroſe betwixt them. However the mutual reſpect ſhewn on this occaſion, and their agreement with each other in treating Jeſus as an object of contempt, brought about a reconciliation between them.

V. 15. *Unto*, &c.] Or "by Him". The conſtruction may be rather unuſual: but Pilate could not mean, that any thing Herod might have done to Jeſus would have been "worthy of death;" but that his conduct proved that he thought nothing worthy of death had been committed by Jeſus. Herod's concurrence with Pilate in this judgment ſeemed to the latter of great weight; as Herod was well acquainted with the cuſtoms, and religion of the Jews: he purpoſed therefore to chaſtiſe Him, in order that he might be deterred from uſing ſuch expreſſions as had given them umbrage; and then to releaſe him, according to the cuſtom of the feaſt; which would render that meaſure leſs offenſive to the Jewiſh rulers, as implying that he deſerved puniſhment, but was ſet at liberty by an act of grace.

V. 25. *Whom*, &c.] The decided preference given by the rulers to one, who had actually excited ſedition, as well as committed murder, &c, was a clear demonſtration of their malice againſt Jeſus; and ſhewed that *this* was indeed their real motive, and not any regard to the Roman authority.

V. 27—31.] Though the multitude of the Jews had been inſtigated to demand the crucifixion of Jeſus; yet there were many, who had an high opinion of, and a pany of people, and of women, which alſo bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jeſus, turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children.

29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave ſuck.

30 Then ſhall they begin to ſay to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?

32 And there were alſo two other malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors: one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 Then ſaid Jeſus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and caſt lots.

35 And the people ſtood beholding: and the rulers alſo with them derided *him*, ſaying, He ſaved others; let him ſave himſelf, if he be Chriſt, the choſen of God.

36 And the ſoldiers alſo mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And ſaying, If thou be the king of the Jews, ſave thyſelf.

38 And a ſuperſcription alſo was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, ſaying, If thou be Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us.

40 But the other anſwering, rebuked him, ſaying, Doſt not thou fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation?

41 And we indeed juſtly; for we receive

ſincere regard for him. A great company of theſe, eſpecially many women followed him, when led away to be crucified, expreſſing their concern by doleful lamentations: but he called on them to mourn for themſelves, and their poſterity, rather than for him: as he went to his ſufferings moſt willingly, being aſſured of a ſpeedy joyful event of them, and moſt glorious effects from them: whereas moſt terrible vengeance would ſhortly come on their city, and nation, for the enormous wickedneſs, which was about to be perpetrated. For the days were at hand, when thoſe women would generally be counted moſt happy, who never had any children; as parents would ſee their offſpring butchered and enſlaved, or dying by famine or peſtilence; nay ſome mothers would even be driven by extreme hunger to eat their own infants. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 19.) Then the Jews, who now clamorouſly demanded his crucifixion, would begin to call on the mountains to hide, or cruſh them; that they might eſcape the lingering miſeries, to which that crime would expoſe them. This intimated the long duration of their national calamities, and that more dreadful vengeance awaited individuals in another world; they would then *begin* to call on the mountains, &c, but they would not ſpeedily ceaſe to do ſo. (*Rev.* c. vi. v. 15—17.) For if the Romans, at their inſtigation, and by the permiſſion of God, inflicted ſo terrible a puniſhment on Him, whoſe conduct had been ſo holy, inoffenſive, and excellent: what would they do to that nation, as the executioners of God's vengeance, when they had filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, and when their turbulent conduct, repeated inſurrections, and obſtinate reſiſtance, had determined them to deſtroy them without mercy? If ſuch a fire were kindled in a green tree, that was altogether unfit for fuel; what would be the caſe in reſpect of the dry wood, which was every way ready for the flames? The proverb may alſo be applied to the intenſe ſufferings of Jeſus, the holy and beloved Son of God, as the Surety for our ſins; and to the caſe of ſinners, who go on in their wickedneſs, in neglect of this ſalvation, and who are made fit fuel for the fire of God's holy indignation.

V. 34. *Forgive*, &c.] This prayer ſeems to have been made, at the very time, when the ſoldiers were employed in nailing our Lord's hands and feet to the croſs. In the extremity of his anguiſh, and the contumelious cruelty with which he was treated; he ſeems to have been more concerned for the ſin of his murderers, than for his own ſufferings. The ſoldiers, who crucified him, ſeem to have been primarily intended: as Romans, "they knew not what they did;" and their guilt was far leſs heinous than that of the chief prieſts, or the people, who had enjoyed fuller means of inſtruction. Inſtead of complaints, or threats; our Lord only uttered an extenuation of the guilt of his cruel executioners, and a prayer for their forgiveneſs! In this he acted as our perfect example; yet doubtleſs his interceſſion prevailed for thoſe, whom he eſpecially intended. Probably the ſoldiers concerned were afterwards converted and ſaved, (Note, *Matt.* c. xxvii. v. 54:) many of the ſurrounding multitude, who had demanded his crucifixion, "not knowing what they did," were doubtleſs ſaved, in anſwer to this prayer; (1 *Tim.* c. i. v. 13:) and in ſome ſenſe, it may be applied to every one, who is juſtified by faith in his blood; as they all were acceſſary to his death by their ſins, though they knew not what they did.

V. 39—43.] The language of the other evangeliſts hath led many perſons to conclude, that both the male-the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiſs.

42 And he ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.

43 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, To-day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.

44 And it was about the ſixth hour, and there was a darkneſs over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the ſun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midſt.

46 And when Jeſus had cried with a loud voice, he ſaid, Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit: and, having ſaid thus, he gave up the ghoſt.

47 Now when the Centurion ſaw what was done, he glorified God, ſaying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

48 And all the people that came together to

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factors at firſt concurred in reviling our Lord: but others think, that it cannot be inferred from their words; and in itſelf it is indeed improbable, eſpecially as the penitent thief neither confeſſed his own guilt *in this particular*, nor ſhewed any reaſon for ſo ſuddenly altering his opinion, when he rebuked his fellow-ſufferer. Doubtleſs he, who was ſaved, had ſpent a very wicked life, and there is no proof, that he was at all penitent, before he was nailed to the croſs; though his awful ſituation might poſſibly have produced ſome ſerious reflections in his mind. The moſt of what he had previouſly heard of Chriſt muſt have been from his enemies: but as he was a Jew, he probably had ſome general knowledge of the ſcripture prophecies concerning the Meſſiah; and he might have heard ſome reports concerning his doctrine, and miracles. Knowing therefore on what account he was condemned, and witneſſing his extraordinary meekneſs and patience under his ſufferings, and his prayer for his murderers; he ſeems to have been led, under the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, to believe that He was the promiſed Meſſiah, the Son of God, and the King of Iſrael; and perhaps to underſtand that he was to be a ſuffering Redeemer, that was to "be led as a lamb "to the ſlaughter." Under this conviction he firſt rebuked his fellow ſufferer, for reviling Jeſus: and demanded of him, whether "he did not fear God?" As to this life, he could have no more to fear than he was actually ſuffering; this therefore implied his belief of a future ſtate, and of the reaſon he had to fear the wrath of God for his crimes, in another world; in reference to which he ought to have been employed in confeſſing his guilt, and in crying for mercy, and not in reviling an innocent perſon, who ſuffered with him. In reſpect of them, he acknowledged the puniſhment to be deſerved both from God, and man; they were indeed "receiving the due "reward of their deeds:" but Jeſus had "done nothing "amiſs." Thus he expreſſly declared his aſſurance of our Lord's innocence, as to thoſe things, of which he was accuſed by the Jews, and in his whole conduct; and that he was indeed the Son of God, the King of Iſrael, who would hereafter ſit on the right hand of the throne of God. Thus fearing God, and being conſcious that he deſerved his wrath, and eternal condemnation; and believing Jeſus to be "the Chriſt the Son of the "living God," though he was now about to expire on the croſs, and that he certainly would poſſeſs the promiſed kingdom, and have the diſpoſal of eternal life and ſalvation; he humbly beſought Him to "remember him "with his mercy, when he came into his kingdom." He had nothing further to fear, or to hope in reſpect of this world; he expected not Chriſt to ſave himſelf or them in that ſenſe: but he was taught by the Holy Spirit to diſcern ſomething of the true nature of "the kingdom "of God." (*John*, c. iii. v. 3.) He knew himſelf to be unworthy of Chriſt's regard, or of the ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings which he had to beſtow; yet he earneſtly deſired to be remembered by him, according to the riches of his mercy; and he evidently "truſted in "Chriſt" for deliverance from the wrath to come, and for eternal happineſs, whatever his views were about the deſign of his death, or whether he expected that he would riſe immediately from the dead or not. He was humbled in true repentance; he believed on Jeſus in his heart unto righteouſneſs, and he made confeſſion of him with his mouth unto ſalvation: he was decided in this confeſſion of Chriſt, as the Meſſiah the King of Iſrael; when all around were deriding and reviling him; and when his own diſciples dared not to acknowledge themſelves, and were even ſtumbled in reſpect of his promiſed redemption and his kingdom, he brought forth all the fruits meet for repentance, which his circumſtances could admit of: he ſhewed holy fear of God, humbly confeſſing his guilt, and thus glorifying him, by ſubmitting patiently to his excruciating ſufferings; he exerciſed faith and hope in Chriſt, love to his name and zeal to his honour; and he ſhewed his love to the ſoul of his fellow-ſufferer, and hatred of his ſin, by his faithful reproof of, and ſeaſonable expoſtulation with him. Here was evidently the ſubſtance of all chriſtian graces, which would have been expanded into all the actions of an holy life, had time been allowed him; and perhaps he actually more honoured Chriſt in this ſhort ſpace, that he lived ſubſequent to his converſion, than many do, who live a number of years to profeſs faith in him: and in ſhort here were evidently both the title to, and the meetneſs for the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Our Lord therefore, without delay, and in the moſt ſolemn manner, aſſured him, that "on that very day he ſhould be "with him in paradiſe." *That day* was then ſpending apace, and many crucified perſons uſed to hang longer on the croſs, than from the time when they were ſuſpended, till the cloſe of it: but our Lord predicted both his own death, and that of the penitent thief, before the ſetting of the ſun, and their immediate entrance into a ſtate of happineſs. The firſt Adam loſt paradiſe by his ſin; the ſecond Adam regained it by his obedience

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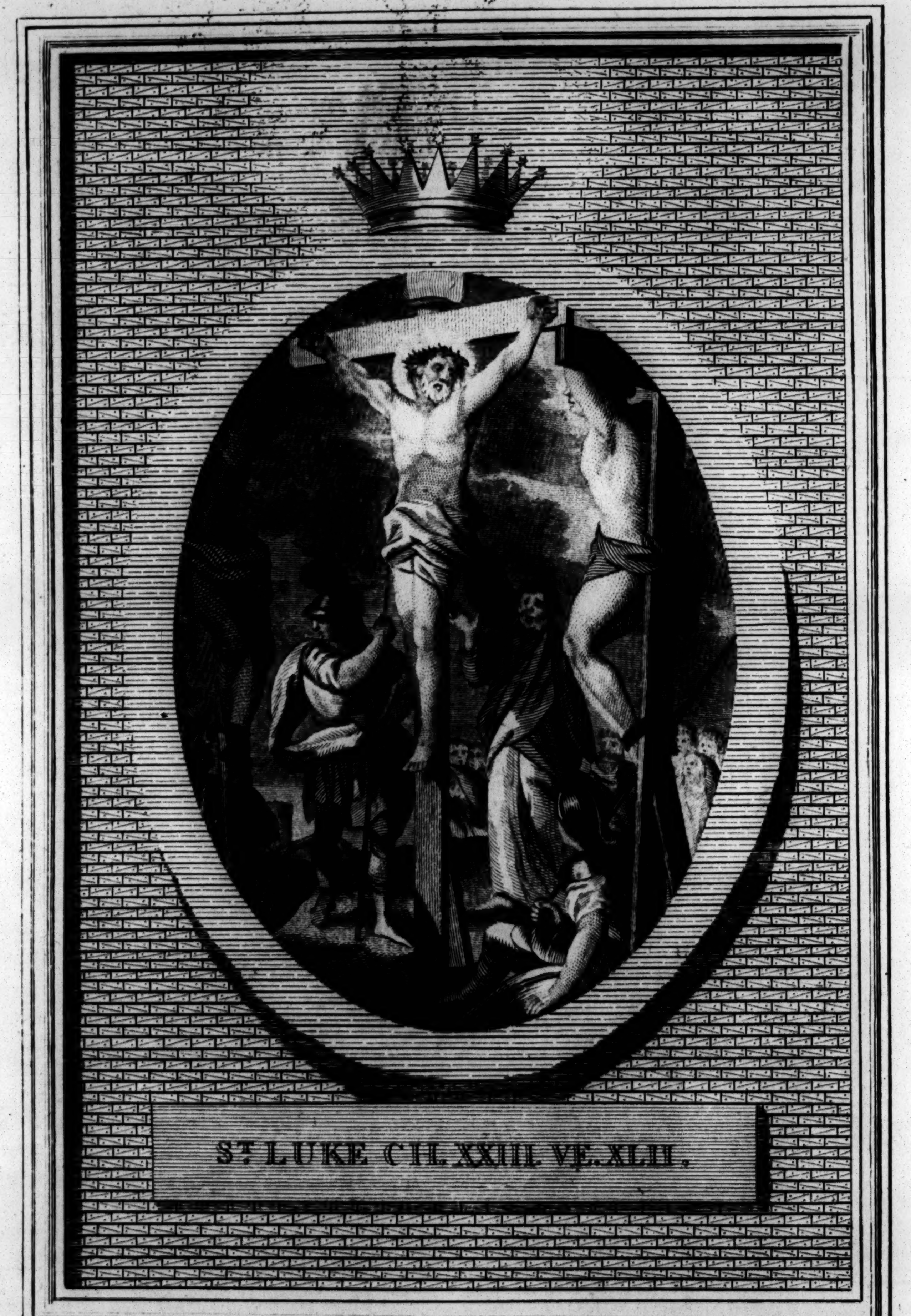

St. LUKE CH. XXIII. VE. XLII.

Dodd del. Goldar sc.

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that ſight, beholding the things which were done, ſmote their breaſts, and returned.

49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, ſtood afar off, beholding theſe things.

50 And behold, *there was* a man named Joſeph, a counſellor; *and he was* a good man, and a juſt:

51 (The ſame had not conſented to the counſel and deed of them:) *he was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who alſo himſelf waited for the kingdom of God.

52 This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus.

53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a ſepulchre that was hewn in ſtone, wherein never man before was laid.

54 And that day was the preparation, and the ſabbath drew on.

55 And the women alſo, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the ſepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56 And they returned, and prepared ſpices and ointments; and reſted the ſabbath-day, according to the commandment.

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unto death, or rather obtained for us a ſtate of far ſuperior felicity in heaven: into this felicity believers are admitted immediately after their death: and this gracious promiſe would be an exhilerating cordial to the heart of the dying penitent, to ſupport him during the remainder of his agonies, which ſoon terminated in unſpeakable joys. This was doubtleſs intended as the grand diſplay of the Redeemer's power and grace, in the view of numberleſs inviſible ſpectators; and for the inſtruction of mankind in all future ages, about thoſe things, which relate to the freedom and ſovereignty of his mercy, the efficacy of his atoning blood, and the omnipotency of his ſaving arm. Thus he triumphed over ſatan upon the croſs, and delivered the prey from the very jaws of that devouring lion, even in the criſis of his deepeſt humiliation: thus he communicated life, when he was in the very agonies of death: and He diſpenſed pardons, and diſpoſed of kingdoms, as from a glorious throne, even whilſt hanging on the tree as a ſlave and a malefactor! But it is a ſingle inſtance in ſcripture, an act of grace well ſuited to honour the extraordinary occaſion, which gave riſe to it: it ſhould indeed teach us to deſpair of none, and that none ſhould deſpair of themſelves; yet leſt it ſhould be abuſed, it was contraſted by the awful caſe of the other thief, who died hardened in unbelief, with a crucified Saviour before his eyes; as a warning to preſuming ſinners, that in general men die as they live. Indeed the caſe of the penitent thief was extraordinary in all it's circumſtances: yet Jeſus is ſtill able to ſave to the uttermoſt all them that call upon him, in their lateſt extremity. However few inſtances indeed occur, in which ſo many concurrent, and indubitable evidences of a ſaving change are witneſſed in the caſe of thoſe, who have ſpent their lives ignorant or negligent of the great ſalvation of Chriſt. It can therefore give no encouragement at all to ſuch as ſin on under the means of grace, and againſt the convictions of their own conſciences, from preſumptuous expectation of a death bed repentance: and, if poſſible, it is ſtill more abſurd, for men to adduce this inſtance, in proof of their licentious views of ſalvation by faith alone, to the diſparagement of holineſs, and of good works as the neceſſary fruits of ſaving faith; when this man's faith was connected with real ſanctification, and productive of good works, as far as ever the caſe could poſſibly admit of.

V. 48. *And all,* &c.] Doubtleſs many of thoſe, who had been prompted to demand Chriſt's crucifixion, were deeply affected by his behaviour on the croſs, and by the prodigies attending his death; and we may ſuppoſe that their remorſe and ſorrow, for their concurrence in his death, might prepare the way for their believing the goſpel, when preached by the apoſtles, at and after the day of Pentecoſt. But the chief prieſts, Scribes, and rulers, felt neither remorſe nor ſorrow on the occaſion!

V. 51. *The ſame,* &c.] Probably Joſeph abſented himſelf from the council, when he found his diſſent had no effect.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Envy, malice, cruelty, and calumny unite in the character of the progeny of ſatan, who hate and perſecute "the Seed of the woman:" and ſuch men are prone to charge their own crimes on thoſe, who are moſt evidently innocent of them. No prudence, or harmleſsneſs, in word or deed, can ſecure a man from their enmity and ſlander: yet they may drive them into ſuch egregious abſurdities, and palpable falſehoods, as ſhall ſerve to expoſe their own malignity. But when ſinners are bent upon their own ungodly purpoſes: every check renders them more impetuous, and every intimation that they are acting wrong is conſidered as an intolerable affront. However the Lord conducts all his own deſigns to a glorious iſſue, by means of thoſe, who are following the evil devices of their own hearts; even as all parties concurred in proving the immaculate innocency of Jeſus the atoning ſacrifice for our ſins. The moſt wicked men have ſome reſerves in their iniquity; there are lengths to which they are reluctant to proceed, eſpecially without ſome adequate advantage; yet whilſt they are reſtrained by inward terrors from the commiſſion of ſome crimes, they are kept from ſuch actions as they cannot but approve, by fear of their fellow-creatures, and even of their inferiors. But profligate profeſſors of true religion are commonly more hardened than open idolaters; and they are entitled to leſs regard from us. Herod might deſire to ſee Jeſus, and to witneſs his miracles, from worthleſs motives: but our Lord would take no notice of a man, who had committed ſuch enormous wickedneſs, in oppoſition to the convictions of his

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains 1ſt. The women aſſured of Chriſt's Reſurrection by angels, and informing the apoſtles, who treated their report as idle words; ſave that Peter went to ſee the Sepulchre, 1---12. *2d. Jeſus appearing, as a ſtranger, to two diſciples, as they went to Emmaus; diſcourſing with, and explaining the ſcriptures to them, and at length diſcovering himſelf to them, &c.* 13---35. *3d. His appearance that ſame evening to the aſſembled diſciples, giving them full proofs that he was riſen from the dead, eating with them, opening their underſtandings, giving them further inſight into his goſpel, and commiſſioning them to preach it, &c.* 36--48. *4th. His promiſe of ſending the Holy Spirit upon them; his bleſſing them, and aſcenſion into heaven; and their worſhip of him with joy, and their conſtant attendance at the temple, &c.* 49---53. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxviii. Mark, c. xvi.)*

own conſcience. How careful then ſhould every one be, not to provoke God to give him up to final infatuation, and inſenſibility! He, who had reverenced John Baptiſt, knowing him to be an holy man, and yet at length had beheaded him; was left to treat Jeſus with the utmoſt contempt, and to join with his brutal ſoldiers in deriding, and inſulting Him, to whom John came to bear witneſs! We may alſo obſerve, that as the enmities of wicked men are often excited about the verieſt trifles; ſo their friendſhips are grounded on, or cemented by the baſeſt combinations in wickedneſs, or they ſpring from coincidence in vicious diſpoſitions, and purſuits. Frequently they agree in little, except in enmity to God, and contempt of Chriſt: death therefore will ſoon terminate their amity, and perfect hatred in every ſenſe will be their final temper and portion.

But we muſt not indulge again in any particular contemplation on that diſplay of man's depravity, and of God's juſtice and mercy; on the meekneſs, patience, fortitude, and love of the divine Saviour; on the evil of ſin, the miſery of unbelievers, the felicity of true diſciples, &c; which the croſs of Chriſt continually ſuggeſts to us. Let us however remark, that no man will in all circumſtances be conſtant to the dictates of his judgment and conſcience, who is not actuated by the fear of God, and faith in his word: that they, who from carnal motives are prevailed on to ſanction iniquity by their authority, and influence, will by no means be held guiltleſs: that wicked men, who reject Chriſt, for the ſake of their deſtructive luſts, will have that, which they deſired, and will have none to blame but themſelves for their perverſe choice: that many are tranſiently affected by the recital of the ſufferings of Chriſt, who have no true faith in or love to him: that ſinners have cauſe to weep inceſſantly for the calamities, which are coming upon them, from the wrath of an offended God: and that it is better to remain childleſs, than to bring up children to be heirs of wrath and miſery. How ſhould we then uſe every means, and eſpecially beſeech the Lord continually for our offſpring, that whatever their lot be in this life, they may be numbered with his ſaints in glory everlaſting! At the approach of the miſeries reſerved hereafter for the unbelieving and diſobedient, the ſtouteſt deſpiſers will begin to call on the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of their offended Judge: yet even this refuge will be denied to thoſe, that now refuſe to flee for refuge to the gracious Saviour, who ſhed his precious blood for us: and even his ſufferings may now preach terror to obſtinate tranſgreſſors, for if "ſuch things were done in the green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?"

But who can ſufficiently admire the Redeemer's compaſſionate prayer, and plea, for his cruel and inſulting murderers? May that prayer be heard for our ſouls; for we too were concerned in crucifying the Lord of glory, "though we knew not what we did." But let every reader fear "crucifying Him afreſh," now he knows better, by continuing in ſin, in contempt of his ſalvation. We ſhould alſo meditate on this ſubject frequently; that we may learn to forgive our enemies, to bleſs thoſe who curſe us and to pray for them who deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us; that we may be induced to perſiſt in doing good, amidſt all the obloquy, outrage, and cruelty, to which we can be expoſed; and that we may be ſhamed out of our reſentments, and averſions, which are generally excited by very trivial provocations. But whilſt the Lord refuſes the preſumptuous demands of proud Scribes and Phariſees, and leaves inſulting ſcorners to be hardened in their prejudices, for the honour of his wiſdom and juſtice; he ſhews that this is not from any defect either of power or love, by ſnatching others as brands from the burning, to the praiſe of the glory of his ſovereign grace. When he pleaſes he can at once enlighten the darkeſt mind, and ſoften the hardeſt, humble the proudeſt, and cleanſe the filthieſt heart; and thus he can plant holy fear, repentance, faith, love and every heavenly affection, in that breaſt, which before was occupied by the vileſt abominations! But if he ſave men from wrath, he will alſo ſave from ſin; and the change of nature is the evidence of the happy change, that has taken place in their ſtate. Such monuments of mercy will then become reprovers, or counſellors to their former companions in iniquity; they will juſtify God in their ſharpeſt ſufferings, and glorify him by ingenuous confeſſions of their guilt; they will fear and deprecate his wrath, and will attain to honourable thoughts of Chriſt, and his ſalvation; they will confeſs him before men, even before thoſe who deſpiſe and revile him; they will humbly apply to, and rely on him, for deliverance from the wrath to come, and for the bleſſings of his kingdom; and they will recommend, honour, and obey Him, as far as they have opportunity. Such penitents Jeſus will certainly take under his protection, and make partakers of his ſalvation; he will ſupport them in the agonies of death, and immediately receive them to his glory: and ſhould their paſſage thither be effected by a torturing and ignominious execution for crimes, which they have previouſly committed; even that circumſtance

NOW upon the firſt *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the ſepulchre, bringing the ſpices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2 And they found the ſtone rolled away from the ſepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jeſus.

4 And it came to paſs, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men ſtood by them in ſhining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they ſaid unto them, Why ſeek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is riſen: remember how he ſpake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.

7 Saying, The Son of man muſt be delivered into the hands of ſinful men, and be crucified, and the third day riſe again.

8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the ſepulchre, and told all theſe things unto the eleven, and to all the reſt.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told theſe things unto the apoſtles.

11 And their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then aroſe Peter, and ran unto the ſepulchre; and, ſtooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themſelves, and departed, wondering in himſelf at that which was come to paſs.

13 And behold, two of them went that ſame day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jeruſalem *about* threeſcore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all theſe things which had happened.

ſhall not prevent the comfort of their dying moments, or impede their joyful entrance into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. God forbid that we ſhould attempt to darken the luſtre of ſuch diſplays of the Redeemer's ſovereign grace; for fear leſt men ſhould abuſe them, and thence be emboldened to continue in ſin. Inſtances, in many reſpects ſimilar, doubtleſs occur in every age, even in the lateſt hours of life: but ſuch *evident* changes as this are very rare; the moſt of thoſe, who live ſtrangers to ſerious religion, die *at beſt* very ambiguouſly, and give but feeble hopes to diſcerning miniſters of Chriſt; whilſt ſome, like the hardened thief, depart, either deſpiſing the Saviour, or deſpairing of mercy: and the awful inſtances of this kind, which we ſometimes hear of, would effectually prevent the hateful deluſion of ſinning on, in hopes of a death-bed repentance, did not the god of this world blind, and infatuate the minds of unbelievers.

But let us come unto Jeſus without delay, and give diligence to make our calling and election ſure; approaching the throne of grace, through the rended veil, through his atoning blood, and prevailing interceſſion: that when we die, we may confidently commend our departing ſoul into our Father's hand, and by his light paſs through that ſcene, which to unbelievers is encompaſſed with inexpreſſible darkneſs and horror. Let us not content ourſelves with ſuperficially viewing the tranſactions before us; with acknowledging Jeſus to have been a righteous man, or with ſome outward expreſſions of ſorrow, and remorſe: but let us ſeek to glorify God by our repentance and converſion; by proteſting againſt the counſel and deed of thoſe, who crucified the Saviour; by a ſober, righteous and godly life; and by filling up our ſtations in the community, and employing all our talents in his ſervice, who died for us and roſe again. Finally, in whatever buſineſs we engage, or however our hearts may be affected; let us never omit to prepare for, and keep holy, the day of ſacred reſt, according to the commandment of our God and Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 9—12.] It is ſuppoſed, that theſe women returned at different times to the city, to inform the apoſtles of what they had ſeen and heard: ſo that ſome of them ſeem only to have ſeen a viſion of angels, not Jeſus himſelf; and Luke here mentions not that the women, who firſt told theſe things to the apoſtles, had ſeen Jeſus. However the apoſtles diſregarded, in a great meaſure, their report, whatever it was, and deemed it to be the effect of their terrors, or warm imaginations, and not a reality; for they had no expectations of ſuch an event, as their Lord's reſurrection. Yet Peter, who is ſuppoſed to have been with John at the ſepulchre before this, (*John*, c. xx. v. 1—10,) hearing that the women had ſeen the angels, who declared that Jeſus was alive, went again to the ſepulchre; probably expecting to ſee the angels, and perhaps with ſome feeble hope of ſeeing Jeſus alſo: but on examination he found *only* the linen clothes laid in the tomb, and nothing elſe; ſo that he departed thence, wondering at theſe events, and reports, of which he could not underſtand the meaning, or how they would end.

V. 13—24. On the day of Chriſt's reſurrection, two diſciples, one called Cleophas, ſuppoſed to be the ſame with Alpheus, (*Mark*, c. iii. v. 18,) journeyed together to Emmaus, a village about 8 miles diſtant from Jeruſalem; and as they walked, they converſed together on the various tranſactions, that had lately occurred; and they were earneſt in debating together on their Lord's crucifixion, and the reports, that they had heard about his reſurrection, and in enquiring what they were to ex-

15 And it came to paſs, that while they communed *together*, and reaſoned, Jeſus himſelf drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden, that they ſhould not know him.

17 And he ſaid unto them, What manner of communications *are* theſe that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are ſad?

18 And the one of them, whoſe name was Cleophas, anſwering, ſaid unto him, Art thou only a ſtranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the things which are come to paſs there in theſe days?

19 And he ſaid unto them, What things? And they ſaid unto him, Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief prieſts and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and, beſides all this, to-day is the third day ſince theſe things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women alſo of our company made us aſtoniſhed, which were early at the ſepulchre:

23 And when they found not his body, they came, ſaying, That they had alſo ſeen a viſion of angels, which ſaid that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the ſepulchre, and found *it* even ſo as the women had ſaid; but him they ſaw not.

25 Then he ſaid unto them, O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken!

26 Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moſes and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they conſtrained him, ſaying, Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far ſpent. And he went in to tarry with them.

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pect, or to do, in ſuch perplexing circumſtances. Whilſt they were thus employed, Jeſus himſelf was pleaſed to join them, as if he had been a ſtranger travelling the ſame road: and as he purpoſely aſſumed ſomething of a different form than uſual, and alſo ſupernaturally influenced their ſight, that they might not know him; ſo they had not any thought that this was their Lord. Having therefore liſtened a-while to their earneſt diſcourſe, he at length enquired into the ſubject, that engroſſed their minds, and rendered them ſo ſorrowful; as he wiſhed to be acquainted with the cauſe of their diſquietude, and to ſympathize with them. To this Cleophas replied, by enquiring whether he was ſo entirely a ſtranger at Jeruſalem, that he alone, of all who ſojourned there, had never heard of thoſe extraordinary events, which had juſt occurred? And upon further enquiry, *they* proceeded to inform him, that they referred to what had taken place in reſpect of one Jeſus of Nazareth, who was *at leaſt* a Prophet, whoſe miracles, and powerful doctrine abundantly proved, that he was great in the ſight of God, as well as in the judgment of all the people. Yet at length the chief prieſts, and rulers had apprehended him, and delivered him to the Roman governor to be condemned to death, and had actually crucified Him. But as for them, they had confidently believed him to be the promiſed Meſſiah, who had ſo long been predicted, and was then expected, to redeem Iſrael from bondage, and to rule over them in great proſperity: and therefore theſe events, ſo contrary to their expectations, had exceedingly diſtreſſed and perplexed them; ſeeing they could not underſtand how his crucifixion could conſiſt with his redeeming his people. Indeed he had ſpoken ſome things about riſing on the third day, that they had not underſtood, which day was arrived: and ſome women of their company had exceedingly ſurpriſed them; for having gone early to viſit the ſepulchre, they could not find his body, and they had alſo declared that they had ſeen a viſion of angels, who aſſured them that he was alive. Indeed ſome men of their company had alſo gone to the ſepulchre, and had found that the body was gone, but they had not ſeen Him riſen from the dead: therefore their anxiety and perplexity were very great, as they knew not what to think or how to act in ſuch circumſtances. This account ſeems to imply, that theſe diſciples came away, before the women, who had ſeen Jeſus, returned to the apoſtles: though ſome think that the contrary is intimated in the expreſſion "Him they ſaw not;" which may ſignify that the women reported that they had ſeen Him; but that the diſciples thought *at moſt*, that it was only the appearance of an angel in his form. (*Acts*, c. xii. v. 15.)

V. 25—31.] When the diſciples had ſtated their difficulties to the ſuppoſed ſtranger; he addreſſed them, as one filled with aſtoniſhment at their ignorance, and ſtupidity: they appeared to him perfectly devoid of underſtanding, and incapable of forming any proper judgment in ſuch matters; through their backwardneſs of mind, to believe all thoſe things, which the ancient prophets

30 And it came to paſs, as he ſat at meat with them, he took bread, and bleſſed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vaniſhed out of their ſight.

32 And they ſaid one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the ſcriptures?

33 And they roſe up the ſame hour, and returned to Jeruſalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

36 And as they thus ſpake, Jeſus himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed that they had ſeen a ſpirit.

38 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myſelf. Handle me, and ſee: for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have.

40 And when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he ſaid unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fiſh, and of an honey-comb.

43 And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

44 And he ſaid unto them, Theſe *are* the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moſes, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the pſalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their underſtanding,

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had ſpoken concerning the Meſſiah: for, he enquired of them, whether it were not plain from their writings, that the promiſed Redeemer muſt needs paſs through thoſe very ſufferings, which Jeſus had endured, previous to his entrance into his glory, and his exaltation to his kingly authority? The purpoſes of God, the predictions of his word, the honour of his name, and the nature of his ſalvation concurred in rendering this incumbent on him. To ſatisfy them of this, and to ſhew them, that there was nothing in thoſe events, which ought either to perplex, or diſconcert them; he began with the types and prophecies in the books of Moſes, and ſo proceeded regularly through the ſeveral parts of the Old Teſtament, adducing and expounding thoſe prophecies, which related to himſelf. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. iii. v. 15. c. xxii. *Exod.* c. xii. *Lev.* c. xvi. *Pſ.* xvi. xxii. lxix. *Iſaiah*, c. liii. *Dan.* c. ix. v. 24—27. *Zech.* c. xiii. v. 1—7.) As they thus diſcourſed they arrived at Emmaus; and as a traveller he offered to go further, in order to excite their more earneſt invitations: accordingly they conſtrained, or importunately preſſed him, to ſpend the night with them, (as the evening now approached,) that they might have further converſation with him on thoſe intereſting ſubjects; to which he conſented. But when they ſat down to meat, he took bread, bleſſed, and breaking gave it to them, as his cuſtom had been at their ordinary meals; and, the ſupernatural reſtraint being at the ſame time taken from their eyes, they immediately perceived who their inſtructive companion was: but as ſoon as they were fully ſatisfied in this matter, he was pleaſed to render himſelf inviſible, and to withdraw from them; in what manner it does not become us to enquire.

V. 32—35.] When the diſciples had conſidered the circumſtances of this moſt extraordinary affair; they peculiarly reflected on the effects, which his converſation had produced on both of them: for their affections had been ſo enlivened, that their hearts ſeemed to burn with hope, joy, love, gratitude, &c, whilſt he opened to them the meaning of the ſcriptures, and ſhewed their accompliſhment, in his ſufferings, death, and reſurrection. Being therefore earneſtly deſirous of communicating the glad tidings to their brethren, they ſet off immediately, and returned to Jeruſalem; where they found the apoſtles aſſembled together with other diſciples; many of whom, in a mixture of aſtoniſhment and exultation, aſſured them, that *indeed* their beloved Lord was riſen from the dead, and had appeared to Simon Peter, in a moſt gracious manner; to aſſure him, that he had forgiven his late denial of him: (1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 5:) in confirmation of which the two diſciples related how he had appeared to them in their journey, and diſcovered himſelf to them, whilſt he was breaking bread to them. Yet after all this we find that ſome of the company did not fully believe them, (*Mark*, c. xvi. v. 12, 13;) ſo backward were they to credit this unexpected, and extraordinary event!

V. 36—49.] (*John*, c. xx. v. 19—23.) Whilſt the diſciples were diſcourſing on theſe ſubjects, Jeſus himſelf was pleaſed, in a miraculous manner, to enter the room, and to appear in the midſt of them; aſſuring them of his peace, his entire reconciliation to them, though they had ſo lately forſaken him; and promiſing them ſpithat they might underſtand the ſcriptures,

46 And ſaid unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem.

48 And ye are witneſſes of theſe things.

49 And, behold, I ſend the promiſe of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jeruſalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and bleſſed them.

51 And it came to paſs, while he bleſſed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worſhipped him, and returned to Jeruſalem with great joy;

53 And were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God. Amen.

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ritual peace, and every bleſſing. Yet after all the preparation, which had been made for his appearance to them; they were greatly alarmed at his preſence, as if they had ſeen a ſpirit, or an apparition reſembling Him: He therefore expoſtulated with them on their unreaſonable incredulity; enquiring why they thus troubled themſelves, and indulged ſo many perplexing thoughts to occupy their hearts; ſeeing every circumſtance ſo exactly accorded to his former declarations, and were ſo well ſuited to inſpire them with joy and confidence. To remove all their doubts, he ſhewed them the wounds in his hands and feet; and allowed them to touch him, that they might be ſure that it was not an apparition, but his body really riſen from he dead. Yet they had been ſunk ſo low in deſpondency by his crucifixion, and had ſo entirely renounced the expectation of ſeeing him again; that the fact, however evident, ſeemed to be too wonderful, and joyful to be true; and they ſtill feared leſt it ſhould prove an illuſion on their ſenſes. To obviate this ſtill more, Jeſus was pleaſed alſo to eat before them, "a "piece of a broiled fiſh, and an honey-comb," (which ſome think was a kind of cake, or bread in uſe among them;) for eating might conſiſt with, though it were not needful to that kind of life, to which he was riſen. Having thus at length ſatisfied their minds, he proceeded to ſhew the conſiſtency of theſe events with his former diſcourſes to them, as well as with the predictions of the Meſſiah, contained in the ſeveral parts of the ſcripture: and as their remaining prejudices alone cauſed their difficulties, and cloſed their minds to ſuch evident truths, he powerfully removed the obſtruction, and "opened "their underſtanding," as well as explained the ſcriptures to them. Thus at length he convinced them, that nothing had occurred, but what was written by the ancient prophets, and what was neceſſary for the honour of God in the ſalvation of ſinners: in both reſpects it was requiſite that the Meſſiah ſhould ſuffer, and riſe again on the third day, as he had done, in order that he might live for ever to complete the redemption of his people: and it was now his purpoſe, as well as agreeable to the tenor of the ſcriptures, that repentance, and remiſſion of ſins, ſhould be preached in his name to ſinners of every nation: that all men ſhould be inſtructed in the nature and neceſſity of repentance, in order to the forgiveneſs of their ſins; and to be taught that theſe bleſſings were to be ſought for by faith in the name of Jeſus, as the purchaſe of his atoning ſufferings, the fruit of his interceſſion, and the effect of his grace. But though all nations were thus to be called upon "to repent and be "converted, that their ſins might be blotted out;" yet the inhabitants of Jeruſalem were *firſt* to be invited to partake of this ſpiritual redemption, inſtead of being excluded from it, on account of their ingratitude, and cruelty to him: and the apoſtles eſpecially were choſen to be his witneſſes, as to the truth and reality of his reſurrection, and the doctrine of ſalvation connected with it. Yet they were not immediately to enter upon their teſtimony; for he would aſſuredly, after his aſcenſion into heaven, ſend them the bleſſing of the Holy Spirit, which the Father had promiſed to him as Mediator, and to his church through and by Him; that by his powerful aſſiſtance, and his energy on the minds of their hearers, they might both be enabled for their work, and rendered ſucceſsful in it. (*Iſaiah*, c. lix. v. 21. *John*, c. xiv. v. 16, 17. c. xv. v. 26, 27. c. xvi. v. 7 13, 14.) In the mean time, they were to remain at Jeruſalem, till their commiſſion was thus ratified, and a marvellous power conferred upon them, from on high.

V. 50—53.] (*Acts*, c. i. v. 1—14.) At the end of forty days after our Lord's reſurrection, (during which ſpace he had in different places appeared to his diſciples, and given them copious inſtructions for their work;) he at length met them at Jeruſalem, and went before them to the confines of Bethany, where he ſtopped; and whilſt with up-lifted hands he pronounced bleſſings upon them, he was marvellouſly parted from them, and aſcended viſibly till a cloud intercepted their ſight of Him. Thus he was carried up into heaven, leading captivity captive, and aſcending his glorious throne, that from thence he might beſtow his purchaſed bleſſings moſt freely and liberally on his choſen people. (*Pſ.* xxiv. lxviii. *Zech.* c. xiv. v 4.) When the apoſtles, and diſciples had witneſſed this auguſt, and ſurpriſing ſcene, they proſtrated themſelves to worſhip Him as their Lord, and their God: and then they returned to Jeruſalem, not mourning for *their* loſs, but rejoicing in the exaltation of their beloved Lord, and in glad expectation of the performance of his promiſes: and whilſt they abode together at Jeruſalem, waiting and praying with one accord for the Spirit of power, truth, and holineſs; they continually reſorted to the temple, at the proper times, to join in the worſhip there performed, and eſpecially in thoſe pſalms of praiſe and thankſgiving, which uſed there to be ſung under the direction of the Prieſts and Levites. (1 *Chron.* c. xxv.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

“ The Lord loveth thoſe, who love Him, and they “ who ſeek Him early ſhall find Him:” and they who ſeek him humbly, though they are at preſent in error and perplexity, and cannot find what they want; yet ſhall at length be directed into a ſaving acquaintance with his truth. All our miſtakes in religion ſpring from ignorance or forgetfulneſs of the words, which the Lord hath ſpoken: and our judgments will be rectified, when we call them to remembrance, and are enabled to underſtand them. This forms one great uſe of the goſpel miniſtry: for thereby men are continually reminded of the words of Chriſt; and eſpecially they are led to conſider thoſe things, which relate to his ſufferings, his agonizing death, and glorious reſurrection. But though many errors in religion may be like “ ſeeking the living among “ the dead;” yet *they* are moſt fatally thus employed, who ſeek happineſs from worldly vanities, or in ſinful pleaſures; or who ſeek ſalvation from human inventions and ſuperſtitions. Even where ſome meaſure of faith and grace are found, how unbelieving are men on ſome occaſions! And not only in thoſe things, which are contrary to their prejudices, but in thoſe alſo, that are above their experience, or expectation: theſe, however atteſted, ſeem to be idle tales, and they believe them not! Yet a diligent ſpirit of enquiry will gradually lead men to a more clear perception of ſpiritual things. When chriſtians journey together, or are any ways employed in company with each other; they ſhould be careful to commune together of thoſe things, which relate to their gracious Lord, and to open their difficulties to each other, for their mutual edification. When we are thus engaged we may expect that Jeſus himſelf will be inviſibly preſent with us: nay he will ſometimes ſpeak to us by thoſe, with whom we are not acquainted, or from whom we have no expectations. When we have carefully inveſtigated the cauſes of our ſorrow and dejections; we ſhall perhaps find that thoſe events, which *ſeemed* to blaſt all our hopes, were indeed as neceſſary to their accompliſhment, as the crucifixion of Chriſt was to the redemption of his people; and that our fears, and troubles aroſe from unbelief alone, and not from want of evidence, ſecurity, or information. Our gracious Lord will reprove his diſciples for their folly and ignorance, and their ſlowneſs of heart to believe the ſcriptures, for the more diligently we ſtudy, and the more fully we underſtand them; the plainer will it appear to us, that the Saviour of ſinners “ ought to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into “ his glory:” though ſurely none will think, that *he ought* to have ſuffered them, on his own account, or for any other end, but to atone for our ſins. We ſhould alſo keep in mind continually, that every part of ſcripture teſtifies to us of Chriſt, in ſome way or other, if we ſpiritually underſtand it. When we earneſtly deſire, and intreat his preſence with us, he will come and abide with us: and this will render our converſation, our worſhip, and even our ordinary meals, bleſſed unto us. Our more comfortable ſeaſons of communion with Him, and his ſaints, are commonly of ſhort duration, and ſpeedily interrupted: but it may afterwards be exhilerating to remember how our hearts glowed with heavenly affections; whilſt He opened to us the ſcriptures, as we were reading, hearing, or meditating on them; and how he made himſelf, and his glorious ſalvation known to us, as we were breaking bread in his name. We ſhould haſten to communicate to our ſorrowing brethren thoſe diſcoveries and communications, which have gladdened our hearts; that we may thus mutually encourage each other's faith, and hope; and the aſſurance “ that the Lord is riſen indeed,” as our experience of his power, truth and love hath abundantly proved. Thus meeting together, the gracious Saviour will again and again manifeſt himſelf unto us, as he doth not unto the world; he will ſpeak pardon and peace to our ſouls, and diſpel our terrors and troubles; he will aſſure us of his love, and open our underſtanding to underſtand the ſcriptures; that we may ſee with increaſing clearneſs, that thus it was written, that the purchaſe of ſalvation is completed, and that repentance and remiſſion of ſins by faith in his name are freely to be preached to all nations. Bleſſed be God, that ever they were preached in this nation; may we be made partakers of them, and endeavour to diffuſe the bleſſed tidings further and further! As they, who crucified the Lord of glory, had the firſt offers made them of ſalvation through his blood; what ſinners need now deſpair of mercy? And as thouſands of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem were in a few weeks converted to Him, whoſe death they had clamorouſly demanded; why ſhould the miniſters of the goſpel be diſcouraged, or ceaſe to labour, pray, and hope for ſucceſs, when a ſhort time may cauſe them to witneſs ſo happy a change? Pardoned rebels, in whoſe caſe, ſin hath abounded, but grace hath much more abounded, are unexceptionable witneſſes to the love and power of our riſen Redeemer: yet without the promiſe of the Father, even the bleſſed gift of his ſanctifying Spirit, we can neither preach nor hear the word of God to good effect: and, though we expect no miraculous powers to be communicated; we are yet encouraged to wait and pray for his more ordinary, but not leſs valuable influences, through our riſen and aſcended Advocate. Let us then rely on, and plead his promiſe, worſhip his name, rejoice in his glory, and wait for his ſalvation; and let us continually attend on his ordinances, praiſe and bleſs our God for his mercies, ſet our affections on things above, and expect the Redeemer's return to complete our felicity. Amen. Even ſo Lord Jeſus come quickly.

The GOSPEL according to St. JOHN.

John the ſon of Zebedee and the brother of James (the penman of this Goſpel, of three Epiſtles, and of the Book of Revelation,) was the apoſtle, and even boſom friend, of Jeſus. He ſurvived all the other apoſtles, and after many perſecutions and perils, he died a natural death, in a very old age; being, as is reported, the only apoſtle that eſcaped martyrdom. It is not agreed at what time of his life he wrote this goſpel: however it ſeems to have been, after the time that Cerinthus and others had begun to deny, or corrupt the doctrine of Chriſt's deity: for he ſeems to have immediately intended to oppoſe his apoſtolical authority to their hereſies, and vain reaſonings. He therefore begins his goſpel with the doctrine of the perſon of Chriſt, adding nothing to what the other Evangeliſts had recorded concerning his conception and birth, as man. He dwells leſs in every part of the Goſpel on the miracles, and more on the diſcourſes of Chriſt, than the others had done; and almoſt the whole of his hiſtory is new, or diſtinct from what hath been already conſidered. He alſo goes much deeper into ſeveral of the myſterious doctrines of chriſtianity, than the other Evangeliſts: and as he wrote after them, ſo he evidently intended to lead his readers forward in the knowledge of the great myſtery of godlineſs, and into an experience of it's ſanctifying effects upon the heart of every true believer.

Anno Domini 26.

CHAP. I.

Contains 1*ſt. A declaration of the eternal Godhead of Chriſt; of his being the Light of men; of his incarnation, and glory, the reception that he met with, and the privilege that he beſtows on all believers,* 1---14. 2*d. Various teſtimonies, which John Baptiſt bare to him on different occaſions,* 15---37. 3*d. Some remarkable circumſtances relating to the calling of his firſt diſciple,* 38---51.

Anno Domini 26.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The ſame was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—3.] The other Evangeliſts leave us to collect the divine dignity of Chriſt from his miracles, and doctrine; and from the various declarations, and diſplays of his glory and perfections, which they record: but John opens his goſpel with an expreſs avowal and ſtatement of this fundamental truth. He declares, that "In the beginning was the Word." (*Gen.* c. i. v. 1.) before the world had a beginning, the Word exiſted: nothing could precede time, but an immeaſurable, incomprehenſible eternity. Time began, when the creation was called forth into exiſtence: and in this beginning "the Word was," that is from all eternity. Some fancy that the evangeliſt referred to the ſpeculations of Plato, and his diſciples, in the term, the WORD, or the LOGOS, which that philoſopher uſed: but it is not likely that he would at all countenance ſuch reveries, which ſeem originally to have been borrowed from Revelation, though they were at length ſo diſtorted and darkened, as to be little, if at all better than atheiſm. Others ſuppoſe that he referred to expreſſions often made uſe of by the ancient Jewiſh writers, that have ſpoken of the Word, in language not very diſſimilar from that of the ancient fathers of the church, and other chriſtian divines; who, endeavouring to explain a myſterious ſubject, and to add further information upon it, to that which the ſcripture hath afforded us, have only confuſed it, and laid it open to the objections of infidels. I apprehend that John had little reference to any thing except the old teſtament, in what he hath here declared. We have in many places obſerved the cleareſt intimations of diſtinct perſons called Jehovah, &c, in the writings of the ancient prophets, &c: and Solomon eſpecially ſpeaks of Wiſdom in much the ſame language, that John here does of the Word. (*Prov.* c. viii. v. 22—31.) But as the apoſtle ſpake as he was moved by the Holy Ghoſt, he could refer to no higher authority than his own: and as he expreſſly ſtates the doctrine, *in the way of a divine teſtimony*; we ſhould endeavour to aſcertain his meaning, according to the moſt ſimple and obvious interpretation of his words; and then to explain occaſional intimations on the ſame myſterious ſubject *by them*, and not them by others. The

4 In him was life; and the Life was the Light of men.

5 And the Light ſhineth in darkneſs; and the darkneſs comprehended it not.

title of "the Word" is peculiar to this Evangeliſt, at leaſt with but few exceptions; and it may ſignify, "Reaſon," and is nearly equivalent to "Wiſdom," as ſpeaking by Solomon, (*Rev.* c. xix. v. 13.) Probably the title is given to Chriſt; becauſe by Him, the perfections, will, and *ſecret* counſels of God are made known to man; eſpecially his hidden and deep thoughts of wiſdom and love, in our redemption: even as a man communicates his ſecret purpoſes and counſels to others by his *word*. The apoſtle teſtifies, that "The WORD was with God;" as he had not mentioned Chriſt by the title of the Son of God; ſo he did not ſay the Father, but God: the Word exiſted, and was with God, when no creature was produced, (1 *John*, c. i. v. 1, 2:) **And the WORD WAS GOD.** Chriſtianity was doubtleſs intended to deliver the world from idolatry, that principal work of the devil: it would therefore have been the moſt palpable abſurdity, to ſuppoſe that one of it's divinely inſpired teachers ſhould uſe ſuch expreſſions, at the opening of his goſpel, as were exactly ſuited to draw the whole chriſtian church into a new ſpecies of idolatry, and which could ſcarce fail to have that effect. Yet this muſt be the conſequence of ſuppoſing the perſon, of whom he here ſpake, to have been a mere creature, however highly exalted. For though the article is not prefixed to the original word, tranſlated God; yet that term is ſo frequently uſed, and even by this Evangeliſt, without the article, for God the Father; that ſcarce the ſhadow of an objection can be drawn from that circumſtance. And what can we underſtand by this teſtimony, that "the Word was God;" but that he was poſſeſſed of the ſame divine nature and perfections with the Father; participated the ſame glory and felicity, and was in every reſpect worthy of, and entitled to the adoration of all rational creatures, that ſhould ever exiſt, equal to God with whom He was? The only objection to this inference ſeems to be, that it is incomprehenſible to us: but it ſhould carefully be noted, that they, who will not admit of it, *on this account, and for other reaſons*, are driven into hypotheſes, the abſurdity of which at leaſt is perfectly comprehenſible. Every ſucceeding generation of theſe opponents have hitherto been induced to give up the ſyſtem of their predeceſſors as indefenſible; or at leaſt as leſs ſpecious, than more modern inventions, or refinements: and many in every age are contending for their different ſchemes of getting over the difficulties here thrown in their way; yet their utmoſt improvements on the ſubject ſcarce need any other anſwer, than to compare them with this divine teſtimony, to which they muſt be in everlaſting oppoſition. Nay their methods of interpretation, and reaſoning are ſuch, as tend directly to univerſal ſcepticiſm, and uncertainty. However the inſpired penman, having declared that "the Word was God;" is equally careful to eſtabliſh the perſonal diſtinction, as the eternal Godhead, of the Word; and therefore he adds again, leſt he ſhould be miſtaken, "that the ſame was in the beginning with God." Having thus ſtated the divinity, and diſtinct perſonality of "the Word," of whom he ſpeaks: he proceeds to aſcribe all the work of creation to Him; as working in perfect union of will, and purpoſe with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, (*Gen.* c. i. v. 2. 26. *Col.* c. i. v. 15—18. *Heb.* c. i. v. 1—3.) In this he is ſo explicit, as to uſe a repetition, which at firſt ſight may appear needleſs: "all things were made by him:" but the word *all* is ſometimes uſed, when abſolute univerſality is not meant; therefore he adds, that "without Him was not any thing made, that was made;" or "not ſo much as one ſingle being;" for ſo the original words imply. In what language can the divine power and operation of the great Creator be more emphatically deſcribed? Or what could have been ſaid better ſuited to lead every one, to look up to, and adore "the Word," as his omnipotent Maker and Sovereign Lord? To ſuppoſe Him to be a mere creature, is to ſuppoſe, infinite power and perfection communicable to a creature; and the whole univerſe as ſtanding in the ſame relation to a creature, as they do to the infinite and eternal God: and to aſſert that "The Word" was only an inſtrument, or ſubordinate agent in creation, beſide the abſurdity of it, is expreſſly to contradict the ſcripture, which ſays that "Jehovah ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, and ſpreadeth abroad the earth by himſelf." (*Iſaiah*, c. xliv. v. 24:) and that "he will not give his glory to another." Indeed it ſeems ſelf-evident, that he who built all things is God, in the ſtricteſt, and fulleſt meaning of the word: yet the inference is not drawn from any ſingle expreſſion, but from a combination of many; and it will therefore appear more incontrovertible as we proceed.

V. 4, 5.] The Evangeliſt here further teſtifies, that "in the Word was life;" (even as water is in a fountain, or ſpring, or as light is in the ſun;) from whence it iſſued forth to animate all orders of living creatures, which He formed, from the moſt minute to the moſt exalted. "And the Life was the Light of men:" all the powers of man's underſtanding, and all the information communicated to him from every quarter, and by every avenue; all that can be called light, natural, intellectual, moral, or ſpiritual, are from "the Word," and that Fountain of Life, that is in him: eſpecially He, who is the Life of the univerſe, is become the Light of fallen men, to ſhew them the way to everlaſting life and felicity. But "this Light ſhineth in darkneſs:" men hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs: the diſcoveries made of the Creator by the works of creation, as addreſſed to the natural reaſon and conſcience of men, fail of producing a profitable knowledge of God, becauſe of the depravity of the human heart; and notwithſtanding this light, the world continues enveloped in darkneſs and wickedneſs. The light of Revelation in the former ages of the world, had ſhone amidſt the darkneſs, which it was inſufficient to diſpel: the Gentiles ſtill continued in darkneſs, almoſt total: and even the Jews miſunderſtood, abuſed, or neglected the light. Even the chriſtian Revelation, though more complete, ſtill ſhineth, as a light in the midſt of a dark world, which generally lieth in

6 There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name *was* John.

7 The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but *was ſent* to bear witneſs of that Light.

9 *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

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error, ignorance, and wickedneſs to this day. For "the "darkneſs comprehended it not," or "did not apprehend it:" fully to comprehend the light, which God affords us, concerning himſelf, his truth and will, may be impoſſible to a finite creature; but the perverſeneſs to which ſin and ſatan have reduced men, cauſes them to deſpiſe, hate, and reject the light; they like not to retain God in their knowledge, they will not take hold of, or retain inſtruction; they avail not themſelves of the light, but cloſe their eyes to it, ſo that it ſhines in vain around them, and they do not comprehend it's uſe, or excellency, but either neglect, oppoſe, or pervert it. (c. iii. v. 18—21. 2 *Cor.* c. iv. ver. 3—6.) This is the real, and in ſome ſenſe the only reaſon, why Chriſt the Light of the world, hath not by his goſpel enlightened all the nations of the earth. But in fact no external revelation can effectually profit an apoſtate rebellious creature; except it be attended with an internal operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind, preparing the vitiated organ to receive the light: and as it ſeems to have been the deſign of infinite wiſdom, in leaving the nations ſo many ages without revelation, to prove *by facts* what a blind guide man's boaſted reaſon is; ſo it ſeems alſo to be the purpoſe of God to ſhew in the ſame manner, that even Revelation alone will not profit fallen creatures, without the teaching of his Holy Spirit. When theſe two humiliating truths are undeniably proved, we have ground in ſcripture to conclude, that he will render the light of revelation effectual by his powerful teaching, to fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory, even as the waters cover the ſea. However, though the paſſage under conſideration may be applied to all theſe, and more particulars; yet the evangeliſt ſeems eſpecially to have referred to that glimmering of divine light, which in former ages had ſhone among the Jews, in the midſt of the darkneſs of the Pagan nations.

V. 6—9.] The coming of Chriſt was intended to introduce a more general diffuſion of divine light amongſt men: this was introduced by the miniſtry of John Baptiſt. He was "a man, ſent from God," wiſe, holy and uſeful as a man, and a prophet; but the evangeliſt ſpake of him in very different language, from what he had uſed reſpecting "the Word, that was with God, and was God, "and made all things." John came on purpoſe "to "bear witneſs of the Light;" to announce the coming of "the Light of the world;" to call men's attention to "the brightneſs of the riſing of the Sun of righteouſneſs;" and to teſtify of Jeſus, that he was to be "a Light to "lighten the Gentiles, and to be for ſalvation unto the "ends of the earth;" in order "that all men," or men of all ranks, characters, and deſcriptions, might by his teſtimony be called upon, and brought to believe in Chriſt. Nothing can more fully prove the darkneſs, which envelopes men's minds, than the reflection, that when the Light was manifeſted, there was need for a witneſs to be ſent from God, to call men's attention to it! Light is it's own witneſs, and renders itſelf, as well as other objects, conſpicuous: but then this pre-ſuppoſes that men have eyes, that they are not blinded, nor wilfully cloſed, nor locked up in ſleep; for in theſe caſes, "the light may ſhine in darkneſs, and the darkneſs not "at all comprehend it:" and it is for ſimilar reaſons, that it is neceſſary for us to cry out "Awake, thou that "ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give "thee light." John was indeed "a burning and a "ſhining light:" but "he was not that Light," who came to illuminate a benighted world; having no light for himſelf, except from Chriſt; or for others, but by reflecting his light. He was merely a witneſs to "the "Word," who was indeed, "that Light, which enlighteneth every man, that cometh into the world;" that is, he is the ſource of all that true light, by which any man in the world, ever was, is, or ſhall be enlightened; all that comes not from him is but darkneſs, at leaſt it is not profitable light in ſpiritual things. The words may be rendered, "which coming into the world "enlighteneth every man." We can no more infer from this expreſſion, that Chriſt gives every individual a meaſure of ſpiritual light; than from one juſt before, (v. 7,) that every man actually believeth in Chriſt through John's teſtimony: both inferences are alike contrary to ſcripture, and to facts. It may further be obſerved, that Jeſus was the true Light, not only in oppoſition to the falſe and pretended light of philoſophy, and the perverted light of the traditions of the elders; but alſo in diſtinction from the typical light of the Moſaic ceremonies, and the derived light of prophets and apoſtles.

V. 10—13.] Before Chriſt appeared as man on earth, "He was in the world," both as he upheld and governed it by his providence; and as he enlightened ſome of it's inhabitants by his word, and Spirit: but though the world was made, and ſuſtained by him; yet men in general "knew him not," ſo as to worſhip, truſt in, and obey Him; (*Rom.* c. i. v. 18—23.) When he appeared in our own nature, he came to his own world, and to his own profeſſed people the Jews, whoſe Lord, King, 14 And the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 John bare witneſs of him, and cried, ſaying, This was he of whom I ſpake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me.

Benefactor, and Redeemer he had ever been; whom he had choſen, brought out of Egypt, ſettled in Canaan, ſeparated and preſerved diſtinct from other nations; whom he had favoured with his word, and ordinances, and the whole of whoſe conſtitution was *his own* appointment for their good: yet when he came in the fulneſs of time, according to his ancient prophecies, they received him not, but thruſt him from them with contempt and abhorrence, notwithſtanding the diſplays that he made of his Almighty power, and divine perfection. But though the Jewiſh nation in general, rejected, and crucified the Lord of glory: yet there was a remnant of them, and a vaſt multitude of the Gentiles, who welcomed him as their Redeemer and King, and received him for all the purpoſes, for which he came into the world: and to every one of theſe perſons, how many ſoever they were, He gave the power, privilege, or dignity of becoming the children of God; that being adopted into his family, and made partakers of his fatherly compaſſion, care, and affection, they might reverence, love, confide in, and obey him with delight, as his beloved children. This "receiving of Chriſt" was indeed to be conſidered as equivalent to, or as the inſeparable effect of, "true faith in his name," that is of a cordial belief of the divine teſtimony concerning his perſonal dignity and excellency, the end of his coming into the world, his mediatorial character, and the preciouſneſs of his ſalvation; and of a reliance upon him, or application to him, for all the bleſſings, which he came to beſtow on periſhing ſinners. This generation of the children of God, are born into his family, not by any natural deſcent from the blood of Abraham, or in conſequence of the blood of circumciſion, or of the ſacrifices; nor is it the effect of their own *natural* choice, as fallen creatures, whoſe will is carnal and ſold under ſin; nor does it ariſe from the will of any man reſpecting them; (as men, who have no children, ſometimes chooſe perſons of diſtinguiſhed excellency, whom they adopt as their heirs;) for no man can enſure the converſion of his deareſt friends or relatives; no miniſter can chooſe, who ſhall, or even conjecture before-hand, who will, profit by his miniſtry; nay the moſt unlikely perſons are very frequently thus diſtinguiſhed: for they are "born of God," according to his ſovereign purpoſe, by an immediate operation of his Holy Spirit, producing in them a new nature, a new judgment and diſpoſition, renewing them to the divine Image, and inclining them to chooſe, reliſh and delight in the ſpiritual excellency of the things of God. Thus new creatures are formed, and brought into the ſpiritual world, to be nouriſhed up by the word of ſound doctrine, to a complete meetneſs for the inheritance of the children of God in heaven. This new birth is the preparation for their receiving Chriſt, and believing in his name, without which they would ſtill continue to deſpiſe and reject him.

14. *And*, &c.] The evangeliſt next proceeds to ſhew in what manner "the Word, came to his own;" "He was made fleſh," or "became fleſh;" that is He aſſumed our nature into a perſonal union with the Deity; "He was made *in the likeneſs* of ſinful fleſh;" he became man, and ſubjected himſelf to all thoſe infirmities, which ſin gave riſe to, as far as he could, without being polluted with ſin: for though he received our whole nature entire; yet the body, the lower part of our nature, was eſpecially mentioned, to ſhew the greatneſs of his condeſcenſion: He became fleſh, as he became liable to hunger, thirſt, wearineſs, pain, ſuffering and death. He was God, and with God from the beginning: at length he became man and was with man: he was in the form of God, and he became in faſhion as a man. This was effected by the miraculous conception, and birth of Jeſus the Son of Mary, who was incomprehenſibly, yet really and inſeparably one Perſon with the Eternal Word. We cannot explain how this was effected; nor can we underſtand the union between the body and ſoul in our own perſons: and indeed it affords matter of triumph to thoſe, who believe the teſtimony of God, and deſire no other proof; that ſome of thoſe, who moſt ſtrenuouſly reaſon againſt this great myſtery of godlineſs, have thought proper alſo to deny the diſtinction between the reaſonable ſoul, and the animal body, in the conſtitution of human nature; I ſuppoſe becauſe they cannot comprehend it: and for the ſame ſage reaſon they muſt deny the exiſtence of the univerſe, yea their own exiſtence, if they will be conſiſtent with themſelves, and purſue their dogma to its inevitable conſequences. "But the teſtimony of God is ſure, and giveth wiſdom to *the ſimple*:" this teſtimony declares "that the Word was made fleſh;" and that He "tabernacled amongſt us," as the ſhekinah, or divine glory dwelt in the tabernacle in the wilderneſs: ſo that "the Word of God," yea "God the Word," condeſcended to dwell here on earth in human nature, and viſibly to diſplay his glory for many years: being "full of grace, and truth," accompliſhing the types, predictions, and promiſes of the Old Teſtament; exerciſing all kinds of condeſcenſion, compaſſion, love and mercy to mankind; communicating all grace to thoſe that applied to him for it, and ſhewing himſelf ever full of, and overflowing with, kindneſs, and truth, in the bleſſed inſtructions, which he continually gave to thoſe around him, concerning the things of God, and the eternal world. Indeed this glory was veiled under his external poverty, &c, from the view of carnal men: but the apoſtles and others, who were enabled to believe in this name, beheld the glory of his power, wiſdom, knowledge, holineſs, truth and grace; and were aſſured that they were ſuch as became the character, and Perſon of "the only begotten of the Father." Some reference may here alſo be had to his transfiguration.

V. 15—18.] The evangeliſt next proceeds to ſhew how this accords to what John the Baptiſt had teſtified reſpecting Jeſus. When he firſt ſaw him, (for this ſeems to refer to the time, when He came to be baptized of

16 And of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moſes, *but* grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.

18 No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

19 And this is the record of John, when

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him,) he proclaimed aloud, that this was the perſon, whom he had announced to the people, as about to make his appearance among them. Indeed, as to the order of time, and his entrance on his work, "he came after "John:" but in every other way he had been and would be "preferred before him;" as it was moſt reaſonable that he ſhould "for he *was* before him:" John was the elder man, and it does not appear what ſenſe can be made of this expreſſion, (v. 30,) except we allow Jeſus to have exiſted before he appeared on earth as man, whereas John had no previous exiſtence: for if John had only meant to declare the ſuperiority of Jeſus to him, he muſt, according to all the rules of language, have ſaid "He *is* before me, not "He *was* before me," as the ableſt critics have unanſwerably proved: beſides this would have been no more than a repetition of his foregoing aſſertion, when it is evidently introduced as a reaſon for it. What follows is generally conſidered as the teſtimony of the evangeliſt reſuming his argument, and not as the words of John Baptiſt: yet the arguments adduced for this opinion ſeem not concluſive. However the doctrine is the ſame, and grounded on the ſame divine authority, whoever be the ſpeaker. The Baptiſt, and the evangeliſt, the prophets and the apoſtles had received, (and all believers from the beginning to the end of the world, do receive,) all their wiſdom, knowledge, ſtrength, and grace from the fulneſs of Chriſt:" they had nothing of their own, but ſin, weakneſs, folly, and miſery: they had nothing from God, but as it was communicated in and through his Son, the eternal Word, either in conſequence of his covenant engagements, or of his actual incarnation, and the work he accompliſhed as our Surety on earth. In him is a fulneſs of life, light, wiſdom, power, grace and truth; all fulneſs dwells in him, even all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily; (*Col.* c. i. v. 19. c. ii. v. 3. 9;) from which alone fallen ſinners have been, are, and ſhall be receiving, by faith, all that renders them wiſe, ſtrong, holy, uſeful, or happy, "and grace for "grace:" this may ſignify, a vaſt abundance of all kinds of grace, grace upon grace; or it may refer to the perfect freeneſs, and royal munificence, with which all ſpiritual bleſſings are diſpenſed from the fulneſs of Chriſt; or it may denote that each believer receives a meaſure of every kind of grace, which was purchaſed by, and is treaſured up in Chriſt, for his choſen people; or that the ſupply is fully adequate and anſwerable to all their wants; or finally, that by the grace received from the fulneſs of Chriſt, they are renewed into his image, and reflect every holy excellency that appeared in his character; even as the melted wax receives line for line, and letter for letter, the exact impreſſion from the ſeal, that is put upon it. The Jews indeed looked up to, and truſted in Moſes, glorying that they were his diſciples: and truly He was an eminent ſervant and prophet of God, who was employed in giving the law to Iſrael; both the moral law, the perfect ſtandard of holineſs, and the foundation of the covenant of works; and the ceremonial law, which was a ſhadow of the grace of the goſpel: but the former is the miniſtration of condemnation to tranſgreſſors, and the latter had no inherent efficacy to take away the guilt or power of ſin; and therefore both, as forming one complex diſpenſation, were intended to lead men to Chriſt, and could do nothing to ſave thoſe, who believed not in him, though excellently fitted to the purpoſes, for which God appointed them. Theſe indeed "came by Moſes" "But grace, and "truth came by Jeſus Chriſt:" all the mercy ſhewn to ſinners in pardoning and juſtifying them; all the grace by which they are ſanctified, and taught repentance, faith and holineſs; all the favour in any way ever ſhewn to the fallen race of Adam from the beginning, "came "by Jeſus" the promiſed Meſſiah: all the faithful promiſes, given and performed to the church of believers: and all the ancient prophecies, and types, had reference to, and were verified in Him. He was the truth of all the ſhadows, the ſubſtance of all the promiſes, the object of all the prophecies, the centre of all the doctrines, the ſource and ſtandard of truth, and the medium of communication of all the grace and bleſſings, that ever were made to, or conferred on fallen man. As ſoon as Adam ſinned, he ſtepped in as it were between him, and the avenging ſword of juſtice, and as "the ſeed of the woman," undertook to be the Surety of a new covenant to his people; He was the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every believer, in every age; through him alone ſinners have acceſs to, acceptance with, or grace from God the Father; and even their repentance, faith, diſpoſition to, or ſtrength for obedience are from Him alone, and the law ſays not one word about them. As one inſtance in which "truth came "by Jeſus Chriſt;" the ſacred penman aſſures us, that all true and uſeful knowledge of God always was derived to man through Him. No man ever did, or can ſee the divine eſſence: but all the declarations concerning Him, all the diſcoveries of his Being, perfections, truth and will, have been made to men, by the Son, who always was, is, and ſhall be, with the Father, as, in his boſom, the object of his entire and ineffable love and delight, knowing his infinite excellency, acquainted with, and ſharing all his counſels and purpoſes, and conſtituted to reveal them to man, as far they are to be known by him. (Note, &c. *Matt.* c. xi. v. 25—27.) We have frequently had occaſion to obſerve, that from the beginning, every diſcovery of God to man, and all the viſions, and diſplays of Jehovah to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Iſaac, Jacob, Moſes, Joſhua, Iſaiah, &c, were in, and by, the eternal Son, the ſecond perſon in the ſacred trinity, the ſame that afterwards became incarnate, being anticipations of that event: nor can thoſe *appearances* of God be reconciled with this, and ſimilar declarations upon any other principle. (1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 16:) according to which no man really knows any thing of God, the Jews ſent prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem to aſk him, Who art thou?

20 And he confeſſed, and denied not; but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt.

21 And they aſked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he ſaith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he anſwered, No.

22 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an anſwer to them that ſent us: what ſayeſt thou of thyſelf?

23 He ſaid, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Make ſtraight the way of the Lord, as ſaid the prophet Eſaias.

24 And they which were ſent were of the Phariſees.

25 And they aſked him, and ſaid unto him, Why baptizeſt thou then, if thou be not that Chriſt, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John anſwered them, ſaying, I baptize with water: but there ſtandeth one among you, whom ye know not.

27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whoſe ſhoes latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe.

28 Theſe things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

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as to the manner of his ſubſiſtence, or his real character, &c, but he, who receives his knowledge by faith in the Son of God. But it is doubted by many perſons, who ſtedfaſtly maintain the doctrine of Chriſt's deity, and of a Trinity of perſons in the godhead, whether the title of "the Son of God," relates to any thing more than his human nature, his miraculous conception, and his mediatorial character and work; and the opinion of former orthodox divines on this ſubject ſeems to be exploded by them, as unſcriptural. Now it muſt be allowed that many have ſpeculated, explained, and diſputed a great deal too much upon theſe myſteries, of which we can know no more, than is revealed: and it muſt alſo be remembered, that ſuch relative terms as Father, and Son, when applied to the deity, can only be uſed in a figurative ſenſe, in order to help our feeble apprehenſions: and therefore they muſt not be puſhed too far, or made the foundation of any inferences, inconſiſtent with the eternity, ſelf-exiſtence, co-equality, &c, of "the Word:" yet it ſeems *to me at leaſt*, that Chriſt is called in ſcripture "the only begotten Son of God," "The Son of "the Father", &c, in reſpect of his divine nature; and that he is the Son of God, by "a generation that none "can declare." Various expreſſions concerning the love of God in giving his Son for us, ſeem not to refer to his giving him to death, *when incarnate*; but to his giving Him *to be incarnate* for that purpoſe. "He ſpared "not his *own Son*," (ἰδιον;) and this gift was ſo vaſt, that the apoſtle deemed all other things to be as nothing in compariſon of it. Indeed it does not appear why he ſhould be called "the only begotten Son of God," in reſpect of his human nature; for the formation of Adam, and of all the angels was a production equally immediate, and divine, as that of the human nature of Chriſt; and "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," (v. 14,) ſeems evidently to relate to his divine, and not to his human nature. In ſhort it ſeems to denote ſomething incomprehenſible, and infinitely ſuperior to creation, and to every thing of which we have the moſt remote conception; that conſtitutes an equality of nature, and a relation between the eternal Father and the Son: of which that relation amongſt men is but a feeble ſhadow, but ſuited to help our conceptions about it. Perhaps we ſhould never have been informed of the diſtinction of perſons in the godhead, but on account of the oeconomy of the work of redemption: or, to ſpeak more properly, that work ſeems to have been planned, in order to a diſplay of the glory of God, as well in this diſtinction of perſons, as in the harmony of his attributes. The apprehenſions of the moſt exalted creatures on ſuch a ſubject muſt be inadequate. Our's muſt needs *at* preſent be alſo confuſed, and defective: however the ſecond perſon may be ſpoken of as "the only begotten Son;" becauſe he is appointed in the eternal counſels to be the Image, Repreſentative, Revealer, &c, of the inviſible God, to man, in every age, and under every diſpenſation: and our conception of Him "as the Son" ſhould doubtleſs be confined to his participation of the ſame divine nature, and his repreſenting it to man; ſo that "he who "hath ſeen the Son, hath ſeen the Father alſo." This will appear with increaſing evidence as we proceed with this goſpel.

V. 19—28.] The evangeliſt next proceeds to relate a very remarkable teſtimony of John Baptiſt to Chriſt. The chief prieſts, ſcribes, and the great council of the nation, who deemed themſelves entitled to ſuperintend and regulate religious matters, having heard many reports concerning John, and his doctrine, baptiſm, great reputation, and popularity; thought proper to ſend a deputation to him, to know who he was, and whether he profeſſed to be their promiſed Meſſiah; as he preſumed to preach, and collect diſciples, without authority from them? To this John anſwered in the moſt explicit manner, declaring that he was not the Meſſiah, nor ever meant to advance any ſuch pretenſions. Being further interrogated whether he were Elias, whom the Jews expected to come *perſonally* from heaven, before the Meſſiah made his appearance; he declared that he was not: he was not perſonally Elias, though he came in the ſpirit and power of that zealous reformer: and though he was a prophet, yea more than a prophet; yet he was not Jeremiah, or any one of their old prophets riſen from the dead, as they expected. When they further demanded who he was, that they might carry ſome determinate anſwer to the ſanhedrim, by which they were ſent; he referred them to a prophecy concerning him, that hath been conſidered. (*Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 3—8.) He was the voice of a herald in the deſert, calling upon men to pre-

29 The next day John ſeeth Jeſus coming unto him, and ſaith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world.

30 This is he of whom I ſaid, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, ſaying, I ſaw the Spirit deſcending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt.

34 And I ſaw and bare record that this is the Son of God.

pare the way of Jehovah, who was about to come among them: and when, as a voice, he had ſignified the mind of Him, who ſpake by him, he ſhould vaniſh, and be no more conſidered in the matter. But as the perſons ſent on this occaſion were Phariſees, who were very tenacious of their ancient cuſtoms and traditions, and averſe to innovations; and as they did not know that this prophecy was parallel to that of Malachi, which they had referred to: they therefore proceeded to demand of John, why he baptized his own countrymen, and thus gathered diſciples to himſelf, without any authority from them; if he were neither the Meſſiah nor Elias, nor an old prophet riſen again? To this he replied, that he only baptized the people with water, as a profeſſion of their repentance, and an outward ſign of the ſpiritual bleſſings to be conferred on them by the Meſſiah, for whom alone he was collecting diſciples: He had not indeed yet publicly avowed himſelf; yet he was already in the midſt of them, and ready to enter on his work, as he had juſt before attended on his baptiſm; though they knew him not, and were not acquainted with his character. Indeed He was the Perſon, who, as he had always declared, was preferred before him; being in fact ſo much his ſuperior in dignity, authority, and excellency, that he was not worthy to perform the loweſt menial ſervice for him. (Notes, &c. *Matt* c. iii. c. xxi. v. 23—32. *Luke*, c. iii.) Bethabara ſeems to have been the place, where Iſrael paſſed over Jordan into Canaan.

V. 29. *The*, &c] The preceding teſtimony of John might be given whilſt Jeſus was tempted in the wilderneſs, and juſt before his return from thence. On the next day therefore John ſaw Jeſus coming to him, to honour his miniſtry by his attendance on it; and John immediately pointed him out to his hearers, as the Lamb of God. The paſchal lamb, in the ſhedding and ſprinkling of its blood, the roaſting and eating of its fleſh, and all the circumſtances attending thereon, aptly repreſented the purchaſe and application of redemption. And thoſe lambs, which were ſacrificed every morning and evening, as expiations of the ſins of Iſrael were evident types of "the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world." (1 *Pet*. c. i. v. 18—20. *Rev*. c. v. ver. 6—13. c. vii. v. 14. c. xiii. v. 8.) The emblem of a lamb denoted the purity, gentleneſs, harmleſſneſs, and patience of the Redeemer, and his valuableneſs and uſefulneſs, living and dying; but eſpecially his fitneſs to be a ſpotleſs ſacrifice to God, for the ſins of his people. He is called "the Lamb of God;" as he was a ſacrifice, which God himſelf both required, appointed, provided, and accepted. As a Lamb he taketh away ſin, by being made an expiatory oblation, that juſtice might be ſatisfied, previous to the ſinner being pardoned. The lambs, that were ſacrificed according to the law, were appropiated to the nation of Iſrael: but the atonement of Chriſt, being of infinite value, extends its efficacy to all nations, and to every generation of men. A lamb could not take away ſin, except by becoming a ſacrifice: and why ſhould John call Chriſt the Lamb of God in this connexion, if he did not really atone for the ſins of men, by bearing the puniſhment due to them? This queſtion would create ſome men much difficulty, if they ſhould ſeriouſly ſit down to give a ſolid anſwer to it. Chriſt "taketh away the ſin of the world," by removing every hindrance to the forgiveneſs of all ſin, original and actual, of all men throughout the world, who are brought to apply to him for that bleſſing by humble faith. It now conſiſts with the glory of God to pardon every ſuch perſon: on this ground any man may come to the throne of grace for all the bleſſings of ſalvation, nor does he want any other plea, than that "Chriſt has died, yea rather is riſen again, and ever liveth to make interceſſion for us." If a man be indeed a true believer, Chriſt will, in virtue of his atonement, take away all his guilt, and bury it as in the depth of the ſea, and give him peace of conſcience, and hope in God; and by that grace, which was purchaſed for ſinners with the ſame ſacrifice, he will alſo take away the power, the love, and the pollution of ſin; yea in due time the very exiſtence of it ſhall perfectly be deſtroyed from the heart of every believer. This general propoſal, and declaration of the death of Chriſt, as a common benefit to all ſinners throughout the world, who deſire to avail themſelves of it, is very conſiſtent with a particular purpoſe of God in reſpect of the application of that benefit, by his "making ſinners willing in the day of his power," who would otherwiſe have periſhed in their pride, obſtinacy, impenitence and unbelief. Accordingly John called on all his hearers, to "behold the Lamb of God;" to obſerve, conſider, value, apply to, and rely on him to take away their ſins, and to baptize them with the Holy Ghoſt: and we too muſt behold Him by faith, and continually contemplate his character, his ſufferings, and his mediatory work, that our ſins alſo may be taken away.

V. 30—34.] Though Jeſus, and John were nearly related, and their parents had been intimately acquaint-

35 Again the next day after, John ſtood, and two of his diſciples :

36 And looking upon Jeſus as he walked, he ſaith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two diſciples heard him ſpeak, and they followed Jeſus.

38 Then Jeſus turned, and ſaw them following, and ſaith unto them, What ſeek ye? They ſaid unto him, Rabbi, (which is to ſay, being interpreted, Maſter,) where dwelleſt thou?

39 He ſaith unto them, Come and ſee. They came and ſaw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *ſpeak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He firſt findeth his own brother Simon, and ſaith unto him, We have found the Meſſias, which is, being interpreted, the Chriſt.

42 And he brought him to Jeſus. And when Jeſus beheld him, he ſaid, Thou art Simon the ſon of Jona: thou ſhalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, A ſtone.

43 The day following Jeſus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and ſaith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethſaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and ſaith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moſes in the law and the prophets did write, Jeſus of Nazareth, the ſon of Joſeph.

46 And Nathanael ſaid unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip ſaith unto him, Come and ſee.

47 Jeſus ſaw Nathanael coming to him, and ſaith of him, Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael ſaith unto him, Whence knoweſt thou me? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou waſt under the fig-tree, I ſaw thee.

49 Nathanael anſwered and ſaith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Iſrael.

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ed; yet it was ſo ordered in God's providence, that John did not perſonally know Jeſus: had they been long and cloſely united in friendſhip, as might previouſly have been expected, John's teſtimony might thereby have been rendered more equivocal, and exceptionable: but though John knew by immediate revelation that his miniſtry and baptiſm were entirely ſubſervient to Chriſt's being manifeſted to the people; yet he ſeems never to have ſeen Him, 'till he applied to him for baptiſm: and then he was probably made known to him, by an immediate divine ſuggeſtion. But when he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending and abiding on him, all former intimations were fully ratified to him, and he thenceforе bare open teſtimony to him, as the Son of God, and the promiſed Meſſiah.

V. 35—42.] Theſe perſons were John's diſciples before they followed Jeſus. Whilſt John ſtood and diſcourſed with them, Jeſus came near them, and John immediately directed them to him as "the Lamb of "God." Accordingly they followed Jeſus, as deſirous of becoming his diſciples, or of being acquainted with Him. To facilitate, and encourage their application, Jeſus turned to enquire what they ſought? And, addreſſing him by the honourable title of Rabbi, or Teacher, they enquired where he dwelt; as they wanted to come to him for his repeated inſtructions? Accordingly he invited them to accompany him; (for he ſeems to have had ſome retired lodging near the place where John preached;) and as it was but two hours before ſun-ſet, they ſpent the remainder of the day, in attending to his inſtructive converſation. Some think that the evangeliſt himſelf was one of theſe two diſciples, but that is uncertain: however Andrew Peter's brother was the other, who, being fully convinced that Jeſus was the promiſed Meſſiah, firſt brought Peter acquainted with him. This was a conſiderable time, before they were called to a conſtant attendance on Chriſt.

V. 43—51.] When the time was arrived, at which our Lord propoſed to go forth into Galilee, in order to enter on his public miniſtry; he found out Philip, and called him to a more ſtated attendance on him. Philip was an inhabitant of Bethſaida, where Peter and Andrew at firſt reſided, (though they afterwards ſeem to have removed to Capernaum;) and perhaps he was brought acquainted with Jeſus by their means. Soon after Philip met with Nathanael, who ſeems to have been his intimate friend; and in a very earneſt manner he informed him, that they had found their promiſed Meſſiah; and that Jeſus, who had hitherto lived at Nazareth, was aſſuredly that great Redeemer of Iſrael. But Nathanael, though a Galilean, had ſo bad an opinion of Nazareth, that he could not think it likely that ſo great a bleſſing, or indeed that any good thing, could ariſe from ſo wicked a place. This opinion, as to the general character of the Nazarenes, ſeems to have been well founded: but it was carrying the inference much too far, to ſuppoſe that no good thing could ariſe from thence; and this prejudice was calculated to ſet him againſt Chriſt, and his doctrine. However Philip very prudently invited him to go with him, and judge for himſelf: and Nathanael, being

50 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Becauſe I ſaid unto thee, I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, believeſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe.

51 And he ſaith unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Hereafter ye ſhall ſee heaven open, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of man.

a candid godly man, went with him. As he approached our Lord, he pronounced him at once to be “an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there was no guile:” that is, a genuine ſon of Iſrael, a covenant ſervant and worſhipper of Jehovah; an honeſt, upright perſon, a man of faith, and prayer; a real Iſraelite, whilſt moſt of his neighbours had nothing but the name, and outward form of Iſraelites; (*Rom.* c. ii. v. 28, 29.) “In whom there was no guile:” his profeſſion of religion was not leavened with hypocriſy; he was the ſame man before God, that he appeared to be among men; and his general conduct was devoid of inſincerity, diſſimulation, and diſhoneſty. In ſhort, though he was not perfect; yet he was a ſound character, a real honeſt godly man. This atteſtation of Jeſus to the whole character of one, with whom he had no previous acquaintance, ſurpriſed Nathanael; and with a conſiſtent frankneſs, he enquired whence he had his information concerning him, or by what means he knew him? To this Jeſus replied, that he had witneſſed what he was doing under the fig-tree, before Philip called on him to come with him. Probably Nathanael was then engaged in devotion, and pouring out his heart with peculiar fervency before God: perhaps he was ſeeking direction concerning the hope and conſolation of Iſrael, in ſome ſecret retirement, where he knew that no human eye obſerved him. However, this afforded ſuch evidence to his mind, that our Lord knew the ſecrets of his heart, that his prejudices vaniſhed at once, and in aſtoniſhment at what he had heard he confeſſed with the utmoſt confidence, that he was “the Son of God,” and the promiſed Redeemer and King of Iſrael. Our Lord, in honour of his faith, aſſured him, that as he had believed by means of this ſingle diſcovery of his glory; he ſhould be favoured with the ſight of ſtill greater things: for “hereafter,” or “henceforth,” he would ſee the heaven opened, and angels aſcending from, and deſcending upon Him, the Son of man, for they would miniſter to him in human nature, as their glorious Lord. This may refer to Jacob's ladder, which typified Chriſt as the medium of communication between heaven and earth, (*Gen.* c. xxviii. v. 11—22;) and it may be explained figuratively to ſignify the whole courſe of Chriſt's miracles, till his aſcenſion into heaven, which was teſtified to the apoſtles by angels: but perhaps there may alſo be a reference to his future appearance, with all his holy angels, to raiſe the dead, and to judge the world. Some think that Nathanael was alſo called Bartholomew, and was one of the apoſtles.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we carefully avoid the error of thoſe, who ſeem to place the whole of religion in an exact orthodox creed; and who ſacrifice every chriſtian temper, and violate the plain precepts of ſcripture, in zealouſly and furiouſly contending for doctrinal notions: we ſhould equally beware of the oppoſite extreme of treating it as a matter of little conſequence, what doctrines we embrace. To the perſon of Chriſt, as the foundation of all true godlineſs, bear all the apoſtles, and prophets witneſs; yea God himſelf hath teſtified, that he ſent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. Let us then beware of thoſe, who would degrade Him, whom the Spirit of truth and holineſs delighteth to glorify: and whilſt we allow the myſtery, to be without controverſy great, and inexplicable; let us ſtill hold it faſt, yea glory in it, as the myſtery of godlineſs, from whence all true piety, in the heart and life of ſinful man muſt ſpring. Let us then never think of Him, whoſe name is called The “WORD of God,” as any other, than “God over all, bleſſed for evermore;” as ſubſiſting from before all worlds, with God, and himſelf God, co-equal with yet diſtinct from the eternal Father. Standing upon theſe plain teſtimonies of ſcripture, without indulging proud reaſonings, or requiring curious explanations; let us avoid with equal caution, thoſe, who allow indeed the diſtinct perſonality, but deny or interpret away the proper deity of the Word; and thoſe, who zealouſly aſſert his deity, but ſeem to loſe ſight of his diſtinct perſonality, and thus unwarily verge to the ſentiments, which they ſeem to oppoſe. It is not for us to comprehend ſuch ſubjects, or to reſolve all queſtions about them: we can indeed prove by concluſive arguments, which no infidel ever yet could, or ever will be able to anſwer, that the ſcripture is a divine revelation: and we can fully ſhew theſe myſterious doctrines to be contained in the expreſs language of revelation. By faith we receive this teſtimony, and by grace we derive nouriſhment from them to our ſouls: but it is the moſt unreaſonable thing in the world, to reject the teſtimony of the infinite God, concerning the mode of his own myſterious exiſtence; when every proceſs of nature, (as we call it,) baffles our feeble powers; and when the beſt philoſophers allow, that we can only know that things are ſo and ſo, but cannot comprehend the manner *how*, or the reaſon *why* they are ſo! Indeed He who knows the worth of his ſoul, the evil of ſin, and other things pertaining to our preſent fallen condition, can ſee no ground of hope, but in the power, truth and love of Him, “who made all things, and without whom was not any thing made, that was made.” This will be his encouragement to hope, and not be afraid, even becauſe “God is become his ſalvation:” and that the Life of the world is become the Light of life to fallen men. Nothing can be more evident than theſe truths, as they are revealed in ſcripture, by which the Word of God ſpeaks to us: but this “light ſtill ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehendeth it not:” every abſurd ſyſtem of ſoothing flattering error from the pit of darkneſs is preferred to it, as more congenial to the pride and luſts of men: thus they walk on ſtill in darkneſs, and neither underſtand nor value the Light of the world! May we then pray without ceaſing, that our eyes may be opened, that we may behold, and walk in this light, and thus be made

CHAP. II.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. At a marriage in Cana, turning water into wine, 1---11. *2d. At the Paſſover, driving the traders out of the courts of the temple, and predicting his death, and reſurrection,* 12--22. *3d. Declining to commit himſelf to ſome, who profeſſed to believe in Him, becauſe he knew what was in man,* 23---25.

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wiſe unto eternal ſalvation by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Many have in different ages been ſent of God to bear witneſs to this Light, that all men through them might be called upon to believe the goſpel: and theſe have ſhone as lights in the world: but every one of them hath been ready to confeſs, that all their light was a mere reflection of the beams of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, the true Light, that enlighteneth every man, that cometh into the world: and all that boaſted illumination, which is ſet up in oppoſition to Him, will infallibly lead men down to everlaſting darkneſs and deſpair. But what multitudes, not only of His creatures, but even of his profeſſed diſciples, refuſe to welcome the condeſcending Saviour of the world! Too wiſe to ſubmit to his teaching, too proud of their own goodneſs to rely on his merits, too fond of their own will to be ſubject to his commands, they reject Him in each of his characters; or like Gallio they care for none of theſe things: And ſhould he come in perſon again on earth; he would be deſpiſed by multitudes, who could ſee no glory in him, and who would feel no need of him. But there are thoſe at preſent alſo, who have other views, and deſires, who conſcious of their ignorance, guilt, pollution, and wretched ſlavery to ſin and ſatan, gladly receive him as their Prophet, Prieſt, King, Redeemer, Phyſician, and Saviour: they believe his word, and rely on his truth, power, and love: He is to them the Pearl of great price, and they would ſell all to purchaſe him; and having once received him, they are ever deſirous of renewing, and ratifying that important tranſaction. To this choſen remnant, the Saviour giveth the glorious privilege of becoming the children of God; and he will ſurely prepare them for, and keep them to the everlaſting inheritance reſerved for them in heaven. Theſe happy ſouls are not found in one family, ſect, or nation; they have not made themſelves to differ; they are not ſelected by the partiality of miniſters or pious friends, they are not choſen becauſe of their previous excellency; but they are “born of God.” Then they begin to fear, to mourn for ſin, to believe, to hope, to pray, to perceive the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, and to embrace his ſalvation: then they begin to adore the infinite condeſcenſion of the eternal Word, who was made fleſh, to tabernacle amongſt us. They diſcern ſome glimpſes of his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: they value the unſearchable riches, and inexhauſtible fulneſs, which are laid up in Him: they ſee that He is the chief among ten thouſand, and altogether lovely; worthy to be admired, adored and loved far beyond all the ſons of earth and heaven; and that from his fulneſs all have received. They therefore conſider prophets, apoſtles, martyrs, and ſaints, as ſo many monuments erected to the Redeemer's glory, and ſo many encouragements to them to apply to Him, who is able to render them alſo wiſe, holy, uſeful and happy; and to furniſh them with every kind and degree of grace, which may enable them to ſhine as lights in the world, and to live to the glory of his name. Indeed we ſhould value every diſcovery of the perfections, truth and will of Jehovah: his law is holy, juſt and good, and was given for moſt important purpoſes; and we ſhould endeavour to make the proper uſe of it. But we cannot have pardon, righteouſneſs, or ſtrength from that quarter: it may recommend, and then teach us to adorn, the goſpel: but it cannot ſupply the place of it. No mercy comes from God to ſinners, but through Jeſus Chriſt; no man can come to the Father but by him: no man can know God, except as the only, begotten Son reveal him. Ignorance, deluſion, condemnation, and unmitigated wrath muſt be the portion of every man; that rejects the Word and Son of God, who is the great ſubſtance and centre of all the promiſes, and the life and ſoul of all doctrines, ordinances, and precepts whatſoever.

Let us then regard John's teſtimony to him: he was filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb; he was great in the ſight of God, and one of the moſt excellent of mere men: yet had he nothing to ſay “of himſelf,” ſave that he was the voice of a herald, to proclaim the Saviour's glory; “being unworthy even to looſe the latchet of his ſhoes.” He knew that Jeſus was before him, as the eternal Word, and that he would for ever be preferred before him and all creatures; He alone could pardon ſin, or baptize with the Holy Ghoſt: He thought he could not enough abaſe himſelf, or exalt his Lord: He only deſired to prepare his ways, and to manifeſt him to Iſrael. Let us then no more regard thoſe, who exalt themſelves, and degrade Chriſt; for their light is darkneſs, and their wiſdom madneſs, being directly in oppoſition to the wiſdom of God, and the Light of the world. But let us eſpecially behold Jeſus “as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world.” Sin muſt be taken away, or ſinners muſt be ruined: God hath provided himſelf a Lamb for a burnt-offering, through whoſe infinitely valuable atonement, he can be juſt and the juſtifier of the ungodly. Let ſinners then behold and truſt in him: let believers look to him continually for renewed pardon, peace, ſtrength, encouragement, motives, inſtructions, righteouſneſs, and a perfect example of holy meekneſs, patience, and love. Thus guilt will be removed from the conſcience; and ſin will be taken away from the heart, till no more remain there. And whilſt we look to him for pardon, let us alſo earneſtly ſeek to be made like him, and to partake of his baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, that we may abound in all holy fruits to the glory of his name. His miniſters muſt never deſire to make diſciples to themſelves, but to Him: they, who are enquiring after ſalvation, muſt learn to hearken to thoſe teachers, who direct them to the Lamb of God, and to diſtinguiſh them from all others: and they, who have got acquainted with Chriſt to their comfort and profit, ſhould endeavour to recommend him to their

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jeſus was there.

2 And both Jeſus was called, and his diſciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jeſus ſaith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother ſaith unto the ſervants, Whatſoever he ſaith unto you, do *it*.

6 And there were ſet there ſix water-pots of ſtone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Fill the water-

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friends and neighbours, that the Light may diffuſe itſelf more widely in families, cities, and countries. All, who deſire to profit by the word of God, muſt beware of narrow prejudices, againſt places, denominations of men, &c, from which even pious chriſtians are not exempt: they ſhould come, and examine for themſelves; and then perhaps they will find good, where they expected none. But let us ſeek, and pray to be chriſtians indeed, in whom there is no guile. Defects and infirmities will be found in all: but hypocriſy and guile belong not to a believer's character: he does not profeſs one thing with his lips, and think another in his heart; he is not a double-minded or deceitful man: it is peculiar to him, to allow of nothing before God, which he diſavows before men; to pretend to nothing before men, which God knows that he does not aim to perform: he is *conſciouſly*, as well as *by confeſſion*, a poor hell-deſerving ſinner, who has no hope of deliverance from condemnation, or pollution, but through the mercy and grace of God in Chriſt: and whilſt he ſeeks a free ſalvation, he really aims and deſires to lead a ſober, righteous, and godly life, and is continually abaſed before God, becauſe he cannot do the things, that he would. (1. *Pet.* c. ii. v. 1, 2.) He, who ſeeth in ſecret, obſerves, and approves this diſpoſition, and hears the retired ſupplications, which it dictates: He marks the humble believer, when he is beſeeching him to teach him his truth, and will: and he will evince, that he accepts of ſuch petitions. In conſequence of his anſwering them, the believer obtains "the witneſs in himſelf," that "Jeſus is the Son of "God, and the King of Iſrael;" and he will attain continually to fuller diſcoveries of his glory, and larger communications from him: until he learn to "love the ex-"pectation of his appearing," in his own glory, and in the glory of the Father, with all his holy angels, when he will render unto every man according to his works.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—5.] On the third day after our Lord's interview with Nathanael, or after his return into Galilee, a marriage was ſolemnized at Cana, a ſmall town in that neighbourhood: probably Mary was nearly related to one of the parties, for ſhe ſeems to have been preſent as belonging to the family: and as Joſeph is not mentioned either on this occaſion or afterwards, we may ſuppoſe that he died before our Lord entered on his public work. Jeſus had now collected a few diſciples, and being near the place, both He and they were invited to the marriage feaſt: and in order to put honour on God's inſtitution, as well as to ſhew the free and ſocial ſpirit of his religion, he was pleaſed to accept of the invitation. As Jeſus and his diſciples ſeem not to have been previouſly expected; and as his preſence might alſo draw others thither, to hear his converſation: ſo all the wine provided for the occaſion was ſoon ſpent, and the company was like to be left without any: for it is probable that the perſons concerned were not in affluent circumſtances, or well able to bear any additional expence. Mary therefore ſtated the caſe to her Son, as under ſome concern about it, and with expectation of his providing a miraculous ſupply. Some expoſitors think, that he had before wrought miracles in private, to ſupply the neceſſities of the family: however the circumſtances of his conception, birth, &c, could not but lead her to expect extraordinary things from Him, when he entered on his public work, which then began to take place: and ſhe ſeems to have thought this to be a proper opportunity of diſplaying his miraculous power. But Jeſus replied to her in a manner, which ſhewed that ſhe was reprehenſible in ſuppoſing, that the authority, or influence of a mother were to be employed, in directing his conduct as the Meſſiah. It is indeed true, that there is not the leaſt appearance of diſreſpect in the original language, with which he addreſſed her; as the greateſt princeſſes were accoſted even by their ſervants in the ſame manner, among the ancients: yet the whole reply was an evident, and intentional diſcouragement to her, from interpoſing on ſuch occaſions: in this reſpect, "what had he to do "with her," or with any other? He muſt not be counſelled, or dictated to, when or for whom he ſhould work his miracles: "his time was not now come?" So it may be rendered: or if we take it, as in our tranſlation, it may ſignify, that the time of his more open appearance as the Meſſiah was not yet completely arrived. The occaſion, on which this miracle was wrought, the miracle itſelf, and this anſwer of Chriſt to Mary, ſeem to have been expreſſly intended as a prophetical proteſt againſt the ſuperſtitions, and idolatries of the church of Rome; eſpecially againſt two leading branches of that antichriſtian ſyſtem; namely the diſparaging, and prohibiting of marriage; and the worſhip of the Virgin Mary. Even to this day there are thoſe, who call upon her, *not to beſeech*, but to *command* her Son, now that he fills the throne of glory; though in his loweſt humiliation on earth, he would not even allow her to counſel him! However Mary did not give up her hope of a miraculous ſupply, though ſhe ſaw the propriety of not preſſing Jeſus further about it: and therefore ſhe ordered the ſervants carefully to obſerve his directions, whatſoever they were.

V. 6—11.] Theſe veſſels were intended to keep water always ready for the ceremonial waſhings preſcribed by the law, as well as for the obſervance of the purifica-

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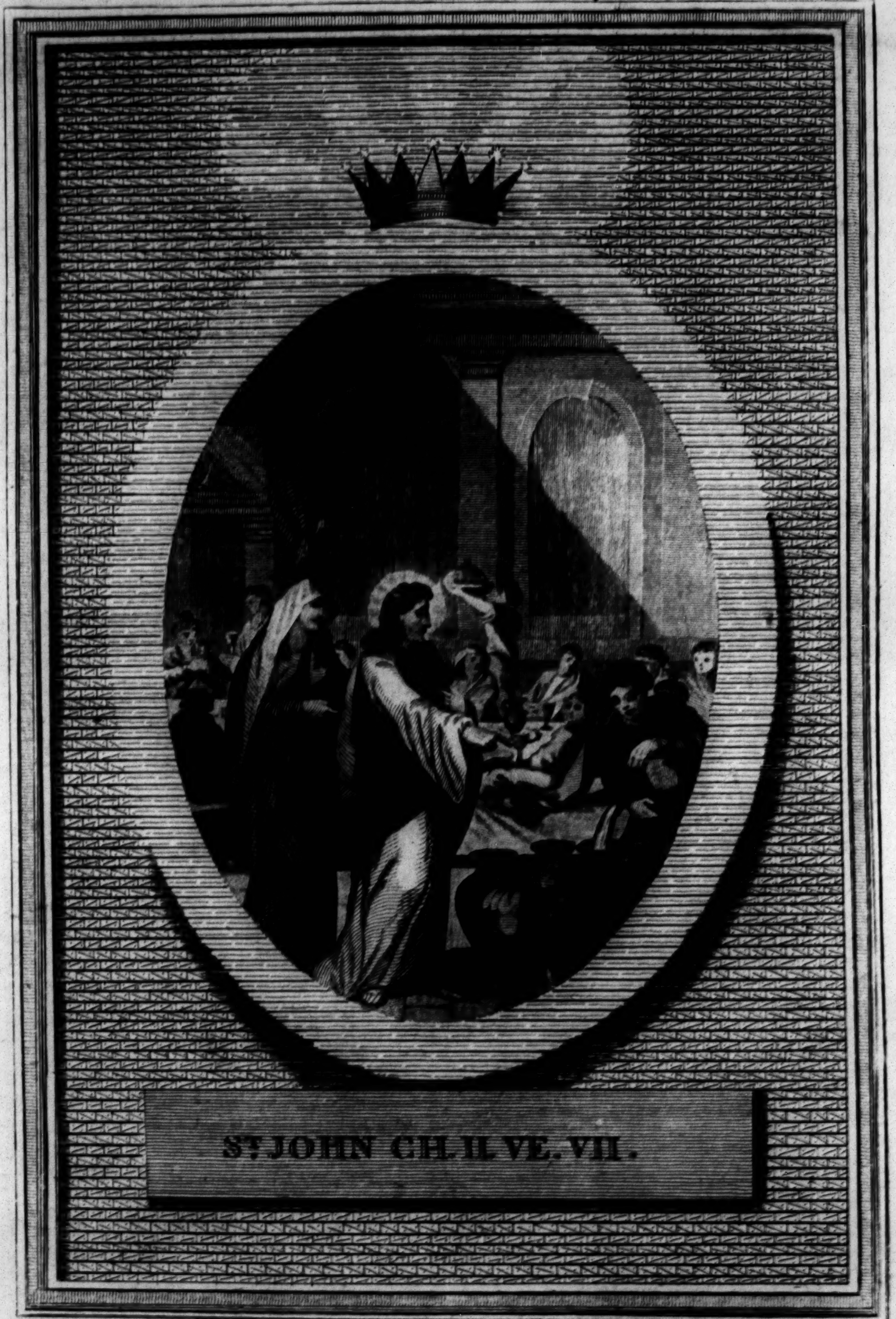

St. JOHN CH. II. VE. VII.

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pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he ſaith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feaſt. And they bare *it*.

9 When the ruler of the feaſt had taſted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the ſervants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feaſt called the bridegroom,

10 And ſaith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth ſet forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worſe: *but* thou haſt kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Galilee, and manifeſted forth his glory; and his diſciples believed on him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his diſciples; and they continued there not many days.

13 And the Jews paſſover was at hand; and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem,

14 And found in the temple thoſe that ſold oxen, and ſheep, and doves, and the changers of money, ſitting:

15 And when he had made a ſcourge of ſmall cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the ſheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And ſaid unto them that ſold doves, Take theſe things hence; make not my Father's houſe an houſe of merchandiſe.

17 And his diſciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.

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tions enjoined by the traditions of the elders. It is not agreed how much they contained a-piece: but on the loweſt computation the ſix water pots muſt have held an hogſhead. Our Lord was pleaſed to order the ſervants to fill theſe veſſels with water, by which they became vouchers for the reality of the miracle: and, though they had doubtleſs a variety of other employments on this occaſion, and though the order ſeemed ill-timed, and to no purpoſe; yet they obeyed it without heſitation, and filled the water pots to the brim. As ſoon as this was done, He bade them draw from them, and carry it to the ruler of the feaſt: and they obeyed without making the leaſt objection; and drawing out what they had juſt before put into the veſſels as water, they carried it to the ruler of the feaſt, to ſet before the gueſts as wine! The ruler of the feaſt ſeems to have been a perſon choſen to maintain order on ſuch occaſions, as well as to ſee that all the gueſts had what they wanted: and ſome think that a Levite, or Prieſt was generally choſen for that purpoſe. When this perſon therefore had taſted of this freſh ſupply of wine, without knowing how it was procured, he found it ſo excellent, that he expreſſed his ſurpriſe to the bridegroom, at his having acted ſo differently, from what others uſed to do on ſuch occaſions: for it was cuſtomary to give them good wine, till they had drunk what was ſufficient, and then that which was of a ſmaller and inferior quality, as moſt ſuitable to their ſituation; whereas he had kept the beſt wine till the laſt. The original word, which is rendered "have well drunk," is often uſed for men's drinking to intoxication; yet many critics have ſhewn that it does not neceſſarily imply that idea, but merely a moderate exhiliration conſiſtent with temperance. However it may further be obſerved, that the words refer to the general management of feaſts, and not to any thing, that took place on this occaſion; where we may be ſure every circumſtance was conducted with the utmoſt regard to temperance, and propriety. The remainder of this wine would be an ample recompence to the new married perſons for the entertainment of Jeſus and his diſciples. This was the beginning of Chriſt's public miracles, by which he manifeſtly diſplayed his glory: an expreſſion never uſed concerning the miracles of any prophet or apoſtle, and which could not properly have been uſed; for they were only inſtruments, the power being of God, and for the diſplay of his glory; but Jeſus wrought by his own power, as Emmanuel, and diſplayed his "own glory, as of the only-begotten of the "Father, full of grace and truth;" and therefore he always moſt approved of thoſe, who moſt honoured him, which no mere ſervant of God ever did. This miracle confirmed the faith of the diſciples in him, as the Son of God, and the promiſed Meſſiah.

V. 13—17.] This was evidently a diſtinct tranſaction from that, which hath before been conſidered: (Notes, *Matt.* c. xxi. v. 12, 13;) for it took place on the firſt paſſover after Jeſus entered on his public work; which he almoſt begun and ended by purging the temple from the mercenary traders, whom the covetous prieſts, and rulers encouraged to make a market place of it's courts. Conſidering the immenſe number of ſacrifices uſed at the feaſt of the paſſover, it muſt have been a very large fair that was there held, and a great multitude of people muſt have been aſſembled and employed: yet Jeſus, appearing as a poor man at that time but little known, without human authority, without attendants, or armour, ſave a ſcourge made of the ſmall cords, which were uſed in confining the cattle, drove them all before him, overturning the tables of thoſe, who exchanged foreign for current coin, and clearing the place of them all: though we may be ſure that pride, avarice, reſentment, and every corrupt paſſion would have diſpoſed them to reſiſtance, if they had not been over-awed, and over-powered! In or-

18 Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing that thou doeſt theſe things?

19 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up.

20 Then ſaid the Jews, Forty and ſix years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he ſpake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was riſen from the dead, his diſciples remembered that he had ſaid this unto them; and they believed the ſcripture, and the word which Jeſus had ſaid.

23 Now when he was in Jeruſalem at the paſſover, in the feaſt-*day*, many believed in his name, when they ſaw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all *men*,

25 And needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for he knew what was in man.

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dering thoſe who ſold doves, to remove them, that they might no longer render the houſe of God, a houſe of merchandize, he expreſſly called God "His Father;" and in a manner, which evidently implied a claim to be the promiſed Meſſiah, the Son of God. When the diſciples witneſſed his courage, and vehemency, his holy indignation and diſregard to oppoſition or reproach, in thus vindicating the courts of the temple from ſuch an abominable profanation, and compared them with the general meekneſs and gentleneſs of his character, they recollected a paſſage, in which David, ſpeaking as a type of the Meſſiah, and uttering many evident predictions of him, had ſaid, "The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up;" or "I am inwardly conſumed by an earneſt deſire to purify thy ſacred ordinances and thy holy habitation from every corruption; and can have no eaſe, till I have taken proper meaſures for that purpoſe;" and they readily perceived how applicable it was to the conduct of Jeſus on that occaſion. (*Pſ.* lxix. v. 9.)

V. 18—22.] Though we can ſcarce conceive of an action more evidential of a divine energy, or more undeniably right in itſelf, than the driving of the traders from the temple; yet the Jews, (probably the Scribes, prieſts or rulers,) demanded of Jeſus ſome ſign, or atteſtation from heaven to his miſſion; ſeeing he preſumed, in defiance of public authority, to act in this manner. In anſwer to this cavilling demand, he bade them "deſtroy that temple, and he would rear it up again in three days: Some think that he pointed to his body at the time; but as his diſciples did not underſtand him 'till long afterwards, this is not likely. However his opponents treated his aſſertion with contempt and deriſion: forty ſix years had elapſed from the time that Herod the king had begun to rebuild, or repair the temple, and though a vaſt number of hands had been employed about the work, it was not yet completed; and would he alone preſume to rebuild it, if deſtroyed, in the ſhort ſpace of three days! But he ſpake not of the temple, which was of man's building; but of his body, of which the temple was a type. The Jews would proceed in their enmity, till they had, as it were, demoliſhed that temple by his crucifixion; and then on the third day he would raiſe it up again, and thus give the grand proof of his being the Son of God, and the promiſed Meſſiah. This explanation of the Evangeliſt contains two direct proofs of the deity of Chriſt: his body was, in an eſpecial ſenſe, a temple, in which God dwelt, and in which he diſplayed his glory: and he declared that he would raiſe his body from the dead by his own power; but doubtleſs "God raiſed him from the dead." After his reſurrection his diſciples remembered, and underſtood this remarkable prediction, and when compared with its exact accompliſhment, it confirmed their faith in Him as the Meſſiah, and in the ſcriptures that teſtified of Him. His enemies alſo remembered theſe words ſome years after, and by miſquoting them, bare falſe witneſs againſt him. (*Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 61.)

V. 23—25.] Jeſus ſeems to have wrought ſeveral miracles at Jeruſalem during this paſſover, and many were thereby led to believe in him, as the promiſed Meſſiah: but they ſeem to have had no proper knowledge of the ſpiritual redemption, which he came to effect, or any due ſenſe of their need of his ſalvation. He did not therefore deem it proper to conſort much with them, as if he confided in their profeſſions: perhaps knowing that they wanted to make him a king, and to take occaſion from thence to excite diſturbances in the city. For he knew the ſecret thoughts, and diſpoſitions of their hearts: he wanted not others to teſtify to him of any man's character, or intentions; for by his own omniſcience he knew perfectly every man's heart, and all its deſires and counſels. (*Jer.* c. xvii. v. 9, 10.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould always endeavour to enſure the countenance of Chriſt in all our undertakings: and though marriage be honourable among all men, and Jeſus gave his ſanction to, and graced, that inſtitution by his firſt miracle, as well as by his preſence; yet the believer cannot expect comfort, and a bleſſing in that eſtate, unleſs he engages in it on ſuch principles, and in ſuch a manner, as may give him confidence in calling upon Jeſus, ſo to ſpeak, to attend upon it. Indeed we ought not in any thing to affect a ſuperſtitious auſterity, nor need we ſcruple feaſting with our friends on proper occaſions: yet every ſocial interview ſhould be ſo conducted, that we might confidently invite the Redeemer to join with us in it, if he were now on earth: He will at all times be preſent inviſibly, to approve, or condemn our conduct; and all levity, luxury and exceſs muſt needs be offenſive to Him. If we would have the comfort of his preſence, we muſt entertain his diſciples alſo; and our converſation ſhould be ſuch as they delight in. In this manner

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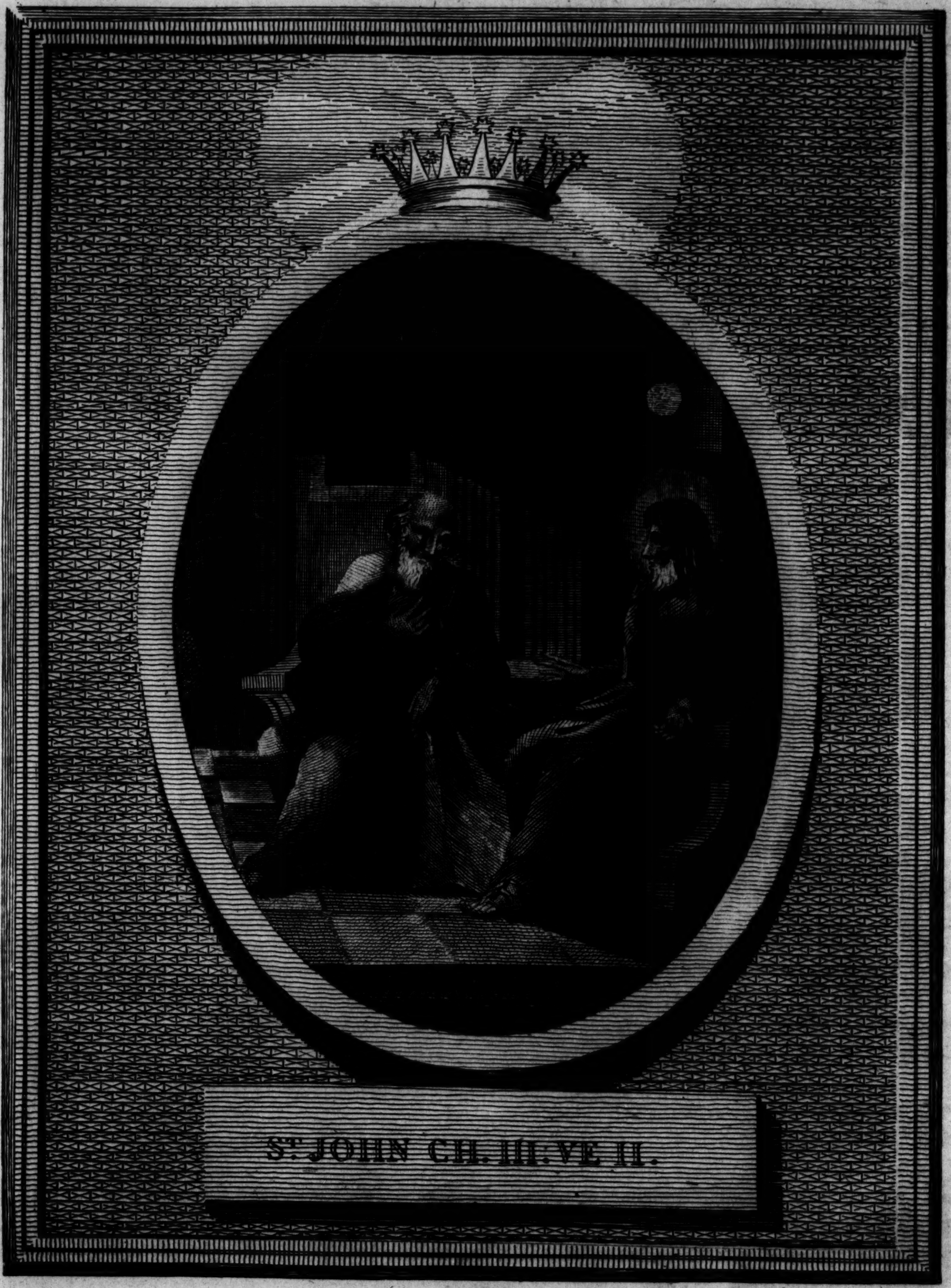
St. JOHN CH. III. VE. II.

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CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. Nicodemus coming to Jeſus by night; and his diſcourſe with him concerning regeneration, redemption, faith, unbelief, &c. 1---21. *2d. Jeſus baptizing, by his diſciples, in Judea, whilſt John baptized at Enon,* 22---24. *3d. John Baptiſt inſtructing his diſciples concerning the glory of Chriſt's perſon, and ſalvation by faith in him alone,* 25---36.

THERE was a man of the Phariſees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The ſame came to Jeſus by night, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do theſe miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him.

3 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Verily,

we may "uſe hoſpitality without grudging;" and the Lord himſelf will bear the expence. For a time indeed we may be in want: but having repreſented the caſe to him, and ſubmitting to his wiſdom the ſeaſon, manner and proportion of our ſupply, we ſhall not long be left unprovided for. But how ready ſhould we alſo be to relieve our needy brethren, and to miniſter to their comfort: ſeeing Jeſus himſelf wrought a miracle, to ſupply wine on a joyful occaſion, for the refreſhment of the company! If we would have bleſſings from his power and love, we muſt unreſervedly follow his directions; even though ſome of them ſhould ſeem unneceſſary, or unprofitable. What he gives in a ſpecial manner to his diſciples is always of the beſt; and his ways are not only unlike, but far ſuperior to thoſe of men. The anger of God, and the curſe of his broken law turn our ordinary mercies into occaſions of deeper deſtruction; but his bleſſing, and the grace of the goſpel turn them all into ſpiritual advantages, and give them a peculiar reliſh: thus Moſes opened his commiſſion to the Egyptians, by turning their water into blood; Chriſt began his gracious miniſtry, by turning water into wine. They, whom the world feaſts, have their beſt wine firſt; and even whilſt they live, every enjoyment grows more and more inſipid, their mirth is ſoon damped, and death at length removes them to final miſery and deſpair: but they whom Chriſt entertains at his marriage ſupper, have indeed many preſent comforts, and they continue to increaſe upon them here; but their beſt wine is kept till laſt, and they ſhall drink it for ever new in the kingdom of their Father. In all theſe things doth he manifeſt his glory, that men may honour and obey him; yet none will do this, but his diſciples, who believe in his name.

Where the preſence and doctrine of Chriſt are not valued, they will not long be continued: but He will always be with thoſe, who copy his example, by a conſcientious attendance on the ordinances of God. His power is principally exerted by a ſecret influence upon the minds of men: to extirpate the corruptions from our hearts, or out of his viſible church, (which he will be ſure to find in abundance,) conſtitutes the main part of his preſent ſeverity. His hand holds the ſcourge, not the avenging ſword, during the day of his patience; nor will he ever deſtroy thoſe, who are now willing to be cleanſed. Zeal for the honour of God's ſanctuary and ordinances ſtill engroſſes his mind: His indignation is daily excited by the abominations of thoſe, who make his Father's houſe, an houſe of merchandize, and, unleſs they repent, he will at length make them as a fiery oven in the day of his wrath. They, who of old queſtioned his authority to purge his temple, and to oppoſe their wickedneſs, were at length enraged by his rebukes to put him to death; but he raiſed up the ſacred temple of his body by his own divine power, that in it, all the fulneſs of the Godhead might dwell for ever: and he ſoon took terrible vengeance on the Jews for their enormous impiety; and all who deſpiſe his authority and warnings, or who hate his goſpel, ſhall periſh in like manner. But his diſciples will reverence his words, when they do not underſtand them; they will treaſure them up in their memories, and wait till the event explains them; and thus they will have their faith continually corroborated by further evidence of his truth and love. But let us beware of a dead faith, or a formal profeſſion: ſuch carnal temporary believers are not to be truſted to, for they often prove moſt treacherous enemies: and however men may impoſe on others, or on themſelves, they cannot impoſe on their glorious heart-ſearching Judge.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1, 2.] The miracles, which our Lord wrought at Jeruſalem, ſeem to have excited the attention of the rulers and Phariſees: and though they were prejudiced againſt him; yet they were not ſo inveterate, as they afterwards became. Some of them therefore had a conviction upon their minds, that he was an extraordinary Prophet, and conferred together upon this ſubject: and Nicodemus, who was a Phariſee, a teacher, and a ruler of the Jews, was deſirous of ſome converſation with him. But as he was afraid of being reviled, or derided by his brethren, he came by night, privately to the houſe, where Jeſus lodged, at or near Jeruſalem; and addreſſed him by the reſpectful name of Rabbi. This appears the more remarkable, when we conſider the obſcurity of Chriſt's birth and education, and the poverty of his circumſtances, and contraſt them with the rank, and ſtation of Nicodemus. He alſo declared that he, and many others, were aſſured that he was a Teacher ſent immediately from God; as no man could perform ſuch powerful and beneficent miracles, without the preſence, favour, and operation of Almighty God: and in this conviction, he came to him, that he might learn what were the peculiar doctrines, or practices, which he came to inculcate.

V. 3. *Jeſus*, &c.] The Phariſees were attached to externals in religion, and were continually multiplying their ſuperſtitious inventions, which at laſt only beautified the outſide of a ſepulchre: but our Lord immediately directed the attention of Nicodemus to the ſource of internal purity. We have already obſerved, that the word "verily," implies a ſtrong aſſeveration, and in the be-verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus ſaith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the ſecond time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit.

ginning of a ſentence it is peculiar to Chriſt: we may here further obſerve that this evangeliſt generally mentions the affirmation, as doubled by our Lord, which adds a ſtill greater energy to it, (c. i. v. 51:) we are therefore previouſly ſure, that ſomething of vaſt importance, and very liable to be overlooked, is here intended, concerning which this emphatical word is ſo frequently repeated. The expreſſion "born again," is doubtleſs figurative, and therefore it muſt not be ſtrained too far in the interpretation: yet ſurely we muſt allow the figure to be peculiarly proper, and ſignificant. Some argue that "to be born again" means no more than to be baptized, and they quote the ancient fathers in proof of it. But will any man ſay, that no one can *ſee*, or *enter into* the kingdom of God; that is, no one can underſtand the nature of true religion, become Chriſt's true diſciple, nor inherit the happineſs of heaven, without the baptiſm of water? This may be allowed to be the outward ſign; but ſure we muſt look for ſomething far more ſpiritual and excellent, as the thing ſignified thereby! Again ſome underſtand it of reformation: but outward reformation may be hypocritical: a man may change one kind of wickedneſs for another, or one creed or ſect for another, in a variety of particulars; and yet remain at the utmoſt diſtance from the kingdom of God: in ſhort, "if regeneration here mean only reformation of life, our Lord, inſtead of making any new diſcovery, has thrown a great deal of obſcurity on what was before plain and obvious, and known not only to the Jews, but to the wiſer heathens. And indeed this is the main article in diſpute among many. Some think, all things in ſcripture are expreſſed in condeſcenſion to our capacities, ſo that there is ſtill to be conceived in many of them an inexpreſſible grandeur: whilſt on the other hand, others ſuppoſe, that under the pomp and grandeur of the moſt hyperbolical expreſſions, things of a low and ordinary ſenſe are to be underſtood." (Owen.) Every one may ſee how applicable this is to all thoſe interpretations of the new birth, which explain this moſt remarkable figurative, and energetic expreſſion to ſignify either things exceeding plain, or of a very inferior nature in religion. We have had frequent occaſions to conſider the ſubject before, (Note, c. i. v. 13:) but it may here be expedient to elucidate the propriety of the Metaphor. When a child is born into the world, though no new matter is brought into exiſtence, yet a new creature is produced; and all its capacities, ſenſes, &c, are new, and ſuited to that new life, on which it hath entered. So when the grace of God produces a change in the ſinner's heart: the perſon indeed is the ſame, but he becomes a new man, poſſeſſed of new capacities, diſcernment, affections, &c, and prepared to make a new uſe of all his organs, ſenſes, and faculties: he enters as a new creature into the ſpiritual world, and becomes capable of employments and ſatiſfactions, to which he was before an utter ſtranger. When an infant is born, it has all the parts of a grown man, but they are in a weak ſtate, and need nouriſhment, attention, and time, before they are fitted to perform their proper functions in a complete manner. Thus the regenerated ſinner, has the ſubſtance of all holy diſpoſitions communicated to his ſoul: but they are in an infantile ſtate, and muſt grow up gradually, and with care and ſpiritual nouriſhment to maturity: this nouriſhment is provided, and the new born babe in the ſpiritual, as well as in the natural world, deſires, hunts after, reliſhes, and thrives upon it. (1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 2.) It is generally agreed that children, when born into the world, endure much pain, as well as their mothers: however few enter into the ſpiritual world by the new birth without much diſtreſs of conſcience, and many ſorrows. As the new born infant is known to be alive, by crying; ſo earneſt confeſſions of ſin, and fervent cries for mercy are the uſual tokens of the ſinner's being born again. No man can comprehend how the infant is formed in the womb; nor can any man know how God effects the ſanctifying change in the ſinner's heart. He works by means, and inſtruments, in both caſes; and in each of them a real creation is effected by his omnipotence. The birth of the infant precedes the exerciſe of its ſenſes, and is the neceſſary introduction to all the actions of future life: ſo the new birth muſt precede all the actions of the ſpiritual life; till that have taken place, the man can neither ſee, hear, ſpeak, walk, or work, in a ſpiritual manner. But, as when a living child is born, it will certainly move, and act, &c: ſo when the ſinner is born again, he will repent, believe, love, obey, worſhip, &c. Whatever be a man's natural abilities, attainments, notions, or profeſſion, our Lord aſſures us, that "he cannot *ſee* the kingdom of God:" he can neither diſcern its ſpiritual nature, nor the excelling of its bleſſings and privileges. This is the unalterable appointment of God; but it has alſo its foundation in the reaſon and nature of things. God is perfect in holineſs, his law is holy, his goſpel is holy, all things relating to true religion are holy and ſpiritual. This is their glory and excellency: but man by nature is unholy, and carnal, and cannot reliſh, or even diſcern that excellency. God, and his law, &c, are unchangeable: therefore man muſt change, or he can never be conformed to, or be happy in them. Every revelation of God requires of ſinful man the deepeſt humiliation before him; but man is a ſelf-juſtifying, ſelf-ſufficient creature: he muſt therefore be inwardly and effectually changed, before he can underſtand the nature and glory of the goſpel. Without this he can ſee no excellency in the holineſs of God, no good-

7 Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus anſwered and ſaid unto him, How can theſe things be?

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neſs or juſtice in the ſtrict and ſpiritual precepts and awful ſanction of the law, no hatefulneſs in himſelf, no malignity deſerving damnation in his ſins, no preciouſneſs in the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, no beauty in conformity to his image and character. Conſequently he can neither ſubmit, repent, believe, love, or obey: but he muſt remain a rebel and an enemy, and a deſpiſer, hater, or abuſer of the goſpel: he cannot therefore be a true chriſtian, and a ſpiritual worſhipper; nor can he have the meetneſs for the enjoyments, and employments of heaven. He may exerciſe the functions, and participate the ſatisfactions of the animal or rational life; but he muſt remain ſpiritually dead, and incapable of ſuch ſatisfactions as angels and ſaints enjoy in heaven, and as godly men experience on earth: even as a watch or other curious machine, conſtructed with three diſtinct parts, may move on regularly as to two of them, when the third is rendered incapable of further motion, unleſs it be reſtored by a ſkill ſimilar to that of the original maker. Some render the words "born again," "born from above;" and no doubt they admit of that meaning: but Nicodemus ſeems not to have thus underſtood our Lord, and the alteration does not materially affect the ſenſe of the paſſage. It ſuffices, that we underſtand it of the beginning of the ſpiritual life, as the original birth was of the natural; without which we can no more live an heavenly life, than we could an earthly one, without being born into this world.

V. 4—8.] Nicodemus, though ſeriouſly impreſſed, ſeems to have had no view of religion, further than as it related to a man's outward conduct: he could not therefore underſtand what our Lord could mean by ſuch a ſolemn declaration; but adverting to the natural meaning of the words, and obſerving with what earneſtneſs Jeſus inſiſted on the neceſſity of being born again; he enquired with great ſurpriſe, how ſuch a thing could poſſibly take place? Or how it could conduce at all to ſalvation, if it were poſſible? To this our Lord replied in the ſame emphatical and deciſive manner as before, and to the ſame effect; yet ſo as ſomething further to declare the Author, and nature of this myſterious work. By the kingdom of God he doubtleſs primarily meant, the kingdom of the Meſſiah, about which the Jews entertained ſuch carnal, and erroneous opinions: yet admiſſion into this is neceſſary in order to "enter into the kingdom of God in heaven;" and ſo both may be included. Without being "born of water, and of the Spirit," no man can "enter into the kingdom of God;" none can become true diſciples of Chriſt, and heirs of heaven, without this change, of which the Holy Spirit is the Author, and purifying, fertilizing water is the outward ſign. Water was uſed among the Jews in "divers waſhings:" John uſed it in his baptiſm; and Jeſus in his initiatory ordinance. This was the emblem of that ſpiritual waſhing without which no man can be admitted into the true church, as a living member of the ſame. As baptiſm in the ordinary courſe of things is requiſite to the outward profeſſion of chriſtianity; ſo regeneration is invariably neceſſary to the poſſeſſion of its privileges, and performance of its ſpiritual duties. Except a man therefore, "be born of water, and of the Spirit;" except his heart be purified by that inward waſhing of the Holy Spirit, of which water hath been the conſtant emblem, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Indeed to be born over again of parents either Jewiſh or Gentile, were that poſſible, could be of no uſe to any man: as "that which is born of the fleſh," by natural generation from the ſtock of fallen Adam, "is fleſh," carnal, corrupt, and enmity to God, (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 1—13:) but "that which is born of the Spirit;" that which is communicated to the ſoul, from the ſecond Adam, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, "is ſpirit," is like it's Author, of a ſpiritual and holy nature, and is capable of ſpiritual and holy exerciſes and enjoyments. Nor was there any cauſe for Nicodemus to wonder at this, as if it were more unintelligible, than other things, the truth and reality of which no man diſputes. The wind for inſtance bloweth from different points of the compaſs, and more gently or more furiouſly, "as it liſteth," that is, as far as man is concerned: but though the ſound of it be heard, and the other effects of it moſt manifeſt; yet no man can tell whence it cometh: even to this day, after all improvements in natural ſcience, men can neither account ſatisfactorily for all the changes of the wind, nor render any of its operations ſubmiſſive to their will. Even ſo it is with "every one that is born of the Spirit:" the nature and effects of this change are moſt manifeſt; the manner in which it is wrought is inexplicable; and it's direction to this or the other perſon is independant on the will of man, and according to the ſovereign pleaſure of the great Creator. But if man cannot govern, or change the wind, or explain thoſe things that relate to it; how can he expect to govern or explain the operations of the Holy Spirit? As the ſame word ſignifies both Spirit, and the wind, in the original languages; ſo the ſimilitude has a peculiar propriety.

V. 9—11.] As Nicodemus had not been uſed to hear this inward change inſiſted on by the ſcribes and prieſts; had never made it the immediate ſubject of his own ſtudy, or diſcuſſion; and had not yet attained to an experience of its nature and effects: ſo he could not underſtand our Lord's meaning. He was not willing to reject his doctrine, which was confirmed by ſuch evident miracles; yet this new birth, on which he ſo ſtrenuouſly inſiſted, ſeemed to him viſionary, inexplicable, and impracticable: and therefore he enquired, as a man aſtoniſhed, "how theſe things could be?" To this our Lord anſwered, as equally ſurpriſed at his ignorance, by demanding, whether he, as a teacher of God's people, could poſſibly be unacquainted with ſuch eſſential and important truths? Not only were they abſolutely re-

10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou a maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things?

11 Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, We ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen; and ye receive not our witneſs.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe if I tell you *of* heavenly things?

13 And no man hath aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, which is in heaven.

14 And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life.

16 For God ſo loved the world, that he

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quiſite to the exiſtence of true religion, as nothing but a worthleſs form could ſubſiſt without them: but they were evidently contained in the old Revelation, and implied in every paſſage, which required ſpiritual worſhip, inward holineſs, and heavenly affections of a fallen ſinner. (*Deut.* c. xxx. v. 6. *Pſ.* li. v. 6—10. *Iſaiah*, c. lxvi. v. 7—9. *Jer.* c. xxxi. v. 33, 34. c. xxxii. v. 39, 40. *Ezek.* c. xi. v. 19. c. xxxvi. v. 25—27.) Jeſus then proceeded to declare, that he, and thoſe ſervants of God, who in every age concurred with him, ſpake in this reſpect what they aſſuredly knew to be true, and teſtified what they were moſt intimately acquainted with: yet the Jews in general, and the Phariſees in particular, would not receive their teſtimony. Prophets, apoſtles, and faithful miniſters knew this ſubject from revelation, from their own experience, and from obſervation of its effects in others: Jeſus knew it in a ſtill higher and more ſublime manner. (v. 31, 32.) Perhaps he alſo referred to the teſtimony of God to this and other truths taught by him, as conveyed by the miracles which he wrought.

V. 12, 13.] The change before deſcribed ſeems here to be meant by "earthly things:" for as it muſt be, and continually hath been, wrought on earth, ſo it is *comparatively* eaſy to man's comprehenſion, and he may reaſon and diſcourſe about it far better, than about the myſteries, which come next to be conſidered. (v. 31.) No creature can find ſatisfaction, without capacities of enjoyment ſuited to his ſituation. Pleaſure cannot be experienced without appetite, and reliſh, as well as the means of gratification. Every animal muſt be in its proper element, in order to be eaſy, and comfortable. If the fiſh muſt be made to live on land, its nature muſt previouſly be changed. Holineſs and ſpirituality are not the ſinner's element: ſubmiſſion to, and communion with God are not his deſired enjoyments: nay he has a rooted antipathy to them. Yet happineſs is impoſſible to a rational creature without holineſs; and holineſs cannot be ſo much as begun, without "being born again." So that this truth, which men are ſo apt to deny, and treat as enthuſiaſm and rhapſody has as evident a ground in reaſon as in ſcripture. Let it but be granted, that God is perfectly holy; that happineſs conſiſts in his favour, preſence, image and ſervice; and that man by nature has no deſire after, nor reliſh for this kind of happineſs; and from theſe premiſes, (which a man muſt be very hardy to deny, or ingenious to diſpute,) it muſt demonſtratively follow, that "except a man be born again," he could not even enjoy happineſs, were he admitted into heaven itſelf; but for that reaſon, among others, he never can enter thither. If men will not therefore believe this doctrine, of which we "that are of the earth, and earthly," can reaſon ſo plainly; how can they believe what Jeſus teſtifies to them concerning "heavenly things?" namely ſuch as relate to the myſteries of the Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead, to his own eternal Deity, his incarnation, redemption by his blood, &c; which could never have been thought of, had not God revealed them, and which muſt reſt wholly on the teſtimony of Revelation? We may indeed diſcern glory and ſuitableneſs in them when revealed: but we feel, that they are ſublime, and myſterious beyond compariſon; and though not contrary to, yet far above, and out of the reach, and province of our reaſon. The knowledge of theſe things muſt be derived immediately, and entirely from heaven, and received by faith alone: yet no man hath aſcended thither to fetch down that knowledge; nor can it be received, except from Chriſt, who came down from heaven, when he became "the Son of man:" yet even then He was in heaven, in reſpect of his divine nature. For the two natures are ſo inſeparably united in his myſterious Perſon; that as God is ſaid to have purchaſed the church with his own blood; ſo the Son of man is ſaid to be in heaven, when he was here on earth, becauſe One with the eternal Word, and Son of God. This language ſeems incapable of any other interpretation; and to wreſt it to ſuit contrary ſchemes, makes our Lord to ſpeak in the moſt obſcure, and unintelligible manner imaginable. Doubtleſs this was intended as a ſpecimen of thoſe heavenly things which were referred to.

V. 14, 15.] (Notes, &c. *Num.* c. xxi. v. 6—9.) This paſſage in the hiſtory of Iſrael was well known, but the typical meaning was not all diſcovered to the Jews in general. The promiſed Meſſiah, was not to be exalted on *earth* to a glorious throne, as they vainly expected: but to be lifted up, and hung upon an ignominious croſs, for the redemption of his people. Moſes the giver of the law was ordered to make a ſerpent of braſs, like thoſe fiery ſerpents, who bit the people; yet perfectly innoxious: this he lifted up on a pole, in the ſight of the people, who looked at it, when mortally bitten by the ſerpents; and ſo they were miraculouſly healed. Thus Jeſus, (in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, in the nature of Adam, by whom ſin and death entered into the world, though perfectly free from ſin, and being falſely accuſed of that very ambition, which was the old ſerpent's ſin, and the temptation, by which he prevailed againſt our firſt parents, in that "He, being a gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.

17 For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be ſaved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already; becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt that they are wrought in God.

22 After theſe things came Jeſus and his

"man, made himſelf God;") was lifted up on the croſs, to "redeem us from the curſe of the law, being made a "curſe for us:" and this *muſt* be, in order to the completion of God's promiſes and predictions, and for the ſatisfaction of his juſtice in ſaving ſinners. In conſequence of his crucifixion, he is held forth in the preached goſpel, that "whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould "not periſh, but have eternal life." This method, which God had deviſed in his infinite wiſdom, is ſuited to bring the periſhing ſinner to expect all his ſalvation from God, and to give him all the glory of it; to promote humility, dependance and gratitude; to render man ſubmiſſive and obedient; and to teach him every ſalutary leſſon by looking to that one object, from which he derives his peace, hope, and comfort.

V. 16—21.] The whole deſign of man's redemption originated in the love of God to the world, even to the apoſtate race of men. This could not be the love of approbation, or complacency; for he deemed them deſerving of his final indignation, and meet objects of his holy abhorrence; and ſo vile, that he could not honourably ſhew them any mercy, except by an expedient more ſuited to ſhew the deſert of their rebellion, than even the eternal puniſhment of the whole multitude of them. God's love to the world was therefore good-will, compaſſion, benevolence, (*Rom.* c. v. ver. 6—10. 1 *John*, c. iv. ver. 9, 10.) He *ſo* loved the world, that He not only purpoſed to pardon ſin, and give heaven to thoſe, who repented of their rebellions: but, in order thereto, (when the honour of his juſtice and holineſs ſeemed to oppoſe the exerciſe of his mercy,) "he gave his only "begotten Son," the co-equal partaker of his divine nature, a perſon of infinite dignity and excellency, and infinitely beloved by him, compared with whom all worlds were as nothing; to be made fleſh, that in our nature he might atone for our ſins by his ſufferings and death upon the croſs: that this obſtacle being removed, he might forgive, ſave, and bleſs with everlaſting life all thoſe of every nation, who believe in Chriſt, and who muſt otherwiſe have periſhed for ever. The world, or the race of men, is therefore now borne with as under a diſpenſation of mercy: ſinners in general are invited to partake of the bleſſing; believers without exception are ſaved: but as true faith ſprings from the new birth, and the Spirit quickens whom he will; ſo we muſt allow a limitation in the application of redemption, and likewiſe in the intention of the Redeemer; for "known un"to God are all his works from before the foundation "of the world." Yet this was not that view of the ſubject, which was in this place to be exhibited. Our Lord further ſhewed Nicodemus, "that God did not "ſend his Son into the world, to condemn the world," as might previouſly have been expected, when the approach of ſo glorious and holy a perſon was announced. This was not the purpoſe of his incarnation, miniſtry, and work on earth: but on the contrary he came to reveal, and purchaſe ſalvation for the world, that ſinners every where might be invited to partake of it. Inſomuch that the man, who believes in Chriſt, no longer remains under condemnation, how many ſoever his ſins have been, but is brought into a juſtified ſtate. But the unbeliever "is condemned already:" he hath rejected the only method of pardon, which God ever revealed; he remains under the condemnation due to his ſins, as a condemned criminal reſerved for execution; and his guilt is exceedingly aggravated, by his refuſal to believe in the name of the Son of God, and by deſpiſing the glorious diſplay of the divine wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and mercy, made in that method of ſalvation. For this unbelief is no ſpeculative miſtake, into which an honeſt mind may be led; but it originates from the wickedneſs and ungodlineſs of a man's heart: ſo that this is the reaſon, and ground of the unbeliever's condemnation, "that Light "is come into the world," to ſhew men the perfections, truth and will of God, and the way of ſalvation from wrath and ſin; (c. i. v. 4—9:) but men love ignorance, deluſion, or infidelity in preference to it, becauſe more congenial to the pride, enmity, and rebellion of their hearts, and the ſecret or open wickedneſs of their lives. For every man who habitually loves, and practiſes any kind of evil, will hate and ſhun that light, which detects and expoſes it: thus men keep aloof from the true goſpel of Chriſt, and run into any perverſion of it; leſt it ſhould diſquiet their conſciences, interfere with their indulgence in ſin, or detect the fallacy of their preſumptuous confidence. But the man, who acts uprightly, and conſcientiouſly, and really deſires to know and do the whole will of God, without reſerves, is glad to bring his creed, his character, and conduct to the Light, that they may be ſcrutinized by it; that he may be further inſtructed, and directed, and that it may be made manifeſt, that "his works are wrought in God," by diſciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John alſo was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, becauſe there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet caſt into priſon.

25 Then there aroſe a queſtion between *ſome* of John's diſciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bareſt witneſs, behold, the ſame baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

27 John anſwered and ſaid, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt, but that I am ſent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which ſtandeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly becauſe of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He muſt increaſe, but I *muſt* decreaſe.

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and ſpeaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth; and no man receiveth his teſtimony.

33 He that hath received his teſtimony hath ſet to his ſeal that God is true.

34 For he whom God hath ſent ſpeaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure *unto him*.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the Son ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

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virtue of an union of ſoul with, and grace derived from, him, according to his will, for his glory, and as accepted by him. Theſe are important truths of general application: yet they were ſpoken with a peculiar reference to the caſe of the Phariſees; and it was thus declared, that the oppoſition which would be made to Chriſt, and his doctrine, aroſe from the wickedneſs of their hearts, and lives, which could not endure the light of his ſpiritual miniſtry. Nicodemus therefore, and they to whom he might report the reſult of this conference, were warned not to reject the counſel of God againſt themſelves. Thus our Lord ſet before Nicodemus the grand outlines of chriſtian truth, and perhaps he enlarged more fully on the ſeveral particulars: and though he did not then clearly comprehend his meaning; yet he was gradually led further into the knowledge of the truth, and grew bolder in making profeſſion of it.

V. 22—24.] Our Lord ſoon after this, left Jeruſalem, and retired into the leſſer cities, or villages of Judea: there he preached, and collected followers, and his more ſtated diſciples baptized them; (c. iv. ver. 1, 2.) It is not probable that He baptized them in that form, which he afterwards preſcribed; but after the manner of John, and as introductory to the more complete eſtabliſhment of his religion. The place, where John was preaching and baptizing at the ſame time, is not mentioned elſewhere: however there were *many ſtreams of water* in it, which rendered it convenient to him, as he ſtill baptized great numbers. This muſt have been previous to any thing recorded of Chriſt's miniſtry by the other evangeliſts. (*Matt.* c. iv. ver. 12.) It is remarkable, that we do not read of Chriſt's diſciples baptizing, previous to his aſcenſion, except in theſe few paſſages of John's goſpel.

V. 25, 26.] The diſpute, between John's diſciples and the other Jews, ſeems to have been, whether John's baptiſm, or their traditional, or ceremonial waſhings were moſt efficacious to take away ſin: but perhaps Chriſt's baptizing by his diſciples might give occaſion to it; and the other Jews might argue from thence, that there was no end of innovating, and that they might as well adhere to the Phariſees, as follow either of the new teachers. This might alſo tend further to excite the jealouſy of John's diſciples, who complained to their maſter, that all men came to Jeſus to be baptized of him; ſo that He had loſt his influence and popularity by bearing teſtimony to Jeſus: by which they ſeem ſecretly to have cenſured our Lord; and to have intimated that John ought to retract the teſtimony, which he had given in his favour.

V. 27—36.] The diſquietude of John's diſciples gave him an opportunity of bearing ſtill a fuller teſtimony to our Lord: He laid it down as an univerſal axiom that "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him "from heaven." Thence he had received his commiſſion, qualifications and inſtructions; and he was fully ſatisfied with the place and work aſſigned to him: but Jeſus came with a far ſuperior commiſſion, and on a more important work, which ſuperſeded his. It may alſo mean, that they muſt have underſtood his teſtimony, and believed in Chriſt alſo; ſave that they could not do this, "till it were given them from heaven." However they knew, he had always declared, that he was not the Meſſiah, but merely his ſervant and forerunner: why then ſhould it trouble them that ſuperior honour was rendered to Jeſus? He was the Bridegroom, who had loved, and would prepare and eſpouſe his church of re-

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus departing from Judea; diſcourſing with a Samaritan woman concerning the water of life, bringing her ſins to her remembrance, ſhewing her the nature of acceptable worſhip, and declaring himſelf to be the Meſſiah, 1---27. 2d. The woman informing her neighbours, and prevailing on them to go and hear him, 28---30. 3d. Jeſus converſing with his diſciples, concerning his delight in his Father's work, and the bleſſed harveſt about to be reaped by them; with reference to the coming of the Samaritans to hear his doctrine, 31---38.

deemed ſinners to himſelf, and ennoble, enrich and bleſs them for ever by that ſacred union, in which he would greatly delight and be glorified; (*Pſ.* xlv. *Iſaiah*, c. liv. v. 5. c. lxii. v. 5. *Hoſ:* c. ii. v. 19, 20.) As for John, he declared that he was honoured as the friend of the Bridegroom, and employed in collecting diſciples, to be an inſtrument in effecting theſe gracious eſpouſals. He therefore ſtood and heard his orders, and gladly obeyed them; he rejoiced greatly to hear his voice, and to witneſs his glory; and this his joy was now complete, in that he had heard and ſeen the promiſed Meſſiah, and found that the people flocked to him. He alſo knew, that Jeſus would continue to increaſe in honour, and influence, as "of "his government and peace there would be no end:" but for his part, he was paſſed the zenith of his reputation with the people, and muſt expect to be leſs and leſs conſidered, and followed; nor did this at all deduct from his rejoicing in Chriſt. He was ſenſible that this was reaſonable, and profitable to men: for Jeſus came from heaven as the Son of God, and was above *all* men, angels, or creatures: whilſt he was of the earth, a mere ſinful mortal man, who could only ſpeak in the language of the earth, concerning the more plain ſubjects of religion; (v. 12:) but Jeſus came from heaven to ſpeak of heavenly things in language ſuitable to their ſublime myſteriouſneſs, as of matters familiar to him, being what he had ſeen and heard. Yet very few, in compariſon with the whole nation, were diſpoſed to receive his teſtimony: but thoſe few, who acknowledged him as the Meſſiah, and profited by his inſtructions, ſet their ſeal to the truth of God, in reſpect of the fulfilment of his ancient prophecies and promiſes, and publicly declared their aſſurance that His word was to be depended on, in every poſſible caſe, as infallibly ſure. For as Jeſus came from the boſom of the Father; his words were indeed the words of God, and implicitly to be credited: and as the great Prophet of the church, the Father gave him the Spirit, not by meaſure, as to inferior prophets, but in immeaſurable fulneſs, from him to be communicated to all others, who were ſent by him. Indeed the Father loved and delighted in the Son, and in his mediatorial undertaking and work, becauſe they ſo greatly glorified his name: and therefore he had entruſted to him, as Mediator, all authority and judgment; and had committed to him every thing relative to the government of the church, and of the world, and had determined that all fulneſs ſhould dwell in us: thus everlaſting life could only be had by faith in him, and might aſſuredly be thus obtained: whereas every one, whether he were a diſciple of the Phariſees, or of John himſelf, or whatever his character and profeſſion might be, who did not believe in the Son of God, could not ſee life, or partake of ſalvation; but the wrath of God muſt for ever reſt upon him, as it doth on every ſinner, till he believe in Chriſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Many are convinced of more divine truth, than they dare avow in the face of an ungodly world, or amongſt proud deſpiſers of the goſpel: and though we muſt not excuſe ſuch, as are afraid or aſhamed to aſſociate with or hear thoſe, whom they are convinced to be ſent of God; yet we muſt not haſtily reject them, leſt we ſhould quench the ſmoking flax; for by proper inſtruction and encouragement they may at length become more bold, and decided. True religion has its reſidence within us, and conſiſts in the right ſtate of the heart: and as he, who has life and death at his diſpoſal, hath ſo repeatedly and ſolemnly aſſured us, that "except a man be born "again, he cannot ſee, or enter into, the kingdom of "God;" it ſurely becomes every man ſeriouſly to enquire into the meaning of this important declaration, and to beſeech the Lord to direct him to a proper ſolution of that enquiry. In this way, a man may hear, read, meditate, pray and wait for a conſiderable time, before he clearly enters into the meaning of the paſſage; yet he will gradually, and certainly obtain an experimental knowledge of it. But ſurely it is the moſt abſurd preſumption in the world, for a man to expect future happineſs, without either knowing or caring any thing about being "born again;" as if he could enter heaven in defiance of Chriſt, and by ſo doing prove his aſſertion to be a falſhood! Nor is it any ſafer, or wiſer to interpret ſuch an emphatical declaration to ſignify ſome form, notion, or impreſſion, which leaves a man as proud, as carnal, and as much an enemy of God as before; which neither evidences his title to the kingdom, nor gives him any meetneſs for its holy employments! But "the na"tural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of "God; for they are fooliſhneſs to him:" to evade conviction therefore, it is common for men to put an abſurd conſtruction on them, and to draw ridiculous inferences from them; and then to enquire whether this be not very fooliſh? Whereas the folly lies in the miſconſtruction, and miſapplication, and not in the doctrine itſelf; which is plain to every teachable enquirer. The Lord will explain his declarations, but he will not retract them; nor will He alter the rules of admiſſion into his kingdom, to humour the prejudices of any ſet of men whatever: and the true baptiſm is not that which is outward in the fleſh, but that which is inward, even that of the heart, by the work of the Holy Spirit, whoſe praiſe is not of men but of God. Without this, we cannot come to, walk with, worſhip, or enjoy God: the carnal mind, which belongs to us all, as born of the fleſh, is enmity to Him, ſo that, they who are *in the fleſh* cannot pleaſe Him. But happy are they, that are born of the Spirit, and made ſpiritual; they can diſcern the things of God, and reliſh them; religion becomes their element, they are made ſubjects of that kingdom of God, which is in righteouſneſs, peace,

4th. The Samaritans believing in Him, and his continuance among them for two days, 39---43.
5th. Jeſus returning to Cana, and curing at a diſtance a nobleman's ſon at Capernaum, 44---54.

WHEN, therefore, the Lord knew how the Phariſees, had heard that Jeſus

and joy; and heirs of the incorruptible inheritance of heaven. Let it not then be marvelled at, that Jeſus hath ſaid, "we *muſt* be born again:" it is enough that the Author, the nature, the neceſſity, and the effects of this gracious work are manifeſt; though the manner and rule of it be not known. Can we indeed underſtand fully how the moſt ordinary, and regular effects in nature are produced? Or can we change the courſe, which God hath eſtabliſhed? One ſhip is wafted into port, and another daſhed upon the rocks by the wind, as it pleaſes God. The ſailors can neither comprehend the reaſons, nor repel the effects of it: but yet they may uſe means, and employ their ſkill to avail themſelves of a favourable wind, or to retire from the effects of a furious tempeſt: and we alſo may uſe means, and hope for the bleſſing of God upon them. It is indeed true, that there are many teachers in Iſrael, and thoſe of great repute, who are ready to ſay, "how can theſe things be?" Nay they poſitively declare that they cannot be; and that they are ignorant enthuſiaſts, or deſigning hypocrites, who pretend to them. However, in an inferior ſenſe, we may ſay with humble confidence, that we teſtify that which we have ſeen, heard, experienced, and obſerved, whether men will receive, or reject our teſtimony.

But if ſuch obvious truths be rejected, we need not wonder, that the great myſteries of redemption, by the blood of the incarnate Son of God, are controverted or neglected: for how can men believe that this glorious Perſon, the Creator of all the world, atoned for the ſins of his enemies by his ignominious death upon the croſs; when they are not ſenſible, that their carnal hearts muſt be changed by new creating grace, before they can reliſh the holy joys of heaven? If they believe not that, which is as capable of proof, illuſtration and comprehenſion, as even *earthly* things in general are: how can they believe that the Son of man was ſo one with God, that he was truly in heaven when teaching here on earth, and that he actually is preſent with his people on earth, now that he ever liveth to appear in the preſence of God for them in heaven? Theſe are heavenly things, and far out of the reach of all, who judge of God by carnal ſenſe, or pur-blind reaſon: yet in them is contained the great plan of God for deſtroying the works of the devil, and the curing of thoſe, who have been poiſoned with the venom of that old ſerpent. However infidels, ſcribes, or phariſees may deride, or revile; ſtill Chriſt crucified, beheld with the eye of faith, brings life and ſalvation to the ſoul of a periſhing ſinner; and there is no other way of eſcaping everlaſting miſery. But if we ſo look to him as to be ſaved from wrath; we ſhall alſo be delivered from the power of ſin, reſtored gradually to ſpiritual health, and transformed into the image of that glorious Object, which is exhibited in the goſpel. Words can never expreſs how free, and excellent the love of God to a ſinful world hath been, in giving his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins: did it ever enter into the heart of an earthly prince to give his only beloved ſon to ſuffer an ignominious death, in order that he might honourably ſave the lives of ſome baſe traitors, who had aimed to ſubvert his throne? Yet even this would be little, and mean, compared with the love of God to rebellious man! But though our God be ſo ready to pardon all thoſe, who believe in the name of his only begotten Son, whom he ſent into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved: yet his infinite love will tend to the deeper condemnation of thoſe, who continue to neglect ſo great ſalvation. The believer indeed is not condemned, and ſhall not come into condemnation: but the unbeliever is condemned already, the wrath of God abideth on him, and he goes about continually under that awful load, which is ſufficient to ſink him into everlaſting miſery. Nor is this unbelief a light or venial matter: it ſprings from determined enmity to God, to his truth, his law, and his glory, and from love of ſin in ſome ſhape or other. "Men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil:" but this would not have been ſo fully proved, if Light had not come into the world, and been hated by them. And is it proper that men ſhould hate God, the truth, knowledge, and holineſs, and love wickedneſs and ſatan's ſervice with impunity? They may indeed ſhelter themſelves under ſome plauſible pretext, or varniſh it over with ſome ſpecious appearance: but they have a ſecret quarrel with the truth, becauſe it oppoſes their favourite iniquities; they wiſh to diſbelieve, and then hunt for arguments to ſatisfy themſelves in their infidelity. Let us remember that the Judge hath declared that unbelief ſprings from this ſource, and that every one, who "doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God." Let us then judge ourſelves, and bring our characters, and conduct to his word to be aſſayed by it: let us beſeech him to diſcover to us the ſecret motives, by which we are actuated, and to prevent our being deceived by ſatan, and our own hearts.

The ſame diſpoſition, which leads to bigotry and formality in religion, produces alſo envy, ambition, and jealouſy of thoſe, who ſeem to outſhine us: but true excellency, and ſanctifying grace cauſe deep humility, ſubmiſſion to God, and a willing dependance upon him. As "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven;" let us ſeek all our bleſſings from thence, give God all the glory of whatever we have or do, occupy with our talents as we are able, rejoice in the honour and ſervice of Chriſt, the condeſcending Bridegroom of his church; ſtand and hear his voice, and ſeek our happineſs in his preſence and favour. And ſhould we be laid aſide from uſefulneſs, and ſee others increaſe whilſt we decreaſe; let us pray to be enabled to bear it meekly, yea thankfully if Chriſt be more honoured by it. Let us attend to Him, who cometh from above, and is above all, that we may ſimply receive heavenly things from his teſtimony; and neither call any one maſter, or lean to our own underſtanding, as all men "being of the earth are

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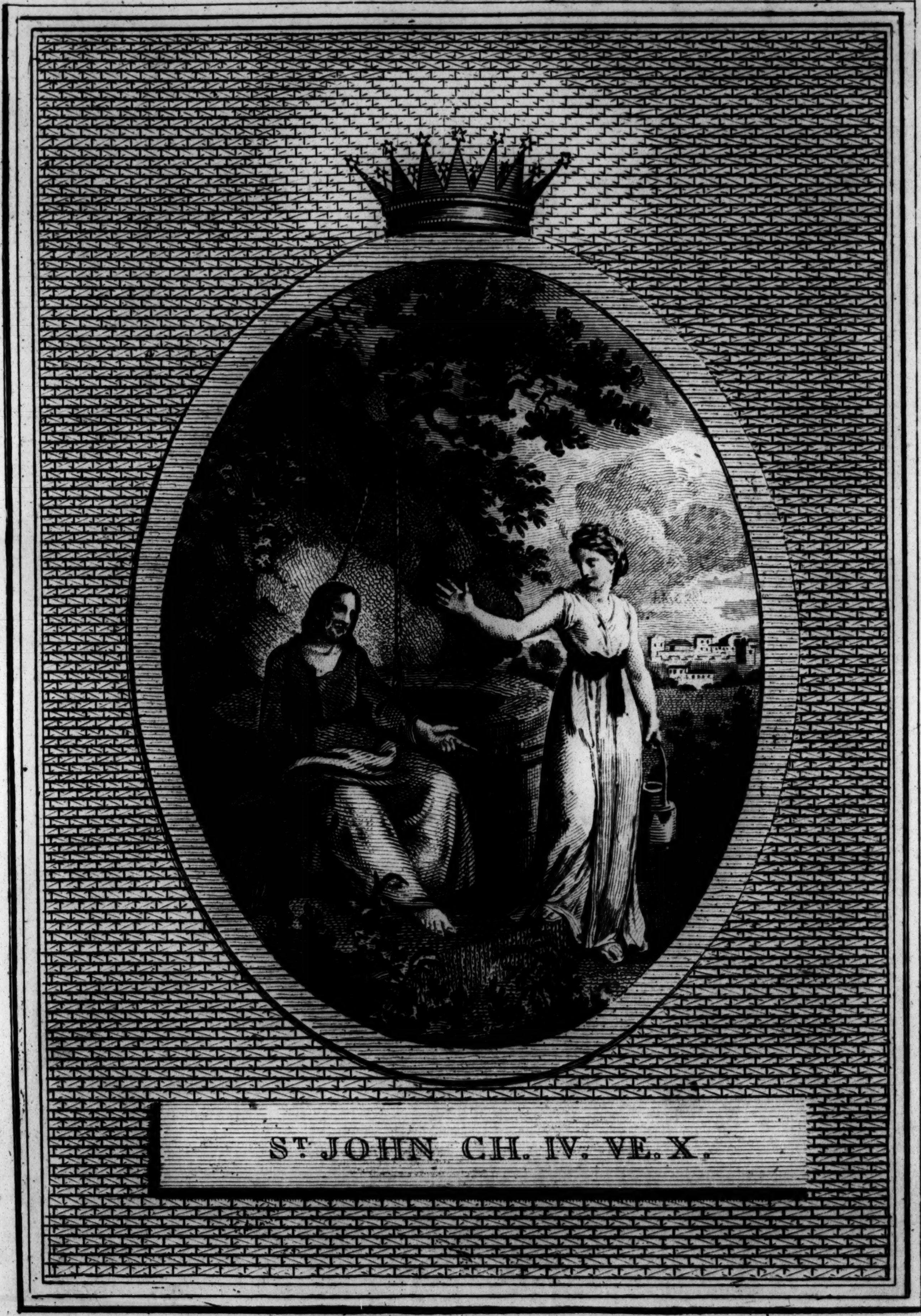

St. JOHN CH. IV. VE. X.

Motz del.

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made and baptized more diſciples than John,

2 (Though Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but his diſciples.)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he muſt needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his ſon Joſeph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jeſus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, ſat thus on the well: *and* it was about the ſixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jeſus ſaith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his diſciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then ſaith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, aſkeſt drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, if thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldeſt have aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, thou haſt nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then haſt thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himſelf, and his children, and his cattle?

" earthly, and ſpeak of the earth." And though few indeed thus ſet to their ſeals, "that God is true;" let us ſeek ſo to honour his word, that he may ſeal his ſalvation to us, by the Spirit of his Son ſhedding abroad his love in our hearts. This is the only way of everlaſting life, through faith in the Son of God, whom the Father loveth, and into whoſe hand all things are given; but there is no ſalvation for ſinners in any other, and " he " that believeth not ſhall without doubt periſh for " ever."

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—4.] Our Lord did not ſee good to preſerve himſelf by a continued ſucceſſion of miracles; and the time was yet diſtant, when he would give himſelf into the hands of his enemies: he therefore avoided every thing, which could needleſſly excite their jealouſy and indignation. He ſeems however to have continued a conſiderable time in Judea, preaching and collecting diſciples; but this at length gave umbrage to the Phariſees, who heard that he was followed by greater numbers than John was: and on hearing this, he left Judea to return into Galilee. It is obſervable, that our Lord was not pleaſed to baptize any with his own hands: perhaps he choſe to act, as the head of the church, who baptizes with the Holy Ghoſt, and therefore left his ſervants to baptize with water: perhaps he ſaw that diſputes would beſt be prevented, by his baptizing none, leſt ſuch ſhould glory in it as a peculiar diſtinction: and perhaps he meant to ſhew, that preaching the goſpel is in itſelf a far higher and more honourable employment, than the adminiſtration of the *external* ſigns of the covenant; which have generally been exalted too much by thoſe, who have obſerved them. In returning to Galilee the road lay through Samaria, and Jeſus muſt needs go that way, unleſs he would go very far about: but he had alſo ſecret purpoſes, for paſſing by that road.

V. 5—9.] Sychar is ſuppoſed to be the ſame place as Sichem, or Shechem, and to have been ſo named from the drunkenneſs of the inhabitants; for ſuch is the ſignification of the word. In a piece of ground, which Jacob bequeathed to Joſeph, (*Gen.* c. xxxiii. v. 18—20. c. xlviii. v. 22. *Joſh.* c. xxiv. v. 32;) there was a well, which tradition reported to have belonged to the former. To this place our Lord arrived *about noon*, after a long morning's walk; (for there ſeems no reaſon to ſuppoſe that John computed time by different rules, than the other evangeliſts:) being wearied with his journey he ſat down *thus* upon the ſide of the well, taking the poor accommodations as he found them, though the ſeat was uneaſy, and there was no ſhelter from the meridian ſun, nor any refreſhment provided for him. As the Samaritans were not generally diſpoſed to receive the Jews into their houſes; ſo he attempted not to go into the town; but ſent the diſciples to buy ſome neceſſary proviſions, as if he intended, after making a homely meal by the well's ſide, to have walked forward in the afternoon. But in the mean while a woman came to draw water; and Jeſus, being thirſty condeſcended to become her ſupplicant for a draught of it; intending alſo by this method to engage her in converſation with him. Accordingly the woman expreſſed her ſurpriſe that he, whom ſhe knew by his apparel, &c, to be a Jew, ſhould aſk water of her, a Samaritan! How could *he* think of becoming her petitioner? Or how could he expect any favour from her? For the inveteracy between the two nations and ſects was ſo great, that they generally confined all their intercourſe to matters of mere neceſſity, and mutually refuſed to aſk or perform any actions of friendſhip, or kindneſs! (Notes, &c. *Luke*, c. x. v. 30—37.) Theſe words ſeem to be the evangeliſt's obſervation, and not the reaſon aſſigned by the woman for her queſtion.

V. 10—15.] Our Lord did not immediately anſwer the woman's enquiry, nor proceed to expoſe her bigotry; but on the contrary he directed her attention to matters of greater importance. He told her, that though ſhe might be diſpoſed to refuſe him the ſmall favour, that he had aſked of her, becauſe he was a Jew; yet he was ready to confer far greater benefits on her, though ſhe

13 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, Whoſoever drinketh of this water ſhall thirſt again:

14 But whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him ſhall never thirſt; but the water that I ſhall give him ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life.

15 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirſt not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Go, call thy huſband, and come hither.

17 The woman anſwered and ſaid, I have no huſband. Jeſus ſaid unto her, Thou haſt well ſaid, I have no huſband:

18 For thou haſt had five huſbands; and he whom thou now haſt is not thy huſband: in that ſaidſt thou truly.

19 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain; and ye ſay, That in Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip.

21 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem, worſhip the Father.

22 Ye worſhip ye know not what: we know what we worſhip: for ſalvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.

24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip *him* in ſpirit and in truth.

25 The woman ſaith unto him, I know that Meſſias cometh, which is called Chriſt: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

was a Samaritan. Had ſhe known the value, and freeneſs of the gift of God, and her periſhing need of it; and had ſhe been apprized of his character, authority, and grace, ſhe would have made her requeſt to him, for "living water:" and if ſhe aſked him he would certainly beſtow it upon her. The gift of God may either mean in general, his free mercy and grace to ſinners; or the gift of his own Son to be their Saviour, that he might purchaſe for, and confer on them all ſpiritual bleſſings: but the living water ſeems eſpecially to mean the holy Spirit, in his ſanctifying and comforting influences, through which the purchaſed ſalvation is applied to the ſoul. His influences may be compared to water, becauſe of the inexhauſtible abundance, that is provided; becauſe of the gratuitous manner, in which they are communicated; and becauſe of their purifying, fertilizing, refreſhing efficacy; this is *living* water, as it confers, ſuſtains, and perfects ſpiritual life, and as it is continually flowing pure from the fountain of life, for our uſe, till we come to the enjoyment of eternal life. All that know the value of theſe bleſſings, and the power and grace of Chriſt, will aſk him for them, and all who aſk for them will obtain them. (c. vii. v. 37—39.) But the Samaritan woman was not then capable of diſcerning ſpiritual things; and ſhe ſeems to have ſuppoſed our Lord to mean *running* water, which is ſometimes called living water. She therefore enquired whence he was to obtain it? He could not get it out of that well, which was very deep, as he had nothing to draw with; and there was no other nigh at hand. Yet ſhe ſeems to have had ſome idea of His being an extraordinary perſon, and therefore ſhe addreſſed him with ſome degree of reſpect: but ſhe intimated, that if he ſpake of ſome water, that he could procure in a ſupernatural manner; ſhe would deſire to be informed, whether he were a more honourable perſon, than the patriarch Jacob, who uſed that well, and left it to his poſterity? The woman called Jacob the Father of the Samaritans; but they were generally of other extraction; (2 *Kings*, c. xvii,) however our Lord permitted that groundleſs claim to paſs unnoticed: and obſerved, that whoſoever drank of that water, "would "thirſt again:" he would ſoon be as thirſty as ever, and might at length die of thirſt, and would thirſt in vain after happineſs for ever, if he had no better water: but the nature of the water, which he ſpake of, was ſuch, that whoſoever drank of it, would "*thirſt no more for* "*ever*;" he might and would thirſt for more and more of it, but it would be ever at hand to ſatisfy that thirſt; it would cure him of his other vitiated deſires and inclinations, his thirſt for ſinful and worldly objects; and it would be within him, as a well, or fountain of water, ſpringing up in all holy affections, purpoſes, comforts, &c, till it iſſued in everlaſting life; in which it would be certainly completed, notwithſtanding all poſſible oppoſition from the world, the fleſh, and the devil. In heaven no thirſt will be experienced by redeemed ſouls; whilſt the wicked in hell will not obtain one drop of water to quench their burning tongues. This language the woman did not underſtand; and ſhe anſwered as one in amazement, or half-diſpoſed to ridicule what ſhe could not comprehend; deſiring Jeſus to give her ſome of this extraordinary water, that ſhe might no more feel the inconvenience of thirſt, nor have the trouble of fetching water from that well.

V. 16—26.] The woman could not underſtand our Lord's words, becauſe ſhe had no deep conviction of ſin, or abiding thirſt after ſpiritual bleſſings: yet they would afterwards be remembered by her with greater advantage. But to prepare her for receiving the truth, He was next pleaſed to put her in mind of her ſins; and with this in-

26 Jeſus ſaith unto her, I that ſpeak unto thee am *he*.

27 And upon this came his diſciples and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man ſaid, What ſeekeſt thou? or, Why talkeſt thou with her?

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tent he bade her "call her huſband, and come to him for further inſtruction." This referred to the ſins, in which ſhe lived; but ſhe, willing to conceal her ſhame, endeavoured to evade the ſubject, by declaring that ſhe had no huſband: and Jeſus allowed the truth of this, in a manner, which ſhewed that he was acquainted with all her paſt conduct. Whether all her five huſbands had died, or ſhe had been divorced from ſome of them, is not certain; but at that time ſhe cohabited with a man, who was not her huſband: either ſhe had left her huſband to live with him, or ſhe had never been married to him; ſo that ſhe was guilty either of habitual adultery, or fornication. This reference to her paſt hiſtory by an entire ſtranger, when perhaps many circumſtances of it were concealed from her neighbours, ſatisfied her that Jeſus was a Prophet, and ſhe frankly confeſſed her conviction: but to divert the converſation, ſhe begged of him to inform her, whether the Samaritans, or the Jews were right, in the grand ſubject of controverſy between them. Adhering to her groundleſs pretence, that the Samaritans were deſcended from the ſtock of Iſrael, ſhe obſerved that their fathers worſhipped on Mount Gerizzim, where *their* preſent temple ſtood; whereas the Jews contended that they ought to worſhip at Jeruſalem. Abraham, and Jacob erected altars at Shechem, (*Gen.* c. xii. v. 6, 7. c. xxxiii. v. 18—20;) which was very near to Mount Gerizzim. (*Judg.* c. ix. v. 6, 7:) and from that mountain God ordered the bleſſings to be pronounced, whilſt the curſes were ſpoken from Mount Ebal. (*Deut.* c. xxvii.) From theſe, and ſimilar premiſes, the Samaritans inferred, that Gerizzim was the place, where God's temple ought to have been builded, and his ſacrifices offered; and that the Jews were the Schiſmatics, and Sectarians: and they rejected the greateſt part of the Old Teſtament, perhaps becauſe it ſo expreſſly and continually declared, that Zion was the place, which God had choſen for his reſidence. Indeed there was no temple on Mount Gerizzim, till Sanballat built one there, after the days of Nehemiah. (Note, &c. *Neh.* c. xiii. v. 28.) However the Samaritans thought the example of the patriarchs much in their favour; and this woman, notwithſtanding her immorality, ſeems to have been very ſtrenuous in the controverſy. But our Lord aſſured her, (if ſhe would believe him, as a Prophet,) that the time was even then arrived, when all theſe diſputes would be ſuperſeded: for neither Mount Gerizzim nor Jeruſalem ſhould much longer be appropriated to the worſhip of God: yet it was proper ſhe ſhould be told, that the Samaritans "worſhipped they knew not what:" they knew not the character of God, their worſhip was not regulated by his commandments, their hope of acceptance was not grounded on his promiſe; their whole ſyſtem was a fabric of ſuperſtition, ignorance, or impoſture, a human device without any divine rule or warrant. On the other hand the religion of the Jews was from God: they had his oracles entire, a ſucceſſion of prophets had been ſent among them; they worſhipped the true God, as revealed by his word, in the ordinances that he had inſtituted, and with a ground of aſſurance that they ſhould be accepted; provided they were not hypocritical in their ſervices. Eſpecially the promiſed Saviour was to be raiſed up among the Jews: to him all their types referred, all the prophets bare witneſs, and all believers looked, and found ſalvation; and through Him all their ordinances became indeed means of grace to them. However the appointed period of that diſpenſation was come: and thenceforth the true worſhippers would not be reſtricted to any place, for their ſpiritual ſacrifices. God was about to be revealed as the Father of all believers in every nation; and he would ſeek out vaſt multitudes to worſhip him in ſpirit and truth. For as he is a Spirit, immaterial, holy, omnipotent, and intimately acquainted with the inmoſt ſoul of man: ſo they, who acceptably worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit, and truth. Splendid temples, coſtly veſtments, multiplied ſacrifices, and external ceremonies have nothing in them ſuited to his nature; and could only be appointed for a time to be ſhadows of good things to come: the ſpirit, or the ſoul of man as influenced by the Holy Spirit, muſt worſhip God, and have communion with him: knowledge of his perfections, reverential fear, humiliation before Him as creatures and ſinners, hope in his mercy and truth, regard to his word, love of his excellency, earneſt deſires after his favour and image, gratitude for his goodneſs, delight in his ſervice, zeal for his glory, ſubmiſſion to his will, and chearful dependance on his grace and providence: theſe ſpiritual affections, expreſſed in fervent prayers, ſupplications, praiſes and thankſgivings form that worſhip of an upright heart, in which God delights and is glorified. The redemption of Chriſt, the miniſtry of the word, and the work of the Holy Spirit concur in forming ſuch worſhippers, and rendering them accepted; and nothing can be pleaſing to God, which has not in it ſomething of this nature. The woman had nothing to object to this; yet ſhe ſeems not to have been fully ſatisfied; and therefore ſhe was diſpoſed to leave the matter undecided, till the advent of the Meſſiah, whom ſhe expected would come, and finally determine all thoſe controverſies, and give them more complete inſtructions. But our Lord, (not having the ſame reaſons for caution, as among the Jews, who were diſpoſed either to excite inſurrections, or to accuſe him to the Romans;) without any reſerve informed her, that He was indeed the Meſſiah: and doubtleſs a power accompanied his words, which enabled her to believe in him, and to underſtand ſomewhat of the nature of his ſalvation.

V. 27—30.] When the diſciples returned, and found their Lord converſing freely with a Samaritan woman, they were greatly ſurpriſed: but though his conduct in this particular was ſo contrary to their narrow prejudices; yet they had too high a veneration for him, to aſk him any queſtions concerning his motives, and meaning in it. In the mean time the woman, being greatly

28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and ſaith to the men,

29 Come, ſee a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 In the mean while his diſciples prayed him, ſaying, Maſter, eat.

32 But he ſaid unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore ſaid the diſciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

34 Jeſus ſaith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harveſt? behold, I ſay unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harveſt.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that ſaying true, One ſoweth, and another reapeth.

38 I ſent you to reap that whereon ye beſtowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the ſaying of the woman, which teſtified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they beſought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed becauſe of his own word;

42 And ſaid unto the woman, Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying: for we have heard *him* ourſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.

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affected with what ſhe had heard, and with the diſcovery of the promiſed Meſſiah, left her pail, (either through forgetfulneſs, or becauſe ſhe intended to come again to draw water;) and haſting to the city, ſhe excited the attention of her neighbours, by calling on them to go with her, and ſee a moſt extraordinary Perſon, who had told her the hiſtory of her whole paſt life! And was not this the Chriſt? For her part ſhe was aſſured that he was, and wiſhed them to go and judge for themſelves concerning him. Thus ſhe, who left the town an ignorant, bigotted, and licentious woman, by a miracle of grace returned thither, as it were, an evangeliſt, to preach Chriſt to her neighbours; who were ſo impreſſed by her words, and by the power which attended them, that they went forth in great numbers to meet Jeſus!

V. 31—38.] Whilſt the woman was thus employed, the diſciples were earneſt with Jeſus to partake of the proviſions, which they had brought; but he was ſo much engaged in the labour of love, that was before him, that he thought no more of his wearineſs, hunger or thirſt. He therefore told them, "that he had meat to eat that "they knew not of:" and when they did not underſtand his meaning; he added, that "his meat was to do the "will of him, that ſent him, &c." It was the Father's will, that he ſhould labour, preach, work miracles, fulfill all righteouſneſs, in the midſt of difficulties, and temptations, and at length finiſh his work on earth by his ſufferings on the croſs. This was his meat: He had an appetite and a reliſh for it, and found every part of it a delight and refreſhment to his ſoul, becauſe God was glorified, and men were benefitted by it. As therefore an opportunity was afforded him of being employed in his work, he intimated to the diſciples that he would poſtpone eating till afterwards. Indeed they knew that it was about four months to the time of the natural harveſt: yet if they looked up and obſerved the Samaritans coming to hear his doctrine, they would ſee that the fields were even then white unto a better harveſt, which he was about to reap, in conſequence of the ſeed that he had juſt ſown by ſpeaking to the Samaritan woman. They ought to conſider, that this kind of harveſt was far more important than any other: for not only would the laborious reaper be graciouſly rewarded with eternal life; but they who were converted by his labours would be as "fruit gathered" into the ſame bleſſedneſs: and whilſt many, in one way or other, contributed to the ſowing the ſeed, and gathering in the crop; they would all at laſt rejoice together in their ſucceſs. This was the good work, in which he meant to employ them, as well as to labour himſelf: and in their caſe the proverb would be happily verified, that "one ſoweth, and another reap- "eth." He was about to ſend them out to preach in his name: and the labours of the ancient prophets, and of John Baptiſt, and eſpecially his own miniſtry would render their work comparatively eaſy, and they would be abundantly ſucceſsful; thus they would enter into, and reap the harveſt of other's labours. This was accompliſhed after Chriſt's aſcenſion, in the converſion of vaſt multitudes both of Jews and Samaritans by their miniſtry.

V. 39—42.] Many of the Samaritans were convinced that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, by what the woman had told them concerning Him: and when they were come to him, and had heard his word; notwithſtanding their rooted prejudices, they invited him to ſtay for a time among them, for their further inſtruction. Accordingly he abode two whole days with them, and doubtleſs ſhew-

43 Now after two days, he departed thence, and went into Galilee:

44 For Jeſus himſelf teſtified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having ſeen all the things that he did at Jeruſalem at the feaſt: for they alſo went unto the feaſt.

46 So Jeſus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whoſe ſon was ſick at Capernaum,

47 When he heard that Jeſus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and beſought him that he would come down and heal his ſon: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Except ye ſee ſigns and wonders ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman ſaith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Go thy way; thy ſon liveth. And the man believed the word that Jeſus had ſpoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his ſervants met him, and told *him*, ſaying, Thy ſon liveth.

52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they ſaid unto him, Yeſterday at the ſeventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the ſame hour in the which Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thy ſon liveth: and himſelf believed, and his whole houſe.

54 This *is* again the ſecond miracle *that* Jeſus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

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ed them the evidences of his being the Meſſiah, and the nature of his kingdom; by means of which many more of them believed, and were fully aſſured that he was the Saviour of the world, that is of all ſinners, Jews, Gentiles, or Samaritans, who truſt in and obey him. This was the more wonderful, as the vicinity of the temple on Mount Gerizzim might be ſuppoſed to have engaged them in intereſt and reputation to adhere to the worſhip there performed; and we do not find that Jeſus wrought any miracle among them.

V. 43—45.] (Note, &c. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 53—58.) The proverb referred to was a general truth; yet the miracles, that Jeſus had wrought, and the reputation he had acquired at Jeruſalem, had procured him ſome influence amongſt many of the Galileans, who had been at the feaſt: He was therefore welcomed by, and continued with them; but he did not go to Nazareth, where their prejudices againſt him were unabated.

V. 46—54.] When our Lord was come again to Cana, the ſon of a certain nobleman, or courtier, (probably belonging to Herod's retinue,) lay dangerouſly ill at Capernaum, which was ſeveral miles diſtant. This perſon, hearing of Chriſt's return, came in perſon to Cana, and moſt reſpectfully intreated Him, to go with him and heal his ſon, who lay at the point of death. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 5—13. *Luke*, c. vii. v. 1—10.) Upon this Jeſus rebuked the unteachableneſs of his countrymen, and their neglect of ſpiritual bleſſings, by obſerving that they would not believe in him, except they continually witneſſed his power in working miracles, and received the temporal benefit of them: whereas the Samaritans had believed his word, without any miraculous confirmation of it. This reproof, of the truth and juſtice of which the courtier was probably convinced, only influenced him, to renew his applications to Jeſus to go with him, ere his ſon died; for he believed he could recover him, if upon the ſpot, though he does not then ſeem to have believed, that he could raiſe him from the dead, or heal him at a diſtance. But our Lord, in order to prove and increaſe his faith, ordered him to return home, as "his ſon lived," or was recovered and out of danger: and though the man had no proof of this, but Chriſt's word, yet he found himſelf enabled to believe it; and therefore he ſet off home without heſitation: and being met by his ſervants, he found from them, that his ſon was inſtantaneouſly relieved from his fever exactly at the time, when Jeſus had ſpoken the word: in conſequence of this both the courtier and his family became the avowed diſciples of Chriſt. Some think that this was Chuza Herod's ſteward. (*Luke*, c. viii. v. 3.) This was the ſecond miracle Chriſt openly wrought in Galilee; his turning of water into wine at the ſame place, being the firſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſucceſs of the goſpel always exaſperates proud unbelievers, however prudently it be conducted: but it is beſt in general, not to out-brave, but to elude the fury of perſecutors, as far as it conſiſts with faithfulneſs and uſefulneſs. In all our journeys we ſhould copy our Lord's example: and into whatever place we muſt needs come, we ſhould endeavour to render our preſence uſeful to others; and to ſubordinate our perſonal accommodations to that ſuperior object. In order thereto we ſhould frequenty meditate on his wearineſs, and his painful, expoſed, and inconvenient ſituation, when he ſat *thus* at the well: few of us ſhould be chearfully ſatisfied to journey, to reſt, and to diet as he did; yet ſurely we ought readily, if called to it, ſubmit to be made like to the Son of God, in ſuch things as theſe. This conſideration may teach the poor, patience, and contentment; and the

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Contains 1*ſt. Jeſus going to Jeruſalem, and, at the pool of Betheſda, healing a man, who had been diſeaſed* 38 *years; and ordering him to carry his bed,* 1---9. 2*d. The Jews blaming the man for doing this on the ſabbath, and enquiring who bade him do it: Jeſus finding the man at the temple, and warning him to ſin no more; and the man informing the Jews, that Jeſus had healed him,* 10--15. 3*d. The Jews perſecuting Jeſus; and his defence before them, in which he aſſerted his perſonal and mediatorial dignity and authority; appealed to the teſtimony of John, to that of God by his miracles, and a voice from heaven, and to that of the ſcriptures concerning him; and upbraided them with their unbelief, ambition, and hypocriſy, &c.* 16--47.

rich, ſelf-denial, ſimplicity, gratitude, and liberality. But let us obſerve where and what the loſt ſheep of Chriſt are, when he comes to ſeek and ſave them; and how he meets with them, when they are not at all thinking of him. If we now indeed believe in his name: after a careful review of our ſtate, character, thoughts and projects, when He firſt began to make himſelf known to us; we ſhall many of us be conſtrained to confeſs, that we were as unworthy, and unlikely, as much prejudiced againſt him, and apparently as far out of his way, as this poor Samaritan woman. This may ſerve to illuſtrate the riches of his grace, and to ſhew, that indeed he hath done ſomething for us. We may alſo remark that bigotry and angry controverſy are extremely inimical to piety, and charity: they indiſpoſe men to communicate good to, or to receive it from others; and thus when they ſhould be praying together, or for others, or edifying one another, they are ſeparated by the moſt virulent antipathies! and *they* are often moſt vehement in their animoſities, who are agreed in the moſt important matters, and only differ about a few ſubordinate points! But if we know the gift of God, and the excellency of Chriſt, we ſhall aſk of him, and He will give us the bleſſings of his ſalvation: and if we are made wiſe in the things of God, we ſhall gladly take a hint from a ſtranger, or one of another ſect or ſentiment: and they, who are like Jeſus, will readily counſel or help the meaneſt, the vileſt, or the moſt prejudiced of mankind. Bleſſed be God for the wells of ſalvation, and the waters of life; (*Iſaiah*, c. xii. v. 3 *Rev.* c. xxi. v. 6. c. xxii. v. 1. 17;) and that we are aſſured that God will give his holy Spirit to all, who aſk him in the Saviour's name. Indeed carnal men will not value theſe bleſſings: they only thirſt for ſenſual pleaſures, worldly honours, or wealth, and what wealth can purchaſe; and how largely ſoever they drink of theſe waſting and polluted ſtreams, they will thirſt again, and thirſt for ever, and be tormented with their unſatisfied deſires; unleſs they now thirſt for, and drink of the waters of life. But happy are they, who are athirſt for the living God, and for his image and favour: the toys of this world will no more quiet them, than play-things will content an hungry child; they will be importunate in prayer for the bleſſings, which Jeſus is exalted to beſtow; and the more they are convinced that "the well is deep," and that they cannot draw of themſelves, the greater earneſtneſs will they uſe in beſeeching the Lord to give them theſe waters of life, by the ſupply of his renewing, comforting Spirit. When this is really done, their thirſt after ſinful pleaſures is abated, the world appears worthleſs, an abiding change is manifeſted in the ſoul; he, who begun the good work, maintains it and carries it on; holy deſires, purpoſes, and affections ſpring up in the heart, and theſe are the earneſt of, and will ſurely iſſue in everlaſting life.

But in vain do we enlarge upon the comforts, privileges and ſecurity of the new covenant; in vain do we repreſent the preciouſneſs and love of Chriſt to the unhumbled ſinner. He can ſee no beauty in *him*, no deſireableneſs in his ſalvation: He cannot apply for the healing of his ſoul before he feels his ſickneſs, nor for the binding up of his heart, till it be broken by a ſenſe of his guilt and danger. We ſhould therefore lay open the law, as the miniſtration of condemnation, and endeavour to put men in remembrance of their crimes, that their mouths may be ſtopped, and their thoughts turned inward. When the word of God is faithfully opened, and ſkilfully divided, it often reaches the caſe, as it were, at one ſtroke; and thus it produces both a conviction of ſin in the outward conduct, and a diſcovery of the evil, that lay concealed in the heart. Indeed the ſinner, when thus attacked, will uſe every imaginable means to ſhift off the conviction: and even religious diſputes are often had recourſe to for a plauſible evaſion. When thoſe ſubjects are ſtarted, which tend immediately to detect men's vanity, ſenſuality, luxury, avarice, or ambition; they will, as it were, ſay, "Come let us talk of ſomething elſe;" "What think you of this or the other doctrine? Of this ſect, this book, this ſermon, or this preacher?" They appear to be wonderfully religious: but it is all in order plauſibly to eſcape conviction; and in fact they ſay, "any ſubject but Herodias," or any thing even about Herodias, except, "that it is not lawful for thee to have her." But the wiſdom of the miniſter conſiſts in purſuing the flying game through all their windings; and if they eſcape one net, to lay another for them. When ſinners ſhrink from the touch, we may be ſure there is a wound, and we ſhould take courage to puſh vigorouſly our advantages againſt them. Indeed it is curious, though lamentable, to obſerve how the moſt abandoned perſons will diſpute about forms, and notions: but, though there be an eſſential difference between God's ordinances, and the moſt ſpecious human inventions; and many called chriſtians know not what they worſhip, nor where ſalvation is to be found: yet we muſt not over-value any external diſtinctions; as no worſhippers can be accepted of God, who do not worſhip him in Spirit and truth; nor indeed could any other be capable of enjoying felicity in him. As the Father ſeeketh ſuch worſhippers; let us beſeech him to make us ſuch, that we may offer ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to him through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:

CHAP. V.

AFter this there was a feaſt of the Jews; and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem.

2 Now there is at Jeruſalem by the ſheep-*market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Betheſda, having five porches.

3 In theſe lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain ſeaſon into the pool, and troubled the water:

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and if we are thus diſtinguiſhed, let us rejoice in and thank our God; for in praiſing and adoring him we ſhall find happineſs to all eternity.

Even good men are incompetent judges of what it becomes the Lord to do: but reverence will impoſe ſilence on them, and they will abhor ſuch blaſphemous objections, as unbelievers often utter concerning things, which they underſtand not. When the heart is much engaged in purſuit of the pearl of great price, outward concerns will ſometimes be neglected: and when our affections are greatly excited, we ſhall naturally be led to call on others to ſeek thoſe bleſſings, which we ſee to be valuable beyond all compariſon. Thus the greateſt ſinners become witneſſes for Chriſt; and from their own experience, they declare his love and truth to all around them. But awakened tranſgreſſors cannot be more earneſt to hear the words of life, than ſome zealous miniſters are to preach them. When we conſider the Lord Jeſus deeming his rugged path, his hardſhips, his labours, and his whole work on earth, as more pleaſant to him than his neceſſary food; and when we remember that his love and zeal are ſtill unabated, whilſt the exerciſe of them is attended with no ſuffering or fatigue: we may confidently apply to him, for all the bleſſings, which he came on earth to purchaſe, and is exalted in heaven to beſtow, on every ſinner that comes to him: but we ſhould alſo conſider him as our example; and in our leſſer ſervices and lighter trials, it ſhould be our meat alſo to do the will of God, and to finiſh his work. This mind of Chriſt ſhould be, and in ſome meaſure is, found in all his diſciples: but his miniſters eſpecially ſhould prefer their work, when a favourable ſeaſon is afforded them, even to their moſt needful reſt or refreſhment. When the harveſt is ripe, the huſbandmen endure hardſhip, heat, thirſt, and fatigue, to ſeize the opportunity of reaping it. And when ſinners are diſpoſed to hear the goſpel, we ſhould deem the fields already white for harveſt, and ſhould diſregard perſonal inconveniences, and ſelf-denial, to improve the precious occaſion. On the other hand, the huſbandman, having ſown his ſeed, waits patiently till the appointed weeks of harveſt: and ſo ſhould we, when we have ſown the good ſeed of the word, though we do not preſently ſee the fruit of our labours. Indeed ſmall ſucceſs is enough to render this the moſt gainful employment in the world. Every ſoul converted will be the miniſter's everlaſting crown of rejoicing, and be for ever happy with Him. Let us then patiently endure the heat and burden of the day: for as prophets, apoſtles and martyrs have laboured and ſuffered, in ſowing that ſeed, of which we now reap the bleſſed harveſt, without ſuch toil, and tribulation: ſo others may reap the crop with joy of what we now ſow in tears, becauſe it ſeems all to be thrown away. Faithful miniſters often labour long, and apparently with little ſucceſs: but the ſeed is not loſt; for others enter into their labours, and gather many ſouls unto Chriſt in conſequence of them: and in that world, where ſelfiſhneſs will be no more, they will all unite in rejoicing over that ſucceſs, to which they have all been inſtrumental. In the mean time then let us labour, (whether ſowing or reaping,) in faith, hope, love, and patience. The chief uſefulneſs of miniſters is frequently found amongſt thoſe, who previouſly bare the worſt characters, and were deemed the moſt hopeleſs perſons. Such are often the means of exciting each other, by carrying a report of what they have heard and experienced; and the effects of the quick and powerful word of Chriſt, in detecting the thoughts and intentions of their hearts, and bringing to remembrance the ſins of their paſt lives, are the general means by which men are brought to believe. However all, who hear, and receive the word of God, ſhall have the witneſs in themſelves, and ſhall know and be aſſured that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Saviour of the world: and all, who are willing to entertain him, ſhall have that privilege, how vile ſoever they have been.

But pride, prejudice, and worldly proſperity concur in keeping men from the Saviour: and thoſe are happy afflictions, perſonal or domeſtic, which induce them to enquire after him. Indeed the rich and honourable of the world ſeldom come to him, till ſome grievous trial ſhews them the vanity of their diſtinctions, and that they need other help, than man can give or wealth can buy. This conviction, and a heart, broken for ſin, will prepare the mind to ſee ſuch ſuitableneſs in Chriſt, that ſigns and wonders will no longer be needful, in order to a man's believing in, and humbly applying to him. But we muſt ſubmit to His rebukes, and renew our applications; we muſt ſimply credit his words, and follow his directions, if we would have the bleſſing from him. Thus experience will confirm and ſtrengthen our faith: and we ſhall find that every event exactly accords with his declarations, and that all things obey him. In this way, the knowledge of Chriſt ſpreads through families, and men find health, and ſalvation to their ſouls. Theſe miracles never ceaſe: may we, and our's apply to Jeſus, and experience them for our good!

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *After*, &c.] This is generally ſuppoſed to have been the feaſt of paſſover, which immediately followed the events of the preceding chapter: but perhaps none of the evangeliſts mention all the paſſovers, which occurred during our Lord's public miniſtry.

V. 2—4.] As the evangeliſt ſpeaks of this pool being at Jeruſalem, at the time when he wrote, it hath been conjectured, that he penned his goſpel, before the ſubverſion of that city: but this is not deciſive on the point. Many things are recorded, or reported concerning this pool; but they do not appear deſerving of implicit credit. It was ſituated near the ſheep-market, or the ſheep gate; by which great numbers of theſe animals were driven whoſoever then firſt, after the troubling of the water, ſtepped in, was made whole of whatſoever diſeaſe he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jeſus ſaw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that caſe*, he ſaith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man anſwered him, Sir I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming another ſteppeth down before me.

8 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Riſe, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the ſame day was the ſabbath.

10 The Jews therefore ſaid unto him that was cured, It is the ſabbath-day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

11 He anſwered them, He that made me whole, the ſame ſaid unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then aſked they him, What man is that which ſaid unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wiſt not who it was: for Jeſus had conveyed himſelf away, a multitude being in *that* place.

14 Afterward Jeſus findeth him in the temple, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews

into the city, to be ſold for ſacrifices, or for conſumption. The name *Betheſda* ſignifies "an houſe of mercy;" and it ſeems to have been given it, on account of the miracles there wrought, from time to time. The five porches, or porticos, were probably built on the ſeveral ſides of the pool, for the accommodation of thoſe, who walked there to recreate themſelves, or converſe with their friends; but they became at length in great meaſure appropriated to the uſe of thoſe diſeaſed perſons, who came thither to be cured. Of theſe a great multitude were collected together: ſome of them being afflicted, or diſabled in one way, and ſome in another; and probably moſt of them deemed incurable by ordinary methods; and therefore they were brought thither to wait and hope for a miraculous recovery. For it pleaſed God, (in order to ſhew that he had not forſaken his people, but that he was about to viſit them again in mercy,) to ſend an angel, from time to time, to excite a viſible and extraordinary commotion in the pool: and whenever this took place, it was found by experience, that the perſon, who firſt bathed in the pool, after the troubling of the water, was perfectly cured, whatever diſorder he had been afflicted with; but that others, who bathed afterwards obtained no relief. It is not probable, that there were ſtated ſeaſons known before-hand, when this miracle would be wrought: for had this been the caſe the diſeaſed perſons would have had no occaſion previouſly to wait by the pool; but it would have ſufficed for them to come at the appointed time. This miraculous effect ſeems to have been an emblem of the healing of men's ſouls by the goſpel, and by waſhing in the fountain opened for ſin, and uncleanneſs: and compared with the multiplied and continual miracles wrought by our Lord, it might alſo denote the efficacy of divine grace under the ordinances of the old diſpenſation, as diſtinguiſhed from its more extenſive effects, under the ordinances of the New Teſtament diſpenſation.

V. 5—9.] Among the numerous pitiable objects preſented to the ſight, in this place; our Lord was pleaſed to notice one eſpecially, who had been diſabled, perhaps by the palſy, for 38 years. Many perſons ſpeak of this man as if he had lain by the pool all that time; but that is without foundation, and utterly improbable. However when all other means failed him, he had been brought thither, in hopes of a miraculous cure; and he perſevered in waiting, notwithſtanding many tedious delays, and bitter diſappointments. This man our Lord ſelected from the reſt, as the object of his miraculous power, probably becauſe his caſe was more deſperate and lamentable, than that of any other even in this receſs of miſery; for he well knew how long he had been thus afflicted. In order to excite his attention, and expectation, He aſked him, whether he was really deſirous of being made whole? A queſtion which in his caſe, might appear unneceſſary; but which aptly repreſented the propoſal of the goſpel to thoſe, whoſe ſouls have long been diſeaſed, and diſabled by ſin. The man replied, that he had neither friend nor ſervant to aſſiſt him, when the water was troubled; and being very helpleſs, he had hitherto been always precluded from a cure, by another ſtepping in before him. But Jeſus at once bade him "take up his bed, and walk;" and though his diſorder had been ſo long continued, yet it was inſtantaneouſly removed, and he was enabled to carry his bed, as a man in perfect health, and vigour. This would be noticed by the more perſons, as it occurred on the ſabbath-day, when burdens were not allowed to be carried: by which means the power of Jeſus would be the more known, and attended to.

V. 10—16.] The Jews here mentioned ſeem to have been the Phariſees, Scribes, or Rulers: they found fault with the man for violating the ſabbath reſt, by carrying his bed; though it was evidently done in honour of God, and to evince his miraculous cure. The man therefore replied, that the very Perſon, who had made him whole, *even He* had ordered him to take up his bed, &c; and he could not think, that he would command him to do that which was ſinful. But they, not at all noticing that it was Jeſus which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to ſlay him, becauſe he had done theſe things on the ſabbath-day.

17 But Jeſus anſwered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews ſought the more to kill him, becauſe he not only had broken the ſabbath, but ſaid alſo that God was his Father, making himſelf equal with God.

19 Then anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, The Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do: for what things ſoever he doeth, theſe alſo doeth the Son likewiſe.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doeth: and he will ſhew him greater works than theſe, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all *men* ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him.

the miracle of his cure, only enquired who it was, that bade him carry his bed? Probably they ſuſpected who it was, and were inſtigated by envy in the whole affair. However Jeſus had ſo ſpeedily, and ſilently, withdrawn from the multitude, which were aſſembled where the miracle was wrought; that the man was not able to inform them who his Benefactor was. But ſoon after, probably on the ſame day, Jeſus met with the man at the temple, whither he had repaired, to render thanks for his unexpected cure, and perhaps to offer a ſacrifice of praiſe: and He called his attention to the greatneſs of the unmerited benefit, which he had received, and warned him "to ſin no more, leſt a ſtill worſe evil ſhould "befal him." This was an intimation that his diſorder had originated from ſome youthful irregularities; and implied that repentance, and its genuine fruits would be the beſt evidence of the ſincerity of his gratitude. As the man had been ſo grievouſly afflicted for 38 years; we cannot eaſily conceive of a worſe temporal evil, that could afterwards befal him: but doubtleſs Chriſt ſpake of the wrath to come, which is infinitely worſe; and yet cannot be avoided, if men continue in ſin, or return to it after they have for a time refrained. When the man had thus diſcovered to whom he owed his cure; he went and told the Jews; (ſaying nothing of his having ordered him to carry his bed;) and probably he expected, that they would honour his Benefactor: but on the contrary they proſecuted him as a ſabbath-breaker; and it is likely that he was brought before the Sanhedrim, and ſpake what follows before that aſſembly: this view of the ſubject makes the diſcourſe peculiarly intereſting, and there is a dignity in it, that indeed is inexpreſſible.

V. 17, 18.] In anſwer to the accuſation brought againſt Him, our Lord briefly obſerved that "His Fa-"ther worked hitherto, and He worked." Thus he called God his Father in a peculiar ſenſe, and claimed the prerogative of acting as He did, without being reſtricted by rules laid down for his creatures, and ſubjects. God finiſhed the work of creation in ſix days, and reſted on the ſeventh: but he inceſſantly worketh in upholding the univerſe, and in continuing the courſe of nature by his providential ſuperintendency. In this work the Son concurs by an union of will, and operation, upholding all things by the word of his power: his work alſo as Mediator was to be conducted by the ſame unremitted, and uninterrupted action, as that of ſuſtaining the univerſe: this miracle was a part of it well ſuited to the ſabbath-day, and he claimed the prerogative of working his holy work, on that day as well as on others, even as the Father carried on his providential operations on every day alike. Unleſs we ſuppoſe this to have been our Lord's meaning, there could be no argument in this plea: for the example of the Creator in "working hither-"to," can be no reaſon why a creature, a ſervant, a mere man ſhould do as he pleaſed on the ſabbath-day. The divine power of the miracle proved Jeſus to be the Son of God; and he inſiſted on the prerogative of working with, and like unto his Father, as he ſaw good, without giving them any account of his conduct. And theſe ancient enemies of Chriſt plainly underſtood him, (though modern oppoſers cannot;) and were thereby rendered more violent in their proſecution; not only charging him with ſabbath-breaking, but with blaſphemy, in calling God his *own* Father, (ἴδιον;) and making himſelf equal with God, in perfection and operation.

V. 19—23.] In anſwer to this further charge, Jeſus ſolemnly aſſured them, that "the Son could do nothing "of himſelf:" as the Father and the Son are one in nature and perfection; ſo they are one in will, counſel and operation, and it is impoſſible that the Son can do any thing of himſelf, apart from what the Father doeth. But being intimately acquainted with every thing that the Father doeth, he co-operates with him in all his works of creation, and providence; ſo that it is equally proper to aſcribe them to the Son, as to the Father, ſeeing they are one in nature, purpoſe and operation. For the Father moſt perfectly loveth the Son, and communicates all his counſels with Him: ſo that the Son perceives and fully comprehends all that the Father doeth, and co-operates therein: of this they had ſeen ſome inſtances, eſpecially in the exerciſe of divine power and goodneſs, by which the impotent perſon had been healed: but the Father would ſhew his beloved Son greater works than theſe; that by the diſplays of his divine glory, in the miracles wrought by Him, they might be aſtoniſhed, even if they were not induced to believe in him. For as God

24 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation; but is paſſed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo, becauſe he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice.

29 And ſhall come forth: they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.

30 I can of mine own ſelf do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is juſt;

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is able to reſtore the dead to life, of which ſome examples were recorded in their ſcriptures; ſo they ſhould ſee the Son alſo by his divine power raiſing the dead, as an emblem of his reſtoring to ſpiritual life whom he pleaſes of thoſe, who were dead in ſin. Indeed all things relative to the government of the church, and of the world, and to the final judgment and the eternal ſtates of men, were committed to the Son, as the divine Mediator: inſomuch that the Father in perſon judgeth no man, nor can any appeal be made to Him from the award of the Son: and this was purpoſely ſo conſtituted “that all men “might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;” ſubmitting unreſervedly to him, relying entirely on him, and rendering him all worſhip, love, reverence, gratitude and obedience: which are his due as God; and which he hath no leſs claim to, on account of his being manifeſt in the fleſh. It is the duty of all men thus to honour the Son; and men of all nations, who really underſtand and obey the goſpel, will thus honour him, as co-equal with the Father: and every one, who doth not *thus* honour the Son, whatever he may think or pretend, doth not honour the Father that ſent him; for he miſtakes his character, rejects the revelation that he had made of himſelf, rebels againſt his authority, deſpiſes his goſpel, and ſets up an idol in his place, the creature of his own imagination, or proud reaſonings. Surely Jeſus would never have inſiſted upon all men honouring him, as they honour the Father; if he had not been conſcious, that he was One with the Father in glory, and majeſty; though he was pleaſed to veil his glory, and to aſſume the form of a ſervant, that he might become the Saviour of rebellious men! And to refuſe Him divine honour, and worſhip, becauſe of his infinite grace, and condeſcenſion, is the height of perverſe ingratitude!

V. 24—29.] Our Lord here proceeded to declare more explicitly his mediatorial authority, and character, as the Meſſiah: but he carefully avoided every expreſſion which the Jews could uſe as an accuſation of him to the Roman governor; though they would readily perceive his meaning. He aſſured them, with the moſt ſolemn aſſeveration, that everlaſting life was entirely at his diſpoſal; inſomuch that every one, who heard, and duly attended to his inſtructions, and thus believed in the Father as revealed by him, had actually the title to, and beginning of eternal life: ſuch a believer would never fall under condemnation; for having paſſed from a ſtate of ſpiritual death, and expoſedneſs to eternal miſery, into a ſtate of acceptance and peace with God, and the life of faith and grace, he would be preſerved from falling into, and continuing in ſin, and dying without repentance and forgiveneſs. He further aſſured them that the hour was even then come, “when the dead ſhould hear “his voice, (as the Son of God,) and live:” this may refer to his raiſing the dead, in ſeveral inſtances, by his omnipotent word; but it ſeems rather to ſignify his raiſing thoſe, who were dead in ſin, to newneſs of life, by his doctrine attended by the power of his Spirit. For as the Father was the ſelf-exiſtent ſource of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal, to all creatures: ſo had “he “given to the Son to have life in himſelf.” It is not conceiveable that a mere creature “can have life in “himſelf,” in the ſame ſenſe, as the eternal, ſelf-exiſtent Father hath, and for the purpoſe of communicating it to others, as is here evidently meant: but that the Son of God, (being according to his divine nature ſelf-exiſtent, and eternal, and one with the Father,) ſhould as Mediator have it given to Him by covenant, on the condition of his humiliation and expiatory ſufferings, “to have life in himſelf,” for the benefit of thoſe, who had forfeited life, who were dead in ſin and law, and whoſe Surety he was become, that they might be quickened, pardoned, and ſaved, conſiſtent with the honour of divine juſtice and holineſs; this, I ſay, is very intelligible: for this was to “have life in himſelf,” for other purpoſes and in another manner, than he had as “God over all, bleſſed for evermore.” In reſpect of the ſame undertaking, the Father had alſo given him authority to execute judgment, for the puniſhment of all his enemies, and the ſalvation of his people; becauſe He, (the Son of God,) was alſo become the Son of Man. It is evident that the office of “Judge of all “men,” muſt require omniſcience, omnipotence, infinite juſtice, truth, and perfection; theſe are abſolutely incommunicable to any mere creature: and the Son of Man cannot be conceived capable of having this work *abſolutely* committed to Him, and of properly executing it; but upon the ſuppoſition that he is alſo the Son of God, and equal with the Father. In confirmation of this He added, that they need not ſhew ſuch aſtoniſh-becauſe I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath ſent me.

31 If I bear witneſs of myſelf, my witneſs is not true.

32 There is another that beareth witneſs of me; and I know that the witneſs which he witneſſeth of me is true.

33 Ye ſent unto John and he bare witneſs unto the truth.

34 But I receive not teſtimony from man: but theſe things I ſay, that ye might be ſaved.

35 He was a burning and a ſhining light: and ye were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have greater witneſs than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.

37 And the Father himſelf which hath ſent me hath borne witneſs of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape;

38 And ye have not his word abiding in

ment at what they had heard, as was viſible in their looks: for the time was approaching, when all the innumerable multitude of the dead would hear his voice, calling them to ariſe and come to judgment; and whereſoever their bodies were diſperſed, and turned to duſt, they would immediately be raiſed up, and come forth, either to life, or damnation, according as their works had been. They, who have repented, believed in Chriſt, and by his grace have learned to love, and obey him, during the remainder of their days, are the perſons "who "have done good." Their good is indeed ſcanty, defective and defiled; but they are intereſted in the covenant of grace, and are acknowledged the heirs of everlaſting life: but the impenitent, the unregenerate, and unbelieving, who go on to the end doing evil, will ariſe to condemnation, and everlaſting puniſhment. (*Matt.* c. xxv. v. 31—46.) Is it poſſible to conceive, that Jeſus would have uſed ſuch language as this, had he not intended his diſciples to conceive of him as of the Almighty God, dwelling in our nature, and manifeſt in the fleſh? (c. xi. v. 25, 26.)

V. 30—38.] (v. 19.) Our Lord here returns to his declaration of the entire coincidence of deſign and operation, between the Father, and the Son; and by uſing the firſt inſtead of the third perſon, as before, he declared himſelf to be the Son of God. It was impoſſible, that he ſhould do any thing in his work, as Mediator, from any motive, to any end, or by any power, diverſe from thoſe of the Father. In executing his judicial authority, he acted, and ever ſhould act, according to the inſtructions, which he had received, with which his own will and wiſdom perfectly harmonized; and in none of his actions did he ſeek his own will, as man, but that of the Father who had ſent him, whom he came to glorify, and who was glorified in his glory. If indeed he claimed ſuch honours and authority, and pretended to perform ſuch works, without any proof, except his own teſtimony to himſelf; it muſt be allowed, that there would be no reaſon to receive that teſtimony: but there was another, who bare witneſs to him, whoſe witneſs he ſuppoſed they muſt allow to be true, as he aſſuredly knew it to be. Some refer this to John's teſtimony: but it ſeems rather to mean that of the Father by John, and in various other ways. They had indeed ſent unto John, (c. i. v. 19—28;) and he had teſtified to him, that he was "the Son of God;" yet he ſtood not in need of man's teſtimony, though he mentioned it as well worthy of their ſerious attention; for whilſt they ſought his life, he would uſe every means to bring them to accept of his ſalvation, and would make thoſe means effectual to ſome of them; (probably Nicodemus and Joſeph of Arimathea were preſent at the time.) John indeed had been "a burning, and a ſhining light;" by his holy life, his flaming zeal, his clear inſtructions, and his patient labours, he both burned and ſhined, to warm as well as illuminate them: (Notes, &c. c. i. v. 6—9:) and for a ſeaſon, they had attended to him, and ſeemed glad to have ſo eminent a man of God raiſed up among them; but they only amuſed themſelves for a time with his inſtructions, without reducing them to practice; and at laſt they rejected his teſtimony concerning Jeſus, and forſook his miniſtry. But indeed He had a far ſuperior teſtimony to him, as the Son of God, than that of John, (who wrought no miracle:) for the works, which the Father had entruſted to him to perform, which he had already begun in the miracles, that he had wrought, and which he ſhould remain on earth to finiſh, notwithſtanding their purpoſe of killing him: theſe powerful, holy, and beneficent works ſufficiently atteſted, that the Father had ſent him, and authorized all that he had ſpoken of his perſonal, and mediatorial dignity, and authority. Nay the Father himſelf had borne witneſs to him by a voice from heaven, at his baptiſm, declaring him to be "his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed." This was ſuch a witneſs to him, and attended with ſuch a viſible diſplay of the divine preſence and glory, as neither they, nor any of their nation had ever heard, or ſeen, reſpecting any of their prophets: and indeed the higheſt that could be imagined; for none could poſſibly *ſee the form*, and *hear the voice* of the Father as a witneſs, in any other, or more evident, manner. This ſeems to be an intimation to them, that all the appearances of Jehovah to their anceſtors, and his ſpeaking to them, were to be underſtood of Him, the Son of God; for none of them had heard the voice, and ſeen the form of the Father at any time. (c. i. v. 18.) He had indeed ſpoken to them in his word, but that had no abiding place in their hearts; which was evident, in that they refuſed to believe in him, whom the Father had ſent to them, according to his ancient promiſes.

you; for whom he hath ſent, him ye believe not.

39 Search the ſcriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which teſtify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuſe you to the Father: there is *one* that accuſeth you, *even* Moſes, in whom ye truſt.

46 For had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how ſhall ye believe my words?

V. 39—44.] The Jews ſuppoſed, that eternal life was revealed to them in their ſcriptures; nay they fancied they had it, as it were, in poſſeſſion, becauſe they had the word of God in their hands. But Jeſus exhorted them to ſearch thoſe ſcriptures, with more exact diligence, and attention; as all the types, and prophecies were fulfilling in his character, doctrine and miracles; as they every where teſtified to him, and fully warranted all he had ſpoken of himſelf, by what they contained reſpecting the divine dignity, and authority of the promiſed Meſſiah. Or it may be rendered, "ye do ſearch "the ſcriptures," they beſtowed ſome pains in examining the ſcriptures, eſpecially with reference to the kingdom of the Meſſiah: yet they were ſo blinded by their prejudices, that they could not ſee that they teſtified of him; and therefore, whilſt they expected eternal life, they would not come to Him for it, who alone could beſtow it upon them. He ſpake not this, as if he wanted their ſanction, or could receive honour from their approbation: He wanted not human applauſe, or external grandeur; nor could he be rendered more honourable by having prieſts, ſcribes, or rulers for his diſciples: but he ſpake ſo plainly to them, becauſe he ſaw through all their pretenſions, and certainly knew that they had no love to God, though they profeſſed to be his zealous worſhippers; and this was the real ground of their rejecting and oppoſing him. He was come among them in his Father's name, acting by his authority, bearing his Image, fulfilling his word, and ſeeking his glory; and his miſſion was abundantly atteſted; yet they would not receive him: but when others ſhould come, aſſuming the character of the Meſſiah, without any ſuch atteſtations, but acting of their own mind, and for their own glory, they would readily receive and follow them: for ſuch impoſtors would pay court to them, and accommodate their conduct and pretenſions to their prejudices, and ambition. Indeed how was it poſſible that they could cordially receive his humbling, ſpiritual doctrine, or believe in him as the Meſſiah; whilſt their hearts were ſo full of pride and vain-glory? They were uſed to flatter, and compliment each other, and thus to foſter each other's ſelf-admiration, and ſelf-importance, and to give reciprocal encouragement to one another's ambition of ſecular honour, authority, and pre-eminence; whilſt they had no real deſire of that honour, which God alone confers on the humble, and lowly in heart. How then could they welcome a Meſſiah, who had no worldly preferments to beſtow on them; whoſe appearance was as mean as his doctrine was humiliating; and whoſe ſharp rebukes muſt needs exaſperate their haughty, and envious minds?

V. 45—47.] Our Lord further obſerved that there was no occaſion for Him to become the accuſer of the unbelieving Jews to his Father; nor was this the end of his coming amongſt them, though he ſo ſharply reproved them to their faces: for they had another accuſer, even Moſes, in whoſe law they truſted for ſalvation. Yet his writings, which were full of types, prophecies, and promiſes of him, would certainly condemn them for their rejection of Him, as well as for their other ſins. Had they really believed the teſtimony of Moſes, they would certainly have welcomed "that Prophet," of whom he wrote: but as they treated Moſes' predictions as deſtitute of truth; it would be wonderful indeed, if they had believed in Him, whoſe doctrine was ſo oppoſite to their pride, and luſts. Though our Lord ſpake thus openly on this occaſion: yet his perſecutors were ſo overawed, that they proceeded no farther againſt him: for his time was not yet come.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The whole earth appears to a conſiderate mind, as a Betheſda, a great hoſpital full of thoſe, whom ſin hath made miſerable, and to whom the compaſſion of God affords the means of relief and comfort. As therefore his mercies are over all his works, and even thoſe, who moſt deſerve miſery, experience his goodneſs during their continuance here: man's mercy ſhould alſo coincide, and we ſhould endeavour to alleviate the ſufferings of the vileſt, and to do them what good we can: and as medicines are created and diſcovered, to relieve the diſeaſes of our bodies, which all originate from ſin; we ſhould attempt to render the poor, partakers of this benefit, by every means in our power. In this view every hoſpital, and diſpenſary is a Betheſda: and they would be more completely deſerving of that name; if more pains were taken to do good to the ſouls, as well as to heal the bodies of thoſe, who reſort to them. Yet alas, how few of thoſe, who in this manner obtain relief, are found in the houſe of God, offering the ſacrifice of thankſgiving to their great Phyſician! How few of them live thenceforth to his glory! How few take warning to ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing ſhould come unto

CHAP. VI.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Miraculouſly feeding the multitudes; ſending away the diſciples by ſhip, when the people were purpoſing to make him their King; and then walking to them on the ſea, &c. 1—21. *2d. Followed by the people to Capernaum, reproving their carnal expectations, and exhorting them to ſeek ſpiritual bleſſings by faith in him,* 22—29. *3d. Diſcourſing with them concerning himſelf as the Bread of Life, &c, till many of them were offended and forſook him,* 30—66. *4th. Enquiring of the apoſtles whether they would leave him? confeſſed by Peter to be the Chriſt, and intimating his knowledge of the treachery of Judas,* 67—71.

them! But the place, where the goſpel is preached, and divine ordinances are adminiſtered, is the true Betheſda: thither the poor and helpleſs ſhould repair, and hope and wait for a cure, whatever their ſpiritual maladies are, or however inveterate they have become. Though the multiplied miracles of converting grace, which better ages witneſſed, be not generally vouchſafed amongſt us: yet we ſtill ſee inſtances of ſuch, as by waſhing in the fountain that God hath opened, are made whole of their moſt deſperate maladies. The whole power is indeed of God: yet they, who would have the benefit, muſt be watchful, earneſt, and patient: they muſt not be ſupine, or dilatory, but make haſte to waſh and be clean; and then they ſhould endeavour in their turn to aſſiſt others alſo. Yet if any ſeem to meet with reiterated diſappointments; they ſhould ſtill wait, hope, and ſeek, never leaving the pool, or ceaſing to labour and pray for the bleſſing: for ſometimes they, whoſe caſe ſeems moſt hopeleſs, and who are ready to give up all for loſt, are made partakers of grace, peace, and ſpiritual health, when they leaſt expect it. However the Saviour perfectly knows, both how long men have been contracting habits of ſin, and how long they have been ſeeking the help and joy of his ſalvation: and He continually attends in his houſes of mercy, to enquire of ſinners, whether they will be made whole? And it is a common caſe, however for men to come thither, who are in love with their diſeaſe, and only deſirous of an excuſe for the loathſomeneſs of it! But if we deſire to be healed and ſaved in his way; we ſhall certainly at length obtain that bleſſing. When he ſpeaks, power attends his word, and the ability of believers to perform ſuch duties as are impracticable to others, and once were ſo to them, will beſt evidence their cure, and recommend their Phyſician. Though Scribes and Phariſees object, and revile; yet redeemed ſinners muſt obey and honour their Benefactor, and follow his directions, who hath reſtored health to their ſouls. By attending on God's ordinances, they will obtain further acquaintance with him; but without deliverance from the love, power, and allowed practice of known ſin, there can be no well grounded hopes of eſcaping the wrath to come. Even in this life, how many hours, days, weeks, months, nay years of pain, do ſome wicked men endure, through their momentary unlawful indulgences! And if ſuch afflictions are heavy and tedious, whilſt year after year men are confined to their beds, and made a burden to themſelves, and others; how dreadful will be the everlaſting puniſhment of the wicked!

Let us then look to, and truſt in him, whom Phariſees and infidels deſpiſe. As the Father worketh hitherto, ſo doth his coequal Son; eſpecially in carrying on, and ſuſtaining his new creation: may thoſe declarations of his eternal power and Godhead, which enrage his enemies, fill our hearts with humble confidence and admiring gratitude. Nor ought we at all to regard thoſe, who accuſe us of giving the glory of God to another: ſuch objectors know not the myſtery of the Father and of the Son; nor do they underſtand, that an union of eſſence, will, and operation, render it for ever impoſſible, to honour the one without honouring the other alſo. The eternal Son is the adequate object of the Father's love; he poſſeſſes all his perfections, and performs all his works; he creates, or deſtroys, he raiſes from the dead, and quickens whom he will: our life is laid up, and hid in him; our future judgment is committed to him; and, as dwelling in human nature, he exerciſes all power and authority, throughout the univerſe; that all men might honour Him, even as they honour the Father. Unleſs therefore we can honour the Father too much, we need not fear honouring the Son more than we ought: here is no danger of exceſs, but much of defect; all the adoration, and worſhip rendered to the Son is directed to the glory of God the Father; and they, who honour not the Son will be condemned as enemies and deſpiſers of the Father that ſent him. May we then hear his voice, and believe his teſtimony, as he revealeth God to man: thus our faith and hope will be in God; we ſhall have everlaſting life, and not come into condemnation; for this is the important paſſage from death to life. And may his voice reach the hearts of thoſe, who are dead in ſin, that they may ariſe from the dead, repent, and do works meet for repentance; and thus prepare for the ſolemn day of retribution. For the hour will ſoon arrive, "in which all that are in the graves "ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, they that "have done good to the reſurrection of life, and they "that have done evil to the reſurrection of damnation." May we now live, as thoſe who deſire then to be found a people prepared for the Lord!

Let none treat theſe things as aſſertions, or conjectures: for they are authenticated by the moſt unanſwerable teſtimony; and they are publiſhed, that ſinners may hear, and fear, believe, and be ſaved. To the bleſſed Redeemer all the ſervants of God bear witneſs; but he cannot derive from them any addition to his eſſential glory. From his fulneſs they have all received: if they be burning and ſhining lights, they glow with his love, and ſhine by his ſplendour: He honours them, and they reflect a little of his glory. Many are willing to hear ſuch teachers, and to pleaſe themſelves with their doctrine: but they obey not their word, they have no root in themſelves, and ſo in time of temptation they fall away. Not only the works, which Chriſt finiſhed on earth bare witneſs to him, as the Son of God: but thoſe alſo, that be hath wrought, ſince his aſcenſion in-

AFTER theſe things Jeſus went over the ſea of Galilee, which is *the ſea* of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, becauſe they ſaw his miracles which he did on them that were diſeaſed.

3 And Jeſus went up into a mountain, and there he ſat with his diſciples.

4 And the paſſover, a feaſt of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When Jeſus then lifted up *his* eyes, and ſaw a great company come unto him, he ſaith unto Philip, Whence ſhall we buy bread, that theſe may eat?

6 (And this he ſaid to prove him: for he himſelf knew what he would do.)

7 Philip anſwered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not ſufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his diſciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, ſaith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two ſmall fiſhes: but what are they among ſo many?

10 And Jeſus ſaid, Make the men ſit down. Now there was much graſs in the place. So the men ſat down, in number about five thouſand.

11 And Jeſus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he diſtributed to the diſciples, and the diſciples to them that were ſat down; and likewiſe of the fiſhes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he ſaid unto his diſciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be loſt.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baſkets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then thoſe men, when they had ſeen the miracle that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is of a truth that Prophet that ſhould come into the world.

15 When Jeſus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himſelf alone.

16 And when even was *now* come, his diſciples went down unto the ſea,

17 And entered into a ſhip, and went over the ſea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, and Jeſus was not come to them.

18 And the ſea aroſe, by reaſon of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they ſee Jeſus walking on the ſea, and drawing nigh unto the ſhip: and they were afraid.

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to heaven, in the ſpread and ſucceſs of the goſpel, demonſtrate the ſame truths: and the voice of God, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, and thus made effectual to the converſion of ſinners, ſtill proclaims, that this is the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleaſed, and all who would be ſaved muſt hear and obey him. But when the hearts of men are full of pride, ambition, and the love of the world; there is no room for the word of God to abide in them. Thus many profeſs to believe, that in the ſcriptures they have eternal life; yet they beſtow little pains to underſtand them: others ſearch them with a proud, curious, or prejudiced mind; and ſo cannot ſee, that they teſtify of Chriſt: others obſerve this doctrinally; yet do not come to Him, that they may have life. Being deſtitute of the love of God, they are careleſs about ſpiritual bleſſings; or they fancy they ſhall be able to obtain them in ſome other way; or they grow proud of their knowledge, they ſeek honour one of another; and they are glad to follow carnal ſelf-conceited teachers, who come in their own name, who coincide with their views, flatter their pride, connive at their ſins, and ſeek their own ends by ſo doing. Alas, how many truſt in their attachment to ſome form of doctrine, or to ſome renowned head of a party; who no more enter into the real meaning of thoſe doctrines, or into the views of the perſons, whoſe names they bear; than the Jews did into that of Moſes! Thus the creeds, and formularies of many ſects and eſtabliſhments will ſuffice for the condemnation of multitudes, who glory in belonging to them: and it is well, if the ſermons many preach, and the books they publiſh, do not appear in judgment againſt them, to accuſe them of not believing or practiſing what they preached, or printed. Let us then ſearch and pray over the ſcriptures, as men intent on finding eternal life: let us obſerve how Chriſt is the grand Subject of them, and daily apply to him for that life, which he beſtows: let us ſeek that honour, which cometh from God only, and not fear the reproach of men; and thus by patient continuance in well-doing, Let us ſeek for glory, honour, and immortal felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—21.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiv. v. 13—33. *Mark*, c. vi. v. 30—52. *Luke*, c. ix.

20 But he ſaith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ſhip: and immediately the ſhip was at the land whither they went.

22 The day following, when the people, which ſtood on the other ſide of the ſea, ſaw that there was none other boat there, ſave that one whereinto his diſciples were entered, and that Jeſus went not with his diſciples into the boat, but *that* his diſciples were gone away alone:

23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

24 When the people therefore ſaw that Jeſus was not there, neither his diſciples, they alſo took ſhipping, and came to Capernaum, ſeeking for Jeſus.

25 And when they had found him on the other ſide of the ſea, they ſaid unto him, Rabbi, when cameſt thou hither?

26 Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Ye ſeek me, not becauſe ye ſaw the miracles, but becauſe ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you: for him hath God the Father ſealed.

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v. 10—17.) The multitudes expected that the Meſſiah would be a Prophet, as well as a King, (v. 14, 15:) they had a temporary conviction from the miracle Jeſus had wrought, that He was the Meſſiah; they concluded that the greateſt advantages might be expected under a leader, who was able in this manner to maintain his followers; and they probably imagined that he would not be diſpleaſed, to have a kind of conſtraint laid upon him, to place him over them, and to declare himſelf to be the expected King of Iſrael. In theſe deſigns the apoſtles would have been ready to concur, by reaſon of their remaining ambition, and carnal prejudices.

V. 22—27.] Though Jeſus diſmiſſed the multitudes before he went up to the mountain to pray; yet many of them continued near the place, in expectation of ſeeing him again in the morning: for they had obſerved that the diſciples went away *alone*, in the only veſſel, that was there at that time. However before the next morning ſeveral boats came thither: and when they could not find Jeſus, they concluded that by ſome means he had followed the diſciples; and therefore they immediately croſſed the lake, and reſorted to Capernaum to ſeek for him: and when they found him there, in the ſynagogue, (v. 59;) they expreſſed their ſurpriſe at meeting him on that ſide of the ſea, enquiring of him by what means he had come thither? But inſtead of reſolving their queſtion, he began to blame them for their motives in ſeeking Him: this they did, not becauſe his miracles had convinced them, that he was a Teacher of righteouſneſs; but becauſe, having eaten of the loaves and fiſhes, they wanted to make him their King, in order that they might derive ſecular advantages from him. He therefore warned them not to "labour for the meat that periſheth." All temporal intereſts were intended by this expreſſion: they only afford a tranſient ſupport or ſatisfaction; they will ſoon periſh, and we ſhall be no better for them; they are of a fluctuating periſhing nature, and are often torn from us during life; and we ſhall ſoon be removed from them by death, and be without them for ever. Our earneſtneſs and diligence ſhould not therefore be directed to the acquiſition of them; except in a very ſubordinate manner, in the way of duty, and according to the precepts of God's word. Moderate attention, and induſtry are our duty, and a part of our religion: theſe may be uſed for the Lord's ſake, to his glory, in ſubmiſſion to his will, and dependance on his bleſſing; and in entire ſubverviency to our eternal intereſts; and not out of covetouſneſs, ambition, or any other carnal principle. To obtain, and poſſeſs the aſſurance of heaven, to enjoy communion with God, to glorify Him, to adorn the goſpel and do good, are the chriſtian's motives to activity: not the deſire of growing rich, of aggrandizing a family, of living luxuriouſly, or of being applauded or ennobled. Inſtead of "labouring for the meat that periſheth," our Lord exhorted them to labour "for the meat, which endureth unto everlaſting life:" by which he meant all thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings, which are neceſſary for, and conducive to the ſalvation of the ſoul: theſe are of an enduring, and incorruptible nature, they tend to, and iſſue in eternal life and happineſs. The greateſt application of mind, the utmoſt earneſtneſs and aſſiduity, in the uſe of every appointed means, ought to be employed in ſeeking theſe important benefits: at the ſame time the idea of merit is to be entirely excluded, and they are to be laboured for, as the gift of the Son of Man, the incarnate Redeemer, to all thoſe, who apply to him for them: for Him God the Father hath conſtituted the abſolute diſpenſer of theſe ſpiritual proviſions; and he hath ſealed his commiſſion, and atteſted his character by the miracles, which He wrought, and by the other teſtimonies that he bare to Him; (c. v. ver. 32—40.) Theſe were the advantages, which the Jews were exhorted to labour for, and to expect from their Meſſiah; and not ſecular honours, and emoluments.

V. 28, 29.] When the people heard our Lord exhort them "to labour," or *work*, (the original word is the ſame,) "for the meat, which endureth unto everlaſting life;" they enquired what they were to do, that they might work the works, which God required of

28 Then ſaid they unto him, What ſhall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.

30 They ſaid therefore unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou then, that we may ſee, and believe thee? what doſt thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the deſert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Moſes gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then ſaid they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to me ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt.

36 But I ſaid unto you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me ſhall come

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them, in order thereto? They ſeem to have thought of ſuch works, as the Phariſees impoſed on their diſciples, in addition to the law of Moſes. To this our Lord anſwered, that the work, which was eſpecially required of them was, to believe on him, whom the Father had ſent among them. This may be called the firſt and great commandment of the goſpel to a fallen ſinner. The contrariety of this faith to the pride, ſelf-confidence, ſelf-will, and carnal enmity againſt God, which occupy men's hearts, render it extremely difficult; and like obedience to the law, it cannot be done without ſpecial grace: yet it requires much pains to be beſtowed in ſelf-examination and comparing our conduct and character with the rule of our duty, and our obligations to obedience, in oppoſing the pride and luſts of our hearts, and in uſing the means of grace, &c: ſo that it may well be called a work. The ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding to God's teaching, of the conſcience to his righteouſneſs, and of the heart and will to his method of ſalvation, and his authority, which are implied in it, render it emphatically an act of obedience. It honours God in all his perfections, more than any other good work can do: and though it doth not juſtify *as a good work*, but by receiving Chriſt for our righteouſneſs; yet without it no other good work can be accepted; ſo that faith in Chriſt may eſpecially be called "the work of God;" and it was that act of obedience to which the Jews were then called, in order to obtain the bleſſing of eternal life. Some indeed explain the words, concerning faith being the work of divine grace in our hearts: but though this be a great truth; yet the context will not allow us to adopt this interpretation, as the real ſenſe of the words under conſideration.

V. 30—35.] Whilſt the Jews imagined that Jeſus was about to lead them forth to liberty, victory, and dominion; they were ready to avow themſelves his followers: but when he demanded faith in him, in order to the attainment of eternal life; they perceived that his doctrine claſhed with their carnal expectations, and with their ſtrong attachment to the Moſaic law; and they therefore began to queſtion his being the Meſſiah. Some of them at leaſt demanded of him, what ſufficient evidence he could produce, to convince them that eternal life was to be obtained by faith in him, rather than by the works of the law, or the tradition of the elders? He had indeed once fed ſome thouſands with barley bread, and fiſh, in a miraculous manner: but what was that in compariſon of what had been done in the days of their great lawgiver; when two millions of their forefathers had been fed with manna, for the ſpace of forty years; which, both in reſpect of its excellency, and the manner in which it was given them, might be called the bread, which God gave them from heaven to eat? (*Pſ.* lxxviii. v. 24.) To this our Lord replied, with his uſual ſtrong affirmation, that Moſes had not given them that bread: he had uſed no means to obtain it for them; much leſs did he create it, as He had done the food of their former day's repaſt: nor did it really come from heaven, but merely from the upper region of the air. Whereas God, even His Father, who gave their anceſtors that typical bread for the temporary ſuſtenance of their natural lives; now gave them the *true* Bread from the heaven of heavens for the eternal ſalvation of their ſouls: for the Bread of God, emphatically ſo called, was *that*, which really deſcended from heaven, to give life to periſhing ſinners all over the world. The Jews did not underſtand the meaning of this: yet many of them had much reverence for him, and ſuppoſed that he alluded to ſome unknown benefit, that he meant to confer on them; and therefore they *ſeriouſly* though *ignorantly* deſired him to give "them evermore that "bread," of which he ſpake: for the addreſs is ſuch, that we cannot underſtand it as made in a deriding manner. Jeſus therefore more explicitly declared that by "the Bread of Life," he meant Himſelf; and that by coming to, and believing on Him, they might receive and be ſuſtained by that bread unto everlaſting life. He is, in his Perſon and mediatory work, the ſuitable and ſufficient Suſtenance of our ſouls: the ſinner, who applies to, and relies on him for pardon, grace, comfort, and all things pertaining to eternal life, will find all his wants ſupplied, and all his deſires ſatisfied in an adequate manner; ſo that he ſhall never be tortured by, or periſh through "hungring, and thirſting," without having a ſupply ever ready at hand, to relieve, and remove them. We may here obſerve that "coming to Chriſt," and to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wiſe caſt out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day.

40 And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, becauſe he ſaid, I am the Bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they ſaid, Is not this Jeſus the ſon of Joſeph, whoſe father and mother we know? how is it then that he ſaith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jeſus therefore anſwered and ſaid unto them, Murmur not among yourſelves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath ſeen the Father, ſave he which is of God, he hath ſeen the Father,

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“ believing on him,” ſignify the ſame in ſcripture language; or rather the former is the never failing conſequence of the latter.

V. 36—40.] Our Lord next plainly told the Jews, that though they had ſeen Him, and his miracles, and ſeemed to be his zealous followers; yet they did not truly believe in him. However, though they would forſake him; yet he ſhould not be without diſciples: for all, whom the Father had given him, in his fore-knowledge and choice of them, and by the covenant of redemption made with him as their Surety, would “ come to him:” the event is certain, “ they *ſhall* and will come,” but without any compulſion being uſed; for the diſcovery of their guilt, danger and remedy, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, makes them willing and glad to come; and to renounce every hope and intereſt, which interferes with applying to him for ſalvation. At the ſame time this purpoſe and work of God perfectly conſiſted with the general encouragements, which he gave to all, who deſired to come, and ſhare theſe bleſſings: as it was equally true, that He would in no-wiſe caſt off any one perſon whatſoever, who thus came to Him. In the original the negatives are multiplied, according to the idiom of the Greek language, to form the ſtronger negation; to aſſure us, that no degree of previous guilt, no inveterate habits of vice, no ſlavery to ſatan, no ſecret decree of God, no involuntary miſtake, no feebleneſs in the attempt of applying to Chriſt, ſhould induce him to reject one ſingle perſon, who cometh to Him for the ſalvation of his ſoul, with a ſincere deſire of that bleſſing, depending on his truth, power, and grace, and uſing the means, which he hath appointed. In this, the Father's will, which the Son came down from heaven to perform, perfectly concurs: it is his will, that not one of thoſe, who were given to the Son by the decree of election, ſhould be rejected, or loſt by him, in life or death; but that every one of them ſhould be raiſed up to eternal felicity at the laſt day: and it is equally his will, that every one, who beholdeth the Son, who contemplates his character and work, and diſcerns the glory, and ſuitableneſs of his ſalvation, ſo as to believe in him, and to entruſt his ſoul in his hands, ſhould have everlaſting life, &c, notwithſtanding all poſſible hindrances and objections. Theſe two views of the divine will; his *ſecret will* concerning thoſe, whom he hath choſen to ſalvation, and his *revealed will* concerning the actual ſalvation of every believer, are perfectly coincident: for no one *will* come, till divine grace hath ſubdued, and in part changed his heart; and therefore no one, who comes will ever be caſt out. When an awakened ſinner feels himſelf willing to come to Chriſt; if he finds the doctrines of God's decrees too dazzling for his newly-opened and feeble eyes; he ſhould look off from them to the general invitations and promiſes of the goſpel: but when he can bear to look at the former, he will find in them the ſource and reaſon of his willingneſs, and will be encouraged to hope in Chriſt for the completion of that work, which grace hath begun in his ſoul. But let every one beware of blaſpheming or abuſing theſe truths, which are moſt certainly contained in ſcripture; and which cannot be ſeparated from our ideas of the divine ſovereignty and perfections, or from a proper underſtanding of the entire free grace of God, in the ſalvation of his people.

V. 41—46.] Theſe declarations of Chriſt excited the murmurs, and offended the prejudices of the Jews; eſpecially in that he ſaid, he was “ the Bread of Life.” Being ignorant of his miraculous conception, they ſuppoſed that they had been acquainted with his parents; and they thought that he was a mere man born on earth, as other men are: how then could he ſay that, “ He came down from heaven?” But Jeſus bade them ſuppreſs their murmurs, and rather advert to the perilous condition of their ſouls. For he muſt further inform them, “ that no man could poſſibly come to Him, except the Father drew him.” The ground of this impoſſibility lies in the contrariety, that ſubſiſts between the proud, worldly, unholy, rebellious, and ungodly nature of fallen man; and the humbling, ſpiritual and holy nature of the goſpel. This cannot be taken away, except by the energy of divine grace: the Father, who

47 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlaſting life.

48 I am that Bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderneſs, and are dead.

50 This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore ſtrove among themſelves, ſaying, How can this man give us *his* fleſh to eat?

53 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.

55 For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father; ſo he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me.

58 This is that Bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this Bread ſhall live for ever.

ſent the Son into the world to ſave ſinners, muſt draw them to the Son to be ſaved by him; or they will univerſally neglect his ſalvation. The goſpel finds none *willing* to be ſaved in the humbling holy manner revealed therein: none are ſaved againſt their will; but the Lord by his grace diſpoſes, allures, and draws ſinners to Chriſt; and his drawing is the cauſe of their activity, and diligence. He cures as it were the fever of the ſoul, he creates the appetite, he ſets the proviſions before the ſinner; he ſatisfies him that they are wholeſome and pleaſant, and that he is welcome: and thus the man is drawn to come, and eat, and live for ever. Our Lord next reminded them, that this accorded with the doctrine of their prophets, who had declared, that all thoſe, who received the benefit of the Meſſiah's kingdom, would be “ taught of God, (*Iſaiah*, c. liv. v. 13. *Jer.* c. xxxi. v. 33, 34:) and thus in fact, every man, who hath learned of the Father, (by hearing and believing his word,) thoſe leſſons that he teaches, concerning his own perfections, his law, the future judgment, the eternal world, the evil of ſin, the ruined eſtate of man, his need of mercy and grace, and the nature and glory of ſalvation, will infallibly come to and believe in Chriſt, and count all things but loſs in compariſon of Him; but none elſe can be willing to come. However, the Jews were not to conclude, that the Father would teach them perſonally: for none had ſeen the Father, but his beloved Son, who was of Him, and perfectly acquainted with him: they muſt therefore expect to be taught by his inward influence upon their minds, removing their prejudices, and humbling their pride; and by the medium of his word, and thoſe miniſters, whom he ſent among them.

V. 47—51.] After a repeated, and moſt ſolemn aſſurance, that faith in Him was the only, and the certain method of obtaining everlaſting life; and that He was the Bread of life, &c; our Lord ſhewed them the ſuperior excellence of his ſalvation above the manna, which was but a ſhadow of ſo great a bleſſing. Their fathers had eaten manna in the wilderneſs, and moſt of them had there died without entering into the promiſed land; and the reſt of them lived but a ſhort time afterwards: ſo that the advantage of that food was very ſmall, ſave to thoſe, who ſaw in it the type of good things to come. But the true living Bread, which came down from heaven is of ſo excellent a nature, that the man who feedeth on it ſhall never die: his ſoul will be nouriſhed thereby to everlaſting life; and the death of the body will be only a ſleep, which will ſhortly terminate in a glorious reſurrection. And this Bread is no other, than His fleſh, his human nature, which he had aſſumed, that he might preſent it to the Father as an expiatory ſacrifice for the ſins of the world; to purchaſe for ſinners of every nation, who believe in him, all things pertaining to life and godlineſs.

V. 52—58.] The Jews, who were generally ignorant, carnal, and formal, not underſtanding theſe declarations, fell to diſputing about them: ſome took them in one ſenſe, ſome in another; and probably many of them derided or cenſured Jeſus, whilſt others vindicated him: yet none of them could conceive how he could give them his fleſh to eat. But he continued to aſſure them, in the moſt determinate manner, that except they eat his fleſh, and drank his blood, they had no life in them; but continued dead in ſin, and expoſed to eternal condemnation. It is proper for us to explain more fully the figurative mode of inſtruction here employed: the human nature of “ the Word who was made “ fleſh,” was doubtleſs intended: his fleſh and blood were made meat and drink, when he gave his body to be wounded, and his blood to be ſhed upon the croſs for our ſins; and when even his ſoul was made a ſacrifice to the divine juſtice. The fleſh, and blood of Chriſt, as ſeparated by death, purchaſed ſalvation for ſinners: the expreſſions therefore have reference to the intention, neceſſity, efficacy, and benefits of the ſufferings of Chriſt: theſe are as needful to the life and health of our ſouls, as meat and drink to our bodies: as

59 Theſe things ſaid he in the ſynagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of his diſciples, when they had heard *this*, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying; who can hear it?

61 When Jeſus knew in himſelf that his diſciples murmured at it, he ſaid unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What* and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man aſcend up where he was before?

63 It is the ſpirit that quickeneth; the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, *they* are ſpirit, and *they* are life.

64 But there are ſome of you that believe not. For Jeſus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him.

65 And he ſaid, Therefore ſaid I unto you, That no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

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the Lord, who knows our outward wants, hath provided food for our uſe; ſo, in compaſſion to our periſhing miſery as ſinners, he hath appointed this ſpiritual nouriſhment for our ſouls: as our food does not ſuſtain us, by being prepared, but by being received, digeſted, and incorporated; ſo Chriſt doth not give life to our ſouls, by being exhibited in the goſpel, but by being received through faith, digeſted in humble meditation, and converted into nutriment to hope, love, and other holy affections. The living, healthy man has an appetite for, and reliſhes his meat, and drink; and the regenerate ſoul longs after, and delights to feed on Chriſt, by receiving Him for all the purpoſes of ſalvation: though our food be God's gift, yet man muſt labour for it; and ſo muſt our ſpiritual food be laboured for, though given us by the Lord: the believer feels wearineſs, and uneaſineſs, and is ready to faint under the trials, and labours, to which he is called; but attending on divine ordinances, and receiving Chriſt by renewed application, as his daily meat and drink; he finds his ſpirits recruited, his heart encouraged, and his ſtrength repaired, to run the race, endure the conflict, and perform the work, that is appointed him. As the fleſh and blood of Chriſt are expreſſly mentioned here, as well as in the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper; numbers have contended, that the external ordinance was here intended; (in the ſame way that water baptiſm hath been miſtaken for the new birth of the Spirit.) But can any one ſeriouſly think, that every man “is dead in ſin,” till he hath received the ſacrament? Or that Chriſt dwells in, and will ſave all thoſe, who partake of that ordinance, however hypocritically? No doubt that it is the general duty of all real chriſtians frequently to commemorate the death of Chriſt at his table: but this is only the outward ſign of the bleſſed experience here intended; and they who reſt in it will have only the ſhadow of ſalvation. It is alſo remarkable, that the church, which of all others hath moſt exalted, and even idolized the Lord's ſupper, hath refuſed the cup, the emblem of the blood of Chriſt, to the laity; as if they would not let them have even the ſhadow of the goſpel ſalvation! However we know upon evangelical principles, that the juſtice and holineſs of God, and the honour of his violated law, rendered ſuch a ſacrifice as that of the death of Chriſt neceſſary for us: and unleſs a man feel his need of that atonement, and habitually apply for, and live upon Chriſt for pardon, righteouſneſs, and all things pertaining to ſalvation; “he hath no life in him.” But he, who thus eateth the fleſh, and drinketh the blood of the Son of man hath the title to, and the beginning of eternal life: the reſurrection of his ſoul to ſpiritual life, is the pledge of the reſurrection of his body to everlaſting glory. For “the fleſh of Chriſt is meat *indeed*,” emphatically, and excluſively, “and his blood is drink indeed;” inſomuch that when we thus live by faith in the atonement of Chriſt, and receive from his fulneſs, we dwell in him, as our Refuge, Reſt, and Home; and he dwells in us by his grace and Spirit, as in his temple; ſo that we are one with him, and he with us. This myſtical union is ſo intimate, that it reſembles that of the incarnate Son of God with the eternal Father: for as his life on earth was ſuſtained by his union with the Deity, and by the indwelling of the Spirit; ſo believers are united to Chriſt, and live by that life, which is hid in him, and they ſhall thus live for ever. (*Col.* c. iii. v. 1—3.)

V. 59—65.] We cannot wonder, that this diſcourſe aſtoniſhed our Lord's audience: for though inſtruction had frequently been ſpoken of, as the food of the ſoul; yet no prophet, or ſervant of God from the beginning of the world, had ever ſpoken of himſelf, as the “Bread of Life;” and he evidently aſſumed to himſelf more than Moſes, or any other perſon ever did, or could properly have done. He ſpake alſo on the moſt myſterious doctrines, and the moſt experimental part of religion, with which few of them had any acquaintance, and which militated againſt their ſtrongeſt prejudices: therefore many of thoſe, who had hitherto profeſſed themſelves his diſciples, concluded that it was a hard ſaying, unintelligible, or incredible; and enquired, who could endure to hear ſuch doctrine, and receive it as of divine authority? But Jeſus, by his intimate knowledge of their ſecret thoughts, and converſation, was acquainted with their murmurs; and demanded of them, whether his doctrine ſo offended, and ſtumbled them, as to induce them to forſake him? If this now ſo perplexed them, what would they think of it, if they ſhould “ſee the Son of man aſcend up where he was before?” The human nature of Chriſt had not before been in heaven: but being God and man in one myſterious Perſon, that Perſon was called either the Son of God, or the Son of man, without any exact diſcrimination; and in virtue of this indiſſoluble union, the Perſon called the Son of man, might be ſaid to have come down from heaven. This implied, that the Meſſiah's kingdom was not of this world; for he would at length aſcend into heaven, and appear no more perſonally among them. They were not

66 From that *time* many of his diſciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then ſaid Jeſus unto the twelve, Will ye alſo go away?

68 Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe and are ſure that thou art that Chriſt, the Son of the living God.

70 Jeſus anſwered them, Have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

71 He ſpake of Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* of Simon: for he it was that ſhould betray him, being one of the twelve.

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therefore to underſtand what he had ſaid concerning “the eating of his fleſh,” &c, in a groſs carnal ſenſe, but of a ſpiritual living upon him and his fulneſs by faith: for as the ſoul of man giveth life to the body, without which the fleſh is of no value, and only a lifeleſs putrifying lump of clay; ſo without the quickening Spirit of God, all forms of religion are dead and worthleſs. Indeed the words, which he ſpake to them were ſpirit, and life: they related to ſpiritual things, on which the life of their ſouls depended: by believing his doctrine, relying on his promiſes, and meditating on his inſtructions, they would ſpiritually “eat his fleſh, and drink “his blood:” and theſe were *the means*, by which the Spirit of God would communicate life, and ſalvation to their ſouls. But he ſpake theſe things unto them, in this figurative manner; becauſe ſome of them did not believe, and were diſpoſed to make a bad uſe of his inſtructions, as he well knew: and therefore he had declared, for their warning, that none could come to him, except it were given him of his Father.

V. 66—71.] Though theſe profeſſed diſciples, who in ſuch numbers forſook Jeſus on this occaſion, attended no more on him during his life-time: ſome of them might, after his aſcenſion, when the event had explained his meaning, receive the inſtructions of his apoſtles, &c. However the multitudes were at this time diſperſed; and Chriſt having only his twelve diſciples with him, he demanded of them, whether they would go away alſo? Intimating that he would have no unwilling followers. They too had their prejudices, and were ſtill under many miſtakes, and much in the dark as to the nature of his ſalvation, but in general they were teachable, upright believers, Peter therefore, anſwering in the name of his brethren, enquired to whom they ſhould go, in caſe they left him? John their former maſter had directed them *to Him*; they could get no benefit by becoming the diſciples of the Phariſees; they knew no other, who could adduce any proof that he was the Meſſiah, or a divine teacher; and they could by no means think of giving up the hope of eternal life; which they were engaged in the purſuit of as their firſt object, whatever temporal advantages they might alſo expect by following him: and indeed they believed, and were fully aſſured that He was the promiſed Meſſiah, the Son of the one, true and living God, and that eternal life could only be found by believing and obeying his words, and obſerving his inſtructions. (*Matt.* c. xvi. v. 16, 17.) To this bold, and explicit confeſſion Jeſus replied in a manner apparently very abrupt; obſerving, that one of the twelve, whom he had choſen to be his apoſtles, was a devil. He meant Judas Iſcariot, who was a ſecret enemy, a deſigning hypocrite, and one who was in every thing of a diabolical diſpoſition, though he had not been ſuſpected by the other apoſtles; eſpecially he was a ſpy, and would prove a traitor, a liar, and a murderer, like ſatan the accuſer of the brethren. Thus Peter, and the reſt of them were taught to be upon their guard, and only to anſwer for themſelves; they were reminded, whilſt they thought they ſtood, to take heed leſt they ſhould fall; and Judas was given to underſtand that his character, and deſigns were well known to his Lord. Probably he took no notice of it; and the other apoſtles would not be able to underſtand it, 'till the event explained it, to their great aſtoniſhment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The beneficence of Chriſt's miracles concurred with the power of them, to convince the people that he was from God: and the ſame ſpirit of love, diſplayed in our conduct, even amidſt our weakneſs and poverty, will beſt adorn the goſpel, and evince its divine origin and excellency. If we copy the example of our Lord, in giving hearty thanks to the giver of all our temporal comforts, and in diſpenſing of them liberally to the indigent; our moſt frugal and homely meals will be far more comfortable, and bleſſed, than the moſt luxurious feaſts of ungodly men. But moderation and indifference in reſpect of our own diet, and a parſimonious care, to “gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be “loſt,” form the very baſis of chriſtian beneficence: and if in opulent cities, all that, which is waſted, or needleſſly conſumed, were reſerved to feed the hungry: how much more comfortably would the poor be maintained! and how much better would it be, both for the ſouls and bodies of the rich? However chriſtians at leaſt ſhould be willing to fare as Chriſt did, to obey his commands, and to encounter difficulties at his word. When he is not ſenſibly preſent with them, he is pleading for them; and he will come to them through every intervening obſtacle, and by his power and love he will terminate all their ſorrows, fears, and hardſhips. If Jeſus were again to appear on earth, feeding and healing men by miracle; he would again be followed by admiring multitudes, who might deſire to have him for their King, in hopes of preferment and ſecular advantages: indeed many profeſs his truths, attend on his ordinances, and miniſter in holy things, who ſeek nothing more than the loaves and fiſhes. They call him Rabbi, but will not be taught by him; they ſpeak of him as their Saviour, but they do not rely on him; and they ſay “Lord, “Lord,” but will not do the things, which he ſays. And though he exhorts us all, “not to labour for the “meat that periſheth; but for that meat, which endureth unto everlaſting life, &c:” yet moſt men, who profeſs and call themſelves chriſtians, labour inceſſantly,

CHAP. VII.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus converſing with his unbelieving brethren, about going up to the feaſt of tabernacles; declining to accompany them, and going up privately after them, 1---10. *2d. The Jews ſeeking for, and diſputing about him: His teaching in the temple, and declaring the divine authority of his doctrine; blaming their attempts againſt him for the miracle wrought on the impotent man, and anſwering their objections, &c,* 11---30. *3d. Some of the people concluding him to be the Meſſiah, and the Phariſees ſending officers to take him,* 31---36. *4th. Jeſus inviting the thirſty to come to Him, and drink, with reference to the Holy Spirit, which was to be given to believers,* 37---39. *5th. The people diſputing whether he were the Meſſiah, or no: the officers returning without Him: and the fruitleſs, and ſcornful contention, which this excited in the council, &c.* 40---53.

anxiouſly, and wholly for periſhing vanities; till death convinces them of their folly; and then others ſucceed them, and copy the example of their infatuation! But to beings poſſeſſed of immortal ſouls, nothing is worthy of the chief regard, or to be the object of primary diligence, which will not endure unto everlaſting life, and ſecure the poſſeſſor from final miſery and deſpair. This enduring portion the Son of man is authorized to beſtow on whom he pleaſes: let us then direct all our earneſtneſs, and employ all our labour, to ſecure this one thing needful: let us aſſiduouſly uſe every means, perform every duty, oppoſe every temptation, and ſeek the mortification of every ſinful propenſity; and in this way let us wait for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life. Whilſt we daily enquire, what are the works of God, which we are called to perform? Let us remember, that an habitual exerciſe of faith in Chriſt is the moſt important, indiſpenſable, and arduous part of the obedience required of us, as ſinners who are ſeeking ſalvation: when by his grace we are enabled to live this life of faith in the Son of God, all other holy tempers follow, and all acceptable ſervices may be performed; but without them no boaſted ſervices will be regarded by our holy and merciful God. Yet this command, (difficult as it is to a proud, and carnal heart,) only requires a periſhing beggar to be enriched, a malefactor to accept of pardon, and preferment, and a ſtarving wretch to partake of a ſumptuous feaſt! Bleſſed be our God, that he hath given us the true Bread from heaven! May he create in us an appetite for it; that we may *intelligently, and cordially* ſay, "Lord evermore give us this Bread!"

But when we look around us, we ſee men in general hungring after, and feeding upon huſks, or aſhes: they ſpend their money for that, which is not bread, and their labour for that, which ſatisfieth not. Some feed on airy ſpeculations, and philoſophy, falſely ſo called; ſome ſeek to ſatisfy their minds with gold, with fame, or power; ſome feed groſſly on ſenſual pleaſure; and ſome attempt to allay their cravings after happineſs by diſſipated mirth, or the pride of life: all theſe are like a hungry man, who dreameth that he eateth; but he awaketh, and his ſoul is empty: for at length death cometh, and their unſatisfied deſires prove their eternal tormentors. Others pretending to religion, take pleaſure in ſuperſtition, enthuſiaſm, notions, forms, controverſies, revilings, &c: theſe alſo "feed upon aſhes; a deceived heart hath turned them aſide, that they cannot deliver their ſouls, or ſay, is there not a lie in my right hand?" But "the fleſh of Chriſt is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed:" here the ſoul, that hungers and thirſts for God, for righteouſneſs, and true felicity, and that is made ſenſible of its ſtate and wants, finds a ſuitable, and abundant proviſion. Here pardon, peace, hope, communion with God; and whatever can calm the conſcience, ſerene and chear the heart, or promote true holineſs, is compriſed in one glorious object, a mighty Redeemer, God manifeſt in the fleſh, ſhedding his precious blood to atone for the ſins of his rebellious creatures! This is that living Bread, which came down from heaven, that we might eat thereof, and live for ever. Though the Jews could not, we may know how Jeſus can give us his fleſh to eat: the humble believer can reſt in no outward emblem; but through the ſacramental bread, and wine, he ſees the body, and blood of Chriſt, which are truly appropiated by the faith of all acceptable communicants, for every ſaving purpoſe. He is convinced, that except a man eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, he hath no ſpiritual life in him, nor any good hope of eternal life: and therefore his great fear is, leſt he ſhould be deceived in a matter of ſuch vaſt importance. He is often ready to faint, and be weary, through inward conflicts, and outward troubles: but by again receiving Chriſt, as the Life and Salvation of his ſoul, he finds his hopes revive, his fears vaniſh, his ſtrength return, and his graces invigorated; and thus he feeds daily on Chriſt, by faith in his heart with thankſgiving, and proceeds in his work and warfare with patient alacrity. He finds that meditation on the croſs of Chriſt, and all the glorious truths connected with it, give life to his repentance, love, and gratitude; his heart is thus raiſed above, and weaned from the world, and fixed on heavenly things; he is thus enabled to rejoice in the Lord; he dwells in Chriſt, and Chriſt in him, and he learns to live by, and to his beloved Saviour, in ſome meaſure, as He lived by, and to the glory of the Father that ſent him. This is the chriſtian's life: in proportion as he thus lives upon Chriſt, and thirſts and applies for the bleſſings purchaſed by his precious blood; he copies more cloſely his example, and obeys his commandments. But unhumbled ſinners cannot underſtand this: and therefore they either object to, and deride the whole of it; or they reſt in the outward form, inſtead of the inward experience of ſo great a bleſſing. He, who made this proviſion for our ſouls, alone can effectually teach us theſe myſteries, and draw us unto Chriſt, that we may live by faith in him. All that the Father hath given to the Son, will be thus taught to come to him, and he will ſurely receive and keep them, and will raiſe them up at the laſt day. If then ſinners are convinced of their need of Chriſt, and of the teach-

AFTER theſe things Jeſus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him.

2 Now the Jews feaſt of tabernacles was at hand.

3 His brethren therefore ſaid unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy diſciples alſo may ſee the works that thou doeſt.

4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeketh to be known openly: if thou do theſe things, ſhew thyſelf to the world.

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready.

7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, becauſe I teſtify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feaſt: I go not up yet unto this feaſt; for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had ſaid theſe words unto them, he abode *ſtill* in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were gone up,

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ing and drawing of the Father; let them attend to his word, and pray for his Spirit, and in this way expect his bleſſing on their ſouls. For every one, who is willing to come to Chriſt, will be made welcome, he will on no account whatſoever caſt him out. He hath ſpoken the word, and he will make it good: it is his will, and the will of the Father that ſent him, and it cannot by any means be invalidated. Let ſinners then apply to Chriſt with confidence; let them be thankful that they have diſcovered their danger, and their remedy; and let them ſeek further inſtruction that they may enjoy the comfort, and bring forth the fruits, of the life of faith in the incarnate Son of God.

But many, who are called diſciples, will diſpute againſt theſe things: many will attend to the general doctrines of the goſpel; but when the miniſter applies them to their conſciences and experience, they are ready to object, that it is an hard ſaying, who can hear it? They form groſs conceptions of ſpiritual things, and they diſpute againſt their own miſrepreſentations: ſo that miniſters, who imitate their Maſter, need not marvel, if their faithful doctrine drive away many of their hearers, who for a time ſeemed zealouſly attached to them. However we muſt ſpeak the words of Chriſt, which are Spirit, and life, and not like the dead notions of moraliſts, and ſpeculators: and we muſt leave it to Him, to quicken whom he will by his Spirit, and to determine who are, and who are not true believers. Our main buſineſs is with ourſelves: when many turn back, and walk no more with Chriſt; he ſeems to ſay to us, "will ye go away alſo?" But the truly broken-hearted ſinner, who can reſt ſatisfied with nothing ſhort of eternal life, will anſwer, "Lord to whom ſhall I go?" Even when diſcouraged, tempted, and harraſſed with doubts, and fears; he ſtill knows it is vain to think of returning to the world, of ſeeking ſalvation by the works of the law, of reſting in forms and notions, or of going after falſe and looſe teachers: and ſtill he believes, and deſires to be fully aſſured, that Jeſus hath the words of eternal life, as "that Chriſt the Son of the living God." This faith, in it's feebleſt exerciſe, is eſſentially different from that of the moſt ſpecious hypocrite, that ever followed the ſteps of the traitor Judas: ſuch are often near to Chriſt in external profeſſion, and office; yet like ſatan in the temper of their hearts, and ſecret conduct: but they are known to, and will be detected by the heart-ſearching Judge; however they may impoſe upon their brethren. May we then be now ſearched, and proved by him, and made ſound in his ſtatutes, as thoſe, whom he hath choſen unto ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the belief of his holy truth.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *Jeſus*, &c.] For a conſiderable time our Lord went about Galilee preaching the goſpel: but he would not go into any part of Judea to teach; becauſe he knew that the Jewiſh rulers were determined to put him to death. He did not ſee good at that time to expoſe himſelf to their rage; and it would have been improper to have favoured ſuch virulent enemies with his miracles, and inſtructions. If he attended the paſſover, &c, (as he probably did,) He went up privately, and continued a very ſhort time at Jeruſalem, or in that neighbourhood.

V. 2—10.] (Notes, &c. *Num.* c. xxix. v. 12—40.) Perhaps theſe brethren, or kinſmen of our Lord were diſguſted, becauſe they ſaw no proſpect of ſecular advantages from their relation to him; which they had expected as a matter of courſe, in caſe he were the promiſed Meſſiah: and therefore, notwithſtanding his miracles, and the holineſs of his character and doctrine, they looked upon him as a deceiver, and ſuppoſed that he acted from corrupt motives. They ſeem to have pretended friendſhip to him, when they adviſed him to go into Judea, to preach and work miracles among the rich and learned part of the nation: they intimated that he muſt have many diſciples there, who would thus be encouraged openly to eſpouſe his cauſe; and that the numbers of his adherents being increaſed, he might then proceed to aſſert his claim to the kingdom of the Meſſiah. They urged, that it was abſurd, and contrary to all the ordinary rules of policy, for him to continue in that obſcure part of the country, when his object muſt be to make himſelf known: and they concluded, that if he meant to proceed in that courſe of life, he ought to ſtand forth openly, and ſhew himſelf to the world. By this inſidious counſel they probably meant to lead him into danger, deſiring that the Scribes and Phariſees might examine his pretences, and detect the impoſture which they ſuſ-then went he alſo up unto the feaſt, not openly, but as it were in ſecret.

11 Then the Jews ſought him at the feaſt, and ſaid, Where is he?

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for ſome ſaid, He is a good man: others ſaid, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit, no man ſpake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

14 Now about the midſt of the feaſt, Jeſus went up into the temple and taught.

15 And the Jews marvelled, ſaying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I ſpeak of myſelf.

18 He that ſpeaketh of himſelf ſeeketh his own glory: but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs is in him.

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pected: however they certainly were actuated by mere carnal motives. He therefore told them, that his time for going up to the feaſt was not yet come; or the time, when it would be proper to avow himſelf amidſt his enraged enemies: but their time was always ready; they might go up to Jeruſalem at one time with as much ſafety, as at another. The world could have no enmity to, or quarrel, with, them; as their maxims, principles, and conduct were congenial with thoſe of other ungodly men, and helped to keep them in countenance; but all ſorts of unconverted ſinners muſt needs hate him, becauſe he teſtified of them, that their works were evil. He not only expoſed the heinouſneſs of their evident immoralities and impieties: but he detected the pride, and hypocriſy of the auſtere, and ſuperſtitious Scribes and Phariſees; he teſtified even of their ſuppoſed good works, that they ſprang from a corrupt ſource, and were abominations in the ſight of God; and he ſhewed, that men of all nations, ſects, and external characters were deſerving of God's wrath, and abhorrence, for the wickedneſs of their hearts and lives. Theſe things affronted the pride, diſquieted the conſciences, interfered with the purſuits, and excited the indignation of the world in general; and thus he was mortally hated by them, notwithſtanding the perfection of his character, and the power of his miracles: And the ſame effects will always be produced by the ſame cauſe. Our Lord therefore bade them, if they ſaw good, go up to the feaſt: but he had his reaſons for not going with them; as his time was not yet fully come. Probably he knew that his enemies would have taken umbrage, if he had gone up with a multitude of attendants: therefore he choſe to go privately, and not before the feaſt was begun; that they might have leſs time to concert their meaſures againſt him.

V. 11—13.] As the Jews ſought our Lord, it may be ſuppoſed that he generally attended on the three great feaſts, though we have not a particular account of it. Some of the people concluded from his doctrine, and miracles, that he muſt be a good and holy man: but others would not allow him even this inferior honour; concluding that he impoſed on the people by ſome artifice, which they were not able to detect: and the few, who favoured him, dared not openly to avow their ſentiments, leſt the rulers ſhould cenſure, or excommunicate them.

V. 14—18.] Though our Lord ſaw good for a time to conceal himſelf; yet he would not loſe the opportunity of preaching to the multitudes, who were aſſembled from diſtant nations on this occaſion. Therefore about the middle of the feaſt, which laſted eight days, he went up to the temple, and taught the people: but the Jews, (the inhabitants of Judea, as diſtinguiſhed from the Galileans, and others;) enquired with a mixture of ſurpriſe and diſdain, how He could be acquainted with learning, or qualified to teach; ſeeing he had been brought up in an obſcure manner, and without any of the advantages of a liberal education? To this objection our Lord replied, that his doctrine (or the inſtructions, which he delivered,) was not his own, as men acquire knowledge by ſtudy and tuition, and ſo teach their own opinions, or thoſe of their maſter; but that it was the meſſage, that he came to deliver from Him, that ſent him; ſo that it was to be conſidered as the teſtimony of wiſdom brought down from heaven, and declared without any mixture, or change. And as his doctrine was divine: ſo the preparation of mind for underſtanding it did not conſiſt in natural quickneſs, or vigour of capacity, or a fund of learning; but in a ſincere willingneſs, and earneſt deſire to do the will of God: inſomuch that the man, who was brought to this temper, and was determined to obey the command of God, however it might interfere with his intereſts, or proſpects, and though it ſhould expoſe him to perſecution; and who uſed proper means for becoming acquainted with the truth, would ſurely be enabled to know of the doctrine whether it were of God, or whether he ſpake of himſelf, as one who deceived the people. Such a frame of mind removes the prejudices of pride, ſelf-love, carnal hope, and fear, &c, which cloud and biaſs the underſtanding, to the excluſion of divine truth: moreover it is the effect of divine grace; and he who hath wrought the mind to ſuch a meaſure of ſeriouſneſs, teachableneſs and integrity, will aſſiſt it to diſcern and embrace the truth, and to detect and refuſe error: and indeed it is eſſential to ſuch a diſpoſition, for a man to be afraid of being deceived, to diſtruſt himſelf, and to ſeek diligently for divine teaching. So that in every way it will guide him through every maze of uncertainty, and controverſy, to the knowledge of every eſſential truth; and all, who are fatally deluded, muſt be allowed to be deſtitute of this

19 Did not Moſes give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

20 The people anſwered and ſaid, Thou haſt a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

22 Moſes therefore gave unto you circumciſion, (not becauſe it is of Moſes, but of the fathers,) and ye on the ſabbath-day circumciſe a man.

23 If a man on the ſabbath-day receive circumciſion, that the law of Moſes ſhould not be broken, are ye angry at me, becauſe I have made a man every whit whole on the ſabbath-day?

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

25 Then ſaid ſome of them of Jeruſalem, Is not this he whom they ſeek to kill?

26 But, lo, he ſpeaketh boldly, and they ſay nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Chriſt?

27 Howbeit, we know this man whence he is: but when Chriſt cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

28 Then cried Jeſus in the temple, as he taught, ſaying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myſelf, but he that ſent me is true, whom ye know not.

29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath ſent me.

30 Then they ſought to take him; but no man laid hands on him, becauſe his hour was not yet come.

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ingenuous, upright diſpoſition. To this our Lord added another general rule: the teacher, who is not ſent of God, but comes of himſelf, will one way or other ſeek his own honour, and advancement, having no higher principle than corrupt ſelfiſh nature: whereas He, who evidently diſregards himſelf, that he may ſeek the honour of God, proves himſelf to be truly ſent of him, and is free from all ground of ſuſpicion, as if he were an impoſtor, or acted from any ſiniſter deſign. Applying this to Chriſt, who evidently endured poverty, contempt, hardſhip, ſuffering and death, for the glory of God in man's ſalvation; it was evident that He was true, and that there was no unrighteouſneſs in him.

V. 19—24.] (Notes, &c. c. v.) It was at leaſt a year, and an half, (probably longer,) ſince the time, when Jeſus had healed the man at the pool of Betheſda, and had ordered him to carry his bed: yet the Jewiſh rulers were ſtill deſirous of putting him to death for that ſuppoſed infraction of the ſabbath; and he ſaw proper to refer to their deſigns in his public preaching, in order to obviate the people's prejudices againſt his doctrine on that account. He obſerved, that they were zealouſly attached to Moſes, their great lawgiver; yet ſcarce any of them were conſcientiouſly obedient to the law; otherwiſe why did they go about to kill Him, in direct oppoſition to the ſixth commandment? To this, ſome of them, who were ignorant of the deſigns of the rulers, replied in a rude and contemptuous manner, that he certainly was inſane, and poſſeſſed, for who was there, that went about to kill him? To this indecent reflection He meekly anſwered, that he had wrought one miracle at Jeruſalem, which excited their aſtoniſhment; not ſo much by the power and goodneſs diſplayed in it, as becauſe he did it on the ſabbath-day, and ordered the man to carry his bed, in evidence of his cure. But in reſpect of that argument, they ſhould obſerve, that Moſes, had enjoined them the law of circumciſion; (though it had been practiſed long before his time by their fathers;) yet they could not obſerve that law without deviating from that exact reſt, which they ſuppoſed required on the ſabbath; for when it was the eighth day, they were uſed to circumciſe the male child, that they might not defer that ſacramental rite beyond the appointed time; nor did they deem this labour a violation of the holy reſt. But if this were right, why ſhould they blame him for reſtoring a diſeaſed man on that day to perfect ſoundneſs by a word ſpeaking? Surely the law of love was as binding as that of circumciſion! And it was as conſiſtent with the deſign of the ſabbath to reſtore health to the afflicted, as to adminiſter an external rite! He therefore demanded of them not to judge by their partial prejudices, or by his external appearance; but to decide upon his conduct in an equitable manner, according to the ſpiritual import of the divine law.

V. 25—30.] Whilſt this ſubject was diſcuſſed, ſome of the citizens, who were acquainted with the deſigns of the council, (of which they who came from other places were ignorant;) enquired whether this were not the perſon, whom the rulers had reſolved to put to death as a deceiver? and they were aſtoniſhed, that he dared, and was allowed, to ſpeak in ſo public a place, and ſo open a manner, and that he met with no interruption! Could it be poſſible, that the rulers ſhould at length be perſuaded, that he was indeed the promiſed Meſſiah? For their parts, they knew him to be an inhabitant of Nazareth, the Son of Mary the wife of Joſeph: but when the Meſſiah came, no man would know whence he was. Doubtleſs they were ignorant of our Lord's deſcent from David, of his miraculous conception, and his nativity at Bethlehem; and they raſhly concluded, that his parentage and birth anſwered not to thoſe, predicted of the Meſſiah: yet they ſeem to have had ſome confuſed idea of the divine original of that great Redeemer, whoſe generation none could declare; and thence they concluded, that when he came, no man would know whence he was. Had their prejudices allowed them to examine, 31 And many of the people believed on him, and ſaid, When Chriſt cometh, will he do more miracles than theſe which this *man* hath done?

32 The Phariſees heard that the people murmured ſuch things concerning him; and the Phariſees and the chief prieſts ſent officers to take him.

33 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that ſent me.

34 Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

35 Then ſaid the Jews among themſelves, Whither will he go, that we ſhall not find him? will he go unto the diſperſed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What *manner of* ſaying is this that he ſaid, Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find *me*? and, Where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

37 In the laſt day, that great *day* of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive: for the Holy Ghoſt was not yet *given*; becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.)

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they would have found their objection ſufficiently anſwered by the circumſtances of his nativity. However, our Lord proclaimed aloud, in reproof of their obſtinate and ignorant oppoſition; that they indeed vainly imagined that they both knew him and his original, and were ſure that he was not the Meſſiah! Whereas in fact he was not come of himſelf, but was ſent of God, who teſtified of him, and ſhewed himſelf true to his promiſes and prophecies: yet, though they pretended to be worſhippers of God, they knew not his character, nor had any ſpiritual, or experimental acquaintance with him. But He perfectly, and intimately knew him, being come from, and ſent by Him to make him known to men. This declaration that they knew not God, joined to his claim of ſuch a knowledge of him as was peculiar to himſelf, exaſperated the hearers ſo much, that they ſought ſome opportunity to apprehend him; but no one ventured upon it, for his hour was not yet come.

V. 31—36.] The diſcourſes of Jeſus convinced many of the people that he was the Meſſiah; and they ſecretly enquired whether that great Deliverer could work greater miracles than He did? But ſome ſpies carried the report of theſe things to the Phariſees, who were the more exaſperated by them; as they ſaw that their reputation, authority, and intereſt muſt be ruined, if the people unanimouſly concluded that Jeſus was the Meſſiah. Aſſembling therefore the council, they ſent officers to take him, and bring him before them, in the chamber of the temple, where they were convened. When the officers were come, Jeſus obſerved to them, that he ſhould continue with them a little longer, notwithſtanding their deſigns againſt Him; but that after a little time he ſhould return to the Father that had ſent him. Then they might ſeek him, ſome of them from malice, and others from a vain deſire of help in their extreme diſtreſs; but they would not find him; nor would they ever be able to enter that happy place, whither he was going. This may refer to the calamities, which were coming on the Jewiſh nation, for their enmity to Chriſt: and to their vain waiting and ſeeking for their promiſed Meſſiah to reſcue them. But they could not underſtand whither He meant to go, having no idea of his aſcenſion into heaven: they therefore enquired whether he intended to go among the Jews, who were living in other nations; and in caſe they would not receive him as the Meſſiah, to become a Teacher of the Gentiles themſelves? Which they would conſider as the moſt deſpicable employment imaginable.

V. 37—39.] This ſeems to have occurred on the ſame day with ſome of the preceding events; as the officers, who came to take him, returned afterwards. On the laſt day of the feaſt of tabernacles, there was an holy convocation, (*Lev.* c. xxiii. v. 36;) and it is recorded, that they uſed to draw and pour out water before the Lord. In alluſion, as it is ſuppoſed, to this ceremony, Jeſus ſtood forth and proclaimed aloud, that "if any "man thirſted, let him come to him and drink." Thus he declared himſelf to be the unfailing ſource of ſalvation to periſhing ſinners; yea the fountain of living waters, in oppoſition to the broken ciſterns of mere creatures. If any man felt himſelf deſtitute, expoſed to miſery, and deſirous of true happineſs; let him come and apply to him, and his wants would be ſupplied, his diſtreſs prevented, his deſires ſatisfied: if any ſinner were diſquieted with guilt, and fear of wrath, and experienced fervent deſires after God's favour, communion with him, and recovery to holineſs; let him come to Jeſus, and his terrors would be removed, and the bleſſings thirſted after would be granted. (c. iv. ver. 10—13. c. vi. v. 35. *Iſaiah*, c. lv. v. 1—3. *Rev.* c. xxi. v. 6. c. xxii. v. 1. 17.) But as this thirſt eſpecially means vehement longing after ſpiritual bleſſings, which nothing can divert, or ſatisfy except the enjoyment of them: ſo the ſanctifying, and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit were particularly intended by the waters, which Chriſt called on them to come to Him, and drink. For he added, that every one, who believed in Him would be ſo repleniſhed from Him, that "out of his belly would "flow rivers of living water." This was ſpoken in reference to ſeveral ſcriptures. (*Prov.* c. x. v. 11. c. xviii. v. 4. *Iſaiah*, c. xli. v. 17, 18. c. xliii. v. 20. c. lviii. v. 11.) The believer would not only have theſe divine influences communicated to him, for his own abiding advantage, but they would be within him a

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this ſaying, ſaid, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

41 Others ſaid, This is the Chriſt. But ſome ſaid, Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee?

42 Hath not the ſcripture ſaid, That Chriſt cometh of the ſeed of David, and out of the town of Beth-lehem, where David was?

43 So there was a diviſion among the people becauſe of him,

44 And ſome of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 Then came the officers to the chief prieſts and Phariſees; and they ſaid unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers anſwered, Never man ſpake like this man.

47 Then anſwered them the Phariſees, Are ye alſo deceived?

48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Phariſees, believed on him?

49 But this people, who knoweth not the law are curſed.

50 Nicodemus ſaith unto them, (he that came to Jeſus by night, being one of them.)

51 Doth our law judge *any* man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou alſo of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet.

53 And every man went unto his own houſe.

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fountain of living water, whence plentiful ſtreams, yea rivers, would flow forth, for the quickening, ſanctifying, and comforting of others alſo. The holy affections of his heart, as connected with divine knowledge and wiſdom, would produce ſuch a tenor of edifying converſation, and exemplary practice, as would render him a channel, as it were, by which ſpiritual bleſſings would be conveyed to thoſe, with whom he aſſociated. This might be eſpecially intended of the apoſtles, and other preachers of the goſpel; but in a ſubordinate ſenſe it is the caſe of other believers alſo. The evangeliſt here obſerves that our Lord ſpake this of the Spirit, which believers were afterwards to receive: “for the Holy Ghoſt “was not yet: becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified.” “Holy men of old had ſpoken as they were moved by “the Holy Ghoſt;” and all believers in every age have been ſanctified and comforted by Him: but the miniſtration of the Spirit was not yet fully introduced; the emphatical pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt, had not yet taken place: for that ſignal event was reſerved to grace the Redeemer's triumphs, and to atteſt his reſurrection, and aſcenſion to his heavenly glory.

V. 40—53.] This open declaration of our Lord, and his other inſtructions excited a further debate among the people concerning him; as ſome deemed him that Prophet, who was to precede the Meſſiah, and others the promiſed Meſſiah himſelf: but to this it was objected, that Jeſus was of Galilee; whereas the Meſſiah was to be a deſcendant of David, and a native of Bethlehem. Thus they remained under the power of their fatal prejudices, becauſe they did not make diligent, and impartial enquiry concerning him. However amidſt theſe diſputes, even ſuch of the officers, as were diſpoſed to apprehend him, could not ſummon reſolution to do it; and ſo they returned to the council without him. Being therefore queſtioned concerning their conduct, they replied, that “never man ſpake as this Perſon did!” His diſcourſes were inimitably powerful, and convincing, and delivered with unſpeakable dignity, and propriety. This enraged the proud and envious Phariſees, who demanded, whether they too were infected with the ſame contagion, and deceived into an opinion of his being the Meſſiah? And, making their own example the teſt of truth, they enquired, whether any of the rulers, and Phariſees, the moſt learned, eminent, and religious men in the nation, had believed in him? For, as to the ignorant, and contemptible rabble, who followed him; they knew nothing of the meaning of the ſcriptures, and were deſerving to be execrated of men, as well as accurſed of God. To this Nicodemus took courage to reply, by enquiring, whether their law judged, and condemned any man unheard, and without examining him, concerning the things, of which he was accuſed? This implied an anſwer to their enquiry: here was a ruler, a teacher, and a Phariſee, who at leaſt favoured Jeſus. Accordingly they began to revile him, as if he had ſpoken like a worthleſs and ignorant Galilean: and bade him examine, and he would find that no prophet was to ariſe out of Galilee. This was a general rule, for which they had no ground: if they meant any thing more by it, than that the Meſſiah was not to be born in Galilee. However Nicodemus's interpoſition diſconcerted their meaſures, and they did not proceed any further in their deſign at that time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No external evidences or advantages can overcome the obſtinacy and enmity of the human heart, or ſecure the converſion of a ſinner: we need not then be diſconcerted by the contempt and oppoſition of our neareſt relations, when we remember that the brethren of the holy Jeſus did not believe in him. Worldly men commonly judge of others by themſelves; and they therefore are diſpoſed to aſcribe even their moſt unexceptionable actions, however modeſtly and humbly performed, to oſtentation, ambition, or ſome ſelfiſh motive; knowing that their own moſt ſpecious conduct ſprings from no higher a principle. Ungodly men ſometimes gravely undertake to counſel thoſe, who are employed in the work of God: yet they can only propoſe to them ſuch things as *apparently* conduce to their preſent advantage;

CHAP. VIII.

Contains Jeſus, 1ſt. Teaching at the temple; and avoiding a ſnare that was laid for him, in reſpect of a woman taken in adultery, 1---11. *2d. Declaring himſelf to be the Light of the world; ſhewing that his Father bare witneſs to him, and predicting the ruin of the unbelieving Jews,* 12---30. *3d. Aſſuring his diſciples of true liberty; anſwering the cavils of his enemies; and ſhewing that they were the ſlaves of ſin, and the children of the devil,* 31---47. *4th. Reviled by them as a Samaritan, and as poſſeſſed with a devil; refuting their charge, promiſing life to believers, ſhewing that He was before Abraham, and evading their attempts to ſtone him,* 48---59.

and *really* tend to their injury and diſgrace. But the ſpiritual man ſees a variety of reaſons for his conduct, and for the time and manner of his proceedings, of which others have no capacity to judge. He knows himſelf to be ſurrounded with enemies, who hate him in proportion as his example, converſation, or more public teſtimony tend to expoſe the wickedneſs of men's hearts, and lives; to proteſt againſt the corrupt maxims, purſuits and faſhions of the world; and to ſhew the evil even of their boaſted morality, religion, and benevolence, when tarniſhed by pride, hypocriſy, and enmity to the goſpel. He ſees therefore that he needs the wiſdom of the ſerpent, as well as the harmleſsneſs of the dove: he will conſult the word of God, and pray for the teaching of his Spirit; he will be decided againſt the counſel of carnal men, and leave them to their own devices, and to monopolize that friendſhip of the world, which is enmity againſt God. The ſervants of Chriſt muſt expect to follow him, through evil report, and good report. The moſt faithful preachers of his goſpel muſt be content, to be called by many "deceivers of the people;" though others will deem them good men, and perhaps think better of them than they deſerve, which none ever could do of their Lord and Maſter. But in general they, who count them deceivers will ſpeak out; and many who favour them will be afraid of incurring reproach, by avowing their regard to them. Any plauſible objection, the reſult of ignorance, and indolent miſtake, will often more than counterbalance the fulleſt proof of a man's being employed, and owned of God: for the cauſe is tried before a partial judge, who will only hear the evidence on one ſide of the queſtion. Some prejudice concerning the family, country, or education of the faithful teacher will be employed by ſatan, to ſtop the ears of his ſervants againſt the truth: and the charge of ignorant, and illiterate will be adduced againſt the moſt ſcriptural preachers by ſuch, as have not yet learned the firſt principles of the oracles of God; however accompliſhed they may be in that wiſdom of the world, which is fooliſhneſs with him. But in an inferior ſenſe, every faithful miniſter, (wherever educated,) may humbly adopt the words of Chriſt. His doctrine is not his own invention, nor does it ſpring either from his learning, or his ignorance; but it is from God, deduced from his word, through the teaching of his Spirit, and he orders it to be preached for the glory of his name. All therefore, who preſume to engage in this work, ſhould ſo ſtudy and pray over the ſcriptures, that they may have a well grounded confidence, that the grand ſubjects of their inſtructions are agreeable to the oracles of God. They ought likewiſe to take heed to themſelves, as well as to their doctrine; that it may be evident, that they ſeek not their own glory, the applauſe of their hearers, or any filthy lucre, (as ſelf-ſent preachers do;) but the glory of their Lord in the ſalvation of ſouls. Thus it will appear, that there is no unrighteouſneſs in them, nor any reaſon to ſuſpect them of bad motives in the exerciſe of their miniſtry. But amidſt the various opinions, and controverſies about religion, which agitate the world; what a bleſſed encouragement is it to the honeſt enquirer, to remember, that if any man of any nation "*will* do " the will of God, he ſhall know of the doctrine, " whether it be of God, or whether men ſpeak of themſelves." So that the word of the Lord is paſſed, and cannot be recalled, that all, who deſire earneſtly, and ſeek diligently to know the will of God, in order to reduce it to practice, ſhall be guided through every labyrinth of uncertainty, and paſt every precipice of error, in the ways of truth and peace; and that they only ſhall be given up to ſtrong and deſtructive deluſions, who hate the truth, becauſe they have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.

Unbelievers may indeed pretend the contrary, and be very zealous for their own views of religion, and vehemently perſecute thoſe, who diſſent from them; whilſt at the ſame time they are acting in direct oppoſition to the plain precepts of God's word, and indulging the moſt diabolical tempers, and when the leaſt check is given them, they will revile and abuſe others, as if all who were not of their party were unworthy of the leaſt regard. Such men, in their zeal for doctrines, (true in themſelves, though held by them in a diſtorted manner,) quite overlook the genuine tendency of them, and are full of pride, and rage in diſputing for the moſt humiliating and conciliatory truths: and if external ordinances be their idol, they pervert them to purpoſes diametrically oppoſite to their true intention: and they condemn in others things of the ſame nature with, or undeniably better than, thoſe which they allow in themſelves. But it behoves us to conſider matters more candidly, and impartially; that we may not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment: we ſhould alſo guard againſt the folly of oppoſing our preconceived opinions, (as if they were demonſtrations,) to ſuch inſtructions, as have the appearance of being from God. If we would underſtand religion, we muſt get acquainted with the glory and harmony of the divine perfections; and we muſt ſeek this knowledge of God from the incarnate Son, and by contemplating his character, miracles, life, and death: otherwiſe we ſhall ſet up a falſe ſyſtem in oppoſition to the truth, and be in danger of being ſeduced to concur with thoſe, who, in every

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him: and he ſat down, and taught them.

3 And the ſcribes and Phariſees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and, when they had ſet her in the midſt,

4 They ſay unto him, Maſter, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moſes in the law commanded us, that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned: but what ſayeſt thou?

6 This they ſaid, tempting him, that they might have to accuſe him. But Jeſus ſtooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued aſking him, he lifted up himſelf, and ſaid unto them, He that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her.

8 And again he ſtooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by their own conſcience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt, *even* unto the laſt: and Jeſus was left alone, and the woman ſtanding in the midſt.

10 When Jeſus had lifted up himſelf, and ſaw none but the woman, he ſaid unto her, Woman, where are thoſe thine accuſers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She ſaid, No man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid unto her, Neither do I comdemn thee: go, and ſin no more.

12 Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them,

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age have been enraged to perſecution by the ſucceſs of the goſpel. For a ſhort time Chriſt continues, by his word and miniſters, among thoſe who reject his ſalvation; but the day of life, and of grace are both of tranſient, and uncertain continuance; and afterwards ſinners, in their miſery, would be glad of that help, which now they deſpiſe. But it will ſoon become in vain to ſeek him, and where he is, thither ſhall no unbeliever enter for ever. They may diſpute, reaſon, and murmur about ſuch ſayings at preſent; but the event will explain them, and in the mean time he will continue to teach his people, who are diſperſed throughout the nations.

Yet ſtill the divine Redeemer proclaims aloud to every man, that is athirſt, to come to him, and drink; happy then is he, whom nothing can ſatisfy, except the favour, image, and enjoyment of God: let him come unto Jeſus, that this thirſt may be allayed, and let him not fear a repulſe. From our ſmitten Rock the waters of life flow forth abundantly, to follow the true Iſraelites through this barren wilderneſs. The miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit we do not now expect, but his more ordinary, and more valuable influences we may confidently apply for; theſe will not only be in us a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life; but they will flow forth in our words and works, to water, fructify, and refreſh our fellow pilgrims in the deſert, and to be the means of quickening ſuch as were dead in ſin. From our glorified Redeemer theſe holy ſtreams have flowed through the medium of the apoſtles, evangeliſts, and a ſucceſſion of believers, down to us in this diſtant age, and in this remote corner of the earth: May we communicate them to thoſe around us, and to ſuch as ſhall ſucceed us, till the whole world be repleniſhed by them! But alas how few are thus athirſt! Even they, who are for a time impreſſed, and reſtrained, and who ſpeak highly of the words of Jeſus, as more excellent than thoſe of all other teachers; often ſpeedily loſe their convictions, and go on in their ſins: whilſt proud infidels, and Phariſees, with carnal Scribes and prieſts deem all deluded, and contemptible, who coincide not with them in opinion. Frequently they revile as ignorant Enthuſiaſts, or deſigning hypocrites ſuch men, as are far more ſerious, diligent, and impartial in ſearching for the truth, than themſelves are; and whoſe words and works are ſober, ſcriptural, and exemplary: but it ſeems enough for them to anſwer by ſaying, “Have any of the rulers, and “Phariſees believed in him?” Whereas the opinions of ſuch men have more generally been a criterion of error, than the teſt of truth. But if a few of their own rank, education, or deſcription are convinced of, and dare to avow, the truth; they too are directly treated with obloquy and contempt, as weak deluded men, who have ſuffered themſelves to become the dupes of fanatics, and impoſtors. Thus wicked men from age to age proceed in the ſame track: yet at the ſame time the Lord gradually brings forward the weak and timid of his ſincere diſciples; and makes uſe of them to derange the politic deſigns of his enemies; for his counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—11.] Probably our Lord went every evening to Bethany, to the houſe of Martha, &c; where he was more retired than he could have been in the city: but it is generally ſuppoſed, that he ſpent this night upon the Mount of Olives in devotion. However he returned, early in the morning, to the temple, that he might inſtruct the people, who were there aſſembled, before they left Jeruſalem, on the day after the concluſion of the feaſt. Whilſt he was thus employed, his enemies concerted a plan for drawing him into a ſnare. About that time, a woman had been taken in adultery, whoſe guilt was undeniable: they therefore pretended a deference to his judgment, and authority, and brought the criminal to him, that he might decide what puniſhment was to be inflicted upon her. They

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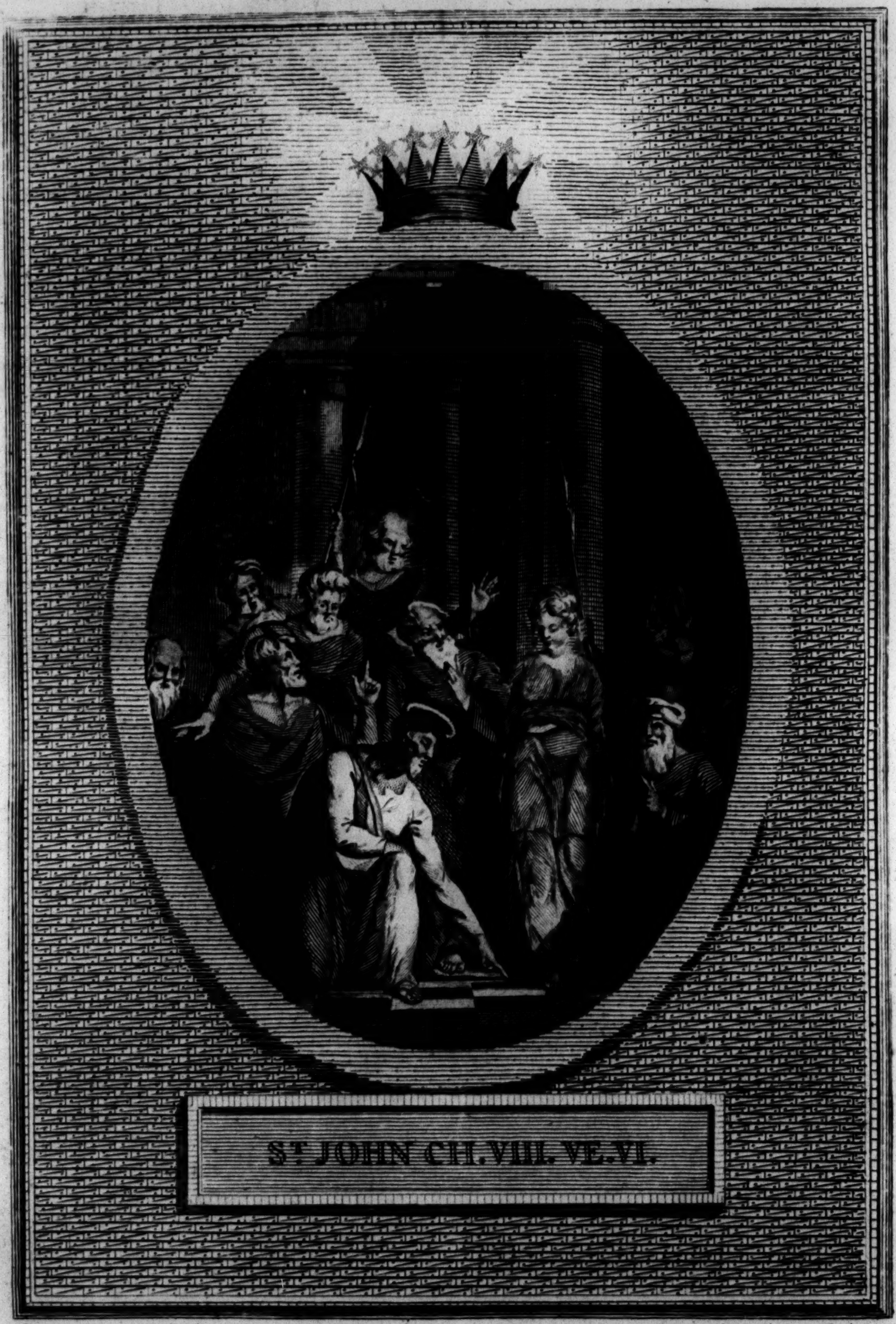

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ſaying, I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.

13 The Phariſees therefore ſaid unto him, Thou beareſt record of thyſelf; thy record is not true.

14 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Though I bear record of myſelf, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

15 Ye judge after the fleſh; I judge no man.

16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that ſent me.

ſtated that Moſes commanded ſuch offenders to be ſtoned. The law indeed doomed both the adulterer, and adultereſs to be put to death, (*Lev.* c. xx. v. 10;) but they ſhewed their partiality by proſecuting the woman, and letting the man eſcape. In a parallel caſe, ſtoning was the death, that was ſpecified, (*Deut.* c. xxii. v. 21—24.) and therefore the other was underſtood of the ſame kind of execution. But they ſuppoſed from many parts of our Lord's doctrine, that he deemed himſelf authorized to alter, or abrogate the appointments of Moſes: and therefore they deſired his opinion upon the ſubject. But, if He had ordered them to execute the law upon the woman; they would doubtleſs have accuſed him to the Romans of aſſuming a judicial authority, independant of their government: if he had bid them ſet her at liberty, they would have repreſented him to the people as an enemy to the law, and the patron of the moſt infamous characters; and if he had referred them to the Roman authority, as then placed over them; they would have accuſed him to the multitude, as a betrayer of their liberties. So that they ſeem to have concluded, that he muſt inevitably either render himſelf obnoxious to the Romans, or unpopular among the Jews by his anſwer to this inſidious queſtion: and in either caſe, it would have facilitated the execution of their purpoſe of putting him to death. But he ſaw the wickedneſs of their hearts: and therefore he ſtooped down, &c; as if he had not regarded them. Perhaps he wrote with his finger in the duſt, the ſentence, which he afterwards ſpake. Some think, that he thus meant to teach them, that they ought to decide ſuch matters by the written word: and others, that he intimated that ſuch baſe hypocrites ſhould be written in the earth. (*Jer.* c. xvii. v. 13.) However his apparent backwardneſs to interfere rendered them the more urgent in their enquiry: and therefore at length, he abruptly ordered that man, who was without ſin among them, to begin the execution of the criminal, according to the law, by firſt caſting a ſtone at her. It was appointed by Moſes, that the accuſer ſhould thus lead the way in putting the condemned perſon to death, (*Deut.* c. xvii. v. 7:) the whole company, that brought this woman, were her accuſers; but it would have been unſuitable for any one of them, who was conſcious of ſecret wickedneſs, to have begun this ſeverity againſt her, and therefore he ordered him to do it, who was conſcious of his innocence. We may be ſure, that our Lord did not mean, that no man ought to act as judge, or witneſs, &c, in a criminal cauſe, who was not wholly exempt from all ſin, in his own conduct; becauſe that would diſannul civil government, which is God's ordinance. But he knew the concealed iniquities of theſe men; and by thus appealing to their conſciences, in reſpect of themſelves, he made them ſenſible of the impropriety of *their* taking an active part in the buſineſs. A divine power doubtleſs attended his word, and a new conviction of guilt ſeized upon them, which for the preſent diſarmed their malice; and perhaps fearing leſt he ſhould more openly and explicitly mention the crimes, in which they lived; they took the opportunity, whilſt he again ſtooped down, &c, to withdraw ſilently, and ſingly, the eldeſt of the company, being moſt deeply alarmed, departing firſt, and the others following his example. Thus they were ſent away in diſgrace, and ſelf-condemned: ſo that Jeſus was left alone: that is none remained with him of that company, ſave the woman, who ſtood in the midſt of the court, where the people were aſſembled to attend on his doctrine; and there ſhe waited to hear what ſentence he would paſs upon her. But having baffled the deſigns of his enemies; he declined all interference with the magiſtrate's office, and gave her permiſſion to depart; exhorting her at the ſame time not to repeat her crime, or return to any of her former wickedneſs. There is no evidence that this woman was a true penitent: yet if theſe remarkable circumſtances were the means of her being converted, pardoned, and ſaved; it would appear peculiarly ſuited to His deſign, who came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. It does not ſeem, that any concluſive argument can hence be drawn, concerning the puniſhment of adultery under the chriſtian diſpenſation: and doubtleſs it is abſurd, that this crime ſhould eſcape almoſt without a legal cenſure, when theft is puniſhed with ſuch marked ſeverity.

V. 12—16.] After this interruption our Lord proceeded to inſtruct the multitudes: and the ſun, being perhaps at this time juſt riſen, by whoſe light they were about to journey homewards; he thence took occaſion to declare himſelf to be "the Light of the world." (Notes, &c. c. i. v. 4—9.) He is that to men in general, as to the concerns of their ſouls, which the ſun is in reſpect of their temporal life: that is, He is the Source and Fountain of all ſpiritual knowledge and wiſdom, by which any man in the world ever did, or ever ſhall obtain God's favour, do his will, and find eternal felicity. All other lights muſt be either typical, derivative, or deluſory. They, who have taught the ſame truths, have in their meaſure, ſhone by, and reflected his Light: they, who have taught oppoſite opinions, have deluded men with a falſe glare of ſuppoſed ſcience, into the pit of deſtruction. He, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, had with his dawning beams afforded ſome degree of Light to preceding generations: but he was now riſen, and he called upon them to make uſe of his clearer Light, in prefer-

17 It is alſo written in your law, That the teſtimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witneſs of myſelf, and the Father that ſent me beareth witneſs of me.

19 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jeſus anſwered, Ye neither know me nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye ſhould have kown my Father alſo.

20 Theſe words ſpake Jeſus in the treaſury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

21 Then ſaid Jeſus again unto them, I go my way, and ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall dei in your ſins: whither I go ye cannot come.

22 Then ſaid the Jews, Will he kill himſelf? becauſe he ſaith, whither I go ye cannot come.

23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I ſaid therefore unto you, That ye ſhall die in your ſins; for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye ſhall die in your ſins.

25 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Even *the ſame* that I ſaid unto you from the beginning.

ence to that of the Moſaic diſpenſation, and in oppoſition to the inſtructions of their falſe teachers, or of any other, who pretended to illuminate mankind: and he ſpeaks the ſame to us alſo. He further aſſured them, that no one, who received his doctrine, obeyed his word, and followed him as his true diſciple, ſhould continue in ignorance, error, uncertainty, iniquity, or miſery, however deeply he had before been involved in this complicated darkneſs; but that he ſhould gradually be illuminated in the clear knowledge of God, and of every thing pertaining to acceptance, peace and holineſs; that ſo he might poſſeſs that divine Light, which guides men ſafely and comfortably through this world of ſin and ſorrow, to the everlaſting felicity of heaven. The Meſſiah had frequently been predicted under this image; (*Iſaiah*, c. xlii. v. 6, 7. c. xlix. v. 6. c. lx. v. 1, 2. 19. *Mal.* c. iv. v. 3:) ſo that this declaration implied an avowal of his character, and alſo that the Phariſees, who oppoſed him were blind guides, and falſe teachers: ſome of them therefore, that were among the multitude, and who had alſo been enraged at the diſcomfiture of their brethren, obſerved that as he bare witneſs to himſelf, his teſtimony ought to be conſidered as falſe, according to the common rule of judgment in ſuch caſes. To this He anſwered, that this rule did not apply to Him; as he knew perfectly whence he came, and whither he was about to go; of which they were entirely ignorant. He had before ſhewn them, that God had in various ways borne witneſs to him: yet they ſpake as if there had been no other proof of his being the Meſſiah, except his own word! But, as he meant afterwards to recur to this; he waved it for the preſent, and only obſerved, that they were incompetent judges in ſuch a cauſe; for they were not only ignorant of Him, as coming down from heaven, and about ſhortly to return thither; but they were unacquainted even with the place of his nativity as man; and moreover they were ſo blinded by their carnal prejudices, that they judged of his pretenſions "according to the fleſh," without any reliſh for the ſpiritual excellency of his character and doctrine, or the divine glory of his miracles; and without any deſire after the real bleſſings of his kingdom. However he came among them as a Saviour, and did not mean at that time to denounce ſentence, or execute vengeance on any man; of which he had given them a proof in his refuſal to decide any thing concerning the woman taken in adultery. Yet if he ſhould aſſume this character, he would certainly judge with infallible equity, and truth; as his union of nature, counſel, and operation with the Father, that ſent him, and was with him, would exclude all poſſibility of error, or injuſtice.

V. 17—20.] Their law, of which they were ſo tenacious, admitted the evidence of two men as a ſufficient proof of any fact; though the ſcripture every where deſcribed mankind as prone to deceive, and liable to be deceived. Jeſus therefore obſerved that He was one competent witneſs concerning his own nature and miſſion; and that his Father was a ſecond unexceptionable witneſs to him. Doubtleſs He referred to his own miracles, to the voice from heaven, and the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, whereby it was proved that he was the Son of God. But the Jews either did not underſtand his meaning, or they were unwilling fairly to meet his argument: and therefore they enquired who his Father was? He did not however ſee good to give them an explicit anſwer; but only declared that they did not know the real character, either of Him, or of his Father. Indeed had they acknowledged him in his divine perſon, and Mediatorial work, they would ſo have diſcovered his Father's glory to ſhine forth in, and from Him; that they would have been brought to a ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of the Father alſo. Thus he afterward ſaid, that He, who had ſeen him, had ſeen the Father; and that he and the Father were one. This open declaration of his being the Son of God, was made in that part of the precincts of the temple, where the ſacred treaſures were collected, and depoſited; yet his enemies were ſo reſtrained, that they did not apprehend him, becauſe the time of his ſufferings and death was not then arrived.

V. 21—29.] (Note, &c. c. vii. v. 33—56.) Our Lord next proceeded to warn the unbelieving Jews of their guilt and danger, more plainly than before. He would ſpeedily withdraw his bodily preſence from them: and they would in their approaching miſeries, deſire the coming of their Meſſiah to redeem them; (for he was indeed that great Deliverer, though they would not be-

26 I have many things to ſay and to judge of you: but he that ſent me is true; and I ſpeak to the world thoſe things which I have heard of him.

27 They underſtood not that he ſpake to them of the Father.

28 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ſhall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myſelf; but as my Father hath taught me, I ſpeak theſe things.

29 And he that ſent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him.

30 As he ſpake theſe words, many believed on him.

31 Then ſaid Jeſus to thoſe Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my diſciples indeed;

32 And ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.

33 They anſwered him, We be Abraham's ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man: how ſayeſt thou, Ye ſhall be made free?

34 Jeſus anſwered them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin.

35 And the ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever; *but* the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's ſeed: but

lieve it ;) and in this vain expectation they would periſh in their ſins; for they would by no means be able to come to that place, whither he was going. This appeared ſo ſtrange to the carnal Jews, who thought of nothing but this preſent world, that they perverſely, and ſcornfully enquired of each other, whether he meant to murder himſelf, in order to get out of their reach? As he ſo decidedly declared, that they ſhould not follow him to the place, whither he was going. In anſwer to this moſt abſurd, and malignant reflection, Jeſus obſerved to them; that they were both earthly in their original, and diabolical in their diſpoſition, and belonged to this preſent evil world: whereas He was from above, of a heavenly and divine nature, and not at all like the men of the world, in his judgment, and temper; ſo that his doctrine, kingdom, and bleſſings could not be ſuited to their taſte. Whilſt this contrariety continued, there could be no cordial intercourſe between them: and as he was about to return to heaven; ſo it was impoſſible that they ſhould follow him thither, or even be capable of ſharing the refined delights of that holy habitation; whilſt they were of their preſent carnal diſpoſition. Nor could they eſcape that condemnation, to which their ſins expoſed them, unleſs they believed him to be the promiſed Meſſiah. Some think that in the expreſſion "I am *He*," (of which the latter word is not in the original,) our Lord meant to avow himſelf the great I AM, who ſpake to Moſes. We ſhall indeed meet with a paſſage in this chapter, which is unequivocal to this purpoſe, (v. 58:) but as the expreſſion is ſometimes applied to others, exactly as in this place (c. ix. v. 9;) ſo it would weaken the argument to adduce it in proof of the doctrine; like bringing ſuſpicious witneſſes to a fact, which is otherwiſe ſufficiently atteſted. Yet as the words, thus underſtood, imply an undoubted ſcriptural truth; ſo it is probable, that our Lord intended gradually to prepare the people for a more full avowal of it. The Jews therefore enquired of him, who he was, that they were to believe in him? His anſwer to this enquiry hath greatly embarraſſed the critics: but the moſt obvious meaning ſeems that ſuggeſted by our tranſlation: as if he had ſaid, "At the beginning of this "diſcourſe I told you, that I was the Light of the "world; and if you believe on me as ſuch, you will "gradually know more of my perſon, and doctrine." This was equivalent to informing them, that he was the Meſſiah, or the Son of God. He added, that he had much more to ſay to them concerning Himſelf, and his ſalvation, as well as about their guilt and danger, and the vengeance that was to be executed on their nation: but this was not his preſent work: however, his Father, who ſent him, being true and faithful, would certainly fufil all his ancient promiſes and threatenings reſpecting them, and atteſt the doctrine which he taught them: for He only ſpake to the world; the doctrine, which he had received from Him. Notwithſtanding the explicit manner, in which he ſpake of his Father, they were ſo blinded by their prejudices, that they did not underſtand, that he meant that God, whom they worſhipped, as the Father of heaven, and earth. He therefore further obſerved, with reference to his crucifixion, that when they had lifted up Him, the Son of Man, they would know, that He was their promiſed Meſſiah, and that he had done, and taught nothing of himſelf, from any motive, or by any will, diſtinct from that of his Father; who did not leave him alone, but continued to be, and to work in, and with him, (as was evinced by his miracles;) for all that he ſaid, and did, moſt perfectly pleaſed the Father, as fulfilling his eternal purpoſes, and diſplaying his glory.

V. 30—36.] There was ſuch dignity in, and power attending upon, the words of our Lord on this occaſion, that many of his hearers were convinced that He was the Meſſiah, and profeſſed to believe in him as ſuch. Directing therefore his diſcourſe to them, he encouraged them to "continue in his word:" this ſeems to mean a perſevering attendance on his inſtructions, credence to his declarations, reliance on his promiſes, and obedience to his commandments; notwithſtanding all the poſſible temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the devil. If they did this, they would become, and evidence them-ye ſeek to kill me, becauſe my word hath no place in you.

38 I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have ſeen with your father.

39 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Abraham is our father. Jeſus ſaith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye ſeek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then ſaid they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

42 Jeſus ſaid unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myſelf, but he ſent me.

43 Why do ye not underſtand my ſpeech? *even* becauſe ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the luſts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in him. When he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And becauſe I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of ſin? And if I ſay the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God heareth God's words:

ſelves to be his diſciples *truly*, and not in name and temporary profeſſion alone: and by the conſtant teaching of his word, and Spirit, their prejudices would be ſo removed, their miſtakes ſo rectified, their views ſo enlarged, and their doubts and uncertainties ſo precluded; that they would know the divine truth and excellency of his doctrine in a clear and diſtinct manner, and be able to diſtinguiſh it from every ſpecious deluſion. By this knowledge they would learn where their hope and ſtrength lay; and thus they would be made free from the bondage of ſin and ſatan; from the love of the world, and the fear of men, from their enſlaving attachment to traditional ſuperſtitions, from the yoke of the ceremonial law, from their legal terrors, and the ſpirit of bondage, and from the dread of death, and the condemnation due to their ſins: thus they would poſſeſs the greateſt poſſible liberty, in the willing, delightful ſervice, and worſhip of God, and in the enjoyment of his favour. But our Lord's hearers were far from thus underſtanding him; they therefore, (and probably ſome of thoſe alſo, who profeſſed to believe in him,) averred, that they never were in bondage to any man, &c. As their nation, though Abraham's feed, had been in the moſt abject bondage in Egypt; and afterwards to ſeveral other nations, eſpecially the Aſſyrians, Chaldeans, and Syrians; and as they were then reduced into ſubjection to the Romans: ſo it is wonderful how they could thus flatter themſelves into a forgetfulneſs of their former and preſent condition? If they meant it of perſonal ſlavery; they certainly could not aſcribe their exemption to their deſcent from Abraham, as many of their brethren were frequently thus in bondage. If they meant that their political ſlavery was an unjuſt uſurpation, and contrary to their right, as Abraham's ſeed; (which was their conſtant pretext for rebelling againſt the Romans;) this could not in the leaſt interfere with the Meſſiah's reſtoring them to the poſſeſſion of actual liberty. However our Lord did not ſee good to refute their vain-glorious boaſt; and we will take the hint, to perplex ourſelves no more about their meaning. Spiritual things were all in all in his judgment: and he therefore only reminded them, that the man, who practiſed any kind of habitual ſin, was in fact a ſlave to that ſin, and could therefore have no right to boaſt of freedom; intimating that this was the caſe with moſt of them. But if inſtead of being evidently the ſlaves of ſin, they had more exactly ſerved God according to the letter of the law, and in dependance upon it, to the rejection of his ſalvation; they could not on that account expect to abide in the family for ever, as children, and heirs, but to be excluded, *like Iſhmael, who was the ſon of Abraham, by a bond-woman*, (*Gal.* c. iv. v. 21—34.) But the Son of God, who was alſo eminently the ſeed of Abraham; and every believer, who in him is a child of God, abideth for ever in the family as an heir: if then He, the Son of God, made them free by his power and grace, according to the will of his Father; they would then "be free indeed;" receiving the Spirit of adoption, and the privileges, the liberty, and the inheritance of children.

V. 37—47.] As to their preſumptuous confidence in having Abraham for their father: though our Lord allowed their external relation to that patriarch; yet he ſhewed them that this could not profit ſuch as were of a contrary ſpirit to him; and this was certainly the caſe with thoſe, who were purpoſing to murder him, becauſe his holy doctrine had no place in their hearts, which were pre-occupied with contrary deſires, and affections. Indeed his doctrine and their practice muſt needs be oppoſite to each other: for he ſpake thoſe truths, which he had ſeen with his Father, and was come from heaven to teſtify to the world; and they did thoſe wicked works, which they had ſeen with, and learned from their father, acting in concert with him, and copying his example. This intimation cauſed the Jews again to inſiſt upon it, that Abraham was their father: but Jeſus ſhewed them, that if they had been the genuine children of that father of the faithful, they would have copied his example: whereas, they were ſeeking to murder him, whom at leaſt ye therefore hear *them* not, becauſe ye are not of God.

48 Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil?

49 Jeſus anſwered, I have not a devil: but I honour my Father, and ye do diſhonour me.

50 And I ſeek not mine own glory: there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death.

they could not deny to be a man, who had told them the truth, as he had received it from God; which did not accord with Abraham's example, who always welcomed every diſcovery of the truth, and will of God, with humble faith and obedience. It was however true, that in another ſenſe they performed the works of their father. The Jews now perceiving that he ſpake not of their natural deſcent, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe, anſwered with indignation, that "they were not born of fornica-"tion;" that is, they were not the deſcendants of Gentile idolaters, or apoſtate Jews, nor themſelves the worſhippers of idols; but they had one Father, even God, whoſe covenanted people and children they were. But Jeſus obſerved to them, that if God had indeed been their Father; if they had been born of, and adopted by Him, and made partakers of his Holy Image and favour; they would certainly have loved him, the beloved Son of God, the brightneſs of his glory and the expreſs image of his Perſon: for he proceeded forth, and came from God, (which words ſeem to imply ſomething more, than his coming into the world as Mediator, being different from what are ſpoken of any other perſon;) neither did he come of his own accord, but as ſent, and commiſſioned by the Father, to diſplay his glory, and make known his truth. Had they therefore either deſired, in a ſuitable manner, the favour of God, or approved of his attributes, or ſought his glory; they muſt have loved the whole character, and doctrine of Jeſus, and have welcomed him in all his offices. As the matter was thus plain, how was it that they did not underſtand his diſcourſe? Truly, becauſe their pride and carnal prejudices cloſed their minds againſt his holy doctrine; and therefore they were determined not to believe that he was the Meſſiah, and the Son of God, or even a Teacher ſent from him. In ſhort they were the children of the devil, and bare the image of their father: therefore they were reſolved to perpetrate thoſe vile deſigns, which originated from the luſts, that ſatan excited in their hearts, and which accorded to his malignant purpoſes of diſhonouring God, oppoſing true religion, and deſtroying it's friends, as much as poſſible. From the beginning of the world, that great adverſary of God, and of his creation, had been a murderer. Having departed from his original love of truth, and his fidelity and loyalty to his Maker, and Lord, by his awful apoſtacy, (in which he, as it were, murdered himſelf, and all his aſſociates;) he proceeded as ſoon as poſſible to murder the ſouls, and bodies of men alſo. By his lies he tempted Eve, and through her, Adam, to eat the forbidden fruit; by which he, in a ſenſe, murdered the whole ſpecies at once. Soon after, he inſtigated wicked Cain to murder his righteous brother Abel; which was the beginning, and ſpecimen of all the innocent blood ſhed by perſecutors ever ſince. He hath always been the great tempter of mankind to all kinds of quarrels, and contentions, which terminate in private murder, or in bloody deſtructive wars, and cruel oppreſſions, &c. He hath prompted men to theſe exceſſes, by which ſuch multitudes deſtroy themſelves and each other: and to ſuicide in all its varied forms. At the ſame time his ſuggeſtions tend equally to the ruin of men's immortal ſouls. All theſe his murders are connected with lies and deceit: all perſecutions have been excited on lying pretences, and in ſupport of falſe religions. In a word he is the great promoter of falſhood of every kind throughout the earth, and does all his miſchief by it; (even as God uſes truth, as the medium of all good to men:) he is altogether compoſed, as it were, of ſubtlety, diſſimulation, treachery, and falſhood: ſo that when he propagateth a lie of any kind, he acts in character, and bringeth forth out of his own inexhauſted treaſury; for he is not only a liar, but the original author of all lies, and the father of all liars. Now it was evident that theſe Jews were the children of this great murderer, and liar; in that they refuſed to believe in Jeſus, and ſought to put him to death, not only *though* he told them the truth, but *becauſe* he did ſo. Their wicked hearts were diametrically oppoſite to the truth, which muſt needs be holy, and humbling: but if he would have taught them any falſe doctrine, it would have been congenial to their pride and luſts, and they would have been diſpoſed to receive it. Yet could any of them convict him of any kind or degree of ſin? If they could not, how did they excuſe their rejection of his doctrine, and their murderous perſecution of him, notwithſtanding his undeniable miracles? If indeed he ſpake the truth of God to them, why did they not believe him? The reaſon was obvious: every man, who is born of, and belongs to God, has an habitual diſpoſition to hear his words, and to believe, and obey them: they therefore did not thus regard them, becauſe they were not the children of God, but the children of the devil; and like their father, were enmity itſelf againſt the truth and holineſs of God.

V. 48—53.] Theſe concluſive arguments, and cutting reproofs of our Lord exaſperated his proud enemies exceedingly: they therefore now openly declared, what they ſeem before to have privately whiſpered, namely, that He was a Samaritan, either one of that hated nation, or as great an enemy to them and their religion, as any Samaritan could be; and therefore equally entitled to their contempt and abhorrence. Moreover they concluded that he was poſſeſſed by a devil, and ſpake by his inſtigation, being alſo enabled by him to perform apparent miracles in confirmation of his deluſions. This was venting their rancorous malice in reproachful language to the utmoſt. But Jeſus meekly replied, that he had not a devil; (taking no notice of being called a Samaritan, as

52 Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou haſt a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou ſayeſt, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never taſte of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makeſt thou thyſelf?

54 Jeſus anſwered, if I honour myſelf, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye ſay, That he is your God.

55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I ſhould ſay, I know him not, I ſhall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his ſaying.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day: and he ſaw *it*, and was glad.

57 Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham?

58 Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

59 Then took they up ſtones to caſt at him: but Jeſus hid himſelf, and went out of the temple, going through the midſt of them, and ſo paſſed by.

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that did not immediately affect the credit of his divine commiſſion;) on the contrary he honoured God his Father, by his conduct, doctrine, and miracles, the tendency of which muſt be, to lead men to worſhip, truſt in, and obey him: and they diſhonoured him by their revilings, as if he were actuated by ſatan, which proved that they were enemies to God, and his honour. For his part he ſought not his own glory, as diſtinct from that of the Father; and therefore he diſregarded equally their reproaches, and their applauſe. There was one indeed that ſought to honour Him, who would judge, and execute vengeance on them for their oppoſition to him. He therefore proceeded moſt ſolemnly to aſſure them, that if any man cordially embraced, and conſtantly held faſt his holy doctrine by obedient faith, he ſhould never ſee death: meaning, that temporal death, or the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body, ſhould never do him harm; and eternal death, or the ſeparation of the ſoul from God, ſhould not come upon him. The Jews, miſunderſtanding this declaration, were confirmed by it in their opinion of his being under the influence of an evil ſpirit. Of this they pretended, that they now were certain: for Abraham and their prophets had all died; and was he able, not only to eſcape death himſelf, but to preſerve alſo his followers from it? And did he indeed pretend to be greater than all, who ever were before him? Jeſus had repeatedly ſhewn them, that he was the promiſed Meſſiah, by ſpeaking as the Son of God, and the Light of the world: and it was evident even from their own interpretation of the ſcriptures, that the Meſſiah was to be far greater, than any one, who had gone before him. To *ſee Death*, and to *taſte of Death*, ſeem only to be figurative expreſſions of the ſame import, as, to die.

V. 54—59.] In reply to their objection, our Lord obſerved, that if he claimed this honour for himſelf, upon his own teſtimony alone, it would be nothing, or a *vain glory*, like that of ambitious wordly men: but his Father had conferred this honour upon him, and teſtified in various ways that it belonged to him. By his Father he meant the God of Iſrael, whom they claimed as their covenanted Friend, and profeſſed to worſhip: yet they had no true knowledge of him, nor any of thoſe holy diſpoſitions which ſpring from that knowledge. But he knew him fully and perfectly: and if, to avoid their hatred, he ſhould deny this; he ſhould then indeed utter as great a falſhood, as they did, when they profeſſed to know, love, and worſhip Him. But he proved his knowledge of him, by perfectly keeping his commandments, and executing the commiſſion he had received from Him. He alſo aſſured them, that Abraham had greatly deſired to ſee, and rejoiced in the proſpect of, the day of his appearing upon earth. He had by faith in the divine promiſes, and through ſeveral types, looked forward to the appointed ſeaſon of his coming for the redemption of his people, with the higheſt ſatisfaction; and his own hope of ſalvation was grounded on the ſame word: yet his degenerate offſpring rejected and hated Him, whom their illuſtrious anceſtor had at ſo great a diſtance beheld with the greateſt reſpect and gladneſs! This declaration the Jews perverſely underſtood, as if he meant that Abraham had actually converſed with him, as a man living upon earth at that time. They obſerved that he was not yet fifty years old, and would he pretend, that he had ſeen Abraham, who died above 1700 years before? (Jeſus could not be at this time above thirty-five years of age: but his gravity, joined with his inceſſant labours probably made him look much older than he was.) To their enquiry he anſwered by ſolemnly ſaying, "Before Abraham was "I AM." The uſe of the preſent tenſe in this connexion, and the conſtruction of the paſſage, require us to underſtand it as a declaration, that as the great I AM, who appeared to Moſes, (*Exod.* c. iii. v. 14;) he poſſeſſed an underived, and independent exiſtence, before Abraham was brought into being, yea from all eternity. Indeed the words ſeem incapable of any other conſtruction; at leaſt conſiſtent with the common rules of grammar, or ſuch as will render them intelligible to a man of ordinary capacity. Thus the Jews evidently underſtood them: and therefore they were about to ſtone him for blaſphemy, without any proceſs of law, or regard to the Roman authority; their indignation was ſo greatly excited by them. But by his miraculous power he concealed himſelf from their view; and paſſing through the midſt of them without being perceived, he eluded their malice for the preſent. Probably this diſcourſe would leave a durable impreſſion on many of the hearers; and

CHAP. IX.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus giving ſight to one, who was born blind; and the converſe which was occaſioned by this miracle, 1---12. *2d. The Phariſees examining the man, and his parents; upbraiding him as Jeſus's diſciple, and excommunicating him,* 13---34. *3d. Jeſus making himſelf known to the man, as*

prepare their minds for receiving the teſtimony of his apoſtles, after the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the conduct of our Lord we ſee an example of the ſtricteſt attention to retired devotion, connected with the greateſt diligence in ſeizing upon every opportunity of public uſefulneſs: but we muſt be very careful in redeeming our time, and very moderate in animal recreation, if we would tread in his ſteps, and not allow theſe diſtinct, and too often detached, parts of our duty to intrench upon each other. Yet even Jeſus could ſcarce be more active in doing good, than his zealous enemies have always been in deviſing, and compaſſing evil; for malice will convert any thing into an occaſion of miſchief. The miniſters of the goſpel therefore want divine wiſdom, and fortitude; for they will be encountered by ſubtle, as well as by powerful opponents: yet their enemies are ſeldom more dangerous, than when they aſſume the appearance of friendſhip, and in the language of reſpect attempt to inveigle them to intermeddle with matters not belonging to them, or to interfere in the peculiar concerns of rulers, and princes. Doubtleſs adultery, and others crimes merit ſeverer puniſhment from the magiſtrate, than they generally meet with; and we may ſometimes ſtate and explain the law of God reſpecting them: but we ſhould not leave our peculiar work, to attempt the direction of legiſlators, or magiſtrates. If any perſuade us openly to meddle in ſuch matters, we ſhould look upon it as a temptation; and we may ſuſpect that this is ſometimes done, that they may accuſe us, either as ambitious men who are enemies to civil liberty, or as turbulent innovators who are diſaffected to the authority, which God hath placed over us. We ſhould therefore generally diſregard ſuch invitations, as though we heard them not; and we ſhould ſtudy to anſwer repeated ſolicitations by ſome ſerious addreſs to men's conſciences. Thus we ſhould ſtudy to be quiet, and mind our own buſineſs; aſſured that there will always be men enough to manage ſuch matters, without the interference of the miniſters of Chriſt, who have far more important work to attend upon. Indeed though the proſecution of criminals be in itſelf a good work: yet it is frequently conducted by ſuch perſons, and from ſuch motives; that the accuſers are in God's ſight the moſt atrocious offenders. From regard to ſociety ſuch perſons cannot be excluded; nor ſhould we in any ſenſe require too much of thoſe, who concur in the neceſſary but painful employment of bringing offenders to juſtice: yet we may fairly obſerve, that he, who is concerned in the proſecution of another for a capital offence; and is himſelf living in the practice of unrepented habitual wickedneſs, has need to tremble at the proſpect of more terrible vengeance from God than that, which he calls for upon a fellow criminal from human juſtice. He ſhould therefore pauſe, and prepare for his awful employment, by ſelf-examination, repentance, faith, prayer, and amendment of life; leſt he ſhould bring upon himſelf ſwift deſtruction. But were ſuch barriers placed around our courts of judicature; were ſuch rules proclaimed therein; how would they be thinned! Whilſt many convicted by their own conſciences, would go out one by one, perhaps beginning at the eldeſt, and greateſt perſons concerned; and thus the proſecution might be left unfiniſhed, and the criminals be allowed to eſcape. Nay if our moſt ſolemn religious ordinances could be fenced againſt thoſe, who are habitually practiſing ſome kind of ſecret iniquity; it is to be feared that the ſmall number of our communicants would be ſtrangely diminiſhed. However theſe reflections may convince us what little reaſon men have to object to the doctrine of a free ſalvation: they only, who have always performed a ſinleſs obedience, ought to caſt a ſtone at the preachers of unmerited forgiveneſs and eternal life by faith in Chriſt; all elſe ſhould thankfully receive their meſſage. The ſame conſiderations may alſo ſhew us the readieſt way of dealing with pertinacious objectors: an addreſs to their conſciences, which calls their ſins to remembrance, may render thoſe ſilent from fear of detection, and the ſenſe of their guilt, whom no arguments can reach: and though we muſt not excuſe crimes, nor object to the infliction of merited puniſhment: yet we ſhould hence learn to be gentle and compaſſionate even in performing the ſevereſt offices; and ever to ſhew a diſpoſition to forgive and be kind to the vileſt, as we hope for mercy from God to our own ſouls. Yet we ſhould alſo join our admonitions, to ſin no more; otherwiſe an eſcape from temporal puniſhment can only give an opportunity of treaſuring up wrath unto the day of wrath.

But every action of Jeſus, as well as his whole doctrine, ſhews him to us as "The Light of the world." Let us then no longer look to the ſchools of philoſophy for illumination; and let us not implicitly follow any man's teaching: on the contrary let us follow Jeſus, that we may not walk in darkneſs, but have the Light of Life. If we have begun to attend on him for inſtruction; we have found in ſome things that his record is true. In many reſpects he hath already "made darkneſs light for us," and "our path will "ſhine more and more unto the perfect day." But unbelievers know not whence he came, and whither he is gone; "they judge after the fleſh;" yet they preſume to judge him, before whoſe righteous tribunal they muſt ſhortly ſtand; whereas they are incompetent to decide upon the principles and conduct of his meaneſt diſciple! Such men often oppoſe precepts to doctrines: yet thoſe precepts properly explained condemn their conduct, and bear witneſs to the doctrines they oppoſe: yea in every way God teſtifieth to his Son, that ſalvation is by faith in him alone. They, who know not His glory and grace, know not the Father that ſent him: but by the knowledge of the Son, in all his characters, and mediatory work, ſinners attain to the ſanctifying and beatiſying knowledge of the Father alſo. Though the Redeemer has left this earth, where he was ſo hated, and deſpiſed; yet none that truly ſeek him ſhall die in their ſins, or be excluded from that place, whither as our Forerunner he is for us entered: but they who continue to deride his warnings, and thus prove themſelves earthly and deviliſh, will die unpardoned, and periſh as veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction.

But ſome will ſay, who is Jeſus? And what are we to believe concerning him? We allow him to have been a Prophet, a Teacher of moſt excellent morality, and a bright example of beneficence and patience: nay we allow him to have been the chief of men, or even of all creatures; and we would even grant him to be ſomething more than a creature, if we could do it without acknowledging him as “God over all, bleſſed for evermore:” and will not this ſuffice? Let Jeſus himſelf anſwer this queſtion? Is this to honour him, even as we honour the Father? Does this anſwer to his being the Light of the World, the Life of men, the Reſurrection of the dead, One with the Father, the everlaſting I AM? He who ſaid ſuch things of himſelf in the vale of humiliation, will not retract them upon the throne of glory: and they, who do not believe in him, as all this, and as more than words can fully expreſs, will periſh in their ſins, whatever out-cries they may make about the bigotry of thoſe, who fairly warn them of their danger. For Jeſus hath much to ſay, and to judge of them: and all ſhall know, by their converſion, or in their condemnation, that he always ſpake and did thoſe things, which pleaſed the Father, even when he claimed the higheſt honours to himſelf.

But many aſſent to, and profeſs theſe doctrines without ſaving faith: when we therefore ſee men hopefully convinced of evangelical truths; we ſhould caution them of the temptations, and dangers, to which they will be expoſed, that they may be excited to guard againſt them. By continuing in Chriſt's word, with an obedient faith, we ſhall evince ourſelves his diſciples indeed, and prove that we were not ſuch, “as received the ſeed in ſtony ground.” Thus we ſhall attain a fuller and more ſatisfactory knowledge of the truth: and this will teach us the nature, excellency, Author, and means of true liberty; and lead us to pant after, purſue, apply for and enjoy that precious bleſſing. But as men are capable of impoſing on themſelves through ſelf-flattery, in the moſt unaccountable manner, in reſpect of their ſecular concerns; no wonder they ſo miſtake their character and ſtate, in relation to God, and the eternal world. However it is moſt certain, “that He, who committeth ſin, is the ſlave of ſin:” and therefore we may infer ſafely, that many boaſt of, declaim and diſpute about, or even fight for liberty; and carry their notions on that ſubject to the moſt extravagant lengths, who are themſelves baſe ſlaves to ambition, avarice, luſt, anger, or ſome other grovelling or malignant tyrant. However therefore we value freedom, perſonal or political, civil or religious; (and when freedom is ſoberly aſcertained, it can ſcarcely be too highly prized;) yet it is a mere ſhadow to the ſlave of ſin and ſatan; and we may well weep to ſee men ſtrutting about in heavy chains, yet glorying in their liberty, 'till death terminates their deluſion, and makes them know that they muſt be ſlaves for ever! From this awful ſtate, no maxims of philoſophy, no ſyſtem of ethics, no inventions of ſuperſtition, no external ordinances can deliver any man: nay God may outwardly be ſerved from mere ſlaviſh fear, or mercenary hope; and yet no liberty be obtained or enjoyed: but if the Son make us free, we ſhall be free indeed and for ever. However therefore men may ſtand up for freedom, rights, and privileges; let every one, who would be truly wiſe, firſt apply to Chriſt for that real and enduring liberty, to which he calls us by His goſpel.

Indeed numbers have in all ages deceived themſelves in theſe matters. Many boaſt of being chriſtians, as abſurdly as the Jews did that they were Abraham's children; and they ſuppoſe that God is their Father, becauſe they have been baptized, even as the Jews did becauſe of circumciſion. But which do they reſemble moſt, the primitive chriſtians, or thoſe who ſought to murder Chriſt, becauſe they could not endure his doctrines and precepts? Are they born again, and made partakers of a divine and holy nature? Do they above all things love Jeſus, and his ſalvation and ſervice? If there be nothing of this kind in their diſpoſitions, and conduct; but many things contrary thereto; let them not deceive themſelves: they are his children, whoſe works they do, and whoſe image they bear; and the pride, rebellion, diſſimulation, malice, and malignity of numbers called chriſtians, ſhew them to be the offspring of that old apoſtate, murderer, and liar, the devil. It is, becauſe of ſuch inferences, that men pretend that they cannot underſtand the words of Chriſt: no evidence can convince them that thoſe doctrines are true, which reduce them to the alternative of renouncing and mortifying every ſin, or of periſhing for ever in hell. The moſt unexceptionable conduct of thoſe, who ſpeak the words of God, will not procure them credit, “*becauſe they ſay the truth*:” but if any improbable report be ſpread, or any new hereſy ſtarted; the ſame perſons will ſwallow it down with the moſt implicit and abſurd credulity. The reaſon is evident “they are not of God, and therefore they cannot hear his words.” But calumny and reproach muſt be the recompence of thoſe, who ſtand up for the truth as it is in Jeſus; and they may expect to be called the enemies of mankind, of their country, nay of the church and religion; for the more they honour God, the more wicked men will diſhonour them. However we muſt ſtill direct men to Jeſus, not ſeeking our own glory, but leaving the matter to Him, who ſeeketh and judgeth: for we are aſſured, that they who keep his ſaying ſhall never ſee death. We ſhould ſtedfaſtly profeſs what we know of God; whatever wrong conſtructions may be put upon our words by thoſe, who falſely claim him as their God, yet know him not: and if we are heirs of Abraham's faith, we ſhall both truſt

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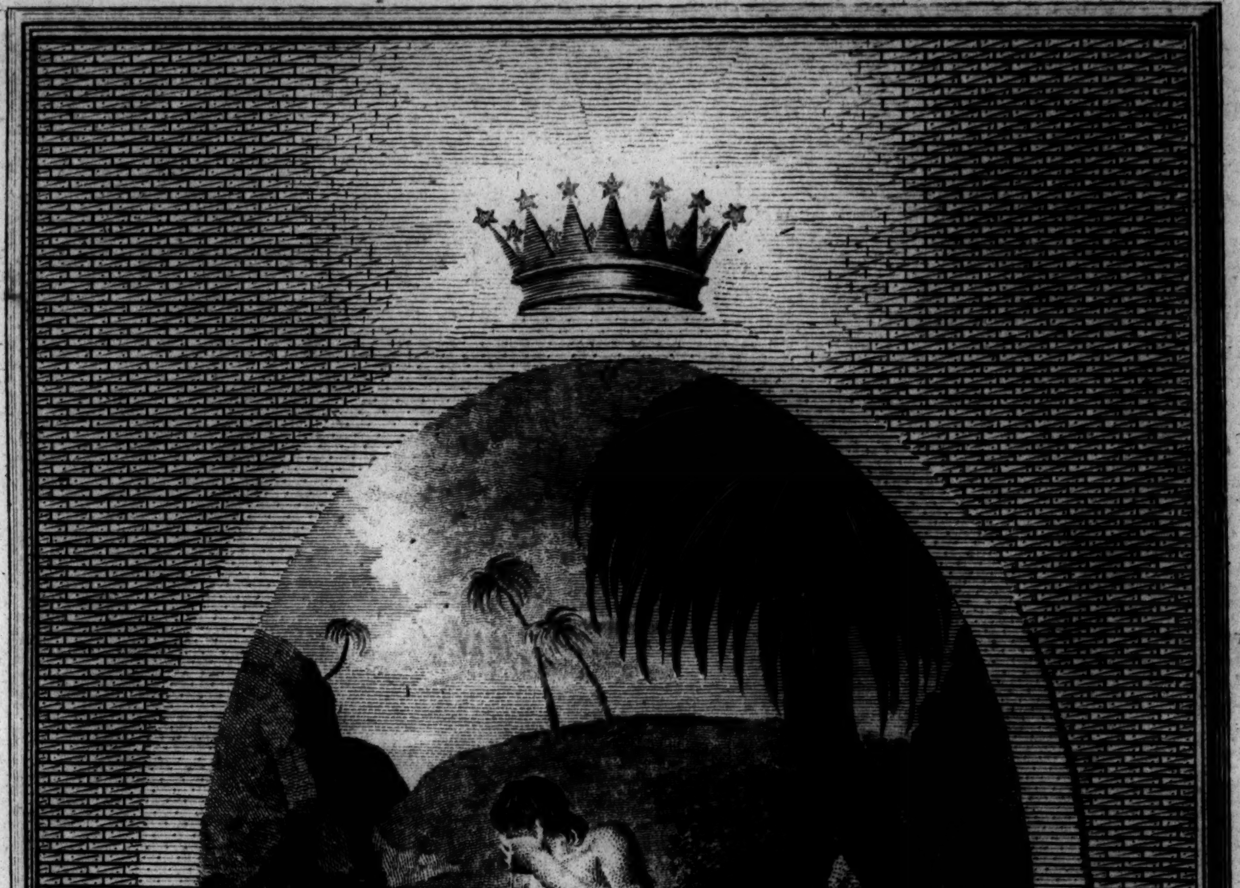

S^T. JOHN CH. IX. VE. VII.

Taylor del. et sculp.

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CHAP. IX.

AND as *Jeſus* paſſed by, he ſaw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

2 And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jeſus anſwered, Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him.

4 I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

6 When he had thus ſpoken, he ſpat on the ground, and made clay of the ſpittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay;

7 And ſaid unto him, Go waſh in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and waſhed, and came ſeeing.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had ſeen him that he was blind, ſaid, Is not this he that ſat and begged?

9 Some ſaid, This is he: others *ſaid*, He is like him: *but* he ſaid, I am *he*.

10 Therefore ſaid they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He anſwered and ſaid, A man that is called Jeſus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and ſaid unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and waſh: and I went and waſhed, and I received ſight.

12 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is he? He ſaid, I know not.

13 They brought to the Phariſees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the ſabbath-day when Jeſus

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him with our temporal protection, and rejoice in expectation of that day, when he ſhall appear in his glory to the confuſion of his enemies, and to complete the ſalvation of all, who believe in Him.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—7.] Though the firſt words of this chapter ſeem to accord ſo exactly with the concluſion of the former; yet it is generally ſuppoſed that ſome months intervened: for the events before recorded took place at the feaſt of tabernacles, thoſe of this chapter are ſuppoſed to have been at the feaſt of dedication about a quarter of a year afterwards; (c. x. v. 22.) Jeſus paſſing on the ſtreets of Jeruſalem met a man, who was known to have been born blind; and the diſciples took occaſion from ſeeing him to aſk a very curious queſtion; which ſeems *in part* to have been derived from the opinion, that men in this world fare better or worſe, according to their behaviour in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, of which they yet have no recollection or conſciouſneſs. Many of the Jews at this time ſeem to have imbibed this abſurd ſentiment from the heathens: for not being ſatisfied with the ſcriptural account of the entrance of ſin and death into the world; they had recourſe to this opinion to ſolve the difficulties, which they met with in the diſpenſations of providence, from obſerving the extraordinary calamities attendant on ſome men, more than on others, through the whole courſe of their lives. The diſciples therefore deſired to be informed, whether this man's calamity was the puniſhment of ſome remarkable ſin in his parents, or his own miſconduct in a pre-exiſtent ſtate? But our Lord aſſured them, that neither the one, nor the other was the real cauſe of the man's being born blind; but it was ſo ordered on purpoſe, that the powerful operation of God by his hands might be openly diſplayed in reſtoring him to ſight. No doubt his parents were ſinners, and deſerved far worſe than this affliction; and the man was born in ſin, as others are: but theſe were not the immediate cauſes of this ſingular calamity, which was appointed for another, and moſt important reaſon. Our Lord therefore added, that notwithſtanding the malice of his enemies, it was requiſite for him to work the works, which his Father had ſent him to perform, during the ſhort remnant of his life on earth: as his crucifixion would ſoon take place, which would put an end to his perſonal labours, and miracles, as the night does to a man's day's work, or as death terminates the ſervices, and fixes the ſtate of every one. It was alſo proper for him to open this man's eyes, as an emblem of his enlightening the minds of men by the knowledge of divine truth: whilſt he continued on earth, he was, by his perſonal miniſtry, and his miracles "The "Light of the World;" and he would be the ſame by his doctrine, and his Spirit, to the end of time. He therefore anointed the man's eyes with clay formed for that purpoſe, (which would ſeem rather to have a tendency to cloſe, than to open them;) and then directed him to go and waſh at the pool of Siloam, which ſignifying *Sent*, might be a type of him, whom the Father had *ſent* to be the Light of the world; (*Iſaiah*, c. viii. v. 6:) accordingly the man, having heard of the miracles of Jeſus, and hoping for a cure, obeyed; and not only thus received his ſight, but was alſo marvellouſly enabled to make an immediate and proper uſe of his eyes, and ſo returned back, ſeeing every object diſtinctly. Perhaps Jeſus took this method of opening the man's eyes, to make trial of his faith and obedience; or to ſhew that the moſt unlikely means will be efficacious, when he appoints and bleſſes them.

V. 13. *They*, &c.] Theſe perſons ſeem to have been actuated by malice, and to have intended to excite the Phariſees againſt Jeſus: it is ſuppoſed that the members of the ſanhedrim are meant, who were chiefly of this ſect.

V. 14. *Made*, &c.] It is ſaid, that anointing the made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Phariſees alſo aſked him how he had received his ſight. He ſaid unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I waſhed, and do ſee.

16 Therefore ſaid ſome of the Phariſees, This man is not of God, becauſe he keepeth not the ſabbath-day. Others ſaid, How can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch miracles? And there was a diviſion among them.

17 They ſay unto the blind man again, What ſayeſt thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He ſaid, He is a prophet.

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his ſight, until they called the parents of him that had received his ſight.

19 And they aſked them, ſaying, Is this your ſon, who ye ſay was born blind? how then doth he now ſee?

20 His parents anſwered them, and ſaid, We know that this is our ſon, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now ſeeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, aſk him; he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf.

22 Theſe *words* ſpake his parents, becauſe they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confeſs that he was Chriſt, he ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue.

23 Therefore ſaid his parents, He is of age, aſk him.

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and ſaid unto him, Give God the praiſe: we know that this man is a ſinner.

25 He anſwered and ſaid, Whether he be a ſinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I ſee.

26 Then ſaid they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He anſwered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye alſo be his diſciples?

28 Then they reviled him, and ſaid, Thou art his diſciple; but we are Moſes' diſciples.

29 We know that God ſpake unto Moſes: *as for* this *fellow*, we know not from whence he is.

30 The man anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now we know that God heareth not ſinners: but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou

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eyes with any kind of unguent on the ſabbath-day was forbidden, by a tradition of the elders: if ſo, our Lord might uſe this method of opening the man's eyes, as a proteſt againſt their abſurd traditions.

V. 22, 23.] Expulſion from the ſynagogue was a ſort of excommunication, attended with many civil penalties, and inconveniences; and not merely a religious cenſure. We may *account* for the parents of the man declining to ſay any thing, which might bring them into danger of ſo heavy a puniſhment; but we cannot excuſe their conduct, when we conſider the obligation they were under to Jeſus, and the ſenſible evidence, which they had of his power to protect and do them good.

V. 24—26.] Some underſtand the Phariſees to have meant, that the man ought to give glory to God, by confeſſing the colluſion, which they ſuppoſed to have been between him and Jeſus, to impoſe on them by an apparent miracle; (*Joſh.* c. vii. v. 19:) for they knew as they pretended, that Jeſus was a bad man, (for ſo the expreſſion means.) Others think, that they meant, that as by ſome unknown means God had given him his ſight, he ought to render him the praiſe, without regarding Jeſus, who being a bad man, could have nothing to do with the credit of the cure. However the man obſerved, that if Jeſus was a ſinner, he had no knowledge of it, and could draw no inference from it; but he was fully aſſured that he had obtained his ſight by attending to his directions.

V. 27—34.] The man perceived that the Phariſees wanted to draw from him ſome expreſſion apparently inconſiſtent with his former teſtimony; and he was filled with an honeſt indignation at their exceſſive malice, and perverſeneſs: he therefore replied in a manner, which implied, that they could have no *good* motive for ſuch repeated interrogatories, unleſs they were at length diſpoſed to become the diſciples of Jeſus, which was not probable. Exaſperated by this intimation, which appeared to them rude and inſolent, they reviled him as a worthleſs contemptible perſon, and as the diſciple of Jewaſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us? And they caſt him out.

35 Jeſus heard that they had caſt him out; and when he had found him, he ſaid unto him, Doſt thou believe on the Son of God.

36 He anſwered and ſaid, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he ſaid, Lord, I believe. And he worſhipped him.

39 And Jeſus ſaid, For judgment I am come into this world; that they which ſee not might ſee, and that they which ſee might be made blind.

40 And *ſome* of the Phariſees which were with him heard theſe words, and ſaid unto him, Are we blind alſo?

41 Jeſus ſaid unto them, If ye were blind,

ſus, along with many others of the ignorant rabble, (c. vii. v. 49;) whilſt they gloried in following Moſes: and they declared themſelves aſſured that Moſes ſpake by authority from God; but they pretended, that they had no evidence whence Jeſus was, whom they conſidered as a worthleſs and deſpicable impoſtor. Thus they inſinuated that the doctrine of Jeſus contradicted that of Moſes; whereas in fact it eſtabliſhed, and completed it: and they conſidered the miracles wrought by Moſes near 1500 years before, as authentic evidences of his divine miſſion; whereas they treated thoſe of Jeſus, though far more numerous and beneficent, and at leaſt equally aſtoniſhing, as unworthy their notice, though they fell under the cognizance of their ſenſes. In fact Moſes was dead; and they knew how to explain away his meaning, and to render his writings ſubſervient to their ambition, and intereſt; whereas Jeſus was a living reprover of their hypocriſy, and a formidable rival and adverſary to their reputation and authority. The man therefore, under all his diſadvantages, being free from their prejudices, argued more ſolidly than they all. He expoſed their obſtinate ignorance, by wondering that they could doubt whence that perſon was, who had wrought ſuch a miracle, as had never before been heard of! God did not regard the prayers of notoriouſly wicked men: much leſs would he enable an impoſtor to work ſuch a ſtupendous miracle, in confirmation of his doctrine: ſo that if Jeſus had not been of God, he could not have done any thing of this kind. This argument, which it was impoſſible to anſwer, and which convicted them of malice and folly; excited their moſt indignant reſentment: and being ignorant of the ſcripture doctrine, that all men are born in ſin; they conſidered his bodily blindneſs as a demonſtration, that he came into the world under the divine diſpleaſure, and far more depraved than other men: and was it proper that ſo a vile and ignorant a wretch ſhould preſume to inſtruct *them*, who were Phariſees, Scribes, and Rulers aſſembled in council? Or could ſuch inſolence be endured? Thus they diſdainfully cloſed their ears to the truth, and excommunicated the man for his honeſt, and ſenſible obſervation!

V. 35—41.] Jeſus, knowing the perſecution, which the man endured on his account, found him out, and made himſelf known to him as the Son of God, in order to his further inſtruction, and encouragement; and the man, who before conſidered him as a Prophet, and no more, now believed in, and worſhipped him in a far higher character. Without doubt the worſhip, that Jeſus accepted from him, was at leaſt equal to that, which apoſtles and angels decidedly refuſed; (*Acts*, c. x. v. 25, 26. *Rev.* c. xxii. v. 9.) Our Lord's addreſs to the man might be private; but what follows muſt have been more open: for he declared in the hearing of the Phariſees, that, though in ſecular matters he would not judge, or inflict puniſhment, (c. viii. v. 15;) yet he came into the world on purpoſe, to diſcover men's ſecret characters, to change many things in the ſtate of the church, and to execute ſpiritual judgments on ſpecious hypocrites, &c. As by his miraculous power, the blind received their ſight; ſo by his doctrine the poor, the ignorant, and the fooliſh would be made wiſe, and diſcerning; and at the ſame time, that they, who were moſt eminent in, and proud of, their ſuperior knowledge, learning, and wiſdom, would be ſhewn to be ſpiritual blind, and have their eyes *judicially* cloſed. The Phariſees readily perceived, that this referred to them; and therefore they diſdainfully enquired, whether he meant, that they were blind alſo? To this he replied, that if they had been really blind or ignorant *by* misfortune, through want of capacity or opportunity of inſtruction; they would comparatively have been free from guilt in their oppoſition to him: but their abundant opportunities, and their high conceit of their own knowledge, and diſcernment, whilſt they wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt the Light, would leave them without excuſe, under the guilt and power of their aggravated wickedneſs, and under the heavy wrath of their offended God. (c. xv. v. 22—24.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It behoves us to be very cautious how we aſcribe the perſonal, or relative calamities of others, to their being ſinners above their neighbours: for the Lord may have far other reaſons for afflicting them; and they, whom he moſt loves, have often been long, and ſharply tried, in order to the diſplay of his grace in ſupporting, and delivering them. But we can never do amiſs in applying to Jeſus for the ſolution of our difficulties; for he is the Light of the world, from whom we muſt derive all our knowledge and inſtruction. Let us alſo learn to copy his perſeverance in doing good, amidſt diſcouragements, revilings, and injuries; and let every one ſeize the preſent hour to enſure his own ſalvation, and do the Lord's work, remembering how ſpeedily the night may come, in which no man can work. (*Eccleſ*: c. ix. v. 10.) Proud human reaſon cannot judge of the propriety of the Lord's methods of operation; for he generally uſes ye ſhould have no ſin: but now ye ſay, We ſee; therefore your ſin remaineth.

CHAP. X.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus diſtinguiſhing between true, and falſe teachers; ſpeaking of himſelf, as the Door, and the Shepherd of his church, and declaring his purpoſe of laying down his life for his ſheep, 1---18. *2d. The different opinions of the Jews concerning his office, and his divine dignity; their attempt to ſtone him; his leaving them to go beyond Jordan, and there preaching with ſucceſs,* 22---42.

VErily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the ſhepherd of the ſheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the ſheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own ſheep by name: and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own

ſuch means and inſtruments, as men deſpiſe: whilſt therefore ſelf-conceited diſputers are cavilling, and ſneering; humble believers obey his word, and obtain the bleſſing. They, whoſe eyes are opened, and whoſe hearts are cleanſed by his effectual grace, are the ſame men, yet new creatures; and being known in the identity of their perſons, and the contrariety of their characters; they live monuments to the Redeemer's glory, and continually recommend his grace to all, who deſire the ſame precious ſalvation. But the ſtout-hearted and ſelf-confident, however learned, ſagacious, or honourable they may be, can never receive the goſpel of Chriſt: and if they enquire into thoſe things which pertain to his character and work; they only do it, that they may ſtart objections, or bring charges againſt his humbling truths, and thoſe who preach them. But how perfect in wiſdom and holineſs was our Redeemer, when enemies like his could find no flaw, and were driven to the neceſſity of renewing againſt him the repeatedly refuted charge of breaking the ſabbath! May we thus be enabled by well-doing to put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.

The moſt illiterate, and poor, who are ſimple-hearted, readily draw proper inferences from the evidences afforded them of the truth of the goſpel: but they, whoſe intereſts and inclination lie another way, though they be "ever learning, will never be able to come to the "knowledge of the truth." Religious perſecutions can only make men cowards, or hypocrites, and ſuppreſs inveſtigation, and an avowal of men's ſentiments: and even the cenſures of the church have too often been levelled againſt her beſt friends. But no terror ſhould induce us to conceal our obligations to, and dependence on the Lord; and what men generally term prudence and caution in this caſe, is unbelief, ingratitude, and baſe fear of reproach and the croſs. Often they pretend zeal for the glory of God, who are moſt aſſiduous in diſhonouring Chriſt: but he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that ſent him. When a believer knows not how to anſwer the objections and arguments of ſuch enemies to the truth; he may have recourſe to his own experience: one thing he knows, that "whereas he was blind, now he ſees;" and what he hath diſcovered of the glory of God, the evil of ſin, the depravity of his own heart, the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, the beauty of holineſs, &c, ſo evinces to him the truth of the goſpel, that no arguments can anſwer this witneſs in himſelf. How little ought we to regard the contempt and revilings of proud unbelievers, though moſt eminent among men; for the holy Jeſus was thus reviled by a convention of Jewiſh prieſts and rulers as a notorious ſinner! and the Lord of glory was diſdained as moſt baſe and vile! But how unbecoming are ſuch revilings, eſpecially in thoſe who are of ſuperior rank, and education! Plain unlettered ſenſe will often go further in underſtanding the moſt important matters; than all the advantages of ſcience, which often render men too ſelf-ſufficient to judge of them aright. Our God, who heareth the repenting ſinner's cry, will not regard thoſe, that go on ſtill in their wickedneſs: but when we deſire and aim to do his will, he anſwers our prayers, and employs us in his ſervice. When arguments fail pertinacious diſputers, they commonly have recourſe to abuſe: and many ſhew their pride and folly by refuſing to hear ſober ſenſe, and ſound argument from their ſuppoſed inferiors, and by anſwering with contempt and upbraidings. But Jeſus will ſhew himſelf peculiarly attentive to thoſe, who are ſuffering for his ſake: they who act conſcientiouſly and boldly, according to their preſent meaſure of knowledge, ſhall be led forward; and the more they know of Chriſt, the greater honour they will render to him. Thus the Lord gives eyes to the blind, and cloſes the minds of proud boaſters of their ſuperior illumination: conſcious humble ignorance dwells nearer the porch of wiſdom, than arrogant genius and ſcience: if a man be wiſe in his own eyes, there is more hope of a fool than of him: none are in more danger than ſuch as exclaim "are we blind alſo?" For numbers of this character will periſh under the aggravated guilt of loving darkneſs, and hating the light becauſe their deeds are evil.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—5.] This parable is an evident continuation of the former chapter: and therefore the Jewiſh falſe teachers were primarily intended by the thieves, and robbers; but not they alone. From Jeſus "the Light of the world," all derive their light, who are inſtrumental in illuminating mankind: in like manner all true paſtors derive their authority from Him, as the great Shepherd of the choſen flock. Even before his appearance in the fleſh all the faithful teachers of God's people teſtified of him, and directed the people to expect ſalvation by faith in the Redeemer, that was to come. When he was on earth: if the prieſts and ſcribes, had been ſuch ſhepherds as God approved, they would have imitated John Baptiſt, and borne teſtimony to Him, as the Son of God, and the Saviour of men. So that in every age of the church a regard to Chriſt, as the Source ſheep, he goeth before them, and the ſheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a ſtranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of ſtrangers.

6 This parable ſpake Jeſus unto them: but they underſtood not what things they were which he ſpake unto them.

7 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, I am the Door of the ſheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the ſheep did not hear them.

9 I am the Door: by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and ſhall go in and out, and find paſture.

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of their authority, and the Subject, and Object of their miniſtry, has been the grand Criterion of faithful paſtors. The prieſts and ſcribes demanded of Jeſus by what authority He acted? Suppoſing that he ought to have taken out a commiſſion *from them*: but He here intimated that they were wicked deceivers, who had received no commiſſion, or inſtructions from Him, the great Proprietor of the flock: yet the prieſts held their office by divine inſtitution, and the Scribes were the regularly authorized teachers of the people. But Chriſt is himſelf the Door, by whom all true paſtors muſt enter into the church, to exerciſe their function. They muſt believe in him for their own ſalvation; and receive from him thoſe peculiar diſpoſitions, and endowments, which fit them for their important work: and they muſt aim to glorify and to do good to ſouls; preferring this ſervice to more creditable, and lucrative employments; and being prepared to ſuffer hardſhip of every kind, in the performance of it. Thus men enter by the Door into the ſheepfold, (v. 7:) but all, who intrude into the paſtoral office without theſe views, diſpoſitions, and purpoſes, (which are ſo many credentials from Chriſt, that he hath ſent the man who poſſeſſes them;) climb up by ſome other way, abuſing human appointments though good in themſelves, and even divine inſtitutions, to ſubſerve their love of eaſe, wealth, authority, or reputation; and employing the influence of rich and powerful connexions, or that, acquired by natural abilities and human learning, as a paſſport into ſtations in the church, for which they have not one correſpondent diſpoſition, or qualification. Such men, like the prieſts and ſcribes in our Lord's time, are the thieves and robbers, who enter the fold in an unauthorized manner, to fleece or butcher, not to feed the flock; who rob Chriſt of his honour, and ſtarve the ſouls of the people, in order to enrich themſelves, and aggrandize their families. But to him, who entereth with a due regard to Chriſt, and with proper deſires and intentions, "the Porter openeth;" that is God in his providence, and by his Spirit, makes way for them ſucceſsfully to exerciſe their miniſtry: and the ſheep of Chriſt, or true believers, hear their voice, and receive the truths of their Lord from them. And, as in thoſe eaſtern regions, the ſheep, when led forth from the fold to the paſture, followed the ſhepherd, when they heard his well-known voice, and ſaw him going before them: ſo theſe paſtors get acquainted with the people committed to their care, and led them by their inſtructions into the knowledge of the truth, and into the ways of peace and holineſs; and go before them by their example; and their people follow them with confidence, as they know and experience their doctrine to be good, and their exhortations ſalutary. But the ſheep will not follow thoſe, who are ſtrangers to them, to Chriſt, and to his truth; but will flee from them, fearing leſt they ſhould be deceived; and not finding their doctrine ſuited to their wants, and experience, or leveled to their capacities.

V. 6—9.] Though our Lord evidently meant by this parable, to expoſe the ignorant, mercenary, and oppreſſive rulers, and teachers of the Jewiſh church; and to contraſt them with the character of faithful paſtors: yet the Phariſees were ſo blinded by their pride, that they underſtood not the drift of his diſcourſe. He was therefore pleaſed to explain himſelf, ſomething more fully, by ſolemnly aſſuring them, that he was "the Door of "the Sheep." No man ever entered into the *true* church, except by faith in Him; though many others have been externally admitted into the *viſible church*: in like manner, no man ever was a true miniſter of religion, who was not commiſſioned and inſtructed by Chriſt; though many have a regular external appointment to the office, who are ſtrangers to him, who have no regard to Him, and whom he doth not accept. By thoſe "who "came before Chriſt," we muſt not underſtand thoſe prophets or faithful teachers, who came before his incarnation; theſe acted by his authority, and were his repreſentatives. But all thoſe, who came with pretenſions of being the promiſed Meſſiah; or who ſet up themſelves above, or againſt him; who taught other methods of ſalvation, and preſumed to take his office out of his hands, and to acquire that influence over the people, which belonged to Him only: in ſhort all ſuch perſons as the hypocritical, and ambitious Scribes, and Phariſees, who had, before Chriſt's coming, uſurped an abſolute dominion over the people's conſciences, and uſed their influence to oppoſe and perſecute Him, and his followers. Theſe were, and all ſuch ever have been, and are, thieves and robbers: mankind indeed generally regard them; but the remnant of God's choſen people, the ſheep of Chriſt, have always turned from them as deceivers. Indeed, as every ſinner muſt enter by Chriſt the Door, into the ſheep-fold for ſafety, and ſuſtenance: how can thoſe be qualified to teach men the way of ſalvation, who are themſelves ſtrangers to Him, and have never entered by that Door into the miniſtry, but have climbed up ſome other way? All men, whatever be their rank, employment, or character, who have not by faith in Chriſt, as the divine Saviour of ſinners, paſſed into a ſtate of acceptance with God, and a life of communion with, and devoted obedience to him; are ſtill in the broad road of deſtruction. That repentance, and converſion, by which men paſs, as through a ſtrait gate, from the broad to the narrow way, have reſpect to Chriſt, 10 The thief cometh not but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

11 I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the ſheep.

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the ſhepherd, whoſe own the ſheep are not, ſeeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the ſheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and ſcattereth the ſheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an hireling, and careth not for the ſheep.

14 I am the good Shepherd, and know my *ſheep*, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the ſheep.

16 And other ſheep I have, which are not of this fold: them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, *and* one Shepherd.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myſelf: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

in all his characters and offices; and every motive, and encouragement is derived from him. Thus men paſs from the kingdom of ſatan into the true church of the firſt born: then they become like the ſheep under the tender ſhepherd's care, which at night are led into the fold, to reſt there ſecured from robbers and beaſts of prey; and by day are guided to the paſture, to feed in quietneſs and plenty: and thus do believers find repoſe, ſafety, proviſion, and conſolation to their ſouls, by faith in their good Shepherd's power, truth, and love. (*Pſ.* xxiii. lxxx. v. 1. *Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 10, 11. *Jer.* c. xxiii. v. 1—6. *Ezek.* c. xxxiv. *Zech.* c. xi.)

V. 10—13.] The falſe teachers before deſcribed ſought admiſſion into the church, only that they might enrich and advance themſelves, or gratify their pride and reſentment by domineering over and perſecuting ſuch as refuſed ſubjection to them: but Jeſus came into the world, that ſinners might have ſpiritual and eternal life through him; that theſe bleſſings might be conferred upon them moſt liberally, and with all poſſible advantages; and that the divine life communicated to them might be maintained and continually increaſed, till it iſſued in everlaſting felicity. Now He was, and is the "good Shepherd" eminently, and excluſively: from Him all pious and uſeful rulers and teachers derive their authority, and ability; Him they repreſent as their Principal; and reſemble, in proportion to their fidelity, diligence, love and zeal: but compared with Him they are mean, defective, contracted, and defiled; and their goodneſs is not only derived, but ſcanty, and even as nothing. Yet great and good, juſt and holy as he is, he ſaw his ſheep about to periſh in their wanderings from God; and in order to expiate their guilt, and to ranſom them from deſtruction, he not only endured hardſhip, or encountered danger, (*Gen.* c. xxxi. v. 40. 1 *Sam.* c. xvii. v. 34—37;) but he laid down his life for them, and in their ſtead! According to this example, his faithful ſervants, conſtrained by love to him and to his ranſomed flock, are ready to venture, and ſuffer for their benefit. On the contrary, the hireling, to whom the miniſtry is a mere lucrative trade, not having any real regard to the welfare of the flock, (being like a hireling ſhepherd, who regards nothing except his wages,) will flee away to ſecure himſelf, when danger ariſes, and will leave the people to be miſled by ſeducers, or deſtroyed by perſecutors, without giving himſelf any concern about them. (*Acts*, c. xx. v. 28—31.)

V. 14—18.] (*Luke*, c. xv. 1—7. *Heb.* c. xiii. v. 20. 1 *Pet.* c. v. ver. 1—4.) Our Lord here again avowed himſelf to be "the good Shepherd," which hath been ſhewn to be a character appropriated to Jehovah, throughout the Old Teſtament, "He knows his ſheep:" He diſtinguiſhes them from all others, he values and approves of them; and he knows their dangers, difficulties, enemies, weakneſs, and wants: and "they know him," by faith and experience; they are ſo acquainted with his perfections and offices, that they truſt in, love, ſubmit to, and obey him. This mutual knowledge of, and acquieſcence in each other, reſemble the knowledge, which the Father hath of the Son, and the Son of the Father; for it may be rendered, "even as the Father knoweth me, and as I know the Father," (Note, *Matt*, c. xi. v. 27:) and in conſequence of his knowledge and love of them, he was determined to lay down his life for them. (*Iſaiah* c. liii. v. 6. 10.) Hitherto he had ſpoken of his people, as of ſheep already brought back to his fold, but he next ſpake of thoſe, who were his by the election and donation of the Father, and eſpecially ſuch of them, as were to be collected from among the Gentiles. Even theſe were *his ſheep*, though at that time living in abominable idolatries and iniquities; and though they were not "of that fold," or of the common-wealth of Iſrael: but in due time, through the ranſom which he was about to pay for them, he would by his word and Spirit bring them forth, cauſe them to hear his voice, take them under his care, and unite them with the Jewiſh converts, under Him the one Shepherd, and Overſeer of their ſouls. (1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 24—25.) Thus he plainly predicted the calling of the Gentiles; to ſhew the Jews, that though they might deſpiſe and reject him; yet he would aſſuredly have a ranſomed flock worthy of ſuch a good Shepherd. To this he added, 19 There was a diviſion therefore again among the Jews for theſe ſayings.

20 And many of them ſaid, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others ſaid, Theſe are not the words of him that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

22 And it was at Jeruſalem the feaſt of the dedication, and it was winter.

23 And Jeſus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly.

25 Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witneſs of me:

26 But ye believe not; becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, as I ſaid unto you.

27 My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all: and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

30 I and *my* Father are one.

31 Then the Jews took up ſtones again to ſtone him.

32 Jeſus anſwered them, Many good works

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that the Father loved him, in his mediatorial Perſon, eſpecially for this reaſon, becauſe he was ready to lay down his life, in order that he might take it again, to effect the purpoſes of his gracious undertaking; ſeeing this aroſe from his zeal to the divine glory, and regard to the honour of the holy law of God. But, though he was about to die, in the moſt cruel and ignominious manner by the hands of wicked men; yet none of them, nor any created being, could by any means take his life from him againſt his will; but he would voluntarily lay it down for the ranſom of his people. As his life was not forfeited by ſin, and as it was *his own*, as no other ever poſſeſſed life: ſo he had a right and power to diſpoſe of it as He pleaſed; and he could as he ſaw good lay it down, and then reſume it. But he would exerciſe this power according to the commandment, which he had, in the capacity of Mediator, received from the Father.

V. 19—21.] The claims and intimations of the preceding diſcourſe, were ſo contrary to the prejudices, and above the apprehenſions of many of the Jews; that they deemed them to be the ravings of inſanity, or the ſuggeſtions of an evil ſpirit; and concluded that Jeſus ought no longer to be heard as a public Teacher. But others, who yet probably did not fully underſtand his doctrine, perceiving that he ſpake with great propriety, gravity, and affection, were convinced that theſe were not like the extravagant and incoherent ſallies of ſuch perſons, as were diſtracted or poſſeſſed: and they enquired whether an unclean ſpirit could poſſibly open the eyes of a man, who had been born blind? This Jeſus had evidently done; but as it muſt be concluded to be a work above ſatan's power, and contrary to his malignant diſpoſition; ſo it was never known that a poſſeſſed man had effected any thing of this kind.

V. 22—31.] The feaſt of dedication ſeems to have been appointed in the days of Judas Maccabeus, to be annually obſerved in commemoration of the purification of the temple, after the perſecutions, and abominations of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is indeed ſuppoſed to have been kept all over the land; yet great multitudes flocked to Jeruſalem at that time: our Lord's going up therefore at that ſeaſon, muſt at leaſt have been an intimation, that he did not diſapprove of ſuch memorials of God's ſpecial public mercies, even when they were only appointed by human authority. This was in the month of December; and the portico, in which Jeſus walked, (probably for ſhelter from the cold,) bare the name of Solomon; being perhaps ſituated in the place, where that prince had formerly erected a very ſplendid one. Hither the Jewiſh rulers came to him; complaining that he kept them in a very painful ſuſpenſe, by ſpeaking of himſelf as "the Light of the world," "the Door of the "ſheep," "the good Shepherd, &c;" and deſiring to be told plainly whether he was the Meſſiah or no. In fact they readily underſtood his meaning; but they could not form his words into ſo plauſible a charge againſt him before the Roman governor, as they could a more explicit declaration of his being the promiſed Meſſiah. Accordingly he obſerved, that he had already told them who he was: but they had not believed in him; though the works that he did, in the name of the Father, and as an appeal to him, ſufficiently authenticated his pretenſions. The true reaſon, why they did not believe him was the want of that ſimple, teachable, and inoffenſive temper, which characterized his ſheep; for not being of that choſen remnant, they were left to the pride, and enmity of their carnal hearts, and therefore no evidence could convince them. On the contrary, his ſheep, being taught and drawn of God, heard, believed, and obeyed his word; they were known and approved of by him, and they followed him as his faithful diſciples: to them he gave eternal life, both the title to, and earneſt of it; nor ſhould one of them periſh to all eternity, through any outward temptation, or inward evil propenſity; neither ſhould ſatan, or any enemy pluck them out of his hands; (*Deut*. c. xxxiii. v. 3.) As his Father, who gave them to him, that he might ranſom and ſave them, was greater than any or all the creatures in the univerſe, ſo that none could pluck them out of his Almighty hands; and as He, and the Father were One, have I ſhewed you from my Father; for which of thoſe works do ye ſtone me?

33 The Jews anſwered him, ſaying, For a good work we ſtone thee not, but for blaſphemy; and becauſe that thou, being a man, makeſt thyſelf God.

34 Jeſus anſwered them, Is it not written in your law, I ſaid, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, (and the ſcripture cannot be broken;)

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified, and ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

39 Therefore they ſought again to take him: but he eſcaped out of their hand;

40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at firſt baptized; and there he abode.

41 And many reſorted unto him, and ſaid, John did no miracle: but all things that John ſpake of this man were true.

42 And many believed on him there.

One Thing, One Being, (it is the neuter gender;) One in Eſſence, Will and Operation. The inference which Jeſus tacitly drew from this declaration; namely, that being One with the omnipotent Father, he was able to defend his ſheep againſt all their enemies, ſufficiently proves that he meant to claim divine power and perfection, equally with the Father that ſent him. The Jews well underſtood the extent of our Lord's claim; and therefore deeming it blaſphemy, (as it certainly would have been in any mere man,) they prepared immediately to ſtone him to death: and *their conduct* is a good expoſition on *His meaning*. We may alſo obſerve that theſe verſes contain an irrefragable proof of the final perſeverance of every true believer. It is in vain to ſay, that ſuch may periſh by their own ſinfulneſs, though no enemy can otherwiſe prevail againſt them: for this not only contradicts our Lord's poſitive aſſurance, that "they ſhall not periſh for ever," but it renders the whole paſſage entirely nugatory; as ſatan hath no other way of plucking believers out of Chriſt's hands, than by tempting them to ſin againſt him.

V. 32—39.] When Jeſus ſaw the fury of the Jews, he calmly enquired of them, for which of his numerous beneficent miracles, they were about to put him to death? To this they replied, that it was not for a good work, (though his miracles, and holineſs doubtleſs peculiarly exaſperated them;) but for blaſphemy that they meant to ſtone him; as He, who was evidently a man, ſpake as if he were the Almighty God. This was a fair inference from his words, and he did not charge them with miſrepreſenting them. Yet his anſwer has been thought by ſome perſons to militate againſt this interpretation: but let us carefully conſider it. Magiſtrates are in ſcripture called gods; (*Pſ.* lxxxii. v. 6:) this is commonly ſuppoſed to refer to their repreſenting the authority of God to the people: but the title is not expreſſly given to any but Jewiſh rulers, who were the delegates and types of the Meſſiah, the Lord and King of Iſrael from the beginning; it was therefore on this account eſpecially, that they were thus dignified. If then there was any propriety in calling them gods, "*to whom the word of God came*;" it muſt ariſe from their relation to the promiſed Meſſiah; and it had a meaning in it, which could not be broken, or invalidated. They were the Lord's anointed, as types of his great anointed One: had He not been *truly* God, they had not typically been called gods. What right therefore had the Jews to ſay to Him, (whom the Father had ſeparated, and conſecrated from the beginning to be the anointed King upon his holy hill of Zion, and at length ſent into the world;) "thou blaſphemeſt," becauſe he declared himſelf to be the Son of God? The Meſſiah was evidently predicted under this title, (*Pſ.* ii. v. 7:) *He* was the Meſſiah; and therefore the Son of God, and One with the Father. I do not ſay, that the Jews fully comprehended this reaſoning, yet they underſtood more than they could anſwer. Nor would it follow from it, as hath been argued, that all, who in ſcripture are called gods, were types of Chriſt: for ſatan, who is called the god of this world, and idols, &c, were not *dignified* with this title, as the anointed rulers of Iſrael were; but expoſed to execration as contemptible and hateful uſurpers. It cannot be denied, that the moſt wicked of the high-prieſts were types of Chriſt, our great High-Prieſt: why then ſhould it be doubted whether the wicked kings and rulers of Iſrael were? Nor are we enquiring concerning what might have been done; but what actually was done; and the Lord evidently did call the rulers of his people gods, probably as a previous intimation, that the anointed King, who was to come, would truly and properly be God manifeſt in the fleſh. To this our Lord added, that they might be allowed to diſbelieve him, if he did not the works of his Father, that is ſuch as evinced Almighty power: but if he performed ſuch works; though they diſregarded his teſtimony, let them not deſpiſe his credentials, or refuſe to believe his myſterious union with the Father, and that mutual in-dwelling, of which he ſpake. This again excited the Jews, to endeavour to apprehend him; but he was pleaſed to evade their malice at that time alſo.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is peculiarly incumbent on all, who enter into, or officiate in, the ſacred miniſtry, to ſcrutinize with rigour their own motives, and principles, and the tendency of

CHAP. XI.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus informed of Lazarus being ſick, delaying his journey, till after his death, and converſing with his diſciples concerning that event, 1---16. *2d. His arrival at Bethany four days after Lazarus was buried; his meeting with Martha and Mary, and his converſation with them about their brother, and of himſelf as the Reſurrection, and the Life, &c.* 17---32. *3d. His raiſing Lazarus from the dead, with the circumſtances, and effects of that miracle,* 33---46. *4th. The prieſts, and rulers, at the inſtigation of Caiaphas, determining to put him to death; his retiring from Jeruſalem; the enquiry made about him juſt before the paſſover, and the order of the council for his being apprehended,* 47---57.

their doctrine and example. By whatever way men may obtain admiſſion into this ſacred function; unleſs they enter by Chriſt the Door; unleſs their diſpoſition, conduct, and inſtructions authorize the concluſion, that He hath ſent them; they will have a ſad account to give of the emoluments, and diſtinctions, which they now ſo eagerly hunt after, or oſtentatiouſly glory in; when it ſhall be proved that they have ſeized on thoſe advantages, to which they had no right; and grown rich by a function, which they had neither knowledge, integrity, humility, or induſtry to do good in. But happy is that paſtor, whom Chriſt teaches, and employs; who is himſelf a true believer, who ſeeks the honour of Chriſt, the converſion of ſinners, and the edification of believers, more than any ſecular advantage whatſoever; and who can ſay to his people "I ſeek not your's but you." To him the Lord will open a door of utterance; ſeals ſhall be given to his miniſtry; believers will approve and encourage his labours; his work will be it's own reward; whilſt he gets acquainted with his people, attends to the caſe of each of them, leads them forward in the knowledge, experience, and practice of the goſpel, and goes before them in every good work. Every man who values his own ſoul, ſhould avoid thoſe, who intrude into the miniſtry, when they are ſtrangers to Chriſt, and the experimental knowledge of his ſalvation: and whoſe example, and doctrine prove them hirelings, who care not for the ſheep. Indeed the true people of God will flee from ſuch teachers; for they know not the voice of ſtrangers: and for this they will be reproached by thoſe, who, like theſe Jews, underſtand not this parable. Such men would deem thoſe very imprudent, who ſhould truſt their health to ſome ignorant empiric, or their eſtate to a diſhoneſt lawyer, merely becauſe they happened to live in the ſame pariſh: yet they ſuppoſe they ought to follow the inſtructions of a man, who neither knows or cares any thing about vital godlineſs, if he be called the paſtor of the pariſh, or of ſome neighbouring congregation! But Chriſt himſelf is, not only the Source of authority to all paſtors, but the good Shepherd, and the perfect model, according to which they ſhould be formed, and by which their pretenſions muſt be decided. He came that ſinners might have life, and have it more abundantly; for their good he became poor, he abaſed himſelf, he laboured, he agonized, and died! Whilſt we admire and adore his infinite condeſcenſion and compaſſion, and his unſpeakable love to ſuch vile rebels, and enemies; let us enquire which profeſſed paſtors of his church are moſt like him? Are they, who riſe from obſcurity to wealth, grandeur, and luxury by the ſacred miniſtry; but who leave attention to the poor of the flock, and every thing that requires labour, condeſcenſion, or ſelf-denial, to others; perhaps without much enquiry into their principles or characters, and without knowing whether they too be not hirelings of an inferior order? Does this, alas too common, procedure reſemble the conduct of the good Shepherd? Or rather is it not a perfect contraſt to it? And whatever indignation it may excite, ſuch men muſt be told that they are thieves and robbers: they only want the perſecuting ſpirit to complete their likeneſs to thoſe, who "came not, "but to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy:" and this exemption is often the effect rather of want of power than want of will. However as one obſerves, ſuch a miniſter "carries a ſhoal down with him, of thoſe, "who have periſhed in ignorance through his neglect, "or of thoſe, who have been hardened in ſins, through "his ill example." (Biſhop Burnett.)

But let ſuch of us be thankful, as have been preſerved, or recovered from ſuch a dreadful ſtate, and courſe of conduct; and let us pray for others, who are ſtill blinded and deluded. Let ſuch as have entered the ſacred miniſtry from carnal motives, and in an unholy manner, pauſe and conſider their awful caſe; that coming to Chriſt, and becoming his true diſciples, they may be commiſſioned, and inſtructed by Him, to exerciſe their miniſtry in a better manner, than that in which they entered upon it. And let all, who deſire to be faithful miniſters, ſtudy and copy Chriſt's example; that they may grow more willing to labour and ſuffer for the good of that flock, for which he ſhed his precious blood; as thoſe who care more for the ſheep than for their income: that they may mortify every covetous, ambitious, ſelfiſh, and ſenſual deſire; and lay aſide all ſloth, pride, falſe delicacy, fear of men, and whatever elſe can render them unwilling to ſpend, and be ſpent for the people. And we all ſhould have our deſires fixed upon thoſe, who are not yet brought into the fold of Chriſt, but are ſcattered abroad in this evil world; and ſhould endeavour, that they too may be brought to hear the Saviour's voice, and become the ſheep of his paſture: and if our zeal and earneſtneſs in ſo bleſſed a work ſhould bring upon us the reproach of being ignorant enthuſiaſts, mad fanatics, or deſigning hypocrites; we may remember, that our holy Lord and Maſter was thus vilified before us.

Let ſinners alſo hear him, who ſays, "I am the "Door:" they can now have no acceſs into the favour of God, or hereafter into heaven, except they believe in Him. But he will admit all, who apply to Him, and guard and nouriſh their ſouls unto everlaſting life. The proud, the malicious, and all, who are not Chriſt's ſheep, will be convinced by no evidence, and take no warning; but his ſheep, when he comes forth to ſeek

NOW a certain *man* was ſick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her ſiſter Martha.

2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whoſe brother Lazarus was ſick.)

3 Therefore his ſiſters ſent unto him, ſaying, Lord, behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick.

4 When Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid, This ſickneſs is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was ſick, he abode two days ſtill in the ſame place where he was.

7 Then after that ſaith he to *his* diſciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 *His* diſciples ſay unto him, Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee; and goeſt thou thither again?

9 Jeſus anſwered, Are there not twelve

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and ſave them, hear his voice, and follow his guidance, and example, and thus they become like the harmleſs, holy, patient Lamb of God. Theſe he knows, and they know him: they love him, becauſe he hath firſt loved them: they ſeek his glory, and he takes care of their intereſts; He gives them eternal life, and keeps them in his Almighty Hand to the enjoyment of it; nor ſhall any enemy, or any event ever ſeparate them from his love. They know in whom they have believed: their Redeemer is the Lord of Hoſts, God is become their ſalvation: Jehovah Jeſus is their good Shepherd, being One with the Father, and poſſeſſed with him of all divine power and perfection. They cannot expect too much from Him, to whom all the prophets bare witneſs, of whom the prieſts and kings of Iſrael were types and delegates, whom all angels worſhip, and who upholds all things by the word of his power. His works proclaim him “God over all, bleſſed for evermore:” that all men may know and believe, that He is in the Father, and the Father in him. Modern oppoſers, who charge us with idolatry for worſhipping the Son of God; would doubtleſs have dared to charge Him with blaſphemy, had they heard theſe diſcourſes: but he will refute ſuch charges, and diſdain ſuch enemies: they can only deprive themſelves of the bleſſings of his ſalvation; and provoke him to bid them “Depart from Him,” when he ſhall come to judge the world. But he will continue to ſend his goſpel to others, that will receive it. Theſe are frequently the poor, the unlearned, and the obſcure of the world; whilſt the wiſe, the learned, the wealthy, and the honourable deſpiſe his ſalvation: and the effects of the teſtimony, which faithful miniſters have borne to Him, ſometimes do not begin much to appear, till they have entered into their reſt; and then they ſpring up, and bring forth a bleſſed harveſt, to the glory of God, and the ſalvation of many precious ſouls.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—6.] (*Luke*, c. x. v. 38—41.) Lazarus ſeems to have been a young man at this time, and to have lived ſingle with his ſiſters. They formed a very harmonious, pious, and happy family; and Jeſus conſtantly reſorted to their houſe, when he went up to Jeruſalem. Bethany is called the town of Martha and Mary, becauſe they reſided and probably had their inheritance there: but, though they were perſons well known and reſpected, yet there is no reaſon to think, that the whole village belonged to them, as ſome have imagined. The evangeliſt diſtinguiſhed that Mary, of whom he ſpake, from others of the ſame name, by referring to an action of her's, recorded by two of the other ſacred penmen, and which he was about to mention, (c. xii. v. 1—8. Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 6—12. *Mark*, c. xiv. v. 3—9:) for there is no probability that ſhe was the woman of whom Luke wrote, (c. vii. v. 37—38;) and whom many ſuppoſe to have been Mary Magdalene. However Lazarus being dangerouſly ill, his ſiſters ſent word to Jeſus, who was at a diſtance, ſimply informing him, that “he, whom he “loved, was ſick.” They knew that this would ſufficiently determine whom they meant, and compriſe every topic, which could be urged for his gracious interpoſition: and they referred the matter to him, without making any particular requeſt: yet they probably expected he would come without delay to heal him. When Jeſus heard this meſſage, he ſaid to his diciples, perhaps in the hearing of the meſſenger; that “this ſickneſs “was not unto death;” it was not intended finally to remove Lazarus out of the world; but for the glory of God, in that wonderful diſplay of the divine power of his beloved Son, by the miracle, to which it would give occaſion. This was evidently our Lord's meaning: but the meſſenger would not ſo underſtand it; and the expectation, which it would probably excite of a miraculous recovery, would add to the trial of the faith of all concerned, when the death of Lazarus ſeemed to preclude every hope of that kind. Our Lord loved each perſon in this favoured family, both as true diſciples, and as his moſt affectionate and intimate friends: yet *becauſe* he loved them, he tarried where he was two whole days after he received the tidings of Lazarus's ſickneſs: whereas we ſhould have ſuppoſed that he would have gone with all ſpeed to Bethany: but his love was directed by conſummate wiſdom, as the event ſhewed.

V. 7—10.] When our Lord intimated his purpoſe of returning into Judea, his diſciples were ſurpriſed at it: they deemed thoſe unworthy of his preſence, who had attempted his life; or rather they doubted whether he would be able to protect himſelf and them from the rage of ſuch powerful enemies. His anſwer implied, that he ſhould certainly be ſafe, and ought to be employed, during the appointed period of his life; and when hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſeeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he ſtumbleth, becauſe there is no light in him.

11 Theſe things ſaid he: and after that he ſaith unto them, Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth: but I go that I may awake him out of ſleep.

12 Then ſaid his diſciples, Lord, if he ſleep he ſhall do well.

13 Howbeit, Jeſus ſpake of his death: but they thought that he had ſpoken of taking of reſt in ſleep.

14 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your ſakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheleſs, let us go unto him.

16 Then ſaid Themas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow diſciples, Let us alſo go, that we may die with him.

17 Then when Jeſus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jeruſalem, about fifteen furlongs off.)

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as ſoon as ſhe heard that Jeſus was coming, went and met him: but Mary ſat *ſtill* in the houſe.

21 Then ſaid Martha unto Jeſus, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now, whatſoever thou wilt aſk of God, God will give *it* thee.

23 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Thy brother ſhall riſe again.

24 Martha ſaith unto him, I know that he ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day.

25 Jeſus ſaid unto her, I am the Reſurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live;

26 And whoſoever liveth and believeth in me ſhall never die. Believeſt thou this?

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that was expired, he muſt be delivered into the hands of his enemies: even as men labour and travel ſecurely, whilſt the ſun affords them his light; but are liable to fall into a pit, or down a precipice, if they travel in the night. Perhaps he alſo referred to the horror of darkneſs, under which his ſoul was enveloped during his outward ſufferings; which was as the gloom of the night compared with the light of the day, when contraſted with his preſent ſenſe of his Father's love and delight in him. The Jews divided the time of the ſun's being above the horizon into twelve hours: but their days were much nearer the ſame length in ſummer and winter, than they are in theſe northerly regions.

V. 11—16.] Our Lord perfectly knew what paſſed at Bethany: and he ſpake to his diſciples of the death of *their friend* Lazarus, which was ſpeedily to iſſue in his being reſtored to life, under the idea of his being "fallen aſleep." Thus he ſtated the fact in language that diveſted it of its terror; and at the ſame time, he ſpake of the miracle, that he intended to perform, in the moſt ſimple and unoſtentatious manner. However the diſciples did not underſtand him: but ſuppoſing him to mean, that Lazarus was taking reſt in ſleep, and deeming this a favourable ſymptom of his recovery; they thought that there could be no occaſion for him to expoſe himſelf to his enemies, by going to Bethany. He therefore plainly told them that Lazarus was dead; and that, inſtead of grieving for it, or regretting that he had not been there to recover him by miracle, he rejoiced on their account, as he meant to take occaſion from thence to confirm their faith in Him: nevertheleſs it was proper for him to go to Bethany, notwithſtanding the malice of the Jewiſh rulers. Thomas therefore, finding him reſolved, propoſed to his brethren to accompany Him; though he apprehended they ſhould be called to lay down their lives with, and for Him. This was the language of cordial affection, and of ſome faith; but combined with great ignorance both of the power, and ſalvation of his Lord, and of his own weakneſs and the deceitfulneſs of the human heart.

V. 17—19.] It was cuſtomary for the Jews to inter their deceaſed friends immediately: ſo that Lazarus was laid in the grave, on the ſame day, on which he died, (v. 39.) The two days, which paſſed before Jeſus ſet out on his journey, and the time employed in travelling, prevented his arrival at Bethany, till four days after that event. This was purpoſely intended as a trial of the ſiſters' faith, and to render the ſubſequent miracle the more inconteſtible, and ſurpriſing. As Bethany was ſcarce two miles from Jeruſalem, many Jews came from thence to condole with Martha and Mary on their loſs, and to employ the cuſtomary methods, and topics of conſolation; and this circumſtance was over-ruled to render the miracle more generally known, and more fully atteſted.

V. 20—27.] Martha, hearing firſt of our Lord's arrival, left Mary and the company, that ſhe might meet and welcome him: and ſome think ſhe wanted to inform him that many Jews were preſent; that he might uſe his diſcretion, whether he would venture himſelf among

27 She ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world.

28 And when ſhe had ſo ſaid ſhe went her way, and called Mary her ſiſter ſecretly, ſaying, The Maſter is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As ſoon as ſhe heard *that*, ſhe aroſe quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jeſus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the houſe, and comforted her, when they ſaw Mary that ſhe roſe up haſtily, and went out, followed her, ſaying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jeſus was, and ſaw him, ſhe fell down at his feet, ſaying unto him, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jeſus therefore ſaw her weeping, and the Jews alſo weeping which came with her, he groaned in the ſpirit, and was troubled,

34 And ſaid, Where have ye laid him? They ſaid unto him, Lord, come and ſee.

35 Jeſus wept.

36 Then ſaid the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And ſome of them ſaid, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have cauſed that even this man ſhould not have died?

38 Jeſus therefore again groaning in himſelf cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a ſtone lay upon it.

39 Jeſus ſaid, Take ye away the ſtone. Martha, the ſiſter of him that was dead, ſaith unto him, Lord, by this time he ſtinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

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them, or not. She expreſſed to Him her aſſurance, that He both could, and would have healed her brother, if he had been upon the ſpot: but ſhe ſeems not fully to have believed, that he could have cured him at a diſtance, if he had pleaſed. She alſo added a confident declaration, that God would grant whatſoever he ſhould then aſk of him, for their comfort and ſupport under their affliction: but whether this implied ſome feeble hope of her brother's being reſtored to life or no, is not evident. However ſhe ſeems rather to have conſidered Jeſus as a holy Prophet, who wrought miracles by faith and prayer, as the ancient prophets had done; than as the incarnate Son of God, who being One with the Father, performed his miracles by his own inherent omnipotence. But He aſſured her, that Lazarus ſhould riſe again: and ſhe expreſſed her firm belief that he would, at the general reſurrection, ariſe to eternal life; but intimated, that this could not make up to her the heavy loſs that ſhe had ſuſtained. To enlarge her expectations, and to excite in her more honourable thoughts of him, our Lord replied, by declaring himſelf to be "The Reſurrection and the "Life." In and through Him, (the ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven,) and through his mediatory undertaking and work, all the dead are to riſe again: He is the Author of the reſurrection; it will be effected by his power; and his ſalvation alone will render it a bleſſing. In every ſenſe He is the Reſurrection, the Source, the Subſtance, the firſt-fruits, and the efficient cauſe of it. He is alſo the Fountain, the Support, and the giver of Life temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; and no man can have it, but by and from Him: (c. v. v. 25—29. 1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 22, 23. 45.) To this He added, that he, who had believed in him, though, like Lazarus, he were outwardly dead, yet he ſhould ſurely live; his ſoul would live in heaven, when his body lay in the grave; and his body would ſurely riſe again to immortal Life, by virtue of his Union with Him "the Reſurrection and "the Life." On the other hand, every one, who was ſtill alive, and believed in him, ſhould be preſerved from dying for ever: that is, the death of the body would to him be no more than a peaceful ſleep; the ſoul would continue to live in happineſs; and after the Reſurrection, both body and ſoul would be preſerved from death, and every evil, to all eternity, (c. viii. v. 51.) Our Lord then demanded of Martha, whether ſhe believed this? And ſhe anſwered by an open confeſſion of her faith in him as the Meſſiah, and the Son of God, whom the prophets had foretold, as He, that was coming into the World.

V. 28.—32.] Martha, having thus confeſſed her faith in Jeſus, and probably obtained ſome comfort and hope from his words, returned to her ſiſter, to inform her that the Teacher was arrived, and had aſked for her; by which it appears that more converſation paſſed, than is here recorded. Accordingly ſhe went to him without the town, where he ſaw good to wait for her; this being more proper, than by going to the Jews, as it were, to call them forth to behold the miracle, which he meant to perform. But, as they judged, that ſhe was going to the grave to indulge her exceſſive ſorrow, they followed her; by which means they became ſpectators of what enſued. Mary proſtrated herſelf before Jeſus in the humbleſt manner; but ſhe expreſſed herſelf exactly in the ſame words, that Martha had done.

V. 33—40.] The exceſſive grief of Mary, and the ſympathizing tears of the Jews, joined to a reflection on the miſeries which ſin hath brought upon mankind, and a proſpect of the ruin which the Jews were bringing upon themſelves by their unbelief, and perverſe oppoſition to him, may be ſuppoſed to have excited this per-

40 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldeſt believe, thou ſhouldeſt ſee the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the ſtone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jeſus lifted up *his* eyes, and ſaid, Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me.

42 And I knew that thou heareſt me always: but becauſe of the people which ſtand by I ſaid *it*, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me.

43 And when he thus had ſpoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Looſe him, and let him go.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had ſeen the things which Jeſus did, believed on him.

46 But ſome of them went their ways to the Phariſees, and told them what things Jeſus had done.

47 Then gathered the chief prieſts and the Phariſees a council, and ſaid, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him; and the Romans ſhall come, and take away both our place and nation.

turbation in our Lord's mind: and, though he was perfectly Maſter of all his paſſions, he was pleaſed to give way to them on this occaſion: he therefore "groaned in "ſpirit, and *troubled himſelf*," as it ſtands in the original. And when at his requeſt they led him to the grave, he vented his inward ſorrow and ſympathy by weeping; and thus ſhewed himſelf in all things like to us, ſin alone excepted. This the Jews noticed, and expreſſed their ſurpriſe, at the greatneſs of his affection for the deceaſed: but ſome of them took occaſion from it, to increaſe their own prejudices, and thoſe of their neighbours againſt him: for taking it for granted, that he would have preſerved the life of one, whom he ſo loved, if he had been able; and concluding that the ſame power, which ſufficed to open the eyes of the blind, could have healed his ſickneſs, they ſhewed a diſpoſition to infer from the death of Lazarus, that there could be no reality in thoſe apparent miracles. Jeſus therefore again groaning within him, both on account of the afflictive ſcene before him, and becauſe of their obſtinate unbelief, arrived at the grave, which was an hollow place in the earth, the opening of which was cloſed with a large ſtone. This he ordered to be removed; but Martha objected to it, and thereby ſhewed how low her hopes had fallen reſpecting her brother's reſtoration. Our Lord therefore reminded her that he had told her, "if ſhe would believe, ſhe ſhould ſee a wonderful diſplay of the divine glory, in reſpect of her brother." This was implied, in what Jeſus had ſaid of himſelf, as "the Reſurrection, &c:" but probably he had ſpoken to her more explicitly to this purpoſe; demanding faith from her, and promiſing a glorious event to her heavy affliction.

V. 41—46.] When the ſtone was removed, our Lord with eyes lifted up to heaven, addreſſed himſelf to his Father, in a manner, of which we have no other inſtance. The Jews, unable to deny the reality of his miracles, had repeatedly aſcribed them to the power of ſatan: he was therefore pleaſed to preface this moſt eminent miracle by an appeal to the God of heaven, as his Father; that it might be evident, that he performed it by power from above; and that the Father thereby bare witneſs to Him, and authorized all thoſe declarations of his own dignity, and authority, which the Jews conſidered as blaſphemy. He therefore praiſed, and thanked the Father, that He had heard him in reſpect of the opportunity, and circumſtances, which had been ordered in providence for the diſplay of his power, in the miracle he was about to perform. Indeed he was aſſured, that he always accepted, and anſwered the prayers, which as Man, and Mediator, he continually preſented before Him. But he made this public appeal to him, for the benefit of thoſe, who ſtood by; that the event might convince them that He had ſent him as his beloved Son into the world, to perform the works, and to teach the doctrines, which they had ſeen and heard. Having thus ſpoken, he called aloud, (as one who had power, authority, and life in himſelf, as the Reſurrection and the Life, and as having the keys of death, and the unſeen world;) commanding "Lazarus to come forth:" and by the ſame energy, which created the world, the body, which had ſo long been tending to putrefaction, was rendered capable of all its ſuſpended functions, and was reſtored to immediate life, health, and vigour; the immortal ſoul having being recalled, and reunited to it: and thus He that had ſo long been dead, roſe up, and came forth out of the tomb, in his grave clothes, &c, (having juſt room to move his limbs,) and Jeſus, who would not multiply miracles unneceſſarily, ordered the ſpectators to looſe him, and ſo give him liberty to walk home, which was done accordingly. The evangeliſt did not attempt to deſcribe, and it would be in vain for us to endeavour to conceive, the mixed, and varied affections of aſtoniſhment, gratitude, joy, &c, which ſeized upon the relatives of Lazarus, and the ſpectators of this ſtupendous ſcene. Many of the Jews were thereby convinced, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah: yet others of them "would not "be perſuaded though one came to them from the dead;" on the contrary they were the more enraged, and went to inform the Phariſees, that they might uſe proper meaſures to prevent the increaſe of his popularity.

V. 47, 48.] We can ſcarce conceive of a more concluſive diſcovery of the madneſs that is in man's heart, or of his deſperate enmity againſt God, than that which

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high prieſt that ſame year, ſaid unto them, Ye know nothing at all.

50 Nor conſider that it is expedient for us, that one man ſhould die for the people, and that the whole nation periſh not.

51 And this ſpake he not of himſelf: but being high prieſt that year, he propheſied that Jeſus ſhould die for that nation:

52 And not for that nation only, but that alſo he ſhould gather together in one the children of God that were ſcattered abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took counſel together for to put him to death.

54 Jeſus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderneſs, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his diſciples.

55 And the Jews paſſover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jeruſalem before the paſſover, to purify themſelves.

56 Then ſought they for Jeſus, and ſpake among themſelves, as they ſtood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feaſt?

57 Now both the chief prieſts and the Phariſees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he ſhould ſhew *it*, that they might take him.

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is here recorded. The Jewiſh rulers, were neither convinced nor over-awed, by the diſplay of our Lord's aſtoniſhing power, (which would as readily have effected their deſtruction, as Lazarus's reſurrection, had he ſo pleaſed;) but they immediately called the council together, that they might determine what to do in this emergency. They blamed themſelves for trifling, and heſitating in ſo urgent a caſe; for it was evident that Jeſus did many miracles: this they could not deny, though they were determined not to admit them as evidences of his being ſent of God. They concluded therefore that if they did not decidedly interpoſe, men of all ranks, and deſcriptions throughout the nation, would unite in believing in him, as the Meſſiah, and in placing him over them as their King; by which the jealous Romans would be offended; and making war upon them, would deſtroy both Jeruſalem and the temple, and ſo ruin and totally enſlave the nation. Thus they argued from their own carnal ideas of the Meſſiah's kingdom, as if theſe had been the avowed purpoſes of Jeſus: they ſuppoſed him able to work ſuch miracles, as would convince all the people of his being the Meſſiah; and yet they concluded, that he would not be able to protect them againſt the Romans? They deſpiſed his mean appearance, and were ready to ſay ſhall this man ſave us? But their hatred of his holy doctrine and example, their regard to their own authority, and their reſentment againſt him for having expoſed their hypocriſy, were at leaſt equally powerful, though more concealed, motives of their oppoſition, than the fear of the Romans. However they projected to put him to death, leſt that nation ſhould deſtroy their city, and temple, &c: and by ſo doing, they provoked God to bring that very judgment upon them.

V. 49—53.] Caiaphas ſeems to have been a Sadducee; (*Acts*, c. v. ver. 17.) He was a bold, ungodly, and infidel politician; and, in the language of pride and arrogance, he charged the whole council with total ignorance of the firſt principles, by which government ſhould be conducted: for whether Jeſus deſerved death, or not, his life ought to be ſacrificed to the public good: for it was evidently expedient, that even an innocent perſon ſhould be put to death, for the benefit of the whole nation, and to preſerve that from deſtruction. But whilſt he thus diſgraced himſelf, by ſuch iniquitous and impious counſel, which was ſo inconſiſtent with his ſacred office: the Lord was pleaſed to guide his tongue to utter a remarkable prophecy, and thus to honour the inſtitution of the high prieſthood, notwithſtanding the wickedneſs of him, who now filled it. For his words aptly ſignified, (though he was not aware of it,) that it was expedient that the holy Jeſus ſhould be made an atoning ſacrifice for the ſins of God's people; ſuffering One for all, the juſt inſtead of the unjuſt; that by his death he might ſave them from periſhing. Thus he died for that nation, that is for all of that nation, who ever ſhould believe in him, and for all the true Iſrael, whom that nation typified: therefore not for that nation only, but for all the children of God, who were ſcattered abroad throughout the earth. This muſt refer to the election of grace, by which men are conſidered *in God's purpoſe*, as his children, even before their converſion, yea before they are brought into exiſtence, (*Eph.* c. i. v. 5;) and as ſuch they are in due ſeaſon gathered together into his family, and admitted to the privileges of his children. We ſhould remember that the evangeliſt here expounds, not the meaning of Caiaphas, but that of the Holy Ghoſt who ſpake by him: and thus this bitter enemy of Chriſt was conſtrained to bear teſtimony to the great doctrine of ſalvation through his atoning blood; even as Balaam was conſtrained to bleſs Iſrael, when he was bent upon curſing them. However he knew not the import of his own words: and his counſel determined the Sanhedrim to deviſe proper meaſures for putting Jeſus to death, without further delay.

V. 54—57.] As it was our Lord's purpoſe to ſuffer at the feaſt of the paſſover; ſo he was pleaſed to retire for the preſent to an obſcure part of the country, where he abode and converſed privately with his diſciples, till within a few days of that ſolemnity. In the mean while

CHAP. XII.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus entertained at Bethany; Mary anointing his feet, &c; Judas from diſhoneſt motives objecting to the expence, and Jeſus vindicating her, 1---8. *2d. The people reſorting to him, by means of Lazarus, his triumphant entrance into Jeruſalem, riding on an aſs, and the indignation of the Prieſts and Phariſees,* 9---19. *3d. Certain Greeks deſiring to ſee him; his taking occaſion from thence to predict his own death, and it's bleſſed effects, &c; his inward trouble, and reſigned prayer, which was anſwered by a voice from heaven; his obſervation thereon, and his exhortation to the people to make uſe of their preſent advantages,* 20---36. *4th. The obſtinate unbelief of the Jews ſhewn to be a fulfilment of Iſaiah's prophecies; the convictions of ſome rulers concerning Jeſus, and the reaſons and motives of their concealing them; and further declarations of Jeſus, concerning his divine miſſion, and the danger of rejecting him,* 37---50.

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the Jews, who went up to Jeruſalem ſome time before, to perform ſuch rites as were appointed for their purification, ſought for Him, probably from different motives: and they queſtioned with each other, whether he would have courage to come to the feaſt, or not; ſeeing public orders were given, for every one to give information where he was, that he might be taken.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Thoſe families are greatly favoured, in which love, and peace abound; but thoſe are moſt happy, which Jeſus loves, and by whom he is beloved. Alas that this ſhould ſo ſeldom be the caſe with every perſon, even in ſmall families, and ſtill more ſeldom in larger houſholds! Yet even this privilege cannot exclude ſickneſs, and death; it may ſtill be often ſaid, “Lord, He, whom “thou loveſt, is ſick;” and they, “whom thou loveſt, “are mourning over the dying agonies, or the dead bo“dies, of their deareſt relatives:” for Jeſus did not come to preſerve his people from theſe afflictions, but to ſave them from their ſins and from the wrath to come; and to convert their outward ſorrows, and temporal death, into medicines or means of completing that ſalvation. However it behoves us to apply to Him, in behalf of our friends, and relatives, when they are ſick and afflicted; and if we can plead for them, that they are the objects of his ſpecial love, we ſhall urge the beſt arguments in their favour: yet we muſt leave it to his wiſdom to direct the exerciſe of his love, without preſuming to dictate to him. In one way or other, the ſickneſſes of thoſe, whom he loves, will be for the glory of God, and for their good; whether they recover or not. We ought to be willing to live, or die, to paſs through any temporal ſuffering, or to part with our deareſt relatives; when his glory requires it: for that grand end cannot be ſeparated from the real advantage of thoſe, whom He loves; any more than the glory of the Father can be ſeparated from that of his beloved Son. But we cannot judge of the Lord's love to us by outward diſpenſations: his ways are not as our ways, but infinitely above them; and he ſees good to prove his people's faith by afflictions and delays, when we ſhould think it abſolutely neceſſary for him to haſten to their relief. We muſt therefore learn to walk by faith, and to wait for him in patience, and with conſtant prayer.

Whilſt we follow our Redeemer's example of perſevering diligence in the work of the Lord; we ſhall experience a ſimilar protection, as far as it is good for us. As long as the appointed, but unknown days of our life continue, we may purſue our journey, and attend to our duty, without fear of our enemies, who can have no power againſt us: but when that time is paſt, we muſt fall into the grave, and all our precautions to the contrary muſt be unavailing.

Whilſt we therefore have time and opportunity, and the light of the goſpel is afforded us, let us endeavour to do good to all men; and let us expect death, as the end of our labours, and as a ſweet repoſe, till Jeſus ſhall come, and awake us from ſleep, to enjoy our eternal recompence. But let us remember, that even diſciples are dull of apprehenſion reſpecting their Lord's meaning: and that whilſt he orders every thing for their good, and the increaſe of their faith; he deems their tranſient diſtreſs a ſmall matter compared with the durable good of their ſouls, and the common benefit of his people. We ſhould therefore all be ready to ſuffer and die with him, if called to it: but many have lively affections, and make confident reſolutions, whoſe views are very confuſed, and who are in no wiſe prepared for the day of trial.

Natural humanity may induce men to ſympathize with, and to comfort the afflicted: yet, however the Lord may prove his people by delaying to appear for their relief, they know that he is their only effectual Comforter, and they will leave all others, to pour out their complaints before him. Yet they ſeldom have adequate views of his power, and love, and ſuitable expectations of help from him; and their faith is commonly counteracted by large alloys of unbelief. We are indeed aſſured that our dear deceaſed relatives ſhall riſe again at the reſurrection at the laſt day, and that all believers ſhall then appear with him in glory: yet this aſſurance, comfortable as it is, cannot wholly allay our anguiſh for the loſs of thoſe, who were a daily bleſſing to us. But we ſhould by no means grieve like men, that have no hope, for thoſe who ſleep in him: neither ſhould we look forward to death with diſmay: for our gracious Friend, who gave himſelf for us, is “the Reſurrection and the “Life:” and death is now a conquered enemy, or rather converted into a friend, to every believer. Such of them whoſe bodies now ſleep in the grave, live in heaven, and ſhall live for ever; and they, who are alive and remain; ſhall never die; for Jeſus hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel. Do we indeed believe this? And are we dejected by the troubles of life, and the proſpect of the grave? Lord pardon our unbelief, increaſe our faith, and help us aſſuredly to hope in thee as the Chriſt, the Son of God, who cameſt into the world to ſave ſinners!

THEN Jeſus ſix days before the paſſover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raiſed from the dead.

2 There they made him a ſupper, and Martha ſerved: but Lazarus was one of them that ſat at the table with him.

3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of ſpikenard very coſtly, and anointed the feet of Jeſus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the houſe was filled with the odour of the ointment.

4 Then ſaith one of his diſciples, Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, which ſhould betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment ſold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he ſaid, not that he cared for the poor; but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

When Jeſus diſplays his glory and gracious preſence to us, as he does not to the world; we ſhould communicate our experiences to our fellow chriſtians, that we may be helpers of their joy: and when He calls us to his ordinances, or his throne of grace; we muſt not permit any company to detain us. But we ſhould be careful not to limit our faith and hope, by the ſcanty meaſures of thoſe, with whom we converſe; leſt we ſhould thus impede each others growth in grace. Our Redeemer was a man of ſorrows: in this world of affliction he conformed himſelf to the climate: We know not that he ever laughed; but he groaned, he troubled himſelf, and He wept. That ſenſibility, of which many are proud, whilſt they weep for fictitious diſtreſs, but are callous to real woe, he never ſanctioned: but he wept over, and with the afflicted; and thus both encouraged mourners to truſt in, and expect comfort from him; and ſet us an example to withdraw from ſcenes of giddy mirth, that we may ſympathize with, comfort, and counſel the diſtreſſed. Yet proud and prejudiced unbelievers call more for our compaſſion, and deep concern, than the moſt afflicted of the believing ſervants of our God. It is grievous to ſee men quarrelling with thoſe truths, by the belief of which alone they can be ſaved from everlaſting miſery; and to ſee the world full of ſin, and woe, and men rejecting their only remedy with obſtinate contempt. However the Lord ſtill proceeds with his gracious plan, notwithſtanding the perverſeneſs of mankind: and they, who are led to believe and obey his word, ſhall ſee, and experience the diſplays, and efficacy of his glorious power in their behalf. But whilſt we expect help from him alone; we muſt not tempt him by neglecting the means he hath inſtituted, or refuſing to obey thoſe commandments that he hath given us ability to comply with. The ſinner cannot quicken his own ſoul; but he ought to uſe the means of grace: the believer cannot ſanctify himſelf; but he ought to lay aſide every weight and incumbrance: we cannot convert our children, relatives, neighbours, or congregations; but we ſhould inſtruct, warn, invite, and exhort them. Thus we may remove the ſtone, or looſe the grave clothes, though we cannot raiſe the dead. But who can expreſs the majeſty and condeſcenſion of our Redeemer? For the ſake of thoſe, who ſought his life, he veiled his glory, and in the form of a Servant he addreſſed the Father for the performance of that work, which he immediately after wrought by his own power, as the Reſurrection and the Life, as God manifeſt in the fleſh. If he then ſhall pleaſe to ſpeak, how ſoon can he rebuke our enemies, new-create our hearts, or anſwer our prayers for the converſion of thoſe around us! How ſafely may we truſt the health and life of our deareſt relatives in his hand! And how chearfully go down to the grave, in a ſure hope of a glorious reſurrection! Our ſharpeſt trials will iſſue in more abundant comfort, if we believe in Him; and they may perhaps promote his glory in the converſion of our fellow ſinners.

Yet no outward means can overcome the obdurate enmity of ſinners againſt God: and they are peculiarly hardened, who have engaged their intereſt, and reputation, in the unequal conteſt. Subtle and infidel politicians count all men ignorant and fooliſh, who heſitate to ſacrifice honeſty and juſtice to expediency: perſecutors deem it a public calamity, when numbers are converted to Jeſus; they think themſelves culpable, when not uſing the moſt ſanguinary methods of oppoſing the truth: they run down thoſe with oppreſſive power, whom they cannot anſwer; they imagine that the excellency of the end will ſanctify all the impieties, frauds and murders, which are uſed to compaſs it; and they deem the life of innocent perſons a trivial matter, compared with the peace and uniformity of the church; which generally conſiſts in groſs ſuperſtition, uſurped authority over men's conſcience, and deſtructive hereſies. But whilſt they ſeek to avert calamities by ſuch means, they bring them upon themſelves in the moſt tremendous manner. However the Lord will honour his own inſtitutions, notwithſtanding man's wickedneſs; and extort confeſſions to his truth from his implacable enemies. Once, and but once, it was expedient that the innocent ſhould ſuffer for the guilty; and the divine Saviour willingly died for us, to gather us, as the children of God from all our diſperſions into his kingdom: may he gather more and more into his church from every part of the earth! But no devices of man can derange the purpoſes of God: whilſt hypocrites amuſe themſelves with forms and controverſies, and worldly men purſue their own projects; Jeſus ſtill communes with his diſciples, and orders all things in ſubverviency to his own glory and their ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—8.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 6—16. *Mark*, c. xiv. v. 3—11.) Lazarus ſat at table on this occaſion, to ſhew that he was really alive and in good health; and Martha waited to honour Jeſus. Judas had always been covetous; and neither his pro-

7 Then ſaid Jeſus, Let her alone: againſt the day of my burying hath ſhe kept this.

8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there; and they came, not for Jeſus' ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo, whom he had raiſed from the dead.

10 But the chief prieſts conſulted, that they might put Lazarus alſo to death;

11 Becauſe that by reaſon of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jeſus.

12 On the next day much people that were come to the feaſt, when they heard that Jeſus was coming to Jeruſalem,

13 Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hoſanna: Bleſſed *is* the King of Iſrael that cometh in the name of the Lord.

14 And Jeſus, when he had found a young aſs, ſat thereon; as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, the King cometh, ſitting on an aſs's colt.

16 Theſe things underſtood not his diſciples at the firſt: but when Jeſus was glorified, then remembered they that theſe things were written of him, and *that* they had done theſe things unto him.

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raiſed him from the dead, bare record.

18 For this cauſe the people alſo met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Phariſees therefore ſaid among themſelves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worſhip at the feaſt:

21 The ſame came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethſaida of Galilee, and deſired him, ſaying, Sir, we would ſee Jeſus.

22 Philip cometh, and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip tell Jeſus.

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feſſed faith in Chriſt, nor his apoſtolical office, had ſubdued this vile propenſity. Being entruſted with the ſcanty ſtock, from which the neceſſary expences of our Lord and his company were ſupplied, he baſely ſtole ſmall ſums from it; probably pretending that he gave them to the poor. And he thought that if the price of this ointment had been at once put into the bag, he could have taken a larger ſum, on the ſame pretence, without being ſuſpected.

V. 9—11.] It is no wonder, that the undeniable miracle of Lazarus's reſurrection ſhould induce multitudes from different motives, to reſort to Bethany, that they might ſee both Jeſus, and him, at the ſame time; or that many Jews ſhould have been convinced that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, and that the Prieſts, and Phariſees were very wicked in oppoſing him: but the conduct of the latter in conſulting to put Lazarus to death, that they might prevent the further effect of the miracle, was ſuch a compound of impiety, iniquity, malice, folly, and infidelity, as can never be accounted for, but by an acquaintance with the deſperate enmity of man's heart againſt God. They ſeemed to reſolve that the man ſhould die, of whom the Lord had evidently declared that he ſhould live!

V. 12—19.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxi. v. 1—11: *Luke*, c. xix. v. 29—40.) The teſtimony of thoſe Jews, who were preſent, when Lazarus was called out of the grave, had excited the multitudes both of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and of the ſtrangers, who were come thither, to go forth and meet Jeſus. His diſciples had no hand in it: nay they did not underſtaud the meaning of his entering Jeruſalem in this manner, till after his aſcenſion, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt, by whoſe influence they recollected the words of the prophet, and perceived their accompliſhment in that tranſaction. (*Zech.* c. ix. v. 9.) But the Phariſees, comparing this conduct of Jeſus, and the favour ſhewn him by the multitude, with their late edict, (c. xi. v. 57;) were greatly enraged: they foreſaw the entire ruin of their reputation, and authority, if he were let alone any longer: their oppoſition, and proclamation had produced no effect; the whole world ſeemed to be gone after him: and whilſt they were more determined than ever to apprehend him; they were afraid to attempt it, leſt the multitudes ſhould riſe to oppoſe them. This made way for the treachery of Judas, which otherwiſe would not have been ſo neceſſary.

V. 20—22.] Theſe Greeks ſeem to have been of gentile extraction, and not Jews who ſpake the Greek language, (as the word rendered Grecians frequently means:) they are ſuppoſed to have lived in the confines of Galilee, and thus to have got acquainted with Philip: (*Mark*, c. vii. v. 26.) They were favourable to the Jewiſh religion; but it is probable, they were not circumciſed as proſelytes; for though they came to Jeruſalem to worſhip, yet it is not ſaid, that they came to eat the paſſover. However, having heard of our Lord's miracles, they were deſirous of ſeeing and hearing him, and reſpectfully applied to Philip for that purpoſe: but he, perhaps fearing leſt an interview with Gentiles would render his Lord ſtill more obnoxious to the Phariſees, did not make it known to him, till he had pre-

23 And Jeſus anſwered them, ſaying, The hour is come, that the Son of man ſhould be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life ſhall loſe it; and he that hateth his life in this world ſhall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man ſerve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be: if any man ſerve me, him will *my* Father honour.

27 Now is my ſoul troubled; and what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave me from this hour: but for this cauſe came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

29 The people therefore that ſtood by, and heard *it*, ſaid that it thundered: others ſaid, An angel ſpake to him.

30 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, This voice came not becauſe of me, but for your ſakes.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

33 (This he ſaid, ſignifying what death he ſhould die.)

34 The people anſwered him, We have

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viouſly conferred with Andrew about it. Probably Jeſus ordered them to be introduced to him, and ſpake what follows in their preſence.

V. 23—26.] Our Lord ſhewed his hearers on this occaſion, that the time was juſt at hand, when he ſhould be advanced to his exalted throne, to be glorified as the Saviour and King of both Jews, and Gentiles: yet this would not take place, 'till he had laid down his life for them. As a corn of wheat yields no increaſe, unleſs it be caſt in the ground, and there periſh, as to its former ſhape, and ſubſiſtence; but by that proceſs a blade ſprings up, which at length produces many grains of the ſame nature, with that which was ſown: thus He might indeed *alone* have poſſeſſed his heavenly glory without becoming incarnate; or after his incarnation, he might *alone* have entered heaven by his own perfect righteouſneſs, without ſuffering, or death; but in that caſe no ſinner of the whole human race could have been ſaved. His love therefore made him voluntarily ſubmit to death, that being laid in the ground, as if about to turn to corruption; he might thence be raiſed as the firſt-fruits of a large increaſe of redeemed ſinners, to bear his image, to ſhew forth his praiſe, and to participate his glory. As this was his deſign, and he was about to carry it into practice; his diſciples ſhould be reminded to arm themſelves with the ſame mind; not loving this preſent life, when it would endanger that of their ſouls; but comparatively hating it, that they might ſecure that eternal life, which he gave to his faithful followers: (Notes, c. x. v. 27—29. c. xi. v. 21—28.) As therefore they called Him their Lord, ſuch of them as really meant to devote themſelves to his ſervice, ſhould prepare to follow his example in being obedient even unto death, if called to it: for ſuch ſervants would aſſuredly be admitted into the ſame happy place, whither he was going, and where he even then was, in the glory of his divine nature. Yea his Father would certainly honour, in the moſt diſtinguiſhed manner, all thoſe, who thus ſerved, and followed him; however man might deſpiſe both him, and them.

V. 27—33.] The near proſpect, which our Lord had of his approaching, and moſt tremendous ſufferings, excited an inward perturbation in his mind; and he openly declared that his ſoul was troubled: and what ſhould he ſay in reſpect of the ſcene before him? ſhould he ſay "Father ſave me from this hour?" Even his holy nature might have dictated ſuch a prayer; had he not known that he came into the world, and had continued ſo long upon earth, with a particular purpoſe of paſſing through that hour of darkneſs and anguiſh; without which his former labours, obedience, and ſufferings would be of no avail: he would therefore in perfect acquieſcence ſay, "Father, glorify thy name:" for he only deſired to be ſupported through the dreadful ſcene, to the glory of the divine juſtice, holineſs, mercy, and truth, in the ſalvation of ſouls. (Notes, &c, *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 36—44.) Upon this the voice of the Father from heaven, which had atteſted him to be his Beloved Son, at his baptiſm, and when he was transfigured, was heard, proclaiming, "that He had both glorified his "name, and would glorify it." The life, miracles, and doctrine of our Lord had ſhewn the glory of God; and his death, reſurrection, and exaltation would ſtill more extenſively, and illuſtriouſly diſplay it. They, who heard this voice leſs diſtinctly, ſaid that it thundered; others ſuppoſed that an angel addreſſed him: but none of them clearly underſtood, that the Father thus atteſted his complacency in Jeſus, and his whole work; for their minds were generally averſe to this concluſion. He therefore aſſured them, that this voice did not come for his ſake, as he had always been ſatisfied of his Father's love to him; but for their benefit, that they might believe in him, as the Son of God. For the "judgment "of this world was come." It's wickedneſs would be proved, and it's condemnation pronounced in that event, which was about to take place: his crucifixion would diſcloſe and aggravate the guilt of man's deſperate wickedneſs; and ſhew God's abhorrence of ſin, and the certain deſtruction, which awaited all unbelievers. His death would make way for the judgment, and condemheard out of the law that Chriſt abideth for ever: and how ſayeſt thou, The Son of man muſt be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

35 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you: for he that walketh in darkneſs knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. Theſe things ſpake Jeſus, and departed, and did hide himſelf from them.

37 But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the ſaying of Eſaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they ſhould not ſee with *their* eyes, nor underſtand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them.

41 Theſe things, ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.

nation of the Jewiſh nation; and of the whole Gentile world, thoſe excepted who embraced his goſpel. His religion would diſtinguiſh men's characters, convict multitudes of hypocriſy, lead others to judge and condemn themſelves; and thus in every way, the judgment of the laſt day would be anticipated. In conſequence of his death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt, and the preaching of the goſpel, ſatan the great ruler and prince of this wicked world, whom all idolaters worſhip as their God, and all unconverted ſinners obey as their king, would be judged and condemned with all his ſubjects; the ſentence would begin to be executed in his expulſion from his uſurped dominion, by the converſion of ſinners, the ſubverſion of the heathen temples, and the deſtruction of idolatry. Of this, the enquiry of theſe Greeks was an earneſt; and this would progreſſively be carried on, till the kingdoms of the earth would be ſubjected to Chriſt. In ſhort, *if*, or *when* he ſhould be lifted up from the earth, to die on the croſs: he would in conſequence of that atonement, and by its attractive influence, through the preached goſpel, and the power of the Holy Ghoſt, draw men, of all nations and deſcriptions, to come and put their truſt in him, to devote themſelves to his ſervice, and to follow him in the way to his eternal glory.

V. 34—36.] The people underſtood our Lord to mean by his being lifted up from the earth, that he was about to be cut off by ſome violent death; and they obſerved, that the law, (a general word ſometimes uſed for the whole of the Old Teſtament,) had repreſented their promiſed Meſſiah as a glorious Prince, whoſe kingdom was to abide for ever: from this they had inferred that he would never die; how then could he ſpeak of "the Son "of Man being lifted up"? They could not reconcile theſe things; and they wanted to know who "this "Son of Man was"? They knew that he ſpake of himſelf by that title; but did he mean, that he was the Meſſiah, or no? Thus they took a part of ſcripture, and drew falſe inferences from it; becauſe they overlooked other parts of the ſame holy records: for had they properly adverted to thoſe prophecies, which explicitly foretold the ſufferings, and death of the Meſſiah; (*Pſ.* xxii. *Iſaiah.* liii. *Dan.* c. ix. v. 26. *Zech.* c. xiii. v. 7.) they muſt have inferred his reſurrection, and ſubſequent glory from thoſe ſcriptures, which foretold that he ſhould abide, and reign for ever. However, our Lord did not ſee good to anticipate that anſwer to their queſtion, which the event would ſpeedily give: But he warned them that the light would continue with them but a little while, and exhorted them to walk in it, whilſt they had it, before they were overtaken by the moſt dangerous and diſtreſſing darkneſs. He, "the Light of the World" continued with them a very ſhort time, in reſpect of his perſonal miniſtry: the light of divine truth was ſoon after withdrawn from the unbelieving Jews, and they have ever ſince wandered in darkneſs, not knowing whither they go. And thus all unbelievers walk in ignorance, error, and uncertainty; and they either die in the moſt diſtracting apprehenſions about the unknown ſtate, to which they are removing; or they are bolſtered up by ſome preſumptuous deluſion. If then the Jews would walk in the Light, they muſt believe in it, and follow Chriſt's inſtructions, and directions: thus they would become the children of the light, the children of God, who is Light, and conformed to him in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and felicity; and ſo they would be made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light, and walk in the light, in ſome meaſure as they do. (Notes, &c. c. viii. v. 12. c. ix. v. 4, 5. 39. c. xi. v. 9, 10. *Eph.* c. v. ver. 8—14. 1 *Theſ.* c. v. ver. 5.) Having ſaid this our Lord retired, and concealed himſelf from his perſecutors, probably by going privately to Bethany.

V. 37—41.] The obſtinate unbelief of the Jews, notwithſtanding the numerous and ſignal miracles of Jeſus, was an accompliſhment of an ancient prophecy, (*Iſaiah*, c. liii. v. 1:) it was predicted by the prophet, as one aſtoniſhed, that few in compariſon would believe the report of the Meſſiah's coming; becauſe his external appearance would not coincide with their carnal expectations: and in the caſe of theſe few, the arm, or power of the Lord would be diſplayed, to overcome their pride, enmity, and worldly prejudices; and to bring them to believe in their lowly and ſpiritual Redeemer. Or the enquiry might be, to whom the deſpiſed Meſſiah would be made known, as the arm, or power of God to ſalvation? However as none can claim this divine power to take away the obſtinacy, and iniquity of their hearts;

42 Neverthelefs, among the chief rulers alſo many believed on him; but becauſe of the Phariſees they did not confeſs *him*, leſt they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue:

43 For they loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God.

44 Jeſus cried and ſaid, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me.

45 And he that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me.

46 I am come a Light into the world, that whoſoever believeth on me ſhould not abide in darkneſs.

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to ſave the world.

48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day.

49 For I have not ſpoken of myſelf; but the Father which ſent me, he gave me a commandment, what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak.

50 And I know that his commandment is life everlaſting: whatſoever I ſpeak therefore, even as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak.

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and as none deſire it, when left to themſelves: ſo the Jews of that generation did every thing that could be conceived to provoke God to with-hold it from them, and to give them up to their own heart's luſts. "Therefore they could not believe;" for it was further predicted, that "God would blind their eyes," &c. They had long ſhut their own eyes, and hardened their own hearts; and ſo God was provoked to give many of them up to ſuch *judicial* blindneſs, as rendered their converſion, and ſalvation impoſſible. The prophecy was not the motive, or the cauſe of their wickedneſs: but it was the declaration of God's purpoſe, which could not be defeated; therefore, whilſt this prophecy ſtood in ſcripture againſt them, and others of like character, who hated the truth from love of ſin; the event became certain; in which ſenſe it is ſaid, that they could not believe. The evangeliſt adds, that the prophet "ſpake theſe things, when he ſaw *his* glory and ſpake of him," evidently meaning Chriſt, of whom he diſcourſed both before, and afterwards: the reference is made to that auguſt viſion, which Iſaiah had of the glory of Jehovah, and the worſhip of the attendant ſeraphim: and St. John declares that the prophet then ſaw the glory of Chriſt and ſpake of Him: from which we confidently infer that Jeſus is Jehovah. (Notes, c. i. v. 18. *Iſaiah*, c. vi.)

V. 42, 43] The reſurrection of Lazarus convinced many of the members of the ſanhedrim, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, and they ſecretly believed in him as ſuch: but they regarded him chiefly as a temporal Deliverer, and they probably expected, that he would ſhortly appear in that character, and then they might ſafely acknowledge him. At preſent the Phariſees, and all the leading perſons, were ſo violent in their oppoſition to him; that they dared not confeſs their ſentiments concerning him, leſt they ſhould be excommunicated: for ambition, and regard to their reputation were predominant in their hearts; and they preferred the eſteem and applauſe of their neighbours, to the favour and approbation of God, which they could not expect, whilſt they acted contrary to their conſciences; (c. v. ver. 44:) and thus they ſuffered the enemies of Jeſus to proceed in their ſanguinary meaſures, till they had put him to death, without making any oppoſition to, or proteſt againſt them; nay they even ſanctioned their conduct by their ſilent concurrence.

V. 44—50.] This ſeems to have been one of our Lord's laſt addreſſes to the Jews, before he finally left the temple. He proclaimed in the moſt public manner, that every one, who believed in him, as his true diſciple, did not believe on him, *only*, or *ultimately*, but on the Father who ſent him; and had all the divine perfections for the foundation of his hope of protection and ſalvation: and every one, who ſaw him, at the ſame time ſaw the Father, who ſent him. In his holy character the moral perfections of God were diſplayed; his miracles ſhewed the divine power, authority, and compaſſion; his knowledge of diſtant events and of the ſecrets of men's hearts, and his moſt conſummate prudence, diſcovered the divine omniſcience and wiſdom; and his mediatory undertaking, obedience, ſufferings, and work, would form the grand exhibition of the glorious juſtice, holineſs, truth, and mercy of God. (c. xiv. v. 9. c. xv. v. 24.) This was ſo manifeſt, that not only believers ſaw, and loved the Father in him: but unbelievers alſo ſaw and hated both him, and his Father. The caſe is ſtill the ſame, with reſpect to the diſcovery of the divine character in Chriſt by the goſpel; and it will continue the ſame to the end. Others indeed had been enlightened after they came into the world, and ſo ſhone for a while, with feeble, and reflected beams: but he was the Light of heaven, and "came a Light into this benighted world," to illuminate it by his doctrine, and no believer in him ſhould long abide in his natural darkneſs: wicked men indeed hated this Light, and would not hear, and believe his inſtructions: but for the preſent he did not mean to judge, or take vengeance upon, them, but would bear all their indignities, and cruelties with perfect meekneſs; working no miracles but thoſe of mercy, ſuited to the character of a gracious Saviour, rather than to that of a terrible Judge and Avenger. (c. iii. v. 16—21) Yet ſuch perſons ought not to infer that they would always eſcape with impunity. They would be cited before an impartial Judge: and the words of truth, and grace, which he then ſpake, and they contemned, would certainly riſe up in judgment againſt them, to enſure and aggravate their condemnation at the laſt day. For he had always ſpoken the words,

CHAP. XIII.

Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Waſhing his diſciples feet, and propoſing his example to their imitation, 1---17. *2d. Declaring that one of them would betray him, marking out Judas as the perſon; and, ſpeaking of his ſufferings, and conſequent glory,* 18---30. *3d. Enjoining the diſciples to love one another, and predicting Peter's denial of him,* 31---38.

which he was commanded of the Father to deliver to them: and they were not only words of truth, purity, and authority, but of abundant mercy and grace; for he aſſuredly knew them to contain the only, and the effectual way, by which ſinners might obtain eternal life. He therefore proclaimed them confidently, notwithſtanding their furious enmity, and indignation: and if they rejected them, and him, they did it at their peril.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No virulence of enraged perſecutors will deter zealous believers from expreſſing their love and gratitude to their gracious Saviour. When the heart is upright every endeavour to honour Him will be accepted; though man may cenſure it as injudicious, and unſuitable. A high profeſſion of religion ſometimes covers the moſt contemptible, or the moſt conſummate knavery. Many perſons plead for charity in oppoſition to faith in, and love to Chriſt; not becauſe they care for the poor, but becauſe it beſt anſwers their ſelfiſh purpoſes. It behoves thoſe, who are entruſted with money, to be employed in pious, or charitable uſes, to watch, and pray continually againſt covetouſneſs. Carrying the bag, has always been a perilous, though a too much coveted, ſervice; eſpecially to church-men: and thieves have often been employed in it. The leſs men are diſpoſed to ſuſpect, or to call us to account, in ſuch matters; the more cautious and ſcrupulous ſhould we be in our own conduct: for if ſatan can prevail with miniſters, or profeſſors of the goſpel to venture on petty frauds, by pilfering from the poor, or embezzling holy things; he will be likely ſoon to gain a more decided victory over them, and expoſe them to open infamy, and complicated ruin. We ſhould not generally be much moved with the unjuſt cenſures, that are caſt upon us; if we knew the ſecret practices, and motives of thoſe, who vented them: it is therefore commonly beſt to keep a clear conſcience, and ſilently to leave the Lord to anſwer for us. Whatever other methods we may occaſionally take of honouring Chriſt with our ſubſtance; the relief of the poor is the ſtated method, and we have them always with us for that purpoſe.

There is nothing ſo wicked and infatuated, but men who have engaged in perſecution, and thus ſtaked their credit and authority in that deſperate cauſe, will attempt, in order to eſcape a defeat, and the infamy and ruin connected with it. The ſucceſs of the goſpel often enrages them to madneſs; and they ſpeak and act, as if they really hoped to obtain a victory over the Almighty God himſelf. We ſhould hence learn to avoid every meaſure, which has the moſt remote tendency to the leaſt degree of this dreadful miſchief. But how miſerable muſt they be, who are pained by the honour conferred on Zion's King! All things written of Him muſt needs be accompliſhed: all nations muſt bow down before him; all his enemies muſt be put under his feet; and the whole world muſt either ſubmit to, or be deſtroyed by, him. And the more he is glorified, the more exquiſite will be the torture of thoſe who hate him, to all eternity! Happy then are they, and they only, who from their hearts can cry "Hoſanna, bleſſed is the "King of Iſrael, who cometh in the name of the Lord;" and who can rejoice in the meek and lowly triumphs of his grace on earth, and in the proſpect of his univerſal and everlaſting kingdom! They, who are neareſt to the means of grace, often ripen the faſteſt for vengeance; whilſt ſinners come from afar to enquire after Chriſt: and it is a joyful ſound to hear ſuch as have been ignorant and careleſs, deſiring the inſtructions, and prayers of his miniſters, in order to their becoming acquainted with Him, and his ſalvation. To receive ſuch ſerious enquirers is his glory, and joy; and when they approach Him, he ſees of the travail of his ſoul, and is ſatisfied. So great was his love to us poor periſhing rebels, that he would not abide alone in his felicity; but rather choſe to aſſume our nature, to ſubmit to death, and to be laid in the grave; that he might riſe and return to his glory, and be attended and followed by an innumerable multitude of thoſe, whom he had redeemed unto God with his blood. Whilſt we admire this unſpeakably rich, and condeſcending love of our adorable Redeemer: let us enquire whether our conduct and character prove us to be the increaſe of this corn of wheat? It is obvious that ſelfiſh, ambitious, contentious, revengeful, or ſenſual profeſſors of the goſpel, are not the genuine produce from the meek, humble, gentle, ſelf-abaſing, generous, patient and holy Jeſus. Such are doubtleſs the tares, which the enemy hath ſown in the field, and which will at laſt be ſeparated and caſt into the fire: whilſt the wheat, who are conformed by divine grace, in good meaſure, to their Saviour's likeneſs, ſhall be preſerved to his heavenly kingdom. Let us then examine whether "Chriſt be in us the hope of "glory?" and let us beg of him to make us indifferent about this preſent life, and all its trifling concerns; that we may be ready to relinquiſh, to venture, or to ſuffer any thing, that we may obtain eternal life; and that we may ſerve the Lord Jeſus with a willing mind, and follow his holy example; for where he is, there will all ſuch ſervants be for ever, in whatever ſtation they have been placed in his church on earth; and they will be honoured of the Father before all his holy angels, however diſgraced among men.

Indeed, temporary pain and ſuffering are hard to bear: even the holy Jeſus felt a reluctancy of nature to the load of anguiſh, which he endured for our ſins. We cannot therefore chooſe ſuffering for it's own ſake: reluctance of mind, and inward perturbation will be felt on ſuch occaſions: even the true believer will ſometimes ſcarce know what he ſhall ſay: his nature will plead "Father ſave me from this hour;" but grace will enable him to add, "Father glorify thy name;" and after the example of his crucified Lord, he will be reſigned to ſuffering, that God may thereby be glorified This diſpoſition, notwithſtanding all its defects, will be graciouſly accepted through him, who hath glorified, and will glorify

NOW before the feaſt of the paſſover, when Jeſus knew that his hour was come, that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And ſupper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, to betray him,)

3 Jeſus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his garments; and took a towel, and girded himſelf.

5 After that he poureth water into a ba-

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the Father's whole name to all eternity. In the great event of the death of Chriſt, faith beholds the world judged and condemned; Satan vanquiſhed, and deprived of his uſurped dominion, his ſlaves liberated, his works deſtroyed, and his cauſe eventually ruined: and whilſt we look to Jeſus, lifted up upon the croſs; we find ourſelves impelled by fear to flee from deſerved wrath, allured by hope to ſeek unmerited mercy, and drawn by humble admiration, love and gratitude, to renounce all other confidences, to break through all impediments, to caſt away all our tranſgreſſions, and to give up all other intereſts; that we may enliſt under the Redeemer's banner, be employed in his ſervice, and aſpire to a participation of his glory. But they, who have not faith, cannot behold this object, and muſt be ſtrangers to it's attractive influence as diſcovered to the ſoul by the Holy Spirit: they will therefore find a thouſand cavils and objections in excuſe for their unbelief. They often pretend that the ſcripture contradicts itſelf, and then quote the authority of one ſacred writer to invalidate the teſtimony of another: whereas their own partial, and prejudiced underſtanding alone is to blame; for the ſimpleſt believer gradually learns to reconcile them, as eaſily, as he can the prophecies of Chriſt lifted up on the croſs, and Chriſt reigning for ever on his glorious throne.

But it is generally beſt to avoid diſputing with ſuch prejudiced objectors; and rather to remind them how ſhort their time may be, to prepare for death, and judgment. It behoves us all therefore to walk in the light, whilſt we have it; and an obedient faith is far more ſuited to our caſe, than frivolous or diſputatious ſpeculations. They, who thus believe in the Light, will be approved as the children of the Light: on all others, darkneſs will ſpeedily come, and they will not know whither they are going, till they fall into the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. (*Prov.* c. iv. ver. 18, 19.) For while men indulge their proud, and infidel prejudices; rebelling againſt the Light of God's word, and of their own conſciences, and quenching the motions of the Holy Spirit: the Lord Jeſus withdraws from them in anger; he leaves them to themſelves to reject his ſalvation; he ſends them a ſtrong deluſion to believe a lie; and ſo they are finally blinded, hardened, and ruined. Such warnings have always been given by thoſe, who have in any ſenſe "ſeen his glory, and ſpoken "of him:" and the awful denunciations of God's word will as ſurely take effect on unbelievers, as his faithful promiſes will be fulfilled to his people. Every man therefore ſhould be peculiarly careful not to ſtifle his convictions, from fear of reproach and perſecution, from love of praiſe or reputation, or from regard to the friendſhip of the world. That will not be deemed true faith, which doth not overcome this vain ambition, and teach men to value the praiſe of God, more than that of the world; and ſo induce it's poſſeſſors to confeſs Chriſt before his enraged enemies. Chief rulers are eſpecially in danger of prevaricating in theſe matters: and thus they may become accomplices in the baſeſt crimes; becauſe the fear of God doth not deliver them from the enſnaring fear of men. But faith in Chriſt, through him in the power, truth, and love of God, and overcometh the world: beholding in Jeſus the glory of the Father, we learn to obey, love, and confide in him: by daily looking to him, who came a Light into the world, we are gradually more and more extricated from the darkneſs of ignorance, error, ſin, and miſery: we learn to know the commandment of God our Saviour to be everlaſting life; and we come to enjoy the earneſts, and foretaſtes of that bleſſed inheritance. But the ſame word will ſeal the condemnation of all that reject and deſpiſe it; their preſent impunity only tends to harden them in incredulity; and the more gracious the truths, promiſes, and precepts are, which they now deſpiſe; the greater will be their confuſion, and the ſeverer their puniſhment at the laſt day. "From all hardneſs of "heart, and contempt of this word and commandment, "good Lord deliver us."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—5] Theſe circumſtances ſeem to have taken place the ſame evening, on which they eat the paſchal lamb; but previous to that ſacred ordinance, as well as to the feaſt of unleavened bread, which laſted ſeven days, and was ſometimes called the feaſt of the paſſover. Jeſus perfectly knew, that his laſt ſcene of inexpreſſible ſufferings was immediately to begin; after which he ſhould aſcend to his Father, and no longer be perſonally preſent with his diſciples. He had loved them, as his own choſen, and immediate friends, with the moſt endeared affection, and they were to continue in this evil world, after his departure; his great concern therefore, even in the immediate proſpect of his ſufferings, and his glory, was about their ſpiritual good; and he ſpent this laſt evening of his life, in inſtructing, and comforting them; thus ſhewing his love to them, even to the end of his life, and in the moſt perfect manner. When ſupper therefore *was prepared*, (ſo the words may be underſtood, and it is evident that what follows occurred, before the concluſion of the meal;) though the devil had already prompted Judas to betray him, and he had made his infamous bargain with the chief prieſts; and though Jeſus was fully conſcious of his perſonal dignity, his mediatorial authority, and the ſpeedy approach of his aſcenſion, and exaltation to the right hand

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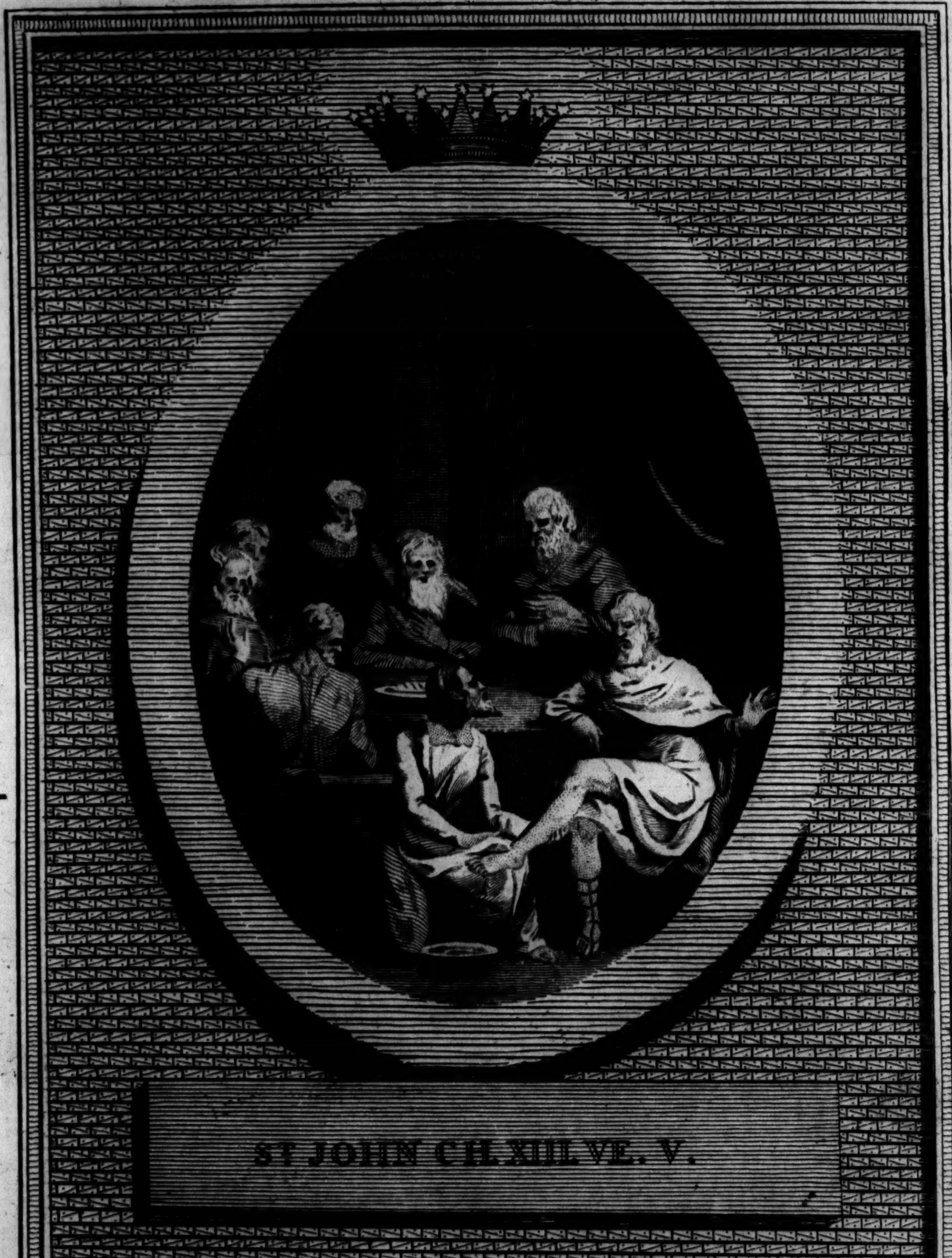

ST. JOHN CH. XIII. VE. V.

Dayes del. Golder sc.

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ſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet; and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet?

7 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What I do thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.

8 Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, if I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me.

9 Simon Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but alſo *my* hands and *my* head.

10 Jeſus ſaith unto him, He that is waſhed needeth not ſave to waſh *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who ſhould betray him; therefore ſaid he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had waſhed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Maſter, and Lord: and ye ſay well; for *ſo* I am.

14 If I then, *your* Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is ſent greater than he that ſent him.

17 If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.

of the Father: He yet aroſe from table, (after a cuſtomary antepaſt had been taken, as is ſuppoſed;) and aſſuming the habit and office of the loweſt menial ſervant; he was pleaſed to perform the laborious, and unpleaſing taſk of waſhing the feet of his own diſciples. This aptly repreſented his laying aſide the robes of light and majeſty, his aſſuming our nature, appearing in the form of a ſervant, and his ſelf-abaſement, obedience, ſufferings, and death; that he might in conſequence waſh our hearts, and conſciences from the guilt and pollution of ſin.

V. 6—11.] Probably Peter was one of the firſt of the apoſtles, whoſe feet Jeſus attempted to waſh: after what paſſed in reſpect of him, none of the reſt made any objection; and doubtleſs Jeſus waſhed the feet of Judas the traitor, as well as thoſe of the other diſciples. Peter, conſcious of his own ſinfulneſs, and firmly believing his Lord to be "the Chriſt the Son of the living God;" enquired with the utmoſt amazement, whether *He* could really mean to waſh the feet of ſo mean, and vile a creature? Intimating that it would be ſuch a degradation to Jeſus, as he could not bear to think of. To this He replied; that though Peter did not then underſtand the import, or perceive the propriety, of his conduct; yet it would be explained to him in due time, and he would know and approve of his reaſons for ſo doing. However Peter, ſuppoſing himſelf actuated by an humble regard to his Maſter's honour, poſitively declared that he never ſhould waſh his feet; thus ſetting up his own will, and wiſdom in oppoſition to thoſe of Chriſt! Yet when our Lord declared, that except he waſhed him, he could have no part in Him, or his ſalvation; Peter changed his mind, and deſired him, not only to waſh his feet, but alſo his hands and his head. But our Lord intimated that this was not requiſite: for the man, who had been in the bath, needed not to repeat his waſhing; except as his feet had contracted ſome occaſional defilement; as in other reſpects he was every whit clean: and ſo were all the apoſtles, except Judas, who was a hypocrite, and a traitor. This ſhews that this action of Chriſt was an intended emblem of that waſhing from ſin, by his blood, and grace, without which we can have no benefit from, or part in him. (1 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 11.) The true believer is thus waſhed, when he firſt receives Chriſt for his ſalvation; for his ſins are all completely pardoned; the ſanctification of the Spirit pervades all his faculties, diſpoſitions, affections and conduct; and he is graciouſly conſidered as clean every whit: yet by his intercourſe with this evil world, he is liable anew to contract guilt and defilement; and in reſpect of his daily walk, he needs waſhing continually by Jeſus, and learns to apply to him for it, in the exerciſe of repentance, faith, and prayer. Thus he is clean, an accepted, and ſanctified perſon: but all profeſſors are not thus privileged; for ſome of them are hypocrites like Judas, and yet in their ſins, in every ſenſe of the word.

V. 12—17. When our Lord was ſet down again to table, he proceeded to point out to the diſciples the immediate inſtruction, which he intended to convey by waſhing their feet. They allowed him very properly the diſtinction, and pre-eminence of being their Lord, and Teacher: if then He, who was in every ſenſe ſo greatly their ſuperior, had condeſcended to perform this low and menial ſervice to them, his own diſciples; "they "ought alſo to waſh one another's feet." There is no ground in ſcripture for underſtanding this injunction literally; nor any trace of its being obſerved *as a religious ordinance* among the primitive chriſtians: but the plain meaning is, that the moſt diſtinguiſhed chriſtian, or miniſter ſhould readily ſtoop to perform the meaneſt, the moſt laborious, and the moſt diſguſting act of real charity, to the leaſt of his brethren; when there is a proper call to it. No advancement above others in rank, abilities, or ſtation in the church, can be comparable to the pre-eminence of our Lord and Maſter above the greateſt of his ſervants: therefore none can refuſe ſuch ſervices, without

18 I ſpeak not of you all; I know whom I have choſen: but, that the ſcripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel againſt me.

19 Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am *he*.

20 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.

21 When Jeſus had thus ſaid, he was troubled in ſpirit, and teſtified, and ſaid, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, That one of you ſhall betray me.

22 Then the diſciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he ſpake.

23 Now there was leaning on Jeſus' boſom one of his diſciples, whom Jeſus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he ſhould aſk who it ſhould be of whom he ſpake.

25 He then lying on Jeſus' breaſt, ſaith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jeſus anſwered, He it is to whom I ſhall give a ſop, when I have dipped *it*. And, when he had dipped the ſop, he gave *it* to Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* of Simon.

27 And after the ſop Satan entered into him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, That thou doeſt, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he ſpake this unto him.

29 For ſome *of them* thought, becauſe Judas had the bag, that Jeſus had ſaid unto him, Buy *thoſe things* that we have need of againſt the feaſt; or, That he ſhould give ſomething to the poor.

30 He then having received the ſop, went immediately out: and it was night.

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affecting to appear greater than the holy, and divine Saviour himſelf. If the diſciples attended to, and underſtood theſe things, they would be happy in his favour; provided they reduced them to practice; and in proportion to the degree, in which they copied his example. The pride, ambition, oſtentation, ſelf-indulgence, indolence, ſelfiſhneſs, and faſtidious delicacy of many profeſſed chriſtians, and miniſters, form an awful contraſt to this example, and inſtruction of our Lord. Such men may literally waſh the feet of the poor, when there is no occaſion for it, nor any charity in it; and they may be proud of it when they have done, as a vain parade of voluntary humility: but to enter into the ſpirit of this exhortation, they "muſt be born again, and become new "creatures." Probably our Lord ſpake more to this effect at the ſame time, (*Luke*, c. xxii. v. 24—27.) It did not ſuit his purpoſe to ſpeak plainly of the emblematical meaning of this action at that time: but in fact the thing ſignified forms the grand example for our imitation. (*Phil.* c. ii. v. 5—11. 1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 20—23.)

V. 18—30. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 20—25. *Mark*, c xiv. v. 17—21.) Our Lord next ſhewed them, that he was aware they would not all be obedient and happy. He perfectly knew what perſons he had choſen for apoſtles, as well as which of them were choſen unto ſalvation. A traitor had indeed been admitted into their company, that the words, which David ſpake as the type of him, might be accompliſhed, (*Pſ.* xli. v. 9;) for one, who then was eating bread with him, would treat him with the utmoſt ingratitude, and indignity; as if an animal ſhould lift up his heel to ſtrike the perſon, who was feeding him. Of this he informed them before it came to paſs; that they might not be ſtumbled by the event, but rather be confirmed by it in their belief on Him, as the very perſon of whom all the prophets wrote. And they might be ſure, notwithſtanding this treachery of one among them, that their labours ſhould ſtill be accepted and honoured; and that they, and all faithful miniſters ſhould be conſidered as the ambaſſadors and repreſentatives of Him, and of the Father, who ſent him; and that they who received them as ſuch, would be accepted accordingly. Theſe reflections exciting much diſquietude in our Lord's mind; he more explicitly declared that "one of them was about to betray him." The application of Peter, through John, (the peculiar friend, and beloved diſciple of Jeſus, who was placed neareſt Him at table, and reclined on his breaſt, but who modeſtly declined to mention his own name;) and the token by which he ſhewed that Judas was meant, ſeem to have been diverſe from the "dipping with "Jeſus in the diſh," mentioned by the other evangeliſts. Probably Judas underſtood our Lord's meaning; though he took the ſop, without appearing to notice it: and perhaps the deſperate reſentment, which might be excited, by his being thus detected and expoſed, gave ſatan his advantage to take full and final poſſeſſion of him, and to hurry him on with his vile deſigns, to his ſpeedy and awful deſtruction. However Jeſus bade him to proceed without delay to execute his deſigns, ſeeing he was fully determined on them. Probably Judas underſtood this warning: but the others did not; and ſuppoſed that Jeſus referred to ſome orders he had previouſly given him, to provide ſuch things, as were requiſite for the proper ſolemnization of that feſtival; or to give ſomething to the poor, out of their ſmall pittance, according to his general cuſtom. But nothing could diſmay, retard, or win upon, the hardened heart of Judas; and he went out ſpeedily, after he had received, and eaten the ſop; for it was now night, and he ſuppoſed, that it was time to go to the chief prieſts, &c; that he

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jeſus ſaid, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

32 If God be glorified in him, God ſhall alſo glorify him in himſelf, and ſhall ſtraightway glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye ſhall ſeek me: and, as I ſaid unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; ſo now I ſay to you.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.

35 By this ſhall all *men* know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 Simon Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, whither goeſt thou? Jeſus anſwered him, whither I go, thou canſt not follow me now; but thou ſhalt follow me afterwards.

37 Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy ſake.

38 Jeſus anſwered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my ſake? Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, The cock ſhall not crow till thou haſt denied me thrice.

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might be ready to meet Jeſus in the garden, to which he ſuppoſed, he would ſoon retire.

V. 31—35.] The departure of Judas was, as it were, the ſignal for the beginning of our Lord's laſt ſcene of ſuffering. This he conſidered as his glory; ſeeing it were undertaken from ſuch honourable motives, would be ſuſtained in ſo honourable a manner, and would be productive of ſuch bleſſed effects: eſpecially as God would be glorified in all his harmonious perfections, in and through Him, and his obedience unto the death of the croſs. And as this muſt certainly be the effect of that event, in the ſalvation of innumerable multitudes of ſinners, ſo would God glorify him, as the Son of Man, in his human nature, by the higheſt poſſible exaltation, and the neareſt poſſible union with himſelf; and this he would do in a very ſhort time. But with this proſpect before him, he looked upon his diſciples, as his *dear children*, yea as *little children*, helpleſs in themſelves, and expoſed to manifold dangers, and injuries in the world; and as ſuch he compaſſionated them, and had their welfare near his heart. He ſhould however ſtay a very little while longer with them; and it would be in vain for them to ſeek the comfort of his perſonal preſence: for it would be true in their caſe, as well as in that of the unbelieving Jews, (though in a different ſenſe;) that they could not follow him to the place whither he was going; but muſt be left behind for a time. Before he left them therefore, he would give them a *new* commandment. The moral law commanded them to love their neighbours as themſelves; and this implied that reciprocal and ſpecial love of believers to each other, of which he ſpake: but this was now to be explained with *new* clearneſs, enforced by *new* motives and obligations, illuſtrated by a *new* example, and obeyed in a new manner. Thus it might be called "*a new commandment*," which he peculiarly inculcated upon his diſciples: they were required to love each other for his ſake, and as bearing his image; and in imitation of his compaſſionate, diſintereſted, and generous love to them. This implied a regard to each others intereſt, and comfort, a ſympathy in ſorrow and joy; and a delight in one another's company: it inculcated the cultivation of peace and harmony, by reciprocal kindneſs, candour, forbearance, and forgiveneſs; by ſupplying each other's wants, by uniting in prayers and religious exerciſes, and by concurring to promote the common cauſe of the goſpel, as one body animated by one ſoul. We ought to love the ungodly with benevolence, and compaſſion; and our enemies with forgiveneſs, and perſevering kindneſs: but believers are to be regarded as the objects of our endeared complacency, our moſt intimate friendſhip, and our ſpecial, and unremitted affection; being brethren in the ſame family, diſciples of the ſame Lord, ſoldiers in the ſame army, travellers in the ſame journey, heirs of the ſame inheritance; yea members of the ſame body. This love muſt be regulated by the pattern of our Saviour's love to us; and it muſt even emulate it in a degree; for "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." And this mutual love was appointed by him as the peculiar diſtinguiſhing mark of his diſciples, by which all men might know them from all other perſons; by perceiving, that whilſt all others were ſelfiſh even in their friendſhips, believers uniformly perſevered in giving up their own intereſt, eaſe, credit, or pleaſure, to promote the welfare of their brethren, in ſuch a manner, and to ſuch a degree, as was never before known.

V. 36—38.] Peter paid more attention to what our Lord ſaid about leaving them, than to his "new commandment" He wanted to know whither he was going; being fully determined, as he thought, to follow him? But Jeſus aſſured him, that he could not follow him at that time; (for his work was not done, nor had he the ſpirit of a martyr;) however he graciouſly aſſured him, that he at length ſhould, though he foreſaw how ſhamefully he was about to deny him. And when Peter ſtill inſiſted upon it, that he was prepared to die with him; he gave him the ſolemn warning, which hath already been conſidered: or one ſimilar to it. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 31—35. *Mark.* c. xiv. v. 27—31. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 31—43.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Neither the deepeſt abaſement and ſuffering, nor the higheſt poſſible exaltation, ever could render our bleſſed Redeemer, for a moment inattentive to the concerns of his diſciples; whom he hath choſen, redeemed, and called to be his own for ever. The ſame love which induced him to ranſom, and reconcile them, when enemies, ſtill influences him to pity their ſorrows, to pardon their

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Contains Jeſus 1ſt. Encouraging the diſciples to believe in God, and in him, and to hope for heaven through Him their fore-runner, and the way to the Father, &c, 1---6. 2d. Shewing them his Union with the Father, and promiſing them extraordinary powers in anſwer to their prayers in his name, 7---14. 3d. Exhorting them to obedience, as the grand proof of their love to Him; promiſing them the Holy Spirit, and great illumination, ſecurity, comfort, and peace, through his influences, and in communion with the Father, and with him, 15---29. 4th. Teaching them, that His return to the Father was a proper ground of rejoicing to them; and informing them of his approaching conflict with the Prince of this world, in obedience to the Father, &c, 28---31.

ſins, to ſupply their wants, to preſerve their ſouls, and to comfort their hearts, now that he hath taught them to truſt in, love, and ſerve him: and having loved them hitherto, he will love them to the end, and for ever. But what can be expected too large from him, who came down from heaven, and in the form of a ſervant, not only waſhed his diſciples feet; but ſhed his precious blood, that he might open a fountain, in which to waſh our ſouls from ſin, and from uncleanneſs? And who, is continually employed, now that “all things are given into his hands,” in applying this ſalvation to cleanſe the vileſt tranſgreſſors, that come to him for that ineſtimable benefit! We may well be amazed at this love, which paſſeth knowledge; but it would evince the groſſeſt ignorance, and the moſt fooliſh pride; if we ſhould refuſe this ſpiritual waſhing away of ſin, without which we cannot be his diſciples. Nay in reſpect of thoſe providential appointments, that he orders in ſubſerviency to our ſanctification; we ſhould remember, that we often cannot know at the preſent what he is doing: but as he hath promiſed that we ſhall know hereafter; we ſhould confide in his wiſdom, truth, and love; when we are moſt in the dark about his intentions, and when all things ſeem to be the moſt againſt us. Much more then ſhould we ſubmit to his authority, in reſpect of thoſe means of grace, which he hath required us to be found in, if we would be waſhed and cleanſed from our filthineſs.

But no outward waſhing can be more than a ſign, or means of the bleſſing propoſed to us: our feet, our hands, our heads, or our whole bodies may be waſhed, again and again, in any way, or by any form; and our hearts, and conſciences may ſtill remain defiled: but if we apply the blood of Jeſus, and are made partakers of his Spirit through faith; all things will be made clean to us, and we ſhall be “clean every whit,” according to the gracious dealings of our God with his redeemed people: and though we cannot but contract defilement in this evil world, our condeſcending Saviour will daily cleanſe us from all ſin, until he preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy. Yet even in this ſenſe how few are there who are cleanſed from their filthineſs? In ſmall companies, and among few communicants, or miniſters, it may often be ſaid, “ye are clean, but not all.” If we would know whether this be our privilege, we muſt enquire whether we underſtand the nature, and tendency of what he hath done for ſinners? And whether we are aiming to copy his example of condeſcenſion, and active love? Whether we are cured in a meaſure of our ſelf-importance, and ſelf-indulgence; and have learned to ſtoop, to labour, and to deny ourſelves, in order to be ſerviceable to the leaſt of our brethren? But, alas, how many are there, who refuſe to do, as Chriſt hath done before them! How many of his profeſſed ſervants act, as if they were greater than the Lord who ſent them! Inſtead of his lowly deportment, they affect ſtate, and conſequence; they deem uſeful employments beneath them; and every troubleſome, or diſagreeable labour of love, ſuch as Jeſus delighted in, is intolerable even to their imagination! Nay among ſuch, as ſeem to be true chriſtians, and ſincere miniſters, there are but few, who fully enter into the ſpirit of the example, which Jeſus hath left us; and ſelf-love ſuggeſts a thouſand excuſes and reaſons againſt many uſeful ſervices, which He would not have liſtened to for a moment. Yet ſuch alone are, and will be happy, who know theſe things, and do them: but knowledge, without correſpondent practice, will only add to a man's condemnation.

But if profeſſed diſciples and miniſters be found, as oppoſite to Chriſt, as darkneſs to light; if they, who eat bread with him, continue to lift up their heel againſt him; let us not wonder: the ſcripture hath foretold, that thus it muſt be, and it's accompliſhment may help to confirm our faith. The Lord knoweth whom he hath choſen; and the baſe behaviour of thoſe, who bely their ſacred profeſſion, ſhould render faithful miniſters more valued and reſpected: and indeed the Lord will take care of them, and their reputation, and will bleſs all thoſe, who “eſteem them highly in love for their work's ſake.” Yet it ſhould trouble us, as it once did our bleſſed Lord, to find traitors joining in ſacred ordinances, and men high in office in his church, ſelling him and betraying his cauſe for filthy lucre's ſake. It does not indeed ſo much concern us to know exactly, who they are, that anſwer this deſcription; as to be ſure, that we are not of the number, and that we really love, and are beloved of the Lord. But as ſome are more near to him than others, in union, communion, and endeared affection; we ſhould not envy their privilege, but avail ourſelves of their friendſhip, to learn more of his mind and will, and ſo to ſeek increaſing nearneſs and conformity to him. In proceſs of time falſe brethren will be detected: and ſatan having long tampered with them, and put one wickedneſs after another into their hearts; he will at length obtain permiſſion to take full poſſeſſion: then perhaps they will go from the participation of the moſt ſolemn ordinances to perpetrate the moſt horrid villainies; and they will go out from the diſciples, and thereby make it manifeſt, that they never belonged to them.

But whilſt they thus bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction; the loſs is wholly their own: for nothing can prevent the glory of the bleſſed Redeemer, and that of

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LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.

2 In my Father's houſe are many manſions: if *it were* not *ſo*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myſelf; that where I am, *there* ye may be alſo.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas ſaith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt; and how can we know the way?

6 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

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the Father in him. Even on the croſs the Saviour acquired the moſt illuſtrious victories over ſatan, the world, ſin, and death: there he magnified the divine law, he paid an ineſtimable ranſom, and reſcued unnumbered millions of immortal ſouls from eternal miſery to the glory of God the Father: therefore hath a name, and a glory been given to him, above all the inhabitants of heaven, and earth; that all ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father that ſent him. The thoughts of his glory, and of his love to us, ſhould reconcile us to our diſtance, and trials, whilſt we continue in this world of ſin, and trouble. We cannot now follow our aſcended Lord to his heavenly felicity; but if we truly believe in him, we ſhall follow him hereafter, notwithſtanding our remaining errors, defilements, temptations, and conflicts: but we muſt wait his time, perform our work, and be gradually humbled, proved, and purified for our inheritance. Who, that ſeriouſly contemplates the ſtate of the Chriſtian church, or of thoſe who ſeem moſt zealous for evangelical truth, would ſuppoſe, that mutual love, after the example of Jeſus, was the appointed criterion, by which all men are to diſtinguiſh his diſciples? Had proud angry zeal for doctrines, forms, and parties; or mutual ſlanders, revilings, and anathemas raſhly denounced; or exactneſs in the *minutiæ* of a ſyſtem, or a curious ingenuity in multiplying *Shibboleths*, ſtill more and more to divide and diſtract the church: had theſe, I ſay, been the teſt of chriſtianity, modern appearances might ſuggeſt leſs melancholy reflections, than now obtrude themſelves under the ſerious and pious mind. But alas the commandment "to love one another, even as Chriſt hath loved us," ſeems ſtill new and ſtrange to moſt profeſſors: many ſeem never to have read it; few appear to underſtand, remember, or practice it; and becauſe iniquity abounds, the love of theſe few waxes cold: and inſtead of exerciſing candour in judging of our brethren, that we may take in all, who appear to hate and repent of ſin, to believe in and rely on a divine Saviour, and to love and follow after holineſs; many ſeem to think, that a rigorous zeal for an orthodox ſyſtem ought to ſwallow up all meekneſs, candour, and kindneſs to thoſe, who differ from them even in the the ſmalleſt particulars. Men in general notice any of Chriſt's words rather than theſe: and ſelf-preference, boaſting, and judging others, ſupplant humble love, which hopeth all things. (1 *Cor.* c. xiii.) But this haughty ſpirit goes before a fall: and ſome, whom the Lord loves, are left to feel, and to ſhow their weakneſs and folly, in order to humble them, and to teach them more tenderneſs to their brethren, as well as more entire dependance on Chriſt. May we then endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to love one another with a pure heart fervently, and to walk humbly with our God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1—3.] Our Lord obſerved, that his diſciples were greatly afflicted on account of thoſe things, which he had ſpoken; eſpecially by the proſpect of his ſpeedy removal from them: but he exhorted them not to give trouble admiſſion into, or poſſeſſion of, their hearts, either on that account, or becauſe of Judas's treachery, or the temptations and falls of Peter, and others of them. They believed in the God of their fathers, and in him as the Son of God, and the promiſed Meſſiah: and this faith would be found ſufficient to ſupport them under, and to ſecure a happy event to, all their trials. It is well known that theſe words may be rendered ſeveral different ways: as they ſtand in our tranſlation, they contain an exhortation to the diſciples to believe in, and rely on him, as the divine Mediator, with the ſame unreſerved confidence, with which they had been uſed to believe in the power, truth, and mercy of the Father. If we render them, "Ye do believe in God, and ye do alſo believe in me;" the meaning hath already been given: but they may be rendered as an exhortation to "believe in God, as well as in him" the divine Mediator. Each of theſe meanings contain evangelical truth, and inſtruction ſuited to the caſe; and the reader may take any, or all of them as he pleaſes. Our Lord next aſſured them, that in heaven, that holy habitation, in which his Father diſplayed his peculiar preſence and glory, many peaceful, enduring, and magnificent manſions were prepared, for the reception of them, and of all his diſciples: their expectations indeed of preferment, and a reſidence with him in an earthly palace, were about to be finally fruſtrated; and if their hopes of heavenly felicity had been as groundleſs and deluſory, he would aſſuredly have undeceived them. But, he was about to remove from them, on purpoſe to prepare a place in heaven for them. His death was neceſſary to atone for their ſins, and to purchaſe their inheritance; his Reſurrection would be the earneſt of their's: he would enter into heaven, as their Fore-runner, to open the way, to remove all hindrances, anſwer all objections to their admiſſion, and make all things ready for their reception; (*Heb.* c. ix. v. 22—29.) and as he was going from them for theſe purpoſes; ſo he would ſurely come again, and having prepared them for that holy inheritance, he would at death receive their ſouls, and at the laſt day raiſe their bodies; that ſo they might be for ever with him their beloved Friend, in that glorious, and happy place, to which he was going.

V. 4—7.] Our Lord next intimated, that after all the

7 If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo: and from henceforth ye know him, and have ſeen him.

8 Philip ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us.

9 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? he that hath ſeen me hath ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

10 Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I ſpeak unto you I ſpeak not of myſelf: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or elſe believe me for the very works ſake.

12 Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you. He that believeth on me, the works that I do ſhall he do alſo; and greater *works* than theſe ſhall he do; becauſe I go unto my Father.

13 And whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

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inſtructions he had given them, they muſt ſurely know both the place whither he was going, and the way by which they muſt follow him: and in a meaſure they did know theſe things, though they were not able to apply their principles to the preſent caſe: (c. vi. v. 68, 69) But Thomas, (being weak in faith, and greatly attached to the notion of a temporal kingdom, and probably ſuppoſing that Jeſus meant to retire for a time, before he openly appeared as the Meſſiah,) obſerved, that as he had not favoured them with any information concerning the place, to which he meant to retire, they could not poſſibly know by what way they ſhould follow him. To this our Lord anſwered, by declaring himſelf to be "the "Way, &c." He is the ſinner's Way to the Father, and to heaven: in his perſon as God manifeſt in the fleſh, in his ſurety-ſhip, his vicarious obedience and atoning ſacrifice, and in his interceſſion as our Advocate before the throne: He is "the Truth," not only as he is the ſubſtance of all typical ſhadows, and the accompliſhment of all the prophecies and promiſes of a Saviour; but alſo as the Prophet of the church, whoſe doctrine is that truth, in believing which ſinners come by him "the "Way" to the Father, and to heaven. And he is the Life alſo, by whoſe life-giving Spirit the dead in ſin are quickened, and ſo enabled to believe in him as the Truth, and to come by Him as "the Way" to the mercy ſeat of God: nor can any man approach God as a Father, who is not quickened by him as "the Life," and inſtructed by him as "the Truth," to come by him as "the Way:" all others will have to do with God, merely as an offended Sovereign, and an avenging Judge. (c. x. v. 9. *Heb.* c. x. v. 19—22.) Having ſtated this, our Lord left Thomas to collect from it the place, whither he was about to remove: obſerving that if they had known him, in reſpect to his perſon, character, and mediation, they would proportionably have known the Father alſo: and indeed they had ſome little knowledge of, and acquaintance with him, which would from that time continually increaſe, till they more clearly ſaw the Father in Him, the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs Image of his *Character*, (2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 4—6, *Heb.* c i. v. 3.)

V. 8—14.] Philip, having very confuſed, and defective views of the dignity of his Lord, deſired him to diſcover the Father to them in ſome ſenſible manner, according to thoſe viſions, with which holy men of old had been favoured; adding that this would ſuffice for their ſatisfaction and comfort, when he ſhould be removed from them. To this our Lord replied by enquiring, (as a gentle rebuke) whether, after he had been ſo long converſant with them, Philip could poſſibly be unacquainted with his divine dignity, and glory? He had before told them, that "He who had ſeen him, had ſeen the Fa-"ther," (c. xii. v. 45,) what need then had he to requeſt any other viſion of the Father, when he had been favoured with ſo many opportunities of beholding Him, by that appointed, and that ſufficient method, in which alone the inviſible God can be ſhewn to mortal man? Did he not yet believe the eſſential union and mutual indwelling of the Father, and the Son, and of the Godhead in his human nature? He had frequently ſpoken to them on this ſubject: and his words were not "of him-"ſelf," as diſtinct from the Father; and therefore they ought to have been more regarded by them: eſpecially as the Father dwelling in, and working by him, had borne witneſs to Him by ſo many ſtupendous miracles. If then the diſplays of his divine truth, purity, knowledge, wiſdom, and goodneſs, did not induce their belief of this great myſtery of godlineſs; they ought at leaſt to believe him, on account of the works, which he performed: theſe manifeſtly warranted all the doctrines which he taught, as by the ſeal of God himſelf; and the authoritative manner in which he performed them, ſhewed that he acted by an inherent power, as the incarnate Son of the Father. However this proof would gather ſtill greater force, by the powers, that were about to be conferred on them, and on other believers; (*Mark*, c. xvi. v. 17—19;) as they would be enabled in his name to perform ſimilar works with thoſe, which they had witneſſed; nay in ſome reſpects they would do ſtill greater works, than what he had wrought in perſon. This refers to the multiplied miracles of the apoſtles after the day of Pentecoſt; to their communicating the gift of tongues, and of working miracles to others alſo; and above all to the immenſe multitude of converts, which were made by their miniſtry. This would be the effect of His aſcenſion to the Father, and his interceſſion for them in heaven: for whatſoever they ſhould aſk in his name as conducive to theſe important ends, He would beſtow

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me no more; but ye ſee me: becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.

20 At that day ye ſhall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt myſelf to him.

22 Judas ſaith unto him, (not Iſcariot,) Lord, how it is that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which ſent me.

it upon them by his own power and authority; that the Father might be glorified in the honour conferred on the Son, in the ſucceſs of the goſpel through their miniſtry, in the bleſſed effects of it on men's lives, and diſpoſitions, and in the diſplay of his juſtice, mercy, wiſdom, truth, and power, in that way of ſaving ſinners.

V. 15—17.] Jeſus next reminded the diſciples, that, inſtead of yielding to inconſolable ſorrow, in the proſpect of his removal; they ought to ſhew their love to him by a conſcientious, and diligent obedience to his commandments: and whilſt they thus regarded his authority, and glory on earth; he would attend to their intereſts in heaven, and intercede with the Father, and obtain for them another "Comforter, &c." The word ſignifies an Advocate, a Counſellor, a Monitor, and a Comforter. Jeſus had been their Advocate to plead their cauſe on earth, and he was going to be their Advocate with the Father; He had alſo counſelled, admoniſhed, exhorted, and comforted them: but he was about to be removed from them; and if he ſhould continue on earth, his perſonal preſence muſt be confined to one place, and was only ſuited to their ſtate, whilſt they were few in number. But another Comforter, Counſellor, and Advocate would be given them, in conſequence of his return to the Father; who would abide with them individually to the end of time: and his gifts and graces would both encourage their hearts, and make them a comfort to each other, and alſo plead their cauſe before the world. This character of another Comforter, or Advocate, and the language here and elſewhere employed, evidently denotes *perſonality*: and the office itſelf implies omnipreſence, omniſcience, omnipotence, and all divine perfections. This other Comforter would be ſent by the Father, and through the Son, who is one with the Father; thus the Trinity of Perſons is evidently declared in this, and other parallel paſſages; each Perſon diſtinct, and divine, yet but One God, (v. 26. c. xv. v. 26. c. xvi. v. 7, 8. 13—15.) This Comforter is called "The Spirit of Truth;" being eſſential Truth, the Revealer of all divine truth, as the ſource of inſpiration; and the great Teacher of truth in the hearts of believers. But the world, or the whole company of ungodly men, continuing ſuch, cannot receive Him, either as a Spirit of truth, or as a Comforter; for all his inſtructions, influences, and conſolations are totally contrary to their diſpoſitions, purſuits, and maxims. They will therefore treat them as fooliſhneſs, and reaſon againſt, ridicule, and blaſpheme them, as enthuſiaſm, deluſion, or impoſture. But the diſciples, being born of God, were already acquainted with theſe bleſſed influences, and the divine Author of them: he even then dwelt with them as a Spirit of truth, holineſs and conſolation: and as he had already endued them with ſome miraculous powers; He would ſhortly be with them in a more abiding, and abundant manner.

V. 18—20.] Jeſus was about to be removed from the diſciples, as a father is from his beloved children, (c. xiii. v. 33;) but he would by no means leave them as deſerted, and deſtitute *orphans*, without friend or comforter. On the contrary he would come to them, by the Holy Ghoſt, through whom he dwells in his people. (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 9—11.) The world indeed would ſoon be deprived of his preſence, and would ſee no more of him, till the day of judgment: but they would ſee him, not only a few times after his reſurrection, but continually by faith, and through the influences of the Holy Spirit, (c. xvi. v. 14:) and as He was about to aſcend into heaven, and as he poſſeſſed eternal life in himſelf; ſo they alſo ſhould certainly live in, and by Him, until he brought them to be for ever with him; (*Gal.* c. ii. v. 20. *Col.* c. iii. v. 3, 4.) And in that day, when being aſcended into heaven, he ſhould ſend the Holy Spirit to be their Teacher, and Comforter, they would more evidently perceive the in-dwelling of the Father with his incarnate Son; and their own union with Him, as their Head of Life and Influence, in whom they dwelt by faith as their Reſt and Refuge, and who dwelt in them by his Spirit, as his temple, and peculiar reſidence.

V. 21—24.] As love to their Lord would be the principal effect and evidence of their union with him; it was neceſſary for them again to be informed that a diſpoſition to receive, retain, and obey his commandments was the moſt deciſive proof of their love to him; without which the higheſt affections muſt be a mere

25 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, being *yet*, preſent with you.

26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghoſt, whom, the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you:

counterfeit, or deluſion. They, who thus ſhewed their love to him, would be the objects of the Father's peculiar complacency, and affection, both as evidencing his choice of them, and as bringing forth the fruits of his grace: and He alſo would ſhew all love to them, as his redeemed people, and genuine diſciples; and in conſequence of this love, he would manifeſt his preſence to them, in a peculiar, and encouraging manner. When Jeſus had given this intimation, Judas, or Jude, called alſo Lebbeus, and Thaddeus, the brother of James, (not Iſcariot, for he had left them before this;) enquired how this could be, that he would manifeſt himſelf to them, and yet the world would ſee him no more? He ſeems to have perceived that there would be great, and diſtinguiſhing kindneſs, in this condeſcending diſcovery of himſelf to his obedient diſciples; but he could not conceive how it could be done, or how it could conſiſt with the ſetting up of his kingdom. To this our Lord replied, by informing him, that He and the Father would come to, and take up their abode with the objects of their ſpecial love. The Father and the Son, being perſonally diſtinct, though eſſentially One, the plural number is here uſed. The preſence, and ſpecial reſidence of the Father and the Son in and with the believer, (as an habitation of God through the Spirit,) are the ſource of ſpiritual illumination, intimate communion, and delightful experience of the preſence of God with, and of his love to, the ſoul; exciting all holy and heavenly affections, and giving an earneſt, and foretaſte of the joys of heaven. Theſe manifeſtations are perpetual in ſome of their effects, eſpecially in the abiding ſenſe of the glorious and gracious preſence of God with us at all times, and an habitual judgment, that he is worthy of all reverence, love, gratitude, confidence, &c: but they are more realizing and affecting at one time, than another, according as hope, love, gratitude, admiration, &c, are brought into more lively exerciſe, and inviſible things are brought near to the ſoul, by the vigorous exerciſe of faith on the truths, and promiſes of God's word. But this muſt be peculiar to true diſciples: for they who love not Jeſus, neither believe, nor obey his words, but caſt them away with contempt, as not worth keeping; and thus they not only offend him, but the Father alſo who ſent him, and ſpake by him; and therefore they cannot reaſonably expect theſe diſcoveries of the divine glory, and grace to their ſouls.

V. 25, 26.] The truths, which Jeſus had ſpoken to the diſciples in his perſonal miniſtry, had not been fully underſtood by them: but when the Holy Spirit, the Author of all holineſs in, as well as the Teacher of all truth to, man, ſhould come to them; he would more effectually inſtruct them, powerfully removing all their prejudices, and aſſiſting all their faculties to receive the truth. This indeed, (in the caſe of the apoſtles,) was effected in the way of immediate revelation, by which they were infallibly preſerved from all error, and guided into all truth. Yet this was mainly done, by cauſing them to recollect, the doctrines, promiſes, and precepts, which he had given them; and by enabling them to ſee the truth, excellency, and glory of them, in the cleareſt, and moſt convincing manner.

V. 27—29.] Our Lord being about to die and leave his diſciples, bequeathed to them his peace as a legacy, or donation. This compriſed peace with God, peace of conſcience, a ſweet ſerenity of mind ariſing from confidence in, and ſubmiſſion to God, and the hope of heaven, and a diſpoſition to mutual love and harmony. This he gave them, not in that complimentary way, in which the people of the world wiſh peace and proſperity to one another, without any meaning or ſincerity; nor yet in that inefficacious manner, by which they ſincerely deſire the welfare of thoſe, whom they cannot relieve: but he gave them his peace in perfect benevolence, and with divine energy; and it was a far richer legacy, than any other dying friend ever bequeathed: and therefore they ought by no means to give way to ſorrow or alarm becauſe of the afflictions, that awaited them. He had told them that he was about to leave them: and if they loved him wiſely and properly, they would rejoice on that account; as he was about to leave his preſent abaſed, and ſuffering condition, and to return to the Father; for his "Father "was greater than He." We have already ſeen, that The Word, as God, and with God, is declared to be One with, and equal to the Father, the Creator and Lord of all. In this reſpect Jeſus could not ſay, that the Father was greater than He, without being inconſiſtent with his former declarations: and indeed there can be no greater or leſſer, where there is the infinite perfection of Deity. But as God the Son was manifeſt in human nature, and acted as the Servant of the Father; as in this ſenſe he was about to finiſh his work, and to go to receive his merited recompence, in being exalted to the mediatorial throne; the language is evidently proper, and conſiſtent with the reſt of the ſcripture; and it behoves all, who love Him, to rejoice in his exaltation to his glory, after his voluntary humiliation.

for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even ſo I do. Ariſe, let us go hence.

V. 29—31.] Our Lord next ſhewed them, that he had before-hand told them of his aſcenſion into heaven, and the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt; in order that the combined evidence of the prediction, and its miraculous accompliſhment might confirm their faith. But He ſhould have little more opportunity for converſe with them: for ſatan the prince of this wicked world, (c. xii. v. 31,) was coming to aſſault him with all his power, both by his ſervants that were about to apprehend, condemn, and crucify him, and by his own horrid temptations. However as there was neither guilt in his actions, nor ſin in his heart; that enemy had no part in him, and could obtain no advantage againſt him: he would find him in every reſpect invulnerable, and muſt therefore experience an abſolute defeat in the conflict. To himſelf it would be inexpreſſibly ſharp and terrible; but the event would be moſt glorious: indeed he ſhould not have at all been expoſed to pain or death; if he had not voluntarily ſubjected himſelf to it, to give a proof of his love of, and obedience to, the Father, that He might be glorified in the ſalvation of his choſen people. As this was his purpoſe, and the time was at hand, he muſt call upon them to ariſe, and go thence to the garden, as a place of preparation, devotion, and where his enemies were about to apprehend him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot help feeling trouble and ſorrow, on account of our perſonal trials, perils, temptations, and ſins; and becauſe of the apoſtacies and iniquities, that we witneſs: but we ſhould watch againſt dejection, and that inward prevalence of uneaſineſs, which excites murmurs and diſtruſt, and unfits us for our preſent duty. The vigorous exerciſe of faith in the promiſes and perfections of our reconciled God, and in the merits and grace of our heavenly Advocate, forms the proper, and the adequate method of keeping trouble from occupying our hearts, and of producing inward joy in the midſt of our tribulations, (*Rom.* c. v. ver. 1—11.) For we ſhall thus be animated by the proſpect of a ſpeedy admiſſion into quiet manſions in our Father's houſe above, of which many ſtill remain for the reception of the whole multitude of true believers. This hope therefore will never diſappoint us: the promiſe of the Lord will not deceive us; he hath told us that in the world we ſhall have tribulation, that we might know what to expect; and he would not have permitted us to look for ſo glorious a felicity hereafter, if he had not intended to give it us. But He is gone before to prepare a place for us: He is as much performing the part of a faithful and affectionate Friend, now that he is aſcended into the heavens, as when on earth he ſhed his blood for our ſins: and he is as mindful of our concerns, though perſonally abſent from us, as he will be, when he ſhall appear the ſecond time to perfect our ſalvation. Our great employment then ſhould be, to ſeek the preparation of our ſouls for that holy inheritance reſerved in heaven for us; and to wait in the patience of hope, and the obedience of love, till he ſhall return to take us to himſelf, that where he is, there we may be alſo. But unbelievers have no place prepared for them in heaven; and no friend to receive their departing ſouls, for to welcome them at the reſurrection of the laſt day: a far different place, "prepared indeed "for the devil and his angels," awaits them; and their enemy ſtands ready to "receive them to himſelf, that "where he is, there they may be alſo; nor is there any one to prevent the ſucceſs of his malignant expectations! As therefore all know, that they are liable to be turned out of their preſent place at an hour's warning; ſurely common ſenſe demands it of them to ſeek admiſſion into thoſe manſions, which Jeſus hath provided for his redeemed people. We are indeed far more faulty than Thomas was, if we know not whither the Saviour is gone, or the way, by which we muſt follow him. Yet ignorance and uncertainty envelope the minds of multitudes of profeſſed chriſtians, in this obvious, and important matter: numbers ſeek to enter heaven by ways of man's deviſing; whilſt Jeſus "the Way, the Truth, "and the Life," is wholly, or in great meaſure neglected, if not deſpiſed, and oppoſed. However, it will ſurely be found, that no ſinful man ever found acceptance with God, or admiſſion into the manſions of felicity, who refuſed to ſeek them by faith in the merits, and mediation of our crucified Emmanuel; by reliance on his word, as the truth itſelf, and by ſeeking life to his ſoul, from Him who is the Life itſelf. It greatly concerns all the oppoſers, and deſpiſers of goſpel grace ſeriouſly to reconſider this ſubject: and all, who are beginning to ſeek the favour of God, and eternal life, ſhould eſpecially direct their attention to it; that they may not delay to come in that way, by which alone ſinners can find acceſs to, and acceptance with a holy God.

In proportion as we know Jeſus, we know the Father alſo: every true believer hath in a meaſure known and ſeen him, in the only way, by which he manifeſts himſelf to us: the character, doctrine, and croſs of Chriſt form the glaſs, in which we muſt contemplate the glory of the inviſible God: it is owing to our inattention to his words and works, that our diſcoveries of Him are ſo feeble, and ſo few; and thus we are our own enemies, for this is the only ſatisfactory good, which can ſuffice to fill all our enlarged capacities with an adequate felicity. Even if we ſinners could behold God in his eſſential glory; the diſcovery would only diſmay, and overwhelm us: in the Perſon of Jeſus alone can we ſee Him, as a juſt God, and a Saviour, as glorious in holineſs, and abundant in mercy; and as the proper Object of our delightful contemplation; our firm confidence, our humble rejoicing, and our thankful adoration. May the doctrine, and character, the miracles and prophecies, the ſufferings and glory of our divine Redeemer; the great things, that he perſonally performed when on earth, and the ſtill greater, that he hath done by his believing ſervants, ſince his aſcenſion into heaven, confirm our faith in

CHAP. XV.

Contains, Jeſus 1ſt. Repreſenting the Union betwixt himſelf, and his diſciples, and their conſequent fruitfulneſs, under the ſimilitude of a Vine, and it's Branches, &c, 1---8. 2d. Shewing them the greatneſs of his love to them, and exhorting them to love one another, 9---17. 3d. Teaching them to expect the hatred of the world, as the effect of it's hatred of him, and His Father; and promiſing the Comforter, to confirm their teſtimony to him, 18---27.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the huſbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not

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him, and aſſure us, that “He is in the Father, and the “Father in Him.” Even now, “whatſoever *we* ſhall “aſk in his name,” as conducive to our good, and ſuited to our ſtate, *He* will give it to us: that in the renewal of our ſouls to holineſs, our ſteady and ſucceſsful reſiſtance of temptation, our patient obedience under trials, and the converſion of ſinners by our inſtrumentality, “the Father may be glorified in the Son;” for theſe are very great works in the ſight of angels, however men may deſpiſe them. Though we have never been favoured with the Redeemer's perſonal preſence; yet we may hope for that of the Holy Spirit, who is ſent by the Father, through his interceſſion, to abide with us for ever. His miraculous operations are not to be expected, nor are they wanted: but as a Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter, He will always continue with his church; and as the Source of holineſs, and felicity he will abide with every believer for ever. The world of unconverted men, with all their wiſdom and learning, are unable to underſtand the nature of, or to deſire, and receive, theſe ſacred influences of the Spirit of truth: they muſt, and will deride, or deny all, that we ſpeak upon this ſubject; and we can ſcarce hope to eſcape the appellation of enthuſiaſts, or hypocrites, if we profeſs our faith, expectation, and experience in this reſpect, in the moſt ſcriptural manner. But the believer cannot be unacquainted with that bleſſed Comforter, who dwelleth in him; nor may he deny his obligations to, and dependence on Him, from whoſe gracious influences all his hopes, and joys ariſe; and who will for ever be in all thoſe, who love Jeſus and keep his commandments. Whatever loſſes ſuch diſciples may ſuſtain, or whatever troubles may await them; they ſhall not be left deſtitute and friendleſs; the abſence of their beloved Lord will be ſhort, and his return will be ſure; they ſee him, whom the world perceives not; they believe, and are aſſured, that, “He is in the Father, and they in Him, and He “in them;” in his ſtrength they labour, in his righteouſneſs they are entitled to eternal life; and becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo, and be kept by his power to complete ſalvation.

But theſe privileges do not belong to all, who profeſs, or even are zealous for, the truths of the goſpel: being confined to them, whoſe faith worketh by love, and whoſe love to Jeſus induces them to keep his commandments; and they are enjoyed in proportion to the degree of their love, and obedience. Such are thus evidenced to be the ſubjects of the Father's electing love, the peculiar purchaſe of the incarnate Son, and partakers of the Holy Spirit, and his regenerating, and new creating grace. The divine Image renewed upon their ſouls is beloved and delighted in by the Father, and the Son; their holy affections, and obedience are honourable to the goſpel; and their happy experience of near, and ſweet communion with the Lord in his ordinances; the diſcoveries of his preſence with, and his glory to their ſouls; the Light of his countenance, and the joy of his ſalvation, will make them know “how he manifeſts himſelf to them, as he doth not to the world:” and their conſcious unworthineſs will fill them with thankful admiration of his unſpeakable condeſcenſion. But they, who love not Jeſus, and keep not his ſayings, cannot know what theſe ſpecial manifeſtations mean: they only proclaim their own folly, if they deny the reality of them, becauſe they never experienced them: and if any pretend to them, when living in allowed diſobedience to Chriſt, they muſt be plainly told, that they deceive themſelves. Would we then know theſe things for our good, we muſt pray for, and depend on the teaching of the Holy Ghoſt: thus the words of Jeſus will be brought to our remembrance, and we ſhall be enabled to underſtand, believe, and obey them; and our experience of their truth, and goodneſs will ſolve thoſe difficulties, which to others are inſuperable. Thus we ſhall apply for and receive that legacy, which Jeſus purchaſed for, and bequeathed to all his diſciples; even *His peace*, which is a *peace of God*, that paſſeth all underſtanding; and it will contribute more to our preſent comfort, than the friendſhip, the applauſe, or the poſſeſſion of the whole world; for it will garriſon our hearts againſt trouble and terror in the moſt afflictive ſcenes of life, and in the ſolemn hour of diſſolution: and we may know His peace, from that of Phariſees and hypocrites, by its humbling and ſanctifying effects, and by its enabling us to unite great tenderneſs of conſcience, with ſweet affiance in God's mercy, and calm ſubmiſſion to his will. Let us then rejoice that our beloved Saviour hath in our nature entered into the joy ſet before him, being “aſcended to his Father and our Father, our God, and his “God;” let us compare his words with our experience and obſervation, for the daily confirmation of our faith. Let us rejoice in his victories over the Prince of this world: and though the enemy hath ſtill a ſtrong party in our ſouls; yet depending on the Redeemer's all ſufficient grace, let us proſecute his victories, both by reſiſting temptation, and oppoſing the cauſe of ſin and ſatan in the world; let us copy the example of his love and obedience; and let us be ready to ariſe, and encounter hardſhip and danger, with conſtancy and alacrity; and to go hence by death, whenever he ſhall pleaſe to ſummon us away.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—8.] The cloſe of the former chapter intimates, that our Lord, and his diſciples then fruit he taketh away, and every *branch* that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall aſk what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.

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aroſe from table, as about to leave the houſe, and to retire to Gethſemane: yet it is probable that they did not ſet forward, till He had finiſhed this diſcourſe, and the prayer, that he added to it, (c. xvii. c. xviii. v. 1.) Yet ſome think that this, and the following chapters were ſpoken by the way, before they paſſed the brook Cedron. Perhaps the fruit of the vine, of which they had been partaking, or the ſight of a ſpreading vine, gave occaſion to this illuſtration of that union betwixt Chriſt and his diſciples, which had before been mentioned; (c. xiv. v. 20.) The nation of Iſrael, as the profeſſed people of God, had frequently been repreſented as a vine; (*Pſ.* lxxx. v. 8—16. *Iſaiah*, c. v. ver. 1—7. *Matt.* c. xxi. v. 33—44:) but Jeſus declared that He was "the true Vine:" that nation had been only a type of the true Iſrael, the ſeed of Abraham; which conſiſts of Chriſt, and believers as united to, and one with him: He therefore was the true Vine, the ſubſtance of that ſhadow; and all the branches of that Vine, which had produced good fruit, had done it by virtue of union with, and grace derived from Him. His Father was the Huſbandman, who planted, watered, guarded, and took care of this Vine, and all its branches: He had appointed the perſon of Chriſt as God manifeſted in the fleſh, and from the beginning had made known his purpoſe of ſending Him to redeem ſinners; He had determined every thing reſpecting his mediatorial work, and its happy effects; He had conſtituted Him the medium of communication, through which alone He would ſhew favour, and convey grace to the apoſtate race of men: He took peculiar delight in his obedience, and ſacrifice, as man's Surety; and in giving Him the Spirit without meaſure, to furniſh Him for, and carry him through his work; and alſo, that from his fulneſs all believers might receive grace ſufficient to render them fruitful and holy; and He was well pleaſed with the care of his church, and greatly valued thoſe fruits, which it produced. (*Iſaiah*, c. xxvii. v. 2, 3.) The Union of the divine, and human natures in the perſon of Chriſt, and the fulneſs of the Spirit that is in him, reſemble the root of the Vine, deriving the fertilizing juices from a rich well cultivated ſoil; and his mediatorial work and offices, like the ſtem of the Vine, conveys thoſe juices to all believers as his branches, to render them fruitful: for it does not conſiſt with the honour of God to give his Holy Spirit to ſinners, except through this great High Prieſt, and his atoning ſacrifice. Like the Vine, the Redeemer appears to the ignorant eye of pride and unbelief, a mean and deſpicable plant; whilſt the wiſe, the learned, the valiant, and the mighty, are deemed like the ſtately cedar, or the ſturdy oak: but the fruit of this Vine, and of it's branches are far more valuable, than all the other productions of the earth. In the viſible church there are many perſons, who are only united to Chriſt by external profeſſion, by attendance on ordinances, or by filling up ſome ſtation amongſt his diſciples, as Judas did: theſe are branches in Him, that bear no fruit; they exerciſe no holy affections, and they perform no genuine good works, from proper motives, and to a right end: their moſt ſpecious appearances are mere form and hypocriſy. They are like thoſe luxurious branches of the Vine, which derive no fructifying ſap from the root; and which muſt be pruned away, or they will crowd the other branches, and prevent their fruit from coming to perfection. Every ſuch profeſſor the huſbandman will in due time remove: by means of temptations, and perſecutions, many of them are detected, and become apoſtates; others are left to turn aſide to falſe doctrines; others are cut off by awful judgments, or are ſilently removed by death: but whatever inſtruments or means are employed, it is His plan, to ſeparate them from the vine, that they may not diſgrace it by their ill behaviour, nor retard the fruitfulneſs of others, by their contagious example, and influence. Thus Judas was removed from among the apoſtles, and the unbelieving Jews were caſt out of the church. (*Rom*, xi. v. 16—24.) On the other hand every perſon, who is really united to Chriſt by faith, and by partaking of his Spirit; and ſhews it, in the fruits of righteouſneſs that he produces, reſembling thoſe of Chriſt himſelf, is pruned and tended by the huſbandman, that he may bring forth more fruit. The chaſtiſements, temptations, and humiliating diſcoveries of their own hearts, by which (in ſubſerviency to his word, and ſanctifying Spirit,) he purifies them from their idols, and worldly attachments, and cures them of their pride, and ſelf-confidence, are often very ſharp and painful: but they promote their fruitfulneſs, and this is the tendency, and general effect of all his diſpenſations towards them. The apoſtles, after Judas had left them, were all fruitful branches; and Jeſus, without excepting any of them, (c. xiii. v. 10,) declared that they were clean, through the efficacy of the doctrine he had taught them, and their believing attention, and obedience to it: and as all their approaching trials were

9 As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not ſervants; for the ſervants knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and ordained you, that ye ſhould go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit ſhould remain; that whatſoever ye ſhall aſk of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

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intended for their increaſing purity and fruitfulneſs; ſo He exhorted them "to abide in Him," by faith, and continual dependence on him; thus He would "abide in them," by the efficacious operation of his grace, rendering them fruitful, and comfortable. For notwithſtanding their preſent attainments: they could no more perform any ſpiritual and acceptable obedience, without applying to him for further ſupplies of his grace; than the branch of the vine could bear fruit, except it remained in union with its native ſtock, and derived continual nouriſhment from it. As he was the Vine, and they were the branches; the illuſtration would aptly ſhew them their need of ſuch a conſtant exerciſe of faith in Him. Every believer, who thus abode in Him, would by his powerful influence in his heart, be enabled to bring forth much fruit: but as they, who were wholly *ſeparated* from Him could do nothing good, at any time; ſo true believers would not be able to do any thing effectual in the ſervice of God, if the exerciſe of their faith in him ſhould by any means ſuffer a temporary ſuſpenſion. As for unfruitful profeſſors they would not abide in Him, and their profeſſion would therefore wither, and they would only be fit to be caſt into the fire of hell: even as the withered branches of a Vine are of no uſe, but men gather them and burn them as waſte wood; (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. xv.) But ſo long as the apoſtles abode in Chriſt, and maintained union and communion with Him, and his words dwelt in their underſtandings, memories and affections by obedient faith; they might aſk what they would, and their prayers would be aſſuredly granted; and this would ſecure their increaſing fruitfulneſs and uſefulneſs. Thus the Father would be glorified in the abundance of fruit produced by them; (as the huſbandman values the produce of his vineyard, for the ſake of his friends, though he may not want it for himſelf:) their holy doctrine would thus be recommended, and propagated; the perfections and wonderful works of God would be made known; the genuine tendency of the goſpel would be ſhewn; ſinners would be converted, and ſpiritual worſhippers would be added to the Lord. (*Phil.* c. i. v. 11.) At the ſame time this would prove them to be his true diſciples, which could not be known by any other evidence, if this were wanting.

V. 9—11.] Our Lord next reminded the diſciples of the exceeding riches of his love to them, which was like that of the Father to him. This muſt be underſtood with ſome limitations: for He was the adequate Object of his Father's love, both on account of his perſonal dignity and excellency, and of his mediatorial righteouſneſs, and atonement; and the glory thence redounding to the divine perfections, and government: but the love of Chriſt to his diſciples was firſt placed on them as ſinners, and was therefore perfectly unmerited; though he afterwards loved his own Image in them, and delighted in their cordial attachment and obedience to Him. However his love to them was immenſe, and unchangeable; and he intended to honour, and bleſs them, according to the purpoſe, and effect of the Father's love to Him. He therefore exhorted them to continue in his love; that is to perſevere in thoſe exerciſes of faith, dependence, and obedience, which might expreſs their love to him; and which might tend to their habitual experience of his love to them, and all its bleſſed effects. (*Jude*, v. 21.) This would be done by diligently obeying his commandments, as their Lord and Saviour; even as his perfect obedience to his Father's commandments as their Surety, had preſerved to him his love, and cauſed him to be well pleaſed in him. He had indeed ſpoken theſe words unto them, to excite them to ſuch conſtancy of faith, and obedience; that he might have abundant cauſe to rejoice in them, and their comfort and uſefulneſs; and that their joy in Him, as their unchangeable Friend, might be full and complete, by their uninterrupted communion with him, and their aſſured hope of his glory.

V. 12—16.] (Note, c. xiii. v. 34, 35.) The principal commandment, to which our Lord, on this affecting occaſion, exhorted the diſciples, was love of one another for his ſake, and after his example. This would neceſſarily imply ſuch a degree of generous, patient, and ſelf-denying affection, as the world had never ſeen. The greateſt love, that had ever been heard of, was for a man deliberately to lay down his life, to preſerve thoſe of his valued friends, and benefactors. Many have been found, who would ruſh upon danger, in the field of battle, or on a ſudden emergency; and who have thus loſt their lives *honourably* in defence of thoſe, who were of ſuperior merit, or rank, and to whom their

17 Theſe things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep your's alſo.

21 But all theſe things will they do unto you for my name's ſake, becauſe they know not him that ſent me.

obligations had been very great: a few inſtances have been found of ſuch, as were deliberately willing to part with life, to preſerve thoſe, whom they greatly loved. But Jeſus, the Lord of glory, was about to lay down his life, in the midſt of agony and ignominy, for thoſe, who were infinitely inferior to him, utterly undeſerving of his eſteem, and indeed the meet objects of his indignation and abhorrence. He had fixed his love upon them, when they were enemies, and when the ſacrifice of his death was neceſſary to their being preſerved from hell, and reconciled to God, conſiſtent with the honour of his law and juſtice; and he had changed them into his friends by his converting grace, (*Rom.* c. v. ver. 6—10:) thus they had learned to love him; and he admitted them, as reconciled rebels to the honourable rank of friends; as ſuch he was now about to die for them according to his previous engagement, and in ſo doing he meant alſo to ſhew them in what manner, and to what degree they ought to love one another; (1 *John*, c. iii. v. 16—23.) Notwithſtanding his dignity, and holineſs, and their meanneſs, and ſinfulneſs, he meant to treat them as his boſom friends, whilſt they unreſervedly obeyed his commandments, without departing from them through fear of men, or love of the world. They were indeed his ſervants, he had a right to exerciſe all the authority of a ſovereign Lord, and he had often ſpoken to them as ſervants; (c. xii. v. 26:) but from that time he meant ſtill more fully to behave towards them as his friends: for ſervants were ſeldom informed of their maſter's intentions, and counſels; but He had made known to them all thoſe things, which, as Mediator, he had been entruſted to communicate to his church; and they would ſoon be inſtructed by his Spirit to a more complete underſtanding of his whole counſel, and employed as his apoſtles to make it known to mankind. (*Gen.* c. xviii. v. 17, 18.) But they muſt recollect that this marvellous friendſhip between the Lord of glory, and ſuch poor ſinful worms, did not originate from them. They were not, of themſelves, diſpoſed to chooſe him, and his ſervice; but He had firſt choſen them to ſalvation, called them to be diſciples, and ſelected them to the office of apoſtles; and their choice of, and love to, him had ariſen from this his choice of them. He had moreover ordained, or appointed them his miniſters, and apoſtles, in order that they might go forth in his name, into the moſt diſtant regions; and that, by their holy lives, unwearied labours, patient ſufferings, faithful preaching, and fervent prayers, and ſome of them as penmen of the ſcripture, and moſt of them as martyrs in his cauſe, "they might bring forth fruit," to the glory of God, and the ſalvation of an immenſe multitude of ſouls. Nor was it meant, that this fruit ſhould periſh when they died, or only remain in the gracious recompence beſtowed upon them in another world; but it would alſo abide, in the continuance, and ſpread of the goſpel, from age to age, even to the end of the world. So that millions, who would not come into exiſtence till long after their deceaſe, would ariſe and bleſs God for the grace beſtowed upon them, and for the goſpel tranſmitted to them through their miniſtry, and by their writings. Even as generous wines are preſerved a long time, and prove a cordial to others, when the vines whence they were produced, and they who cultivated them, are alike removed. And they were alſo called into this ſtate of friendſhip; that their prayers being anſwered by the Father, through his interceſſion, all bleſſings might be conferred on them; and all ability and ſucceſs ſecured to them, in reſpect of their moſt important work.

V. 17—21.] As the apoſtles, and other diſciples of Chriſt were to be engaged in one common cauſe, for the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind; it would be peculiarly neceſſary, that they ſhould be united in the cloſeſt bonds of mutual love: eſpecially, as the world would be ſure to hate, oppoſe, and perſecute them. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 10—12. c. x. v. 16—39.) To prepare their mind for this trial, they ought to conſider that the men of the world, (though called the people of God,) had treated Him, *their Chief*, with the greateſt enmity, contempt and cruelty; notwithſtanding the excellent wiſdom, holineſs, and beneficence of his whole conduct. If indeed they had been his diſciples only in name, and their principles and conduct had accorded to the maxims, faſhions, and purſuits of worldly men; theſe would have loved, and careſſed them, as friends and brethren. But He had ſelected them from among their former companions; and effectually called them out of the world, to preach his humbling doctrine, to copy his holy example, and to promote his cauſe, indirect oppoſition to the courſe of it: and therefore the ſame pride, ignorance, and wickedneſs, which had excited the world to hate Him, (c. vii. v. 7,) would induce it to hate them alſo. He had juſt before reminded them, that the ſervant was not above his Lord, (c. xiii. v. 16:) they could therefore expect no other, but to be perſecuted by ſuch perſons, as had perſecuted him. If indeed they had obſerved that men in general welcomed his doctrine, and obeyed it; they might expect to have their words alſo attended to, in like manner: but as the contrary was obvious, it would be vain to indulge ſuch an expectation. As they would be faithful in their miniſtry, and holy in their example, the Jews, (as well as the Gentiles,) would hate, revile and perſecute them, 22 If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloak for their ſin.

23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had ſin; but now have they both ſeen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But *this cometh to paſs,* that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cauſe.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me:

27 And ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning.

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from enmity to him, and his character, doctrine, and authority; becauſe they knew not that God, whom they profeſſed to worſhip. For being ignorant of his perfections, his law, and the worſhip he required, and approved; they ſuppoſed him to be pleaſed with their formal ſervices, and expected him to ſend them a Meſſiah, to humour their prejudices, and to gratify their ambition: but when Jeſus came, in a lowly manner to call them to repentance, to inculcate his holy religion, and to beſtow ſpiritual bleſſings; they hated, and crucified Him; and they ſuppoſed they pleaſed God, by cleaving to their ceremonies and traditions, and oppoſing his goſpel.

V. 22—25.] (Note, c. ix. v. 41.) Doubtleſs the Jews would have been chargeable with ſin, if Chriſt had not appeared among them; for even the Gentiles are inexcuſable in their ungodlineſs: but their ſins would have been comparatively ſmall; if he had not come among them, and publiſhed his holy and gracious doctrine, and confirmed it with ſuch miracles, as no other perſon had ever wrought: theſe things having excited their moſt virulent enmity, and given occaſion to their perpetrating the moſt atrocious crimes, exceedingly increaſed their guilt, and left them without the leaſt excuſe for, or palliation of it: for in every reſpect, Jeſus ſo repreſented to them the divine glory, and character; that in hating him, they manifeſted the utmoſt enmity to God, as all others do, who reject and oppoſe his goſpel, when plainly ſet before them: and as they had ſeen his character, and miracles, and obſerved his miniſtry, with the moſt decided enmity; ſo they had in him, ſeen and hated the holineſs, the authority, and the glory of God himſelf. Thus they fulfilled the words of David, who ſpake as a type of him, and who was hated for a ſimilar reaſon, by the men of his generation, (*Pſ.* xxxv. v. 19. lxix. v. 4. *Iſaiah,* c. liii.)

V. 26, 27.] The apoſtles, when they ſaw the contempt, and cruelty, with which their Lord was treated; and when they found, that they muſt expect ſimilar ill uſage, might have been ready to conclude, that none would attend to their doctrine. He therefore aſſured them, that the Comforter, whom he had promiſed to ſend them, would teſtify to Him, by his miraculous operations, and by giving ſucceſs to the goſpel: and they too, inſtructed, emboldened, and encouraged by his influences, would bear teſtimony to his character, his reſurrection, his aſcenſion, and to the glory of his kingdom, and ſalvation; for which they would be eminently competent, as they had been with him from the beginning of his miniſtry. The Holy Spirit is here ſaid to *proceed* from the Father; and many expoſitors ſuppoſe this to refer, not only to his being ſent forth from the Father, and the Son, (as the Son was from the Father,) a willing meſſenger, to apply the purchaſed ſalvation to the hearts of God's choſen people; but to what is called his *eternal proceſſion* from the Father; by which is meant ſomething ſimilar to the *eternal generation* of the Son; (eſpecially as the preſent tenſe, and not the future is here uſed.) But theſe are incomprehenſible myſteries; and, (though inſerted in moſt of the ancient creeds, and formularies,) ſeem not to be explicitly, and evidently revealed in ſcripture: perhaps it is therefore better to adore in ſilence; than at all to ſpeculate upon, or to attempt any explanation of, ſuch matters; which not being clearly revealed, cannot otherwiſe be at all diſcovered, or underſtood.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the perſon, and ſalvation of Emmanuel, the Lord hath made effectual proviſion, for the ſanctification, as well as the acceptance, of all thoſe, who believe in Him: but all others muſt die unreconciled, and unholy. He is the true Vine, whom God hath planted, and watereth continually. As profeſſed chriſtians, we appear to belong to this Vine, and are externally united to Chriſt by various types: but woe be to them, who have no other union, no more intimate communion, than what conſiſts in notions, ſacraments, and forms. Such will not bear good fruit, perhaps very bad indeed; and one after another of them will be taken away, and left as fuel to the fire of the wrath of God. But even ſuch branches, as bear fruit, have many remaining hindrances to their fruitfulneſs; and the gracious care of the Huſbandman conſiſts in "purging them, that they may "bring forth more fruit:" ſo that it may reaſonably be expected, that true believers will commonly grow in grace, under this heavenly culture; and if the pruning knife be uſed to lop off redundancies, and ſharp means be employed to promote their ſanctification; they will, when in their right mind, be thankful for them. Much more will they deſire, and pray to be enabled to abide in Chriſt, that he may abide in them by his word and Spirit; and they will attend on all inſtituted ordinances, as means of cementing, and preſerving this bleſſed union: they know, that only in the perſevering exerciſe of faith in Chriſt, they can poſſeſs the aſſurance, that they "are "clean through his word;" they dread nothing ſo much, as leſt they ſhould at laſt be found unfruitful branches, and as ſuch left to wither, and be caſt into the fire; and this fear, and the deſire of being made fruitful, will dic-

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, Jeſus 1ſt. Again warning the diſciples to expect perſecution, &c, 1---6. *2d. Shewing them the advantage of his departure from them, in that He would ſend the Comforter to them, with a declaration of the nature and effects of his operations,* 7---15. *3d. Aſſuring them, that he would ſpeedily turn their ſorrow into joy; that he would enſure a gracious anſwer to their prayers; and that they ſhould have his peace amidſt all their tribulations, &c,* 16---33.

THESE things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended.

2 They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues:

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tate ſuch prayers, as will ſurely be anſwered. But ſuch chriſtians alſo long to bring forth more and more fruit: they know that the will, and the power muſt come from Chriſt, “without whom they can do nothing;” they find by experience, that any interruption in the exerciſe of their faith cauſes their holy affections to decline, their corruption to revive, and their comforts to droop; they are convinced, that they can no more perform any ſpiritual obedience without deriving grace from Chriſt; than the branch can be fruitful without the ſap from the root of the vine. They alſo find, that in proportion to the vigour of their faith, they are enabled to produce the fruits of righteouſneſs; and thus God may be glorified by ſuch poor worms on earth, when they approve themſelves in this manner the diſciples of Chriſt. Let us then indulge an holy ambition of living more ſimply on the fulneſs of Chriſt, and of growing more fruitful in every good word, and work; and let us be upon our guard againſt thoſe, who pretend to abide in the living Vine, but produce wild and poiſonous grapes, inſtead of the fruits of righteouſneſs, and true holineſs. Whilſt we admire the unſpeakable love of Jeſus to us; according to the Father's love of Him; let us follow his example of obedience, that we may continue in his love: and, as he rejoices over us to do us good; ſo may our joy in him and his ſalvation be full, by means of near communion with him, and a conſcientious walk before him.

What a kind and gracious Lord do we ſerve! His chief commandment is that we love one another, as He hath loved us: and no love of man to his deareſt friend ever equalled his love to us, when ſtrangers, and enemies! What admiration muſt have pervaded the Hoſts of heaven, when a friendſhip was propoſed betwixt the Object of their exalted adorations, and poor rebellious worms on earth! When he aſſumed human nature, and laid down his life upon the croſs for us! And when he quickened us by his grace, and ſo made us willing to become his diſciples, and his friends! And when they obſerve how he treats us with the moſt unreſerved affection, makes known to us his gracious purpoſes, and notices our mean concerns; notwithſtanding all our remaining vileneſs, and ingratitude! But let us obſerve, that they only are the Redeemer's friends, who “do whatſoever “he commands them:” He hath ſtated this evidence, and inſiſted on this return, of friendſhip; and it is preſumption to claim the privilege, whilſt we are allowing ourſelves in any inſtance of diſobedience. But if we indeed do now chooſe Him as our beloved, and count all but loſs compared with his ſervice, and friendſhip; we muſt remember, that this is the effect of his previous choice of us: He hath alſo appointed every one of us his place, and work; that we may bring forth fruit, in our holy lives, and the improvement of our ſeveral talents, whether as miniſters or private chriſtians, whether we be rich, or poor learned, or unlearned: and as the fruit produced by the apoſtles ſtill remains for our good; ſo the effect of our feeble endeavours may in ſome meaſure conduce to the benefit of others, long after we are gone to our reſt. Let us then continue in prayer, and unite with our brethren in holy love, and in zealous endeavours to promote the cauſe of the goſpel: and let us not be diſmayed by the hatred of the world, which can only love it's own, but muſt diſlike thoſe, whom Chriſt hath choſen out of the world, who bear his image, profeſs his truth, and obey his commandments. We cannot experience worſe uſage, than our Maſter met with; and we ought not to be ſtumbled, or grow weary of well-doing, if we meet with no better. The more we reſemble him, the greater enmity will proud and ungodly men feel againſt us; yet we ſhould be thankful for the reſtraints which providence hath placed to outward perſecution, and we ought carefully to avoid exciting needleſs oppoſition, by raſhneſs, turbulency, or intermeddling with things, not properly belonging to us. But, if we ſuffer for Chriſt's ſake, and from thoſe, who hate Him, and the Father that ſent him, we ſhould rejoice, and be exceeding glad. Alas, how little do many perſons think, that in rejecting and oppoſing the doctrine of Chriſt, as our Prophet, Prieſt, and King; they prove themſelves ignorant of that one living, and true God, whom they profeſs to worſhip; that they are in fact ſetting up an idol, the creature of their own imagination, and proud reaſonings, in the place of “the God, and “Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;” and that their oppoſition to the ſcriptural view of the perſon, atonement, and ſalvation of the Son of God, ſprings from determined enmity to the holy character, authority, law, and worſhip of Jehovah. Thus it was with the Jews, who ſaw and hated both the Son of God, and the Father, who ſent him: thus it is, at this day, with many, who have the ſcriptures in their hand, the evidences of their divine original clearly ſet before them, and perhaps the goſpel faithfully preached to them; whoſe guilt is thereby exceedingly aggravated, and they have no cloak for their ſins; as they evidently hate Chriſt, the Light of the world, only becauſe their deeds are evil, and their whole diſpoſition and conduct are diametrically oppoſite to his holy truths, and precepts. But even in theſe perſons the ſcripture is fulfilled: whilſt, by the converſion of many ſinners, and the holy lives of many profeſſors of the goſpel, the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, ſtill bears teſtimony to Chriſt, and confirms that of thoſe faithful miniſters, who preach his free, and glorious ſalvation, after the example, and doctrine of thoſe, who were with him from the beginning.

yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doeth God ſervice.

3 And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come ye may remember that I told you of them. And theſe things I ſaid not unto you at the beginning, becauſe I was with you.

5 But now I go my way to him that ſent me; and none of you aſketh me, Whither goeſt thou?

6 But becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you, ſorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will ſend him unto you.

8 And when He is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment:

9 Of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me;

10 Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more;

11 Of judgment, becauſe the prince of this world is judged.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—6.] (Notes, &c. c. xv. v. 17—27.) The apoſtles probably had expected honour, and attention, from their relation to Chriſt: and if this vain hope had been countenanced, their ſubſequent trials might have tempted them to think, that they had been deceived. Our Lord, therefore warned them that perſecutions awaited them, that they might not be ſtumbled when they aroſe: not only would the Jewiſh rulers excommunicate them; but they would ſoon arrive at that pitch of bigotry, and malice, as to deem the murder of them, or any others of his diſciples, an acceptable ſervice to God. They would not only treat them, "as ſheep for the ſlaughter, but as ſheep for the altar;" and they would expect to merit the favour of God, by ſacrificing them in ſupport of the Moſaic diſpenſation, and their own traditions. This was the caſe with Saul, and many other zealots among them, (*Acts*, c. xxiii. v. 12—14. c. xxvi. v. 9.) and the ſame hath doubtleſs been the caſe with many of thoſe profeſſed chriſtians, who have been drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and the martyrs of Jeſus. They had a blind, proud, and headſtrong kind of conſcientiouſneſs in what they did. But they were led to perſecute the diſciples of Chriſt from ignorance of *His* character, and truth; and becauſe not knowing the Father, they knew not his Son, their promiſed Meſſiah, when he appeared among them: thus they expected to pleaſe God by ſuch actions, as could only gratify the malignant prince of darkneſs. Our Lord predicted theſe things thus explicitly, before he was taken from the diſciples, that the remembrance of his words might ſupport them under their trials: He had indeed before given them ſeveral intimations both of the hatred, which they would incur, and of his removal from them: but not in ſo explicit a manner, as he did at that time; for being to continue longer with them, He was always at hand to obviate their miſconceptions, and anſwer their enquiries. But he was now about to return to his Father; and ſince He had aſſured them that they could not follow him immediately, and had intimated that He was about to leave the world; (c. xiii. v. 36. c. xiv. v. 1—6;) they had not aſked him any thing further about the ſtate, and place, to which he was going: and therefore, inſtead of rejoicing in his approaching exaltation, and hoping for important benefits from it; they were overwhelmed with ſorrow at his words, as if they were about to ſuffer an irreparable loſs.

V. 7—11.] (c. xiv. v. 15—17. 26—28. c. xv. v. 26, 27.) Our Lord had before intimated, that his departure from the diſciples would prove advantageous to them; and He here ſolemnly aſſured them, that what he told them was perfect truth, though they ſeemed ſo backward to believe Him. It was highly expedient for him to leave them: for, unleſs he paſſed through his ſufferings, and entered into his glory, the promiſed Comforter would not come unto them; for this bleſſing was beſtowed on ſinners, as the purchaſe of his atonement, and as the fruit of his interceſſion; and the abundant pouring out of the Holy Spirit would be the immediate effect of his aſcenſion into heaven, and could not take place without it. (c. vii. v. 39.) When he was gone from them, he would ſurely ſend him to them, according to the counſel, and covenant of redemption. Our Lord not only promiſed to *pray the Father to* ſend the Comforter, but alſo that he would himſelf ſend Him, as One with the Father, and as exalted for that purpoſe to his mediatorial throne. This miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt does not imply that He is *naturally* inferior to the Son of God, neither does the miſſion of the Son prove that He is *naturally* inferior to the Father. The whole was conducted by a voluntary, and harmonious undertaking, according to the plan formed in the divine counſels, for the diſplay of the glory of all the Perſons and perfections of the Godhead, in man's redemption. An ambaſſador is not *naturally* inferior to the prince, who ſends him; and his having been previouſly a ſubject is a mere circumſtance, not eſſential to the office, which he has taken upon him: but in that office, he appears *relatively* inferior to his prince, and as ſuch acts by commiſſion, and obſerves his inſtructions. To this he is bound by the nature of his ſervice, though he might be perfectly voluntary in taking it upon him. This illuſtration may help our conceptions of the natural co-equality of the three Perſons in the ſacred Trinity; and of the relative, voluntary, and apparent inferiority, of the Son and Spirit as to their

12 I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

reſpective offices in man's redemption. The preſence of the Comforter would be far more advantageous to the apoſtles, and the other diſciples, than that of Chriſt in Perſon could have been. He would be every where with them, when they were ſeparated from each other: his teaching, counſels, and conſolations would be inward and efficacious; and His influences would both qualify them for their work, and enſure their ſucceſs in it. For when, He ſhould come, (ἐκεῖνος, the perſonal pronoun,) "He "would reprove," or rather convince "the world of "ſin, &c." This may be underſtood of his miraculous gifts, and operations, by which the world ſtood convicted of ſin, in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory: by which the righteouſneſs of Chriſt was fully proved, as he was returned to the Father, and appeared no more among them; but in proof of his being glorified, He had ſent forth His Holy Spirit upon his diſciples. Thus it would alſo be evinced, that He would judge the world, as He had declared; ſeeing that ſatan the prince of the world, (by the power of the Holy Ghoſt atteſting the apoſtles doctrine,) would be ſhewn to be judged, and condemned as a criminal, and to be gradually expelled from his uſurped dominion over mankind; (Note, c. xii. v. 31.) Theſe miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt left unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles, without excuſe; and bound them over to the day of judgment, as determined favourers of ſatan's cauſe, in oppoſition to that of Chriſt; and they doubtleſs were the means of conviction to great numbers in different parts of the world, that Jeſus was the Son of God, and the Saviour of loſt ſinners. Yet the principal meaning of the words ſeems to refer to the general, internal operation of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men, in every age, and nation, when he leads them to believe in Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation. He convinces them of the ſinfulneſs of their whole conduct, of their ſuppoſed virtues, and of their hearts; by diſcovering the glory of God to their ſouls, by ſhewing them their obligations and relations to him, and by turning their thoughts to the ſpirituality of the law, to the hateful nature of tranſgreſſion, to their own paſt lives, to their preſent behaviour, and to their inward thoughts, deſires, and motives. Thus the veil of ignorance, pride, and partiality being removed; they are brought without reſerve to condemn themſelves, and to plead guilty before God. He ſhews them alſo the righteouſneſs of God in the ſentence denounced againſt ſinners: he leads them to realize and anticipate the day of judgment, and to ſeek deliverance from the condemnation to be then denounced againſt ungodly men. But eſpecially, the Holy Ghoſt ſhews the awakened ſinner, the evil of his unbelief, and neglect of Chriſt, and his ſalvation. Perhaps he once deemed this meritorious, at leaſt he ſuppoſed there was no great evil in it: but now he begins to perceive, that it ariſes from pride, love of ſin, enmity to God, and the moſt rebellious ſtate of the heart imaginable; he finds, that it implies the greateſt contempt of the divine authority, juſtice, truth, wiſdom, and mercy, that can be conceived; that it is a rooted averſion to be reconciled unto God; and in ſhort that it is the ſource, and as it were the ſubſtance, of all other ſins; the moſt affronting and ruinous of all the crimes, of which men are, or can be guilty; and ranks him, who deliberately perſiſts in it, with thoſe implacable enemies of God, that hated, and crucified the incarnate Redeemer, when he appeared on earth. In connexion with this diſcovery of a man's ſinfulneſs, eſpecially in ſtanding out againſt the propoſals of mercy, through Jeſus Chriſt; the Holy Spirit diſcloſes to him that righteouſneſs of God, which is revealed to faith, as the ground of a ſinner's juſtification; even the obedience unto death of the divine Redeemer as our Surety. He convinces him of the ſuitableneſs, and ſufficiency of this righteouſneſs, for the end propoſed; he makes him ſenſible, that in this way God is righteous in juſtifying ſinners; and glorious in mercy, and in all his other perfections at the ſame time: He diſcovers to him how the law is magnified by this expedient, and how the real belief of it muſt ever be accompanied with hatred of ſin, with humility, love of God, and the beginning of all holy diſpoſitions. He ſhews the ſinner, that Chriſt's aſcenſion to the right hand of the Father proves, that the ranſom was accepted, and the righteouſneſs finiſhed, through which believers were to be juſtified: and therefore there is no need for him to appear again on earth, till he ſhall come to judge the world. Moreover the Holy Ghoſt gives the convinced ſinner a realizing apprehenſion of a future judgment, (which few men ſo believe, as to be influenced in their daily conduct by the expectation of it:) He leads him to juſt apprehenſion of the nature, meaſure, and conſequences of that ſolemn day of account, and retribution: He ſhews him, that the prince of this world, who is already judged and condemned, will then be conſigned, with all his angels, and all who adhere to him in oppoſition to Chriſt, to everlaſting puniſhment; but that all, who truly believe in Chriſt, and become his diſciples, and ſervants, loving and obeying him as their Lord and Saviour, will then be adjudged righteous through his merits; (their good works being adduced as evidences of their faith;) and ſo be admitted into the regions of everlaſting glory and felicity. Under theſe realizing convictions; He teaches them to conſider their own ſtate, character, and actions; anticipating that deciſive ſeaſon, by daily inſtituting a judgment upon themſelves, whether they belong to Chriſt or no; in which they deſire to conſider all the evidence, which will then be adduced; that they may be ſatisfied on ſcriptural grounds, that their ſtate is good, and that they are prepared to meet their heart-ſearching Judge, in the endearing character of a gracious Saviour, and Friend. As theſe things evidently contain the ſubſtance of the diſtinguiſhing work of the Holy Ghoſt, in illuminating, convincing, converting, comforting, and ſanctifying believers, of every age, and nation, by which he gives ſucceſs to the preached goſpel in the world; and as it ſo aptly anſwers to the words before us; ſo I apprehend that our Lord had reſpect to it in them, and not merely, nor mainly to the miraculous influences of the Holy Ghoſt, in the days of the apoſtles.

V. 12—15.] Our Lord had many things further to communicate to his apoſtles, concerning the nature of his ſalvation, the preaching of his goſpel to the Gentiles, 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf; but whatſoever he ſhall hear, *that* ſhall he ſpeak: and he will ſhew you things to come.

14 He ſhall glorify me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew *it* unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore ſaid I, That he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew *it* unto you.

16 A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me; becauſe I go to the Father.

17 Then ſaid *ſome* of his diſciples among themſelves, What is this that he ſaith unto us, A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, A little while, and ye ſhall ſee me; and, Becauſe I go to the Father?

18 They ſaid therefore, What is this that he ſaith, A little while? we cannot tell what he ſaith.

19 Now Jeſus knew that they were deſirous to aſk him, and ſaid unto them, Do ye enquire among yourſelves of that I ſaid, A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, A little while, and ye ſhall ſee me?

20 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, That ye ſhall weep and lament, but the world ſhall rejoice: and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when ſhe is in travail hath ſorrow, becauſe her hour is come: but, as ſoon as ſhe is delivered of the child, ſhe remembereth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have ſorrow; but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

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and the abrogation of the Moſaic diſpenſation, &c. But their minds were not ſufficiently freed from prejudices, to receive ſuch inſtructions, and to make a proper uſe of them: He therefore purpoſed to leave them to be made known gradually after his reſurrection and aſcenſion, as they became able to bear them. For the Spirit of truth, of whom He ſpake to them, would guide them into every part of the truth, and make known to them many things, which He had not explicitly taught them. They were therefore unreſervedly to depend on his teaching: for he would punctually adhere to the inſtructions given him; (even as He, the Son of God, had to the inſtructions of his Father,) ſpeaking nothing of himſelf, as if he propoſed to himſelf any ſeparate end, or purpoſe; but teaching them exactly thoſe truths, which were appointed by the divine wiſdom, to be revealed to the church; as being One in nature, counſel, and operation with the Father, and the Son. Moreover He would be in them a Spirit of prophecy, to make known to them future events, even to the end of time: that thus the doctrine, delivered to them, might in their writings be handed down to future ages; whilſt the accompliſhment of the prophecies contained in them, would authenticate their divine original to all, who ſhould be favoured with them. They were further to obſerve, that the Holy Ghoſt would make the honour of Chriſt the great end of all his operations, and revelations: he would glorify Him, in reſpect of his Perſon, doctrine, righteouſneſs, atonement, kingdom, and ſalvation: He would teach men to honour Him by reliance on, ſubjection to, and worſhip of Him: He would exalt the Saviour in their judgment, and affections, and lead them to honour Him by their profeſſion, preaching, converſation, and conduct. So that, if any perſons ſhould pretend to the ſpirit of God, and ſhould diſhonour Him, by their doctrine, or in their conduct, in reſpect of his Perſon, or any of his offices; they might ſurely determine, that it was a lying ſpirit. (1 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 3. 1 *John*, c. iv. ver. 1—3.) For the Holy Spirit, in his influences, would receive thoſe truths, which related to the Perſon, and ſalvation of Chriſt, and diſcover them to the minds of thoſe, in whom he reſided: that they might ſee their glory and excellency, and appropriate them to themſelves, for every ſanctifying, and ſaving purpoſe: and he would direct the apoſtles, and other miniſters to repreſent them to others, with ſuch energetic language, and lively affections, as would lead them alſo to ſeek for an intereſt in them. Indeed all things which belonged to the Father, as the Creator and Proprietor of the univerſe, belonged to Him the incarnate Son alſo, as One with the Father. All the perfections and fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily, for the benefit of his church, and to effectuate the purpoſe of his redemption: the adminiſtration of the univerſal kingdom veſted in Him: all judgment was committed to him, and all honour and worſhip were due to Him: ſo that the Holy Spirit, in glorifying Him, ſhews him to the believer, as the Lord of All, and coequal with the Father, the object of all worſhip, obedience, confidence, love, and praiſe; and in ſo doing, the Father alſo is glorified in the Son, as One with him: and with reference to this, Jeſus ſaid, that the Spirit of truth ſhould take of His, and ſhew it to the diſciples, that they might behold, adore, rejoice, and be thankful.

V. 16—22.] In a few hours the Lord Jeſus was to be removed from the ſight of the diſciples, by his death and burial: but after a ſhort time they would ſee Him again, as riſen from the dead; becauſe he was viſibly to aſcend to the Father in their preſence, that they might teſtify that event to the world. But ſome think, that the little while, which was to intervene before they ſaw him again, referred to the continuance of their lives on earth, previous to their ſeeing him in that glory, to which he was about to remove. However the diſciples

23 And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing. Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

24 Hitherto have ye aſked nothing in my name: aſk, and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full.

25 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you in proverbs: the time cometh, when I ſhall no more ſpeak unto you in proverbs, but I ſhall ſhew you plainly of the Father.

26 At that day ye ſhall aſk in my name; and I ſay not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 His diſciples ſaid unto him, Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and ſpeakeſt no proverb.

30 Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt

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did not underſtand his meaning; not being yet aware, that he was ſo ſoon to die, and then to riſe again, previous to his "going to the Father." But he knew their perplexity; and he therefore further declared to them, that the moſt overwhelming ſorrows were coming upon them; whilſt the world, or the multitude of his enemies, would rejoice and exult, as if they had obtained a final victory over him and his cauſe, when they had nailed him to the croſs, and ſaw him expire upon it. However the ſorrow of his diſciples would ſoon be turned into joy: even as the woman's pangs of travail are, by the ſight of her infant, and by her ſatisfaction in beholding it. Thus they, (as well as He,) would have ſorrow; but he would certainly ſee them again after his reſurrection; and then they would have the moſt cordial, ſolid, and ſubſtantial joy communicated to them; which would not be deſtroyed by his aſcenſion into heaven, as the Holy Spirit would be their Comforter; nor would the malice of men, or devils, or any of their trials and ſufferings in life or death, ever deprive them of it.

V. 23, 24.] When Jeſus ſhould be aſcended into heaven, and the Holy Ghoſt ſhould come upon the apoſtles; their views would be ſo enlarged, and their faith and hope ſo confirmed, that they would not have occaſion to aſk Him the meaning of any of his words, as they then had been deſirous of doing. (v. 19.) They would not therefore want his perſonal preſence, which they then thought indiſpenſably neceſſary to them. For they might be aſſured that whatever they aſked the Father, in his name, would be granted them. Hitherto they had not been uſed to pray in his name, or through his interceſſion: that way of acceſs had not *explicitly* been eſtabliſhed, nor had they clearly underſtood thoſe types, by which it had been ſhadowed forth under the old diſpenſation. They had therefore prayed to the God of Abraham, pleading his mercy and his promiſes: but the way into the holieſt was ſoon to be thrown open, by his ſacrifice, reſurrection, aſcenſion and interceſſion: and then they would learn to plead his righteouſneſs, and atonement, as the ground of their hopes; and to come through Him as their great High-Prieſt and Advocate, to the mercy ſeat of God: and in this way, enlarging and multiplying their petitions, their joy and conſolation would be abundant, and complete. To ſuppoſe, that Chriſt meant, to forbid the apoſtles to addreſs him in prayer; when he ſaid "Ye ſhall aſk me "nothing," would be equivalent to a cenſure on the apoſtles and primitive chriſtians, when acting under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghoſt. The diſciples had been uſed to enquire of their Lord, *as Man*, in all their difficulties: but this would ſpeedily and finally be terminated; and they would be taught to apply to God by prayer, through his mediation. But to addreſs the Father in the name of Chriſt; or to addreſs the Son, as God dwelling in human nature, and reconciling the world to himſelf, come to the ſame thing, if "indeed "the Father, and the Son are One."

V. 25—30.] Our Lord had ſet before the apoſtles, during his whole miniſtry, as well as in this diſcourſe, the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, in parables, or in ſhort and weighty ſentences, the import of which they did not fully underſtand: but after his reſurrection he intended to lay aſide all ſuch obſcurity, and reſerve, and plainly to inſtruct them in thoſe things, which related to the perfections, truth, and will of the Father, and the way of acceſs to him, &c. Then they would learn to pray in his name; but though they would preſent their petitions through his interceſſion, as the honourable way, in which the Father would grant them; yet he meant not, that there would be any need for Him to importune the Father in their behalf, as if he were reluctant to grant their requeſts: ſeeing the Father alſo loved them, and delighted to do them good; becauſe, having been drawn and taught of Him, (c. vi. v. 44, 45;) they had been led to love, and obey His only begotten Son, and to believe that he came from him, to be the Saviour of mankind. This both evidenced his grace beſtowed upon them, and was itſelf well pleaſing in his ſight: for indeed He had come forth from the Father, when he aſſumed human nature to appear in the world; and he was now about to leave the world, and aſcend in human nature to the Father, that he might appear in his preſence in their behalf. The apoſtles declared, when they heard this, that Jeſus had now ſpoken plainly, &c: but according to ſome men's ſyſtems, he ſcarce ever ſpoken any thing ſo abſtruſe, or inexplicable: however it is evident that ſuch men do not accord with the apoſtles, in interpreting the words of Chriſt; and another day muſt determine whether they underſtand them better, or not. This declaration of Chriſt ſo accorded with the ſecret thoughts of the apoſtles' hearts, all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould aſk thee: by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God.

31 Jeſus anſwered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye ſhall be ſcattered, every man to his own, and ſhall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me.

33 Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

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and anſwered the enquiries, that they had deſired to make; that it ſatisfied them of his omniſcience, and that he was able to diſcover and anſwer all their ſecret doubts, without their ſo much as propoſing them; and this ſerved for the preſent exceedingly to confirm their faith.

V. 31—33.] Our Lord foreſaw, that, notwithſtanding the confident profeſſion, which the diſciples had juſt made of their faith in him, they would ſhortly be ſtumbled: He therefore aſſured them, that very ſoon, they would be ſcattered from him, every man ſeeking for himſelf ſome place of concealment, as being afraid, or aſhamed of being known to belong to him: thus they would ſhamefully deſert him in his extreme diſtreſs, to ſhift for their own ſafety. Yet he ſhould not be left alone, without any helper, in the midſt of his enraged enemies: for his Father would be with him, to ſupport, and carry him through all his ſufferings, and to bring him to the glory reſerved for him. But though he foreſaw all their miſconduct: yet he had ſpoken the whole of this affectionate parting diſcourſe to them; that in the recollection of it, they might poſſeſs inward peace, and tranquillity, by faith in Him: for in the world they would ſurely meet with heavy trials, and virulent perſecutions. That was an enemy, with which they muſt have many ſharp conflicts; whilſt ſatan would endeavour by means of ungodly men, to weary out their patience, or to terrify them into apoſtacy: but as He, their Surety, and the Captain of their ſalvation, had overcome the world, and all the temptations, with which it had in every way aſſaulted Him; and as He was about to break through all the remaining oppoſition of the prince of this world, and his devoted adherents, and to aſcend triumphant to his mediatorial throne: ſo they, through the power of his grace, and by following his example, would at length obtain a ſimilar victory, and be put in poſſeſſion of the Conqueror's crown. They would have to fight with enemies, that had already been vanquiſhed: they might therefore endure the peril and the hardſhip with alacrity, and conſtancy; aſſured of all needful ſupport, and comfort; and that the event would be unſpeakably glorious and happy, though their faith and patience would be ſharply tried.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How fallacious is the common opinion, that God will accept every man, whatever his religion may be, who is *ſincere* in his endeavours to pleaſe him! For the moſt bigotted, and cruel perſecutors, with their anathemas, interdicts, excommunications, priſons, inquiſitions, fire and faggots, have often been as *ſincere* in their way; as the more candid and philoſophical oppoſers of “the “truth, as it is in Jeſus:” they have murdered the true worſhippers of God by thouſands, and verily imagined that they were offering him an acceptable ſacrifice! But did ſuch men *ſincerely* deſire to know the truth, and will of God? Did they humbly and impartially examine his word, and pray to be taught by his Spirit, that they might know what He would have them to do? Did they *ſincerely* embrace and profeſs the truth, and obey the will of God, as far as they knew it; without warp from any of their temporal intereſts, or from fear of reproach, and perſecution? Were they *ſincerely* willing to obtain the favour of God, and devote themſelves to his ſervice, at any price, or without regarding conſequences? Without ſomething of this diſpoſition and conduct, men's ſincerity may be a compound of obſtinate prejudice, wilful ignorance, proud ſelf-confidence, carnal policy, and malignant paſſions: and the event will prove, that after all their pretences, and with all their advantages, they were entire ſtrangers and enemies both “to the Father, and the Son;” and “that they hated “the Light, becauſe their deeds were evil.” But the prophecies of ſcripture ſo prepare the attentive believer's mind for ſuch events; that inſtead of being ſtumbled by them, he ſees in them a demonſtration of the truth of revelation, and an illuſtration of its doctrines; eſpecially in reſpect of the *deceitfulneſs*, and deſperate wickedneſs of the human heart; the ſubtlety of ſatan, that old liar, and murderer of mankind; and the awful juſtice of God, in giving up his enemies to ſtrong deluſions, and leaving them to periſh with a lie in their right hand. But let us remember, that humble docility, a belief of God's word, and a diſpoſition unreſervedly to do his will, are neceſſary to that *ſincerity*, which is accepted of him; theſe effects of his grace will lead men to come to the Father, through his beloved Son; and to ſet their affections on things above, where Jeſus ſitteth at the right hand of God: and thus they will learn to rejoice in his exaltation, and in the hope of being with Him to behold, and ſhare his glory. If this be our character, and experience, we ſhould remember, that our hearts are often filled with ſorrow, at thoſe events, which are highly expedient for us: the feebleſt believer can ſee, that this was the caſe with the apoſtles: the atonement, the aſcenſion, and interceſſion of the Redeemer, and the preſence of the Comforter, were not only more deſirable than Chriſt's perſonal preſence; but they were abſolutely neceſſary to them, and to us all, in order to ſalvation: yet no removal of a beloved relation, a chriſtian friend, or faithful miniſter, can appear to us ſo irreparable a loſs, as the departure of Chriſt did to the apoſtles.

It behoves every one to enquire whether the Holy Spirit hath begun a good work in his heart: when He comes to be a Comforter, he always occaſions a tem-

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, Jeſus 1ſt. Praying to be carried through his ſufferings, and put in poſſeſſion of his glory; that he might glorify the Father, and give eternal life to his people, &c, 1---5. 2d. Interceding for his apoſtles, and diſciples, and all ſucceeding believers, for every thing pertaining to their preſervation, ſanctification, comfort, union, uſefulneſs, and eternal felicity, &c. 6---26.

porary ſorrow, and a deep humiliation, which are often attended with terror, and diſtreſs. For without deep convictions of ſin, and a clear diſcovery of our guilt and danger, we ſhall never underſtand the value of Chriſt's ſalvation: but when we are brought to a juſt eſtimate of our own character, and duties; we begin to perceive the preciouſneſs of the Redeemer's obedience atonement, and interceſſion. Then we alſo ſee the ſinfulneſs of unbelief, and neglect of the goſpel; and if at any time we be tempted to deſpair of God's mercy through a ſenſe of our own vileneſs; we perceive that this would be a more fatal, and atrocious offence, than any or all our other tranſgreſſions. Thus we learn to value, and rely upon, Chriſt, for righteouſneſs, and for ſanctification, and to prepare to meet him, when he ſhall come to judgment; when the prince of this world, and all that continue his ſervants will be caſt into the lake of fire. And whoever he be, all over the earth, who is delivered from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; he experimentally knows what it is to be thus "convinced of ſin, of "righteouſneſs, and of judgment." This is eſſential to the religion of a converted ſinner; and to his ſalvation, through Him, "who was made ſin for us, though he "knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſ"neſs of God in Him." If then this be the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit, as the great Agent in applying the redemption of the Son of God: they, who are inſtruments and "workers together with Him," ſhould uſe proper means for producing ſuch needful convictions; they ſhould often, and particularly, lay open the Holy Law of God, as the miniſtration of condemnation; they ſhould ſhew the evil of ſin, the way of juſtification by faith in Chriſt, the guilt, and ruinous conſequences of unbelief; and the ſolemn tranſactions, and awful event of the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. In theſe things they ought to be frequent, copious, alarming, encouraging, and diſtinguiſhing: but in matters more diſputable, and leſs eſſential, they would do well, to copy the example of Chriſt, and not attempt to force them upon their auditories, before they are able to bear, or to make a good uſe of them; but gradually, and as the Spirit of Truth removes prejudices and darkneſs from the mind, and enables them to receive them. Whilſt we attend to the ſure word of prophecy, and wait for the day dawn, and the day-ſtar to ariſe in our hearts; we ſhould carefully obſerve, that the Holy Ghoſt comes forth from the Father, on purpoſe to glorify Chriſt among men: we need not wonder then, that ſo many perſons deny His Deity, and his atonement, or treat his prophetical, or kingly authority with ſuch neglect, or contempt: for they imagine, that the work of the Holy Spirit was confined to the primitive ages; and that all dependence upon his influences at preſent is enthuſiaſm! Could they aſcertain this poſition, it would follow, that Jeſus could only be glorified in the primitive times; and in proportion as men overlook, or do not depend upon, pray for, expect and experience the influences of the Holy Spirit; Chriſt hath always been neglected, and diſhonoured even by thoſe, who call themſelves his diſciples. On the other hand, if men pretend to be guided, and influenced by the Holy Spirit; and yet do not honour Chriſt, but either treat his word with contempt, or place other dependances than his atoning blood, or make him the miniſter of ſin, or diſgrace him by their unholy lives, it is plain that they are either deceivers, or deceived. Where this ſacred Teacher and Comforter reſides; he ſhews Chriſt in all his offices, and characters to be glorious, and precious; he leads a man to rely on, and glory in him; he conſtrains him by the love of Chriſt, to devote himſelf to his ſervice, and to honour him by his life, and by the improvement of his talents to recommend, and promote his cauſe; he leads him to ſee, that all things that the Father hath, are the Son's alſo; that in honouring him, he honours the Father that ſent him; and that all the power and perfection of Deity are in Chriſt, for the completion of that deſign of love, for which he ſuffered on the croſs. We ſhould therefore have more admiring views of, and more lively affections towards our glorious Redeemer; did we more pray for, and depend on the Holy Spirit, and were we more careful neither to grieve him by our ſins, nor to quench his influences by our negligence. Thus we ſhould learn to rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, amidſt all our tribulations.

A little while indeed, believers muſt be abſent from their beloved Saviour, and they may be often called to weep and lament for their ſins, and through manifold tribulations; whilſt the ungodly world around them are rejoicing in carnal mirth, and deſtructive proſperity, or perhaps in the ſucceſs of their moſt atrocious iniquities. But their joys, and the believer's ſorrows are alike tranſient: they have their fears and forebodings to damp their mirth; he has his hopes, and anticipations to alleviate his afflictions: and as a ſorrow is coming on them, which none can mitigate, or terminate; ſo the believer is the heir of an unalienable joy. Indeed many of his ſorrows are as a neceſſary criſis, which is inſeparably connected with everlaſting glory, in which all remembrance of grief will be ſwallowed up in unutterable joy: whilſt the ungodly man's glimmering lamp will be put out in total darkneſs. It might have excited our ſurpriſe, if we had ſeen the apoſtles weeping over their crucified Lord, and God's enemies glorying in their ſucceſs: but where is now the joy of his murderers, or the ſorrow of his friends? Theſe have ſeen him again, and are filled with conſolation. Such will be the event of every believer's trials: may we then chooſe that good part, that can never be taken from us: and may we come, at all times, eſpecially when depreſſed with ſorrow, to the mercy-ſeat of our God, in the Redeemer's name; that

THESE words ſpake Jeſus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and ſaid, Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorify thee:

2 As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

we may aſk, and receive, till our affliction be turned into the fulneſs of joy! Thus darkneſs will become light before us; thoſe things, which ſeemed moſt obſcure, will appear plain and ſatisfactory; we ſhall have increaſing evidence, that the Father himſelf loveth us, as thoſe, who love, and believe in his incarnate Son. We ſhall perceive that he knows, and even anticipates our deſires, and requeſts; that he delights to hear and anſwer our prayers; and that even our manifold infirmities, miſtakes, and offences, will not cauſe him to ceaſe from loving us, and communicating all needful bleſſings to us. But whilſt we think we ſtand, let us take heed leſt we fall: we know not how we ſhould act, if we were brought into temptation; we ought therefore to watch, and pray without ceaſing, that we may not be left to ourſelves: we muſt ſeek our peace and comfort in Chriſt, and not in the world; which we muſt conflict with as an enemy, in whatever form it appears, and where we muſt expect tribulation, as long as we continue in it. But relying upon our victorious Saviour, and looking conſtantly to him; we may go forward with confidence; aſſured of being made more than conquerors, through the love and power, of our unchangeable Friend.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1—3.] In the preceding chapter our Lord cloſed his inſtructions to his apoſtles, previous to his crucifixion, (except what paſſed in the garden,) and in this he addreſſed his Father, in their preſence, by a moſt intereſting prayer: in which their good ſeemed ſo to occupy his mind, (in connexion with the joy ſet before Him;) that he had not leiſure expreſsly to mention the tremendous ſufferings, on which he was about to enter. Through the whole of this prayer we may obſerve, that He ſpake as the incarnate Son of God; he ſupplicated as man, and as the Mediator of his people; yet he ſometimes expreſſed himſelf with majeſty and authority, as one with, and equal to the Father. In the attitude of reverent devotion, he addreſſed God as his Father, in a peculiar ſenſe; and obſerving, that the important, the deciſive, and long expected hour was now come, when he was to expiate the guilt of his people by his agonizing ſufferings, and ignominious death, He therefore prayed, that He would "glorify his Son," &c: the Father glorified Chriſt, by ſupporting his human nature through his unknown ſufferings, and enabling him to exerciſe perfect meekneſs, patience, love, and zeal, under them all; by the appearance of an angel to him in his agony in the garden; by the miracles, and prodigies attending his crucifixion; by the converſion of the penitent thief; by the teſtimonies borne to him by Pilate and the Centurion; by the fulfilment of ancient types and prophecies in him; by the acceptance of his ſacrifice; by his reſurrection, and aſcenſion; and by his exaltation to the mediatorial throne, angels, principalities, and powers, being made ſubject to him: and the Son glorified God the Father, in the diſplay of his juſtice, holineſs, truth, and mercy, and in magnifying his law and government; both in his humiliation, and the glory that followed it. This requeſt referred to the power entruſted to him, as Mediator, to decide upon, and determine the final condition of all the human race; and to give eternal life to all thoſe, who had been given to him, in the covenant of redemption, according to the election of grace: for eternal life could not be given to them, unleſs Chriſt their Surety, both glorified the Father, and was glorified of Him. This eternal life was declared to conſiſt in "the knowledge of the only true God," in diſtinction from all creatures, and all idols; and "of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, whom he had ſent" to be the Saviour of the world. God muſt be known in his perfections and character, and in the beauty, excellency, glory, and harmony of them: this knowledge muſt be received from revelation, by faith, and through ſpiritual illumination, and increaſed by ſubſequent experience, and communion. It cannot be acquired, except by the knowledge of Chriſt, in his divine Perſon, and mediatorial character and work: in every other view of God, He either appears ſo juſt as to exclude the exerciſe of mercy to the guilty; or ſo merciful, as to interfere with the perfection of his juſtice, holineſs, truth, &c. His glory, and the harmony of his attributes muſt be ſeen in the face of Jeſus Chriſt: and this knowledge is attended with reverential fear of, and confidence in Him, and produces love, gratitude, ſubmiſſion, obedience, ſpiritual worſhip, and conformity to him. This is the ſinner's way to eternal life: it evidences his title to it; it is his meetneſs for it, and the earneſt of it: and when this knowledge ſhall be perfected, holineſs and felicity will be completely enjoyed.

V. 4, 5.] Our Lord next pleaded, that He had glorified the Father on earth; (c. xiii. v. 31, 32:) He had glorified Him by his perfect obedience, his holy doctrine, and his numerous miracles; and He was juſt about to glorify Him by his expiatory ſufferings: ſo that it might be ſaid, that "He had finiſhed his work on earth;" for he was aſſured of being carried honourably through that cloſing, awful ſcene. He therefore called on His Father to glorify him with himſelf, at his right hand, as inveſted with all authority, exerciſing all divine perfections, and receiving all adoration; according to that glory, which he had with the Father, before the

6 I have manifeſted thy name unto the men which thou gaveſt me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things, whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee:

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me; and they have received *them*, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me: for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name thoſe whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: thoſe that thou

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creation of the world; (Note, c. i. v. 1—5.) This He had veiled for a time under the form of a ſervant; in order that in human nature he might be exalted to it, as the head, and Saviour of his body the church. To ſuppoſe, as ſome do, that nothing more is here meant, than God's eternal decree of glorifying the man Chriſt Jeſus, not only enervates the language; but induces obſcurity, and impropriety into it.

V. 6—10] Our Lord in theſe verſes, and in the greateſt part of this chapter had the apoſtles primarily in view; but not excluſively: they were the depoſitaries of his doctrine; and being preſent on this affecting occaſion, they were to communicate what they heard to their fellow diſciples, and to all other believers, for their inſtruction, and encouragement alſo. Chriſt had manifeſted the name, (or the perfections, purpoſes, truths, and will of the Father,) to thoſe perſons, who had been given to him from among the people of the world, with whom they had aſſociated before they were called to be his diſciples: yet they had been the Father's in an eſpecial manner, not only the creatures of his power, but the objects of his choice, even before they were converted, nay, *in the order of nature*, before they were given to the Son to be redeemed and ſaved by him. At length they had received, believed, obeyed, and kept his word; having been aſſured, that all things, which Jeſus had done, and taught, diſplayed, and claimed (by the gift, or commiſſion of the Father to Him,) were indeed according to the will, expreſſive of the perfections, and conducive to the glory of the Father. They had received the words of their Lord with implicit credence, even as he had delivered them from the Father, and were convinced of his divine miſſion, and authority, (c. xvi. v. 27—30.) He therefore offered this prayer for them excluſively as believers; and not for the world at large, who are not, in *this ſpecial ſenſe*, intereſted in his interceſſion, ſave as they are of that number who are given to Chriſt to be ſaved by him; as the perſons had been, who were now brought to believe in him. Theſe were ſtill the Father's, though given to the Son; by reaſon of the perfect union of eſſence, counſel, and operation between them: and indeed, not only the ſame perſons belong equally to the Father and to the Son, but the ſame things alſo; ſo that all things belonging to Chriſt belong equally to the Father, and all things belonging to the Father, belong equally to the Son; (it is the neuter gender in the original.) Thus the power and perfections of the Father are the Son's likewiſe; and the honour and worſhip of the Son, are the Father's likewiſe: there is no competition, or ſeparation between their authority or honour, as ſome vainly imagine; but the moſt perfect unity, harmony, and coincidence, (c. xvi. v. 15.) As therefore the diſciples were alike beloved of the Son and of the Father; ſo through His interceſſion for them, being made effectual, He would be glorified in their ſalvation, and by their holy lives, and labours, (*Phil.* c. ii. v. 11.)

V. 11, 12.] Jeſus was at that time at the very point of leaving the world, (as to his perſonal preſence;) but whilſt he rejoiced in the thought of going to the Father; his concern was exerciſed about his diſciples, that were to continue in the world, in the midſt of ſnares, dangers, and tribulations: He therefore interceded with God, as his Holy Father, (referring to all his moral excellencies as engaged to effectuate the purpoſes of the new covenant, eſpecially in the ſanctification of believers;) that he would keep them, through his own name, or according to his power and perfection, and for the glory of his name; or *in* the faith, love, and worſhip of himſelf; that they might be moſt intimately united in judgment, affection, doctrine, worſhip, labours, &c; even according to the inexplicable union of the Father and the Son in the Deity, or of God and man in the Perſon of Chriſt. He had hitherto, by his perſonal preſence and inſtructions, preſerved them in this manner: none of thoſe, who had been given to him had departed from him, or run into the ways of deſtruction: ſave, that Judas, who was emphatically a child of wrath, an heir of perdition, had been left to periſh, according to the predictions of the ſcripture concerning, him. (*Pſ.* cix. v. 6—19) If we underſtand "the giving to "Chriſt," in this verſe, as before, (v. 6—9:) then Judas is not mentioned as an exception to the rule, but by way of oppoſition, or diſtinction: as the woman of Sarepta is diſtinguiſhed from the widows of Iſrael, and Naaman the Syrian from the lepers in Iſrael; (*Luke*, c. iv. ver. 26, 27.) In the preceding verſes, they, who were given to Chriſt, are ſtated to have kept his word, and believed in him, &c: but Judas had always been an hypocrite, and was now become a traitor, and an gaveſt me I have kept, and none of them is loſt, but the ſon of perdition; that the ſcripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and theſe things I ſpeak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themſelves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, becauſe they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo have I alſo ſent them into the world.

19 And for their ſakes I ſanctify myſelf, that they alſo might be ſanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word.

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.

22 And the glory which thou gaveſt me

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apoſtate; and therefore Chriſt could not mean to include him in that number. So that, if in this verſe, we underſtand by thoſe given to Chriſt, ſuch, as were given to him to be his apoſtles, without any reference to the election of grace; we cannot underſtand the preceding verſes in that ſenſe; becauſe they are characteriſtic only of true believers, which Judas never had been. The former ſeems indeed the true interpretation; but if any prefer the latter, it muſt be noted, that it doth not at all interfere with the doctrine contained in the foregoing verſes, as it hath been already explained.

V. 13—16.] Before Jeſus aſcended to his glory, he ſpake all theſe things, in his exhortation, and interceſſion, before the apoſtles; that they, and their brethren, might have his joy fulfilled in them; that is the joy, that he had in truſt to confer on them, ſimilar to that, which He poſſeſſed in the aſſurance of his Father's love, and in the proſpect of his glory. They would greatly need this ſupport: as He had given the word of the Father to them, that they might preach and profeſs it before men; and the world had already begun to hate them on that account: becauſe they no longer were of the ſame character, or party with them, but oppoſite in every thing, according as He had not been of the world; but contrary to it, in his whole doctrine, and conduct. However He did not pray, that the apoſtles and diſciples ſhould be removed out of the world, in order, that they might eſcape the effects of the rage, contempt and enmity of ungodly men: they had a great work to do, for the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind, which they muſt continue on earth to finiſh; at the ſame time, they muſt ripen for their exalted ſtate in heaven, by paſſing through manifold trials, and tribulations. But He interceded in their behalf, that the Father would preſerve them from the evil; that is, from being corrupted by the contagious influence of the world, or tempted by its ſmiles or frowns to apoſtatize from him; from the fatal effects of the remains of ſin in their hearts, and from the power and ſubtlety of ſatan that evil one, (Note, *Matt.* c. vi. v. 13;) that they might paſs ſafely and honourably through the world, as through an enemy's country, in ſome meaſure, as he had done.

V. 17—19.] The apoſtles were actually converted, called out of the ungodly world, and engaged in a work diametrically oppoſite to all its ſentiments, inclinations, and purſuits: but they needed to be more completely purified, renewed, and conſecrated to God for their moſt important work. Chriſt therefore prayed, that they might be ſanctified, through the truth of God's word; every part of which is holy in its nature, and tendency, and *the means* of the ſanctification by the Spirit, as well as of rendering the man of God completely furniſhed for every good work, (2 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 16, 17.) The commandments, doctrines, promiſes, warnings, examples, &c, of ſcripture, are ſuited to diſcover the evil of ſin, and to detect it in all its workings; to impreſs the mind with proper affections towards God and holineſs, and to furniſh directions, motives, and encouragements for every thing that is good, and excellent; and thus to transform the believer's ſoul into it's own holy nature, and to induce him to that dedication of all his powers to God, in the performance of his proper work, which is here eſpecially intended. For our Lord immediately referred to his ſending forth of his apoſtles to publiſh his goſpel in the world; and their being wholly conſecrated, and ſet apart to that ſervice, and prepared to perſevere in it, amidſt all hardſhips, perils and ſufferings unto death: even as He had been ſent by the Father into the world, and had willingly ſet apart himſelf, and his whole human nature, as conſecrated by the Holy Ghoſt, to his moſt arduous work, and was now about to give himſelf an atoning ſacrifice for ſin, for the ſake of his apoſtles and diſciples, and for the glory of God in their ſalvation; that they might in like manner, be ſanctified through the truth, to carry on the ſame work in the world, by their miniſtry, and example, their patient ſufferings, and the martyrdom of many of them, for their teſtimony to his doctrine.

V. 20, 21.] In theſe verſes Chriſt interceded for all chriſtians in every age, to the end of the world; and as ſuch, it is replete with inſtruction and conſolation to us. Doubtleſs the effectual calling of ſinners to faith in Chriſt, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.

24 Father, I will that they alſo, whom thou haſt given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou haſt given me: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and theſe have known that thou haſt ſent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it:* that the love wherewith thou haſt loved me may be in them, and I in them.

is one effect of his continual interceſſion in heaven, of which this prayer is a ſpecimen, and example; but none can have any encouragement from that conſideration, till they in ſome meaſure believe in his word: he therefore was pleaſed here to pray for them, as thoſe, who would believe on him, rather than as thoſe, who were the elect of God. He interceded for all, who ſhould believe, through the word of his apoſtles. The goſpel was eſpecially committed to them, and from them it hath been tranſmitted to us; as the whole New Teſtament was either penned, or ſanctioned by them as of divine authority. So that all believers are included in this expreſſion: nor will any other doctrine than their's produce this kind of faith. Our Lord eſpecially prayed, that all ſuch perſons might be united together in the cloſeſt bonds of love; as one Body, under one Head, animated by one Soul, according to the incomprehenſible union before-mentioned, and in virtue of their union with Chriſt, and the Father in him, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. In ſome reſpects this requeſt is, and muſt be granted in behalf of all true believers; and in proportion to the degree of their illumination, and ſanctification: the more cloſely they are united in judgment and affection, and live in peace and harmony, profeſſing the ſame doctrine, and worſhipping God, as with one heart and one mouth; the clearer evidence do they afford of the divine original and excellency of the goſpel, to the conviction of the world around them. But the more they, who in ſo many reſpects are one, and who are agreed in the moſt important matters, differ and diſpute about leſſer things, and expoſe and condemn each other; the more ambiguous and uncertain doth the truth and excellency of chriſtianity appear. Men are apt on ſuch occaſions to ſay, that it will be ſoon enough for them to embrace the goſpel, when its profeſſors have agreed among themſelves, wherein it conſiſts: and they have ſeen and read very little, who are not aware of the advantage, which infidels and ungodly men have made of the diviſions and controverſies among profeſſing chriſtians, againſt the common intereſt of our holy religion. Falſe profeſſors indeed will always be prompted to diſturb the peace, as well as to corrupt the purity of the church; and it muſt needs be, that ſuch offences will come: but true believers ſurely ſhould be more cautious in this reſpect, than they generally are.

V. 22, 23.] Our Lord cannot be ſuppoſed here to intend his perſonal, or mediatorial glory: but either that glory, which was given to him to be conferred on his diſciples; or the glory of bearing his image, declaring his truth, labouring and ſuffering in the ſame cauſe, and enduring enmity and oppoſition from men, in ſtanding up for the honour of God in the world. Thus he gave to them the glory of concurring in that grand deſign, for which he lived, and died; and of being anointed, in their meaſure, by the Holy Ghoſt for that ſervice: that under the teaching and influence of that one Spirit, they might all be made complete as one body in Chriſt, and in the Father, through him: that all men might ſee in their doctrine and behaviour, that they were a holy and happy people; that their religion was of heavenly original, becauſe of a heavenly nature and tendency; and that they were the proper objects of God's ſpecial love, for Chriſt's ſake, and according to the Father's love to him, in whom he was well pleaſed.

V. 24, *I will,* &c.] The language of this verſe is very remarkable: Chriſt does not ſay, *I pray,* or *beſeech,* but *I will.* His interceſſion is grounded on a covenant, the terms of which he hath perfectly fulfilled, and the benefits of which are claimable by him as a right; and He diſpenſes them by his own authority, and ſovereign will, as one with the Father. He therefore here claimed in behalf of the whole company, that had been given to him, and who would in due time believe on him, that they ſhould at length be ſafely brought to heaven, the place of his ſpecial preſence as God, and whither as man he was about to aſcend; that there the whole company of the redeemed might behold his glory, as their beloved Friend and Brother, and therein find their felicity: for in this reſpect, as well as on account of his divine excellency, the Father loved him before the foundation of the world; becauſe he moſt perfectly approved of, and delighted in, his mediatorial undertaking and work, as fully adequate to all the purpoſes of his glory in the ſalvation of his people.

V. 25, 26.] Theſe laſt verſes primarily related to the apoſtles. Jeſus addreſſed God, as his "righteous Father," (v. 11,) not only becauſe of his eſſential juſtice, and the righteouſneſs of his moral government; but as righteous in juſtifying ſinners through his obedience unto death, and in performing the engagements of his everlaſting covenant. The world had not indeed known him, in reſpect of this righteouſneſs, and his other glorious excellencies; for it was in a ſtate of rebellion againſt Him, and expoſed to his juſt vengeance on that account. But as He, His beloved Son, had perfectly known Him; as the apoſtles had aſſuredly believed, that the Father had ſent him; and as he had declared, and would ſtill further declare the name, or character,

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains 1*ſt. Jeſus retiring to the garden; betrayed by Judas, &c; cauſing his enemies to fall to the ground; requiring the diſmiſſion of his diſciples; reſtraining them from fighting in his defence; and allowing himſelf to be bound, and led away to Annas firſt, and then to Caiaphas,* 1---14. 2*d. Peter introduced into the high Prieſt's palace; Jeſus ſmitten by an officer; and Peter thrice denying him,* 15---27. 3*d. Jeſus accuſed before Pilate by the Jews; examined by him concerning his kingdom, and pronounced innocent; and the people preferring Barabbas to Him,* 28---40.

of God to them, by his doctrine, and his Spirit: ſo they were, and would be, diſtinguiſhed from the world, by their knowledge of God, and all its happy effects; (v. 3;) in order, that, being one with Him, as dwelling in them by his Spirit, and as members of his myſtical body, the love of the Father to Him, might be communicated to, and abide with them alſo; and that thus, being joined to him by one Spirit, they might be filled with all the fulneſs of God, and come as near the fountain of all felicity, as creatures poſſibly can do. (v. 20, 21.) After all our endeavours to explain this chapter, we muſt allow, that our thoughts are ſwallowed up in thoſe depths of wiſdom, and love, and in thoſe myſteries of the Godhead with which it is replete; and that the light of heaven alone can fully clear it up to us.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Fervent prayer forms the proper concluſion of religious inſtructions, and the preparation for approaching trials: and our eyes, and hearts ſhould habitually be lifted up to our heavenly Father, that he would glorify himſelf in, and by us; that he would proſper our endeavours to honour him, ſupport us in reſiſting temptations, and carry us through all difficulties to his heavenly kingdom. But all our ſupplications, muſt be preſented through the interceſſion of our great High Prieſt, who “hath power “over all fleſh;” and who giveth eternal life to all his choſen people, and will conſign all unbelievers to everlaſting puniſhment. For however men may deny, deride, or overlook it; eternal life can only be obtained by us ſinners, through the knowledge of God, as revealed in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and as the purchaſe of his meritorious obedience unto death; by which he glorified the Father on earth, and finiſhed the work, that was given him to do. In leaving the glory, that he had with the Father, before the world was; in his humiliation on earth, and his aſcenſion into heaven, to be reinſtated in his glory; and by the doctrine, which he committed to his holy apoſtles, he hath manifeſted the name of God to man; and all believers here behold his glory as in a glaſs, till they are changed into the ſame Image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. This knowledge of God in Chriſt is no vain inefficacious notion, which puffeth up a man with pride: but it is humbling, transforming, and ſanctifying; the ſource of all ſpiritual worſhip, and holy obedience, the hope, the evidence, the earneſt of, and the meetneſs for, eternal life. It is peculiar to thoſe, whom the Father hath given to Chriſt out of the world; who receive, and keep his word, who are firmly perſuaded that his doctrine, and his works were from the Father, and who believe in him for the ſalvation of their ſouls. Theſe are the ſpecial objects of the Saviour's love, and his moſt valued purchaſe, and property: for them eſpecially he came into the world; for them he obeyed and ſuffered; for them he roſe again and reigns; for them he continually intercedes, and not for the world at large: in them he will eternally be glorified, with the Father, whoſe alſo they are, as all things that the Father hath are the Son's likewiſe. However no trembling ſinner, who deſires to come to the Father, and is conſciouſly unworthy to come in his own name, need be diſcouraged by the Saviour's declaration, that “He prays not for the world;” for He is both able, and willing to “ſave to the uttermoſt all them, who “come to God by him.” Theſe convictions and deſires are hopeful tokens, that a man is one of thoſe, who were given unto Chriſt; and when they lead him to the throne of grace, through faith in his word, and reliance on his interceſſion; the expreſs promiſes of God become his ſecurity, and the work already wrought in him begins to evidence that he Hath been “choſen unto ſalvation, “through ſanctification of the Spirit, and *belief of the* “*truth*;” nor can any man, whatever he profeſſes or preaches, have any knowledge of his election, except by that “faith, which worketh by love.”

Many have called Chriſt Lord, and Maſter, and have ſeemed to be the children and ſervants of God, who have at length proved “ſons of perdition,” after the example of Judas: but in them too the ſcripture hath been fulfilled; for they never truly believed Chriſt's word, and therefore they did not keep it. Such examples ſhould excite us to ſerious ſelf-examination, and fervent prayer: but they ſhould not diſtreſs the humble believer, who is conſcious of integrity in his profeſſion of repentance, and faith in Chriſt, and a deſire of living to his glory; notwithſtanding all his imperfections, and unworthineſs. Theſe are of that number, who, through the interceſſion of Chriſt, ſhall be kept by the power of God, to the glory of his name, and in his worſhip and ſervice, through faith, unto eternal ſalvation. None of them ever were, or ever will be loſt: for the ſons of perdition only ſeemed to be of them, but they never were one with them in judgment, diſpoſition, and affection. They live indeed at preſent in an enſnaring world, which hates and deſpiſes them: yet the recollection of Chriſt's words, and the experience of his faithfulneſs, may fill them with holy joy in him, and in each other, amidſt all their tribulations. They ſhould be willing to die, but they ought not impatiently to deſire it: for their loving Advocate doth not intercede for their immediate removal out of the world; but that they may be kept from the evil of it. They muſt however carefully remember, that they are not left here, to purſue any of the ſame objects, with the men of the world around them; but to glorify God, to ſerve their generation, to finiſh their work, and to be perfected through ſufferings, after the example of the Captain of their ſal-

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WHEN Jeſus had ſpoken theſe words, he went forth with his diſciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his diſciples.

2 And Judas alſo, which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither with his diſciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band *of men*, and officers from the chief prieſts and Phariſees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches, and weapons.

4 Jeſus therefore, knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth, and ſaid unto them, Whom ſeek ye?

5 They anſwered him, Jeſus of Nazareth. Jeſus ſaith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas alſo, which betrayed him, ſtood with them.

6 As ſoon then as he had ſaid unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then aſked he them again, Whom ſeek ye? And they ſaid, Jeſus of Nazareth.

8 Jeſus anſwered, I have told you that I

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vation. They ſhould therefore hope and pray, that the grace, which hath ſeparated them from the world, may preſerve them from the evil of it, and from the ſnares of the wicked one, whilſt they continue here below: they ſhould ſeek to be continually ſanctified more and more, through the word of truth, that they may be devoted unreſervedly to the ſervice of him, who "through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God," for their ſakes, and "to purge their conſciences from dead works, that they might ſerve the living God:" and they ſhould carefully examine, whether the doctrines, which they hold, have a ſanctifying effect upon their hearts and lives; for, as all divine truth is of a holy nature; if our ſentiments have not this effect upon us, we may be ſure, that they either are not divine truth, or that we do not receive them by a living, and operating faith, but as mere notions in our mind.

Bleſſed be God, that we ſinners, in theſe remote regions, and diſtant ages, are intereſted in this prayer of our Redeemer, if we indeed believe in him, according to the word of his holy apoſtles! May we continually recollect, that union and communion with the Father and the Son, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and union, peace, and harmony with one another, formed the ſubſtance of our Redeemer's prayer for all his future diſciples to the end of time. Let us then "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:" let us pray for a larger portion of divine illumination in behalf of ourſelves, and of all our brethren, that we may all be united in one mind, and judgment: let us alſo pray for more abundance of holy love; that we may amicably differ in opinion, where we cannot ſee things exactly in the ſame light: that thus a ſpirit of mutual candour, forbearance, kindneſs, and active love amongſt all, who appear to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, may convince the world, that we are of one heart and ſoul, (though ſomewhat ſeparated through external circumſtances;) and that we are all ſoldiers in one army, (though not exactly marſhalled and diſciplined in the ſame manner;) that we are indeed fighting againſt ſin, the world, and the devil; and that we will not be ſeduced to turn our arms againſt each other, (as hath too often been the caſe,) to the joy, and triumph of our inſulting enemies. Thus we ſhall beſt convince the world of the truth and excellency of our religion, and of the divine authority of its great Author: thus we ſhall experience more intimate union of ſoul, and more ſweet and ſanctifying communion with the God of our ſalvation, and with his ſaints: thus we ſhall have a meaſure of the Redeemer's glory conferred on us, by being conformed to his image, united with his people, and hated by thoſe only, who hate him and the Father that ſent him: thus we ſhall enjoy the comfort of his love on earth; and at length, according to his ſovereign will and his covenant engagements, we ſhall ſurely be with Him for ever, to behold his glory, and enjoy, as one with him, that love, with which the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world; and ſhall poſſeſs the moſt complete felicity, in the full knowledge, and beatific viſion of that God of glory, whom the world hath not known; but in knowing whom angels, and arch-angels find bleſſedneſs, of which in our preſent ſtate we can frame no adequate conception.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1—3.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 30—50. *Mark*, c. xiv. v. 26—45. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 39—58.) Cedron, or Kidron, was a ſmall brook, which ran eaſt of Jeruſalem, over which David, (the type of Chriſt,) paſſed weeping, when he fled for fear of Abſalom: (2 *Sam.* c. xv. v. 23—30.) The garden, to which he retired, probably belonged to ſome friend, who was glad to afford him and his diſciples this quiet retreat. But Judas, knowing of his cuſtom, and purpoſe of reſorting thither, had procured a cohort of Roman ſoldiers, as well as the officers of the Jewiſh rulers, in order to apprehend him; and they came with every preparation, that would have been neceſſary, if they had attempted to ſeize ſome deſperate criminal, who would uſe every method to oppoſe, or to eſcape from them: otherwiſe torches, &c, ſeem not to have been needful, when the moon was at the full. The firſt Adam fell in a garden; the ſecond Adam began his atoning ſufferings in a garden likewiſe.

V. 4—9.] Our Lord, though fully aware of all the inexpreſſible ſufferings, that were coming upon him, went forth to meet his rude aſſailants with the moſt perfect ſerenity, and fortitude! It is particularly remarked, that Judas ſtood with the company, that came to take Jeſus, when he made his enquiry of them, and declared himſelf to be the perſon, they ſought for; ſo that he too was conſtrained to go backward, and fall to the ground:

am *he*. If therefore ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way:

9 That the ſaying might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, Of them which thou gaveſt me have I loſt none.

10 Then Simon Peter having a ſword drew it, and ſmote the high Prieſt's ſervant, and cut off his right ear. The ſervant's name was Malchus.

11 Then ſaid Jeſus unto Peter, Put up thy ſword into the ſheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?

12 Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews, took Jeſus, and bound him.

13 And led him away to Annas firſt: (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high prieſt that ſame year.)

14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counſel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man ſhould die for the people.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jeſus, and *ſo did* another diſciple. That diſciple was known unto the high prieſt, and went in with Jeſus into the palace of the high prieſt.

16 But Peter ſtood at the door without. Then went out that other diſciple, which was known unto the high prieſt, and ſpake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then ſaith the damſel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou alſo *one* of this man's diſciples? He ſaith, I am not.

18 And the ſervants and officers ſtood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold,) and they warmed themſelves: and Peter ſtood with them, and warmed himſelf.

19 The high prieſt then aſked Jeſus of his diſciples and of his doctrine.

20 Jeſus anſwered him, I ſpake openly to the world; I ever taught in the ſynagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always reſort: and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing.

21 Why aſkeſt thou me? aſk them which heard me, what I have ſaid unto them: behold, they know what I ſaid.

22 And when he had thus ſpoken, one of the officers which ſtood by ſtruck Jeſus with the palm of his hand, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou the high prieſt ſo?

23 Jeſus anſwered him, If I have ſpoken

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yet was *he* not diſmayed, by that further diſplay of the power of his Lord; but dared to proceed with his horrible purpoſe! No doubt Jeſus could with equal eaſe have ſtruck the whole company dead in a moment: and it is wonderful, that they did not recollect the companies, that were deſtroyed by fire from heaven, when they came to take Elijah; (2 *Kings*, c. i;) and that they ſhould venture to renew their attempt, after this unexpected repulſe. But perhaps they aſcribed it to the ſame power, by which ſome of them ſuppoſed that he wrought his miracles; and, if ſo, they might deem their preſervation a peculiar interpoſition of God in their favour. However our Lord was pleaſed to proceed no further againſt them; but only obſerved to them, that as they ſought him, who was ready to yield up himſelf to them; they ſhould let his diſciples go away unmoleſted: which they were over-ruled to comply with. This conduct of Chriſt accorded to the word, that he had before ſpoken, (c. xvii. v. 12:) for he thus not only ſhewed the moſt tender concern to their temporal ſafety, as thoſe who had been given to him as apoſtles: but he kept them, as true but weak believers, from ſuch temptations, as they were not then prepared to withſtand: which tended alſo to their ſpiritual preſervation.

V. 10—14.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. xxvi. v. 51—57. *Mark*, c. xiv. v. 46—53.) The enquiry of our Lord, (whether it did not behove Him to drink the cup, which his Father had given him?) was peculiarly beautiful and expreſſive. He conſidered not the malice and injuſtice of his enemies, in his ſufferings; but he received them as a cup put into his hand by his heavenly Father, who would not afflict him without good reaſon, and for the moſt gracious and important purpoſes. Caiaphas ſeems to have obtained the high prieſthood by the intereſt of Annas, who poſſeſſed it before him: the officers of the council led Jeſus firſt to him, out of deference to his character; but He remitted them to Caiaphas, to whom Jeſus was evidently brought, before the events, which are next recorded. (v. 24. c. xi. v. 47—54.)

V. 15—18.] Expoſitors have generally ſuppoſed, that this other diſciple was John the evangeliſt; and the connexion *ſeems* to point out one of the apoſtles: yet conſidering that John was a Galilean fiſherman; it is not very probable that he ſhould have had any acquaintance with the high prieſt, or his family. However ſome diſciple, perhaps in a ſuperior ſtation, who might not be known to favour Jeſus; having entered with him into the palace of the high prieſt, procured admiſſion for Peter, who had before been excluded.

V. 19—23.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. xxvi. v. 58—68. *Mark*, c. xiv. v. 53—65. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 54. 63—71.) We may ſuppoſe, that Caiaphas queſtioned Jeſus concerning the number, and rank of his diſciples; but to this he anſwered nothing. He alſo enquired of him, what doctrine he had taught the people? Probably with reference to his aſſuming the character of the Meſſiah, or to the contrariety of his doctrine to the traditions of the elders, &c. To this He replied, that, as he evil, bear witneſs of the evil; but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me?

24 (Now Annas had ſent him bound unto Caiaphas the high prieſt.)

25 And Simon Peter ſtood and warmed himſelf: they ſaid therefore unto him, Art not thou alſo *one* of his diſciples? he denied *it*, and ſaid, I am not.

26 One of the ſervants of the high prieſt, being *his* kinſman whoſe ear Peter cut off, ſaith, Did not I ſee thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again; and immediately the cock crew.

28 Then led they Jeſus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themſelves went not into the judgment-hall, leſt they ſhould be defiled; but that they might eat the paſſover.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and ſaid, what accuſation bring ye againſt this man?

30 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 Then ſaid Pilate unto them, take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore ſaid unto him It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

32 That the ſaying of Jeſus might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, ſignifying what death he ſhould die.

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jeſus, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews?

34 Jeſus anſwered him, ſayeſt thou this

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had taught the people in the moſt frequented places, and the moſt open manner, and had ſpoken nothing in private, contrary to his public inſtructions: ſo it was not proper to require his teſtimony in his own cauſe, as they were not diſpoſed to believe it; but that the enquiry ought to be made of his hearers, or even of the perſons preſent, ſome of whom knew what he had taught: the words "*they know*," may be rendered "*theſe know*." This reply was peculiarly ſuitable to the ſituation, in which Jeſus was at this time placed; for he ſtood as a priſoner on his trial, before judges, who wanted evidence againſt him; being determined to put him to death, and only ſeeking ſome pretence for their injuſtice and murder. However an officer of the court, pretending that he anſwered the high prieſt in a diſreſpectful manner, contumeliouſly ſmote him, either with a ſtaff, or with the palm of his hand; (*Micah*, c. v. ver. 1.) But Jeſus meekly replied, by obſerving, that if on that, or any other occaſion, he had ſpoken any thing criminal, let him bear witneſs againſt him: but if his words were not faulty, why did he ſmite Him, when he was on his trial in a court, where juſtice ought to be adminiſtered to every one? It was proper, that this man ſhould be rebuked for his ill-behaviour, and that the imputation of blame ſhould be done away from our Lord's character; though He was ready to endure every indignity and cruelty, without reſiſtance or menace.

V. 25—27.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 69—75.)

V. 28—32.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvii. v. 1, 2. 11—13. *Mark*, c. xv. v. 1—5. *Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 1—7.) The hall of judgment was the place, in which the Roman governors decided cauſes, and perhaps ſome appendages of their idolatry were ſeen there. The Jewiſh rulers therefore feared, leſt they ſhould contract ritual defilement, if they went into it; and thus be prevented from eating of the ſacrifices, that uſed to be offered on the firſt day of unleavened bread, which were ſuppoſed to be an eſſential part of the feaſt of the paſſover. Thus they were ſcrupulous, and zealous in externals, and were purpoſing to join in ſacred ordinances; when they were trampling under foot every obligation of piety, juſtice, mercy, &c! (*Matt.* c. xxiii. v. 24.) However, Pilate condeſcended to humour them in their ſcruples; and therefore he went out to them, to demand what accuſation they had to preſent againſt Jeſus? He muſt have known many things reſpecting the character, and reported miracles of Chriſt, &c: but He did not wiſh to meddle in the proſecution, unleſs he could make ſome advantage of it. The Jewiſh rulers, therefore, conſidered his queſtion as an inſinuation againſt their equity in the affair; and they replied with a meaſure of diſpleaſure, that they would not have condemned him, and delivered him to him to be put to death, if he had not been a malefactor, deſerving of ſo heavy a puniſhment. Thus they would have had him take their word for our Lord's guilt, and ſo without heſitatioin have given orders for his execution. But He, not approving of ſuch a ſummary method of procedure, not willing to interfere without neceſſity, and yet averſe to giving them offence; deſired them to ſettle the matter by their own authority, and to judge and puniſh Jeſus by their own law. It is not agreed, how far the authority of the Jewiſh courts at this time extended: but it ſeems evident, that they were not generally allowed to inflict capital puniſhment, without ſanction from the Roman governor; and no other ſentence could gratify their virulent malice againſt Jeſus. Nor did they chooſe to interpret Pilate's permiſſion as a warrant to put him to death; leſt he ſhould afterwards take ſome advantage of it againſt them. Thus the words of Jeſus, concerning his being lifted up from the earth, &c, were fulfilled: for if the Jews had put him to death, they would have ſtoned him as a blaſphemer.

V. 33—40.] Pilate, having got the rulers to acknowledge, that they had no authority to put any man to death, returned into the judgment-hall to examine Jeſus, concerning the things of which he was accuſed; and eſpecially to enquire, whether he really profeſſed himſelf thing of thyſelf, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate anſwered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief prieſts have delivered thee unto me. What haſt thou done?

36 Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore ſaid unto him, Art thou a king then? Jeſus anſwered, Thou ſayeſt that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate ſaith unto him, What is truth? And when he had ſaid this he went out again unto the Jews, and ſaith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*.

39 But ye have a cuſtom, that I ſhould releaſe unto you one at the paſſover: will ye therefore that I releaſe unto you the King of the Jews?

40 Then cried they all again, ſaying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

to be the King of the Jews? For this would be underſtood, as an act of treaſon againſt the Roman emperor. And when Jeſus aſked him, whether he made this enquiry, from his own opinion of him, as the reſult of his paſt conduct; or merely becauſe others had informed him, that he laid claim to this character? He replied, that he was no Jew, and knew nothing of their ſentiments concerning their expected Meſſiah. The prieſts and rulers of his own nation were his proſecutors: and therefore he deſired to know by what crimes he had expoſed himſelf to their ſuſpicion, or indignation? Jeſus then intimated, that He *was* a King; but that "his "kingdom was not of this world:" it had nothing to do with men's temporal intereſts or privileges; it left rulers and ſubjects in the ſame ſituation, as it found them; and it was therefore no object of jealouſy to any government. Had he claimed a kingdom of an earthly nature; He ſhould certainly have armed his followers, and they would have fought in his cauſe: but as this had not been his conduct, and as his diſciples had been few in number, inoffenſive in their conduct, and forbidden to fight for him, even when he was apprehended; ſo it was evident that his kingdom was not of a ſecular nature, but related wholly to ſpiritual and heavenly things, and was to be ſupported wholly by ſpiritual ſanctions and authority. The multitudes that followed Chriſt when he entered Jeruſalem, would have readily fought for him, if he would have claimed a temporal kingdom; and they ſeem to have been ſet againſt him becauſe he would not. Pilate next demanded of Him, whether, in his circumſtances, he really profeſſed to be a king in any ſenſe? To which He anſwered by aſſenting to Pilate's propoſition that He was a King: and he averred, that He was born for that end; that He came into the world to bear witneſs to the truth of God, in this and every other particular; and that every one that belonged to, and was diſpoſed to comply with, the truth, heard and obeyed his voice; though his nation in general rejected and oppoſed him. This reply cauſed Pilate to enquire, "What was truth?" But whether he did it, out of curioſity, or in deriſion, or from ſome impreſſion of reverence to Chriſt's character and behaviour, is not certain. However, as our Lord did not immediately anſwer his queſtion; he went out, declaring to the Jews his conviction of the entire innocence of Jeſus: yet, as they had delivered him up as a malefactor, he propoſed as a cuſtomary act of grace at that feſtival, to releaſe to them this their inoffenſive king; by which means the people would be ſatisfied, and the rulers would be exempted from cenſure, for the part they had taken in his proſecution. But they all, both prieſts, rulers, and people, clamorouſly preferred the robber Barabbas to him!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Even the rancorous malice of our Lord's enemies did not render them more eager to apprehend and crucify him, than his love to periſhing ſinners made him ready to meet all, which he knew was coming upon him, that he might purchaſe their ſalvation! All the power of earth and hell could not for a moment have reſiſted his omnipotence, if he had ſeen good to exert it: but he only alarmed, and did not injure his aſſailants; for that was the day of his patience and meekneſs, as our Surety, and Example. Yet the day of his wrath will come, when all who oppoſe, yea all, who do not obey his goſpel, ſhall be driven backward and periſh for ever. (2 *Theſ.* c. i. v. 7—9) In the mean time he ſpares, and warns his adverſaries: yet neither his terror, nor his forbearance will deter men in general from their purpoſe, or from purſuing worldly things, in contempt of his ſalvation, and in defiance of his vengeance! But He will moſt tenderly regard the temporal peace and ſafety, as well as the eternal intereſts, of his faithful diſciples; he will proportion their trials to their ſtrength; nor will he ever require them to bear ſuch ſufferings for him, as he bare for them. However we ſhould learn from his example, to receive our lighter afflictions, as a cup, which our Father has given us to drink; and to reſiſt every temptation to avoid ſuffering, by ſinful means, or to murmur and deſpond under it; by aſking ourſelves, whether we ought thus to oppoſe our Father's will, or to diſtruſt his love? Self confident raſhneſs is very different from the ſteady courage, and patience of faith: they, who moſt readily venture into temptation, are often moſt eaſily overcome by it. The company of profane, and wicked men either corrupts, or diſmays thoſe pious perſons that are ſeduced into it; and they ſoon forget their

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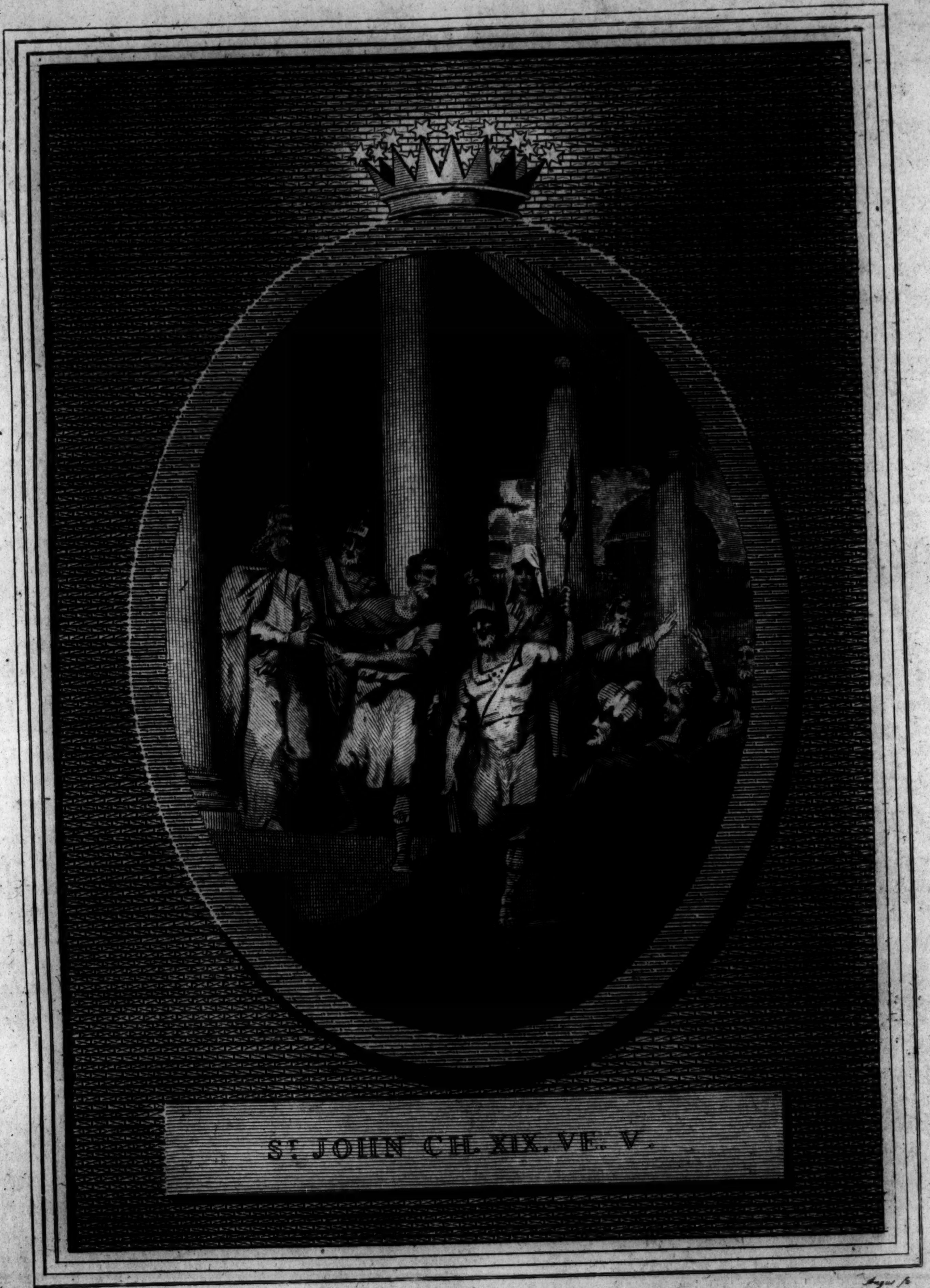

S^T. JOHN CH. XIX. VE. V.

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CHAP. XIX.

Contains, Jeſus 1ſt. Scourged and crowned with thorns, &c; and condemned by Pilate, (notwithſtanding his great reluctance,) to ſatisfy the clamorous demands of the Jews, 1---15. 2d. Crucified between two thieves; and the title placed over his croſs, and Pilate's adherence to what he had written, 16---24. 3d. Commending his mother to the care of John, 25---27. 4th. Expiring on the croſs; his ſide pierced by a ſoldier; and the fulfilment of ſeveral ſcriptures in theſe events, 28---37. 5th. Buried by Joſeph, and Nicodemus, 38---42. (Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxvii. Mark, c. xv. Luke, c. xxiii.)

THEN Pilate therefore took Jeſus, and ſcourged *him*.

2 And the ſoldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe.

3 And ſaid, Hail, king of the Jews! and they ſmote him with their hands.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and ſaith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jeſus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* ſaith unto them, Behold the man!

6 When the chief prieſts therefore and officers ſaw him, they cried out, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate ſaith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

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purpoſes and reſolution, and conform to the humour, or try to ſhun the reproach of their companions. We ſhould therefore watch and pray againſt ſuch temptations: yet humiliating experience of our own weakneſs is commonly neceſſary to teach us caution, and attention to the words of Chriſt. As He ſuffered every inſult, for the ſake of Peter, even when Peter was baſely denying him: ſo he foreſaw all our unfaithfulneſs and ingratitude at the time, when he ſhed his blood for our ſins! This conſideration ſhould not only encourage our hope in his boundleſs mercy; but alſo ſhame us out of our baſe requitals of ſo gracious a Benefactor.

The moſt perfect meekneſs, patience, and wiſdom of the Son of God only ſerved to increaſe the outrageous enmity of his perſecutors; and their baſe uſage reciprocally illuſtrated his meekneſs, &c. This ſhould teach us what to expect from the wicked, and how to behave towards them. So blind are men in the things of religion, that they can often expect to pleaſe God by exactneſs in externals; whilſt they are deliberately perpetrating the baſeſt iniquities! Nay, they can hope to atone for their murders and oppreſſions, by ſuch hypocritical forms of godlineſs! They, who are moſt ſcandalouſly unjuſt, frequently expect moſt credit for their ſtrict regard to juſtice; and they are greatly affronted to be ſuſpected of the leaſt crime, whilſt they are actually committing the greateſt! But the malice even of the worſt of men tends to fulfil the words of Jeſus, and to accompliſh the wiſe and holy purpoſes of God.

It behoves us all to remember, that Chriſt's kingdom is not of this world: it is not to be promoted by carnal weapons or means, of any kind, or by any party; nor muſt it be made ſubſervient to men's temporal intereſts. He reigns in the heart and conſcience of his true ſubjects: the princes of this world have nothing to fear from men's obedience to his authority; nor does he *need* the countenance of their's, though he may ſee good ſometimes to make uſe of it. His ſervants are commanded to render tribute to whom tribute is due, and honour to whom honour; to ſubmit to the powers that be; to fear God and the king, and not to meddle with thoſe, who are given to change: though at the ſame time, they muſt obey God rather than man, when man preſumes to interfere out of his own province. It would be much for the credit of the goſpel, if all the profeſſed ſubjects of Chriſt, whilſt they ſtand up for their right of liberty of conſcience, would be careful to render a conſcientious obedience to theſe plain precepts of God's word in this matter. Then, they would more reſemble Him, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion; and prove themſelves to be of the truth, by hearing and obeying his voice. But many profeſs to enquire after truth, who are not diſpoſed to wait for, or welcome an anſwer. Many will give Jeſus, and his people a good word, who will not join them, or venture any thing in his cauſe. Many commit injuſtice for fear of their own dependents, and from a deſire of popularity. Many of all ranks prefer Barabbas the robber to Chriſt; and vehemently run down all, who ſeem diſpoſed to favour him: and it requires more conſtancy, than unregenerate men in general poſſeſs, to ſtem the torrent of impetuous wickedneſs. However let us look to the Lamb of God, in whom the governor could find no fault at all: let us endeavour in the ſame manner to make all our accuſers aſhamed: let us never indulge prejudices againſt perſons, or doctrines, becauſe multitudes decry them: and let us beware of deliberately ſparing our luſts, (thoſe robbers of God, and murderers of the ſoul;) and thus crucifying Chriſt afreſh, and putting him to open ſhame.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1—7.] John ſeems to have mentioned our Lord's being ſcourged, and crowned with thorns, in the exact order of time in which theſe events occurred. Pilate probably thought, that, by ſeverely ſcourging Jeſus, and allowing the ſoldiers to treat his pretenſions to royalty with the utmoſt deriſion, he could have induced the Jewiſh rulers to have conſented to his releaſe; or at leaſt, that the compaſſion of the multitude would have been excited, and ſo they might have been influenced to prefer him to Barabbas. He therefore had Him brought

7 The Jews anſwered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and ſaith unto Jeſus, Whence art thou? But Jeſus gave him no anſwer.

10 Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Speakeſt thou not unto me? knoweſt thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to releaſe thee.

11 Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldeſt have no power *at all* againſt me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater ſin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate ſought to releaſe him: but the Jews cried out, ſaying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſar's friend: whoſoever maketh himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Ceſar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he brought Jeſus forth, and ſat down in the judgment ſeat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 And it was the preparation of the paſſover, and about the ſixth hour: and he ſaith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate ſaith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief prieſts anſwered, We have no king but Ceſar.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jeſus, and led *him* away.

forth to them thus arrayed, and probably covered with his own blood: and having repeated his full conviction of his entire innocence, he called upon them to "behold the Man;" and to conſider whether he was not rather an object of contempt, and compaſſion, than of jealouſy and hatred. But the rulers were too rancorous in their malice to be at all moved by the ſpectacle; and fearing leſt it ſhould affect the common people in another manner, they became ſtill more clamorous in demanding his immediate crucifixion. This ſeems to have greatly diſpleaſed Pilate; and therefore he bade them take Jeſus, and crucify Him themſelves; as he could not properly do it, ſeeing he found no fault at all in His whole conduct. This reply induced them to add the charge of blaſphemy, to that of rebellion againſt the Roman authority; that if Pilate would not condemn him as guilty of the latter, he might conſent to his death, as guilty of the former, and as juſtly condemned by their law. (*Lev.* c. xxiv. v. 16.) This was indeed the ſuppoſed crime, for which he ſuffered; though they could not but know, that the Meſſiah was expreſſly predicted, under this title. (*Pſ.* ii. v. 7.)

V. 8—12.] It is not neceſſary for us to aſcertain what ideas were excited in Pilate's mind on this occaſion: however he ſeems to have been impreſſed with an apprehenſion, that Jeſus might probably be ſome extraordinary perſon, very cloſely connected, and high in favour with the ſuperior powers; and that it would be dangerous to proceed further againſt him: and the mild dignity, and gravity of his behaviour, amidſt all the inſults and cruelties he experienced, might tend to confirm this opinion. He therefore demanded of Jeſus whence he was, whether of earthly, or heavenly original? But our Lord gave him no anſwer: he was no complete judge of ſuch queſtions; and his unjuſt conduct, in allowing ſuch cruelties to be exerciſed upon a Perſon, whom he knew to be innocent, rendered him unworthy of any further regard. But His ſilence ſeems to have aſtoniſhed, and diſpleaſed Pilate; who haughtily enquired if he refuſed to ſpeak to him; when he knew that he had an unreſtrained authority, either to order him to immediate crucifixion, or to ſet him at liberty? Jeſus therefore reminded him, that he had his power from above, and would be called to an account for his uſe of it; nor indeed could he at all exerciſe it againſt Him, if the Lord had not for wiſe reaſons ſeen good to permit it. But though He was about to contract very great guilt by abuſing his authority in condemning him; yet Caiaphas who, at the head of the Jewiſh council, had delivered Him to him, would have far more to anſwer for: as his ſituation enabled him to know more of God and his law, as well as to have more acquaintance with his doctrine, and miracles, than Pilate did; and as the conduct of the High Prieſt, and all concerned with him in that proſecution, reſulted from far more determinate enmity to the truth, holineſs, and authority of God, than his did. However this anſwer of our Lord's was a warning to Pilate, to beware what he did in ſuch a cauſe; and as ſuch he ſeems to have underſtood it in ſome degree: wherefore he became the more deſirous to releaſe him. But the Jewiſh rulers, finding that their laſt accuſation rather obſtructed, than forwarded, the completion of their deſign; endeavoured next to terrify Pilate into compliance, by declaring that He could not pretend to be cordially in the intereſts of the Roman emperor, if he neglected to puniſh a man, who by aſpiring to the kingdom, muſt be deemed Ceſar's competitor, and enemy. The jealous tyranny and cruelty of Tiberius Ceſar, who was then emperor, are well known; and Pilate, fearing leſt ſome ſpies ſhould carry an accuſation againſt him to Rome about this matter, began immediately to give way to their injuſtice.

V. 13—16.) Pilate having aſcended his tribunal, which was not in the judgment-hall, but in a more public place, (concerning which there are various uncertain conjectures;) proceeded to paſs ſentence on Jeſus. The Evangeliſt obſerves, that it was the preparation of the

17 And he bearing his croſs went forth into a place called *the place* of a ſkull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha;

18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either ſide one, and Jeſus in the midſt.

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the croſs. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jeſus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin.

21 Then ſaid the chief prieſts of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews: but that he ſaid, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate anſwered, What I have written, I have written.

23 Then the ſoldiers, when they had crucified Jeſus, took his garments, (and made four parts, to every ſoldier a part,) and alſo *his* coat: now the coat was without ſeam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They ſaid therefore among themſelves, Let us not rend it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe it ſhall be: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, which ſaith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my veſture they did caſt lots. Theſe things therefore the ſoldiers did.

25 Now there ſtood by the croſs of Jeſus, his mother, and his mother's ſiſter, Mary *the wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jeſus therefore ſaw his mother, and the diſciple ſtanding by whom he loved, he ſaith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy ſon!

27 Then ſaith he to the diſciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that diſciple took her unto his own *home*.

Paſſover, or the day before the ſolemn Paſſover ſabbath, for which the people ought to have been making preparation; though many of them were far otherwiſe employed. It was alſo "about the ſixth hour." As there is no reaſon to think that John computed time, in a different manner than the other Evangeliſts did; as ſix o'clock, (according to the Roman computation,) or ſoon after ſunriſe, muſt have been much too early for all the events to have occurred that morning, which preceded our Lord's crucifixion; as St. Mark has expreſſly mentioned the third hour, or nine o'clock, as the time of that event, to which the accounts of the other Evangeliſts ſeem to accord; and as the ſixth hour or noon, (according to the Jewiſh computation,) would be too late to agree with the parallel Scriptures: ſo it ſeems the moſt eaſy way of ſolving the difficulty, to ſuppoſe that *ſixth* inſtead of *third* was inſerted by ſome of the early tranſcribers of this goſpel. The miſtake would be very trivial, and eaſily fallen into; and in a few places it is neceſſary to allow, that this has happened. However Pilate again pointed out the ſuffering Jeſus to the implacable Jews, ſaying "Behold your King" perhaps with ſcorn of them; as if a King crowned with thorns, and covered with ſtripes, befitted ſuch a people. And when they ſtill perſiſted in demanding his crucifixion; he aſked them, whether he ſhould crucify their King? And though, on other occaſions, they had many doubts and objections even concerning the lawfulneſs of ſubmitting, or paying tribute to the Roman Emperor; yet to gratify their malice, they became all at once very loyal to him, and exclaimed, that they had had no other king but Ceſar: and Pilate, perhaps deeming this conceſſion from ſo turbulent a people, of conſiderable importance, got over all his ſcruples, and delivered up Jeſus to be crucified.

V. 20—22.] The three languages, in which this inſcription was written, were the moſt generally underſtood of all others, in that age, and moſt perſons preſent would be capable of reading it, in ſome one of them: So that this was in fact to publiſh Chriſt's authority to the nations of the earth. We need not wonder that it gave umbrage to the Jewiſh rulers; as it ſeemed to imply, that they had enviouſly, and maliciouſly perſecuted to death their promiſed Meſſiah: and probably Pilate, intended it, as a reflection upon them. However he was ſo put out of humour, by being compelled to condemn an innocent man, contrary to his judgment and conſcience; that he would not gratify them, in allowing the inſcription to be altered; which was doubtleſs owing to the ſecret power of God upon his heart, in order that this atteſtation of our Lord's character might continue. Perhaps the open inſults that the chief Prieſts, &c, uſed towards Him, as He hung upon the croſs, might in part be intended to counteract the effects of this inſcription on the minds of the people.

V. 25—27.] The inward anguiſh, and the conflicting thoughts and affections, with which the mind of Mary muſt have been agitated on this moſt diſtreſſing occaſion, can never be deſcribed, or imagined: but conſidering all the miracles, and expectations of the conception, birth, and infancy of Jeſus, as well as all that had been diſplayed in his public miniſtry; ſhe could ſcarce doubt, even when ſhe ſaw him expire on the croſs, but that He was the promiſed Meſſiah, the king of Iſrael. (*Luke.* c. ii. v. 35.) After Joſeph's death, and our Lord's entrance on his miniſtry, it is probable that Mary had generally attended him: and being now preſent to behold his crucifixion, Jeſus, amidſt all his own ſufferings, was tenderly mindful of her; and by turning her attention to John, the beloved diſciple, as one who would be as a ſon

28 After this, Jeſus knowing that all things were now accompliſhed, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I thirſt.

29 Now there was ſet a veſſel full of vinegar: and they filled a ſpunge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyſſop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid, It is finiſhed: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.

31 The Jews therefore, becauſe it was the preparation, that the bodies ſhould not remain upon the croſs on the ſabbath-day, (for that ſabbath-day was an high day,) beſought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

32 Then came the ſoldiers, and brake the legs of the firſt, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.

34 But one of the ſoldiers with a ſpear pierced his ſide, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

35 And he that ſaw *it* bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he ſaith true, that ye might believe.

36 For theſe things were done, that the ſcripture ſhould be fulfilled, A bone of him ſhall not be broken.

37 And again another ſcripture ſaith, They ſhall look on him whom they pierced.

38 And after this Joſeph of Arimathea,

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to her, and by mentioning her to him, as his mother, to whom he was to perform the duty of that relation for *his* ſake; he influenced John to take her to his own home, to provide for her, and to treat her with all reſpect and affection, as long as ſhe lived. How long that was; or where John had a home, we are not informed.

V. 28—30.] The whole of Chriſt's expiatory ſufferings were now on the very point of being finiſhed: but in order to the fulfilment of ſome other ſcriptures, he ſaid "I thirſt:" (*Pſ.* xxii. v. 15. lxix. v. 21;) and his exquiſite torture, fatigue, and heat, doubtleſs cauſed his thirſt to be very intenſe. Probably this was ſoon after he had cried out "Eli, Eli, &c;" (for this evangeliſt generally records other circumſtances even of the ſame events, that the others do,) and ſo it was this word, "I thirſt," that induced ſome of them to offer Him vinegar; whilſt others waited to ſee whether Elias would come to ſave him. When Jeſus, by receiving, and taſting the vinegar, had accompliſhed theſe predictions alſo, He ſaid, "It is finiſhed," or "It is perfected:" all that the prophets had foretold; all that the types prefigured; all that the juſtice of God required, as an atonement for ſin in order to the reconciliation of ſinners to himſelf; all that the honour of his law and government demanded; and whatever was neceſſary for the glory of all the divine perfections in man's ſalvation, was now completely finiſhed: and ſo was the victory over ſatan, ſin, the world, and death, as far as His obedience and ſufferings were concerned. Probably the darkneſs, that began to oppreſs our Lord's mind in the garden, at this moment was finally diſperſed; and thus he expired in the clear perception, and full enjoyment of the light of his Father's countenance.

V. 31—37.] The law of Moſes required that the bodies of ſuch malefactors, as were ſuſpended on a tree, ſhould be taken down the ſame day; (*Deut.* c. xxi. v. 22, 23:) and, though the Romans frequently left them upon their croſſes, till they were conſumed; yet they ſeem to have allowed the Jews to bury ſuch, as belonged to them, when it was certain that they were dead; but this ſometimes was not till the next day, or even later. But the rulers, (though not deterred from their iniquitous, and murderous purpoſe by the ſacred feſtival, which they were celebrating;) were averſe to the bodies continuing on the croſſes during the next day: which was both the ſabbath, and the ſecond day of unleavened bread, from which the ſeven weeks, till the pentecoſt, were reckoned, and alſo the day for preſenting the firſt fruits of a ſheaf of corn; and ſo it was a day of peculiar ſolemnity, which the people were preparing to obſerve with great exactneſs. They therefore beſought Pilate to give orders, that their legs might be broken, in order that they might be removed: this was ſometimes done, from a kind of compaſſion, to haſten the death of thoſe, who lingered very long in their ſufferings; but ſurely a ſpeedier method of terminating their torture might have been deviſed! However the ſoldiers employed in this ſervice brake the legs of the two malefactors, who were ſtill living: and thus they were inſtrumental to the fulfilment of our Lord's promiſe to the penitent thief, that he ſhould *that day* be with him in paradiſe. But finding Jeſus evidently dead, they brake not his legs; yet one of them, in a contemptuous and inhuman manner, thruſt his ſpear into his ſide, from whence flowed a ſtream of blood, and water, evidently diſtinguiſhable from each other. Probably the pericardium was pierced: but, however it may be accounted for, it is allowed to have been a deciſive evidence of his being then actually dead: and thus the ſoldier's conduct was over-ruled to take away all pretences to the contrary, by which his enemies might otherwiſe have attempted to invalidate the reality of his reſurrection. The evangeliſt himſelf was an eye-witneſs of this tranſaction, and he recorded it from his own knowledge, as indiſputable truth; that all, who read his teſtimony may believe in the crucified Redeemer. For theſe circumſtances were accompliſhments of ancient types and prophecies concerning the Meſſiah; (Notes &c. *Exod:* c. xii. v. 46. *Num.* c. ix. v. 12. *Pſ.* xxxiv. v. 20. *Zech.* c. xii. v.

(being a diſciple of Jeſus, but ſecretly for fear of the Jews,) beſought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jeſus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jeſus.

39 And there came alſo Nicodemus (which at the firſt came to Jeſus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh, and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.

40 Then took they the body of Jeſus, and wound it in linen clothes with the ſpices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden: and in the garden a new ſepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There laid they Jeſus therefore, becauſe of the Jews preparation-*day*; for the ſepulchre was nigh at hand.

10.) But it ſeems that the apoſtle alſo conſidered this blood and water as intended emblems of the diſtinct parts of ſalvation; namely the pardon of our ſins through the atoning blood of Chriſt, and the cleanſing of our hearts by the ſanctification of the Holy Ghoſt; which are conferred on us through the purchaſe of his obedience unto death. (*Eph.* c. v. ver. 25—27. *Tit.* c. ii. v. 14. 1 *John.* c. v. ver. 6—8.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The conflict between men's convictions, and corrupt affections is often ſtrong: but where faith is wanting, the world will get the victory; and the dread of reproach or loſs, and the hope of ſecular advantages will induce men to venture the wrath of God, and all its tremendous conſequences. Every man is inexcuſable, who commits known injuſtice, or deliberately acts contrary to his conſcience, on any account whatſoever: but the greater opportunities men poſſeſs of knowing the truth, and will of God; the more aggravated will their guilt be found, in rebelling againſt them: yet ſuch perſons have often been moſt deſperately engaged in oppoſition to the power of godlineſs, and in perſecuting thoſe, whoſe doctrine and example have tended to detect their hypocriſy, and uſurpations. All thoſe rulers, of every deſcription, who have proudly ſat in judgment upon, and condemned Chriſt, and his ſervants, will ſoon ſtand before his tribunal; where they will know the power of his wrath, and be conſtrained to confeſs with terror, and anguiſh, that "truly this was the Son of God." (*Pſ.* ii.) We cannot wholly paſs over this narrative of our Redeemer's crucifixion, without again reflecting for a moment on the complicated cruelties, and indignities to which he was expoſed, without any fault at all of his own: but he was wounded and ſcourged, that we might be healed; he was arrayed with ſcorn in the purple robe, that he might procure for us ſinners the robe of righteouſneſs and ſalvation; he was crowned with thorns, that we might be crowned with honour and immortality; he ſtood ſpeechleſs, that we might have an all-prevailing plea; he endured torture, that we might have a ſtrong conſolation; he thirſted, that we might drink of the waters of life; he bare the wrath of the Father, that we might enjoy his favour; he was numbered with tranſgreſſors, that we might be made equal to the angels; he died, that we might live for ever! Let us then often retire to ſurvey this ſcene, and to admire his immeaſureable love; that we may learn to mourn for and hate ſin, and to rejoice in, and feel our obligations to the Redeemer; and that we may be conſtrained by love to live no longer to ourſelves, but to him, who died for us, and roſe again. As we ought to hear with thankful exultation, that the ranſom and righteouſneſs of our ſouls were perfected, when Jeſus ſaid "It is finiſhed;" ſo we ſhould be excited to redouble our diligence, in ſeeking to have the work of his ſanctifying grace powerfully carried on towards perfection in our hearts. For we ſhould look to him as our King, as well our High-Prieſt. In every way it hath been decidedly written, and the writing ſhall never be reverſed, "that Jeſus of Nazareth is the King "of the church, and of the world"; and all, who profeſs his religion, and will not have him to reign over them, will be deemed guilty of crucifying their king with indignation and contempt.

We may be encouraged by our Lord's attention to his mother, when he hung upon the croſs, to hope for his condeſcending pity in all our ſorrows and afflictions, now that he is exalted to the throne; (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 46—50:) but we may alſo learn, that the ſureſt intereſt in his love will not ſecure our exemption from the ſharpeſt temporal ſufferings. His example alſo teaches all men to honour their parents, in every circumſtance of life, and death; and to provide for their wants, and to promote their comfort, by every means, in their power: and we ought alſo to be reminded to ſhew our love to Jeſus, by behaving with reſpect, and liberal kindneſs to thoſe, whom he loves; even as though they were our moſt endeared relatives.

The tender mercies of the wicked, and eſpecially of hypocritical perſecutors, are cruel: and their preparations for religious ordinances, by the commiſſion of the moſt horrible crimes, is the worſt of abominations; (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 10—15.) But the believer, if called to witneſs ſuch ſcenes, ſhould peculiarly obſerve how God overrules every thing, to fulfil his own word. Thus comparing the ſacred oracles with the events that occur in the church, and in the world: our faith will be increaſed, even in the moſt diſcouraging tranſactions. May we then continually look to Him, whom by our ſins, we too have ignorantly, and heedleſsly pierced; and who ſhed from his wounded ſide both water, and blood; that we "might be waſhed, and ſanctified, and juſtified, in his "name, and by the Spirit of our God." (*Zech.* c. xiii. v. 1.) Thus our hearts will be habitually affected with penitent ſorrow, with believing hope, and with lively gratitude; and prepared by every ſervice, to which we are called. Thus feeble, uneſtabliſhed, and timorous believers, will grow in grace, in knowledge, in ſtability and boldneſs; and ſo be prepared to avow their relation

CHAP. XX.

Contains 1ſt. Mary Magdalene finding the ſepulchre open, and coming to inform Peter and John; and their haſte in going thither, where they found not the body of Jeſus, but only the grave-clothes lying in very exact order, 1---10. *2d. Two angels appearing to Mary Magdalene; and afterwards Jeſus appearing to her, and ſending her to inform the diſciples,* 11---18. *3d. Jeſus meeting them when aſſembled in the evening; Thomas, who was abſent, determining not to believe, without the evidence of his own ſenſes: Jeſus coming again to the diſciples, and, convincing Thomas; with his confeſſion of faith, and our Lord's obſervation upon it,* 19---29. *4th. The end, for which all theſe events were recorded,* 30, 31. *(Notes, &c. Matt. c. xxviii. Mark, c. xvi. Luke, c. xxiv.)*

THE firſt *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the ſtone taken away from the ſepulchre.

2 Then ſhe runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other diſciple whom Jeſus loved, and ſaith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the ſepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and came to the ſepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other diſciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre.

5 And he, ſtooping down, *and looking in,* ſaw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itſelf.

8 Then went in alſo that other diſciple, which came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the ſcripture, that he muſt riſe again from the dead.

10 Then the diſciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary ſtood without at the ſepul-

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to Jeſus in the time of extreme danger, and difficulty; though they perhaps have formerly heſitated to confeſs him before men, when it might have been done with comparative ſafety.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1—9.] Mary ſeems to have arrived at the ſepulchre before any of the other women, "when it was yet dark;" and finding the ſtone removed, ſhe haſtened back to inform Peter, and John, that ſome perſons had "taken away the Lord, out of the ſepulchre," and as "they knew not where they had laid him;" ſhe and her female friends were deprived of the opportunity of expreſſing their reſpect and affection to him, by embalming his body. It is very improbable that ſhe had ſeen an angel informing her of Jeſus's reſurrection, when ſhe ſpake to Peter and John in this language; and therefore ſhe doubtleſs was at the ſepulchre, apart from the other women. Accordingly Peter and John ſet out together to the ſepulchre; but the latter, probably being the youngeſt man, arrived there firſt, and looking in he ſaw the linen clothes lie; but he entered not in, perhaps being afraid to do ſo: ſoon after Peter came up with him, and according to the promptitude of his diſpoſition, he entered into the ſepulchre without any heſitation; and found the grave-clothes laid in ſuch regular order; as evinced that neither friends nor foes had taken away the body in an haſty manner. Upon this, John alſo entered in; and, from what he ſaw, he was convinced that Jeſus was riſen; though neither he, nor Peter underſtood from the ſcripture, that the Meſſiah was to riſe again from the dead.

V. 11—18.] After the apoſtles had returned to their company in the city, to wait the event of theſe extraordinary occurrences; Mary Magdalene, who had followed them, oppreſſed with the moſt inconſolable ſorrow, at length looked into the ſepulchre, and there ſaw two angels (probably in the form of young men clothed in white,) ſetting at each end of it: and they immediately accoſted her, enquiring the cauſe of her exceſſive ſorrow? Yet ſhe ſeems not to have greatly attended to this circumſtance, perhaps in her confuſion ſuppoſing them to have been diſciples, who had come thither to view the ſepulchre: and therefore ſhe anſwered them in the words, which ſhe had uſed to the apoſtles. But as ſhe turned from them, Jeſus himſelf was pleaſed to appear to her: but through exceſſive weeping, and as not at all expecting to ſee him, ſhe did not know him. And ſuppoſing that it was the perſon employed by Joſeph, to take care of the garden; it occurred to her, that perhaps he had removed the body to ſome other place; and therefore ſhe deſired, that if he had, He would inform her, and ſhe would take it away, and be at the expence and trouble of the burial. It is obſervable, that, though ſpeaking to a ſuppoſed ſtranger, ſhe mentioned not the name of Jeſus; but ſaid *Him*; as if every body muſt of courſe know whom ſhe meant. Jeſus then called to her by name; and his voice and addreſs made him known to her: and turning herſelf with joy and amazement, ſhe called him "Rabboni," which ſeems to ſignify "Maſter," or "Teacher," with particular reſpect, and application: but when ſhe was about to ſpend time in further expreſſing her affection, (*Matt.* c. xxviii. v. 9, 10.) or perhaps to ſatiſfy herſelf that it was not merely an apparition; Jeſus prevented her by ſaying "Touch me not, &c."

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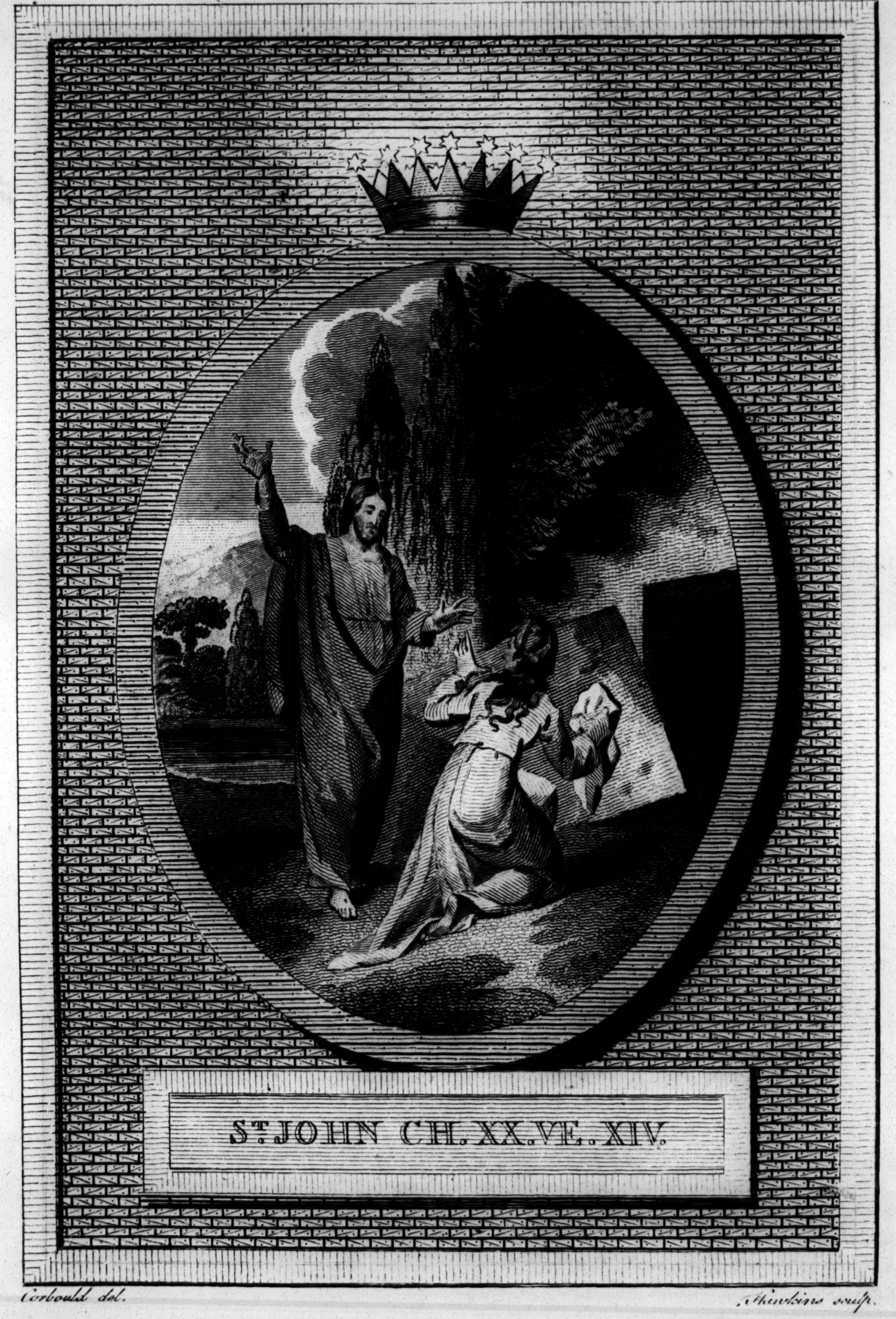

ST. JOHN CH. XX. VE. XIV.

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chre, weeping: and, as ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down, *and looked* into the ſepulchre.

12 And ſeeth two angels in white, ſitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain.

13 And they ſay unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? She ſaith unto them, Becauſe they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when ſhe had thus ſaid, She turned herſelf back, and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and knew not that it was Jeſus.

15 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? whom ſeekeſt thou? She, ſuppoſing him to be the gardener, ſaith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary. She turned herſelf, and ſaith unto him, Rabboni; which is to ſay, Maſter.

17 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet aſcended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father: and *to* my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the diſciples that ſhe had ſeen the Lord, and *that* he had ſpoken theſe things unto her.

19 Then the ſame day at evening, being the firſt *day* of the week, when the doors where ſhut were the diſciples were aſſembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jeſus, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

20 And when he had ſo ſaid, he ſhew-

Thus intimating that ſhe would have other opportunities of that kind: for, though he had repeatedly told his diſciples, that he was about to go to his Father; yet he was not yet aſcended, but ſhould continue with them a ſhort time on earth, for their ſatisfaction and comfort. In the mean while ſhe ought not to delay conveying the joyful news of his reſurrection to the diſconſolate diſciples, whom he acknowledged as his brethren, notwithſtanding they had ſo lately forſaken Him; and ſhe was further to inform them that he was riſen, in order "to aſcend "to his Father, and their Father, and to his God, and their "God:" for as He, the eternal Son of God, had become their Brother by aſſuming human nature; ſo, through the work which he now had finiſhed, they were become the children of God by regeneration, and adoption; and his God, and Father, as Man and Mediator, was become their God, and Father alſo. Accordingly Mary went immediately to inform the apoſtles.

Having now conſidered ſeparately the different accounts, given by the four evangeliſts of our Lord's reſurrection; which ſeem at firſt ſight to be inconſiſtent with each other: it is proper, to ſtate very briefly the moſt approved method of forming the whole into one conſiſtent narration. (Note, *Matt.* c. xxviii. v. 9, 10.) It is ſuppoſed that ſeveral women agreed to meet at the ſepulchre, in order to embalm the body of Jeſus; and that Joanna, and ſome others with her, having undertaken to prepare the ſpices, purpoſed being there about ſun riſing; (*Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 55, 56. c. xxiv. v. 1. 10:) but Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome came to view the ſepulchre, while it was yet dark, (*Matt.* c. xxviii. v. 1.) Mary Magdalene ſeems to have arrived ſome ſhort time before her companions; and obſerving the ſtone to be removed, ſhe left them to wait for Joanna and her company, and returned back to inform Peter, &c. In the mean time the other Mary and Salome came to the ſepulchre, and ſaw the angel, as recorded by Matthew, and Mark. Whilſt they returned to the city, Peter and John went to the ſepulchre, paſſing them at ſome diſtance, or going another way; but the angel did not appear to them. After their return Mary Magdalene ſaw a viſion of two angels, and then Jeſus himſelf, as here related, (*Mark*, c. xvi. v. 9—11:) and immediately after, He appeared to the other women as they returned to the city. (*Matt.* c. xxviii. v. 9—11.) In the mean while Joanna and her company arrived at the ſepulchre, and entering it, at firſt they ſaw nothing, only obſerved that the body was not there: but whilſt they were perplexed on that account, two angels appeared to them, and addreſſed them, as the one angel had done the other women, (*Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 1—9.) They therefore returned immediately to the city, and by ſome means found the apoſtles before the other women arrived, and informed them of what they had ſeen; upon which Peter went a ſecond time to the ſepulchre, but ſaw no angels, only the linen clothes lying. (*Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 12.) About this time the two diſciples ſet off for Emmaus, having only heard the report of theſe women, and neither that of Mary Magdalene, nor yet that of the other Mary and Salome. (*Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 22—24.) Theſe at length arrived, and informed the apoſtles, that they had ſeen Jeſus himſelf, and that two of them had been permitted to touch him: and ſome time after on the ſame day he appeared to Peter alſo. There are other ways of reconciling the apparent differences between the evangeliſts; but this ſeems to anſwer every purpoſe, as will readily appear to the attentive reader. (Weſt upon the Reſurrection.)

V. 19—23.] The evening after the preceding events, (which the evangeliſt obſerves to have been the firſt day of the week, and which is frequently afterwards mentioned by the ſacred writers; having thenceforth been ſeparated and ſet apart at the Chriſtian Sabbath, in commemoration of our Lord's reſurrection;) the diſciples having met together, probably to join in prayer and ſupplication; and having ſhut the doors for fear of being diſcovered by their perſecuting enemies; Jeſus himſelf came unexpected unto them *his* hands and his ſide. Then were the diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord.

21 Then ſaid Jeſus to them again, Peace be unto you: as *my* Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you.

22 And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on *them*, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.

23 Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whoſe ſoever *ſins* ye retain, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jeſus came.

25 The other diſciples therefore ſaid unto him, We have ſeen the Lord. But he ſaid unto them, Except I ſhall ſee in his hand the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days, again his diſciples were within, and Thomas with them. *Then* came Jeſus, the doors being ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, Peace *be* unto you.

27 Then ſaith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt *it* into my ſide: and be not faithleſs, but believing.

28 And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, My Lord, and my God.

29 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed: bleſſed *are* they that have not ſeen, and *yet* have believed.

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edly amongſt them, having miraculouſly and ſilently opened the door for his own admiſſion: and as he had promiſed "his peace to them", (c. xiv. v. 27;) ſo he now authoritatively pronounced and conferred it upon them, as well as aſſured them, that he was entirely reconciled to them after their late miſconduct. To convince them alſo of the reality of his reſurrection, he ſhewed them his wounded hands and ſide; which ſatisfied their doubts, and filled them with gladneſs. (c. xvi. v. 22. *Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 36—48.) And having repeated to them the aſſurance of his peace; he alſo renewed to them their apoſtolic commiſſion, ſending them forth to declare his truth to the world, even as the Father had ſent Him, (c. xvii. v. 18. *Heb*. c. iii. v. 1:) and as an earneſt of the approaching deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, as well as to ſhew that this was to be communicated from his fulneſs, and according to his ſovereign pleaſure; he breathed upon them, and bade them receive the Holy Ghoſt; (*Gen*. c. ii. v. 7.) Thus he ſhewed them, that their ſpiritual life, and all their ability for their work, were derived from him, and abſolutely depended on him: and then he authorized them to declare the method, in which alone ſin would be forgiven, and the character and experience of thoſe, who actually were pardoned, or the contrary; (Note, &c. *Matt*. c. xvi. v. 19.) So that to the end of time, the rules and evidences of abſolution or condemnation, which they laid down, will infallibly hold good; and all deciſions concerning men's own ſtate, or that of others, whether in preaching, diſcipline, or any other way, that accord to them, will be certainly ratified in heaven.

V. 24—29.] It is not known on what account Thomas was abſent at this critical time; perhaps he was tempted to renounce his hope, and to leave the company of the apoſtles. However he poſitively refuſed to credit thoſe, who had been ſatisfied by the teſtimony of their ſenſes, that Jeſus was riſen; and in the language of determined incredulity he declared he would not believe, without he had that demonſtration, which few of the human race could poſſibly receive. He might therefore juſtly have been left in his unbelief, after the rejection of ſuch abundant proof; but his gracious Lord was pleaſed to deal with him, according to the multitude of his mercies. Therefore, eight days after, or on the eighth day, (that is on the next firſt day of the week,) the diſciples were again aſſembled as before, perhaps by ſome intimation from Chriſt, and Thomas was with them: and he again appeared among them, in the ſame manner, and with the ſame affectionate ſalutation as before. He then made Thomas ſenſible, that he knew, without any information, all his unbelieving objections and demands, and at the ſame time offered him the fulleſt ſatisfaction which he could deſire. It does not appear, whether Thomas actually examined our Lord's hands and ſide, or no: but his knowledge of his perſon, the proof of his reſurrection, the concurring evidence of his knowing the ſtate of his mind, as well as his tender compaſſion for him; joined to a recollection, under the influence of the Holy Ghoſt, of what Chriſt had ſaid of his being equal to, and One with the Father, &c, had ſuch an effect upon him, that he at once confeſſed him not only to be riſen from the dead; but to be "His Lord, and his God," Emmanuel, God in human nature, God manifeſt in the fleſh, and as ſuch entitled to all confidence, love, obedience, and worſhip. Nothing can more fully prove, that this was Thomas's meaning, than the pitiful evaſion, which the Socinians are here driven to make, as their only refuge from conviction: they pretend that Thomas meant not to call Jeſus his Lord, and his God; but that he exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!" As people ſometimes do when greatly aſtoniſhed. That ſuch exclamations are a direct violation of the third commandment admits not of a doubt; yet this ſuppoſes that the apoſtles were guilty of this profaneneſs in the preſence of Chriſt, and that he approved of it! Surely ſuch a ſo-

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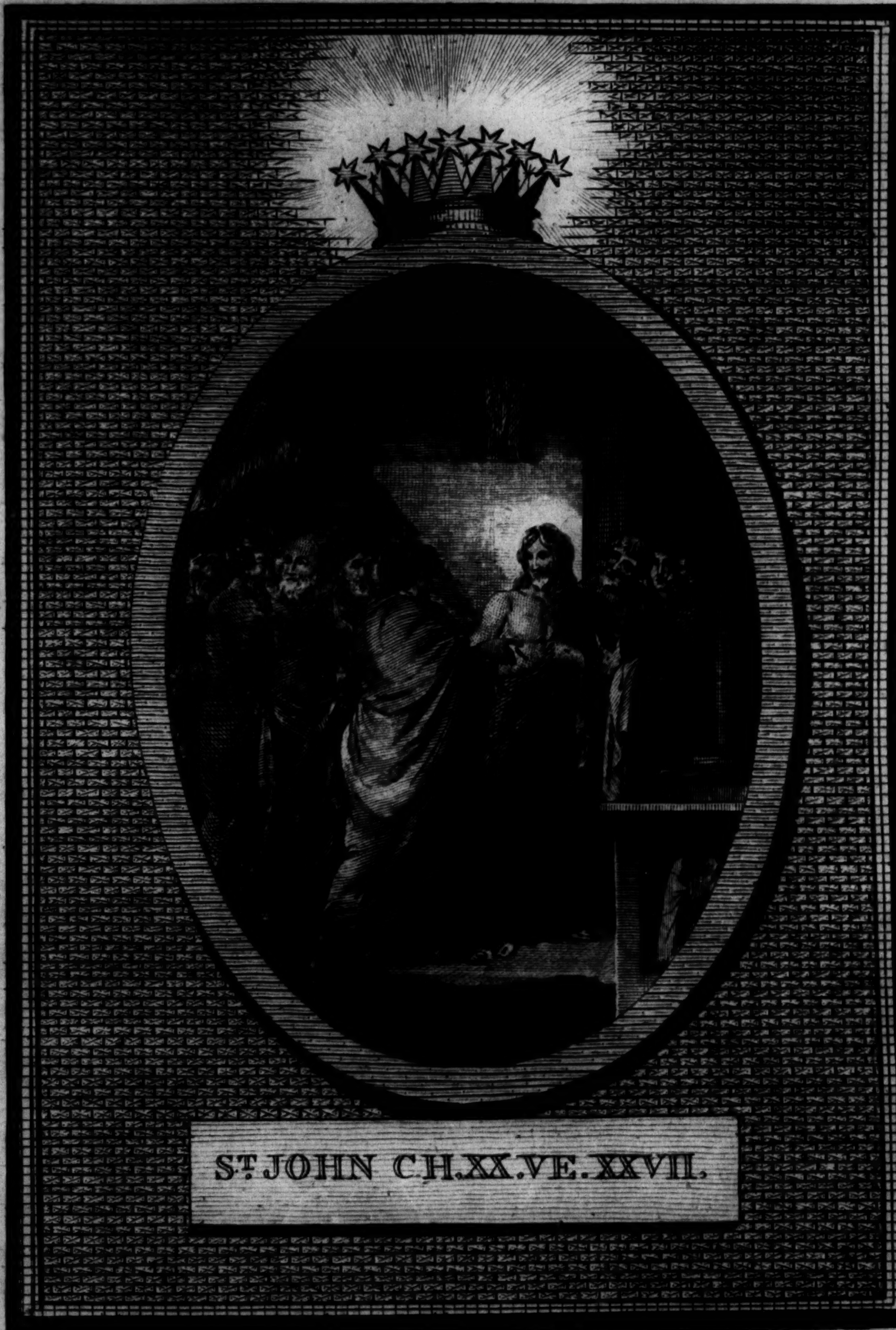

ST JOHN CH.XX.VE.XXVII.

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30 And many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not written in this book.

31 But theſe are written, that ye might

lution is the moſt improbable, that can be imagined! But Thomas evidently addreſſed theſe words *to* Chriſt, which is deciſive againſt that opinion. Our Lord approved of his preſent faith and adoration, as juſtly due to him; and only gently reproved his former unbelief. He had indeed been convinced by the teſtimony of his ſenſes: but there had been, and, were then numbers, and there would be immenſe multitudes in future ages, who could not have ſuch over-bearing evidence; yet would they be peculiarly bleſſed in believing in him. It was not ſaid, that they would be more bleſſed than Thomas: but it intimated, that if others were as incredulous as he had been, few indeed could inherit the bleſſing: and it implied, that they, who never ſaw Jeſus, yet believed in him, would be no loſers, by that apparent diſadvantage; yea that believing on competent evidence, without requiring ſuch abſolute demonſtration, would denote a more teachable frame of mind, and be more honourable to God.

It may here be proper to ſubjoin a compendious view of the evidence afforded *us* of our Lord's reſurrection, which is the grand external evidence of the truth of chriſtianity. It may be premiſed, that almoſt all human affairs are conducted upon man's teſtimony: even in the great concerns of life and death, the concurring evidence of two or three perſons of good character, ſober ſenſe, and competent information, is deemed abundantly ſufficient proof of any fact, which is in it's own nature credible; eſpecially if it be clear, that they have no private intereſt in the teſtimony they give. But the reſurrection of Chriſt, as connected with the divine authority of Revelation, and the glory of God in the ſalvation of ſouls, &c, was an event in itſelf perfectly credible; for a ſufficient reaſon may be aſſigned for the interpoſition of Almighty Power to effect it. To prepare the way for the teſtimony, which was to be given of this event, it was foretold by the ancient prophets, (*Pſ.* xvi. v. 10. *Iſ.* liii. v. 10—12:) and even the enemies of our Lord knew that he had expreſly predicted it, and the very time, when it would take place. Accordingly on the day prefixed, the body was gone, after all the precautions, that his crucifiers had made to ſecure it: and though their authority and reputation were in every reſpect at ſtake, and they could never give any rational account what was become of the body; and though they had the whole authority in their hands, they never ventured to bring either the ſoldiers who guarded the ſepulchre, or the apoſtles who were ſaid to have ſtolen the body, to any trial about it; but choſe rather to ſit down under the imputation of the baſeſt murder, prevarication, and wickedneſs, than excite any further enquiry into the tranſaction. The eleven apoſtles, (to whom a twelfth was ſhortly after added,) were a ſufficient number of witneſſes; they were men of plain ſenſe, and irreproachable characters; they had been conſtant attendants on Jeſus, during ſome years, and could not but know him; and they unanimouſly teſtified, that they repeatedly ſaw, converſed, eat, and drank with him, after his reſurrection from the dead; that they examined the wounds in his hands, and ſide, and that at length they beheld him aſcend from them into heaven. In this teſtimony they perſiſted as with one voice, during a ſeries of years; and nothing could induce any one of them to vary from it, in the ſmalleſt particular. It is evident that they had no previous expectation of the reſurrection of their Lord; and, notwithſtanding all the miracles they had witneſſed, they were remarkably incredulous about it. They were alſo exceedingly intimidated by his crucifixion: and they could have no poſſible temporal motive, to invent, and propagate a report of his reſurrection; for only labour, poverty, reproach, impriſonment, ſuffering, and death could be expected, as their recompence for thus embracing the cauſe of one, who had been crucified as a deceiver. In every thing elſe, they appeared to be the moſt ſimple, upright, holy, and pious men in the world: yet if in this falſified; they muſt have been the moſt wicked, and moſt artful perſons, that ever exiſted, and that without any proſpect of advantage: for they ſpent all the reſt of their lives in propagating the religion of Jeſus, as riſen from the dead, renouncing every worldly intereſt, facing oppoſition and perſecution, enduring all kinds of hardſhip, prepared at all times to ſeal their teſtimony with their blood, and moſt of them actually ſuffering martyrdom in the cauſe; confirming their teſtimony with their lateſt breath, and leaving it in their writing as a moſt valuable bequeſt to poſterity. Moreover there were other competent witneſſes, who ſaw Jeſus after his reſurrection, even to the number of 500 perſons: theſe alſo concurred in the ſame teſtimony to their lateſt breath; and neither terror, or hope, or any other motive, ever induced one of them to contradict, or diſſent from, the teſtimony of the others! If we were to ſtop here, we could ſcarce conceive of a more complete human teſtimony to any matter of fact. Yet perhaps ſome may think, that if Jeſus had openly appeared after his reſurrection, to the Jewiſh nation, and their rulers; it might have put the matter beyond all doubt: but it ſhould be conſidered, that if this meaſure had been adopted, and the rulers had ſtill perſiſted in their rejection of Him, (as they certainly would, if their hearts had remained unchanged,) the goſpel would have had ſtill greater diſadvantages to have encountered, both among the other Jews, and among the Gentiles! On the other hand, if the whole Jewiſh nation, and their rulers had received Jeſus as the Meſſiah: when the goſpel had been ſent among the Gentiles, it would have appeared as a plan formed of aggrandizing that nation; and as ſuch would probably have been diſregarded. In ſhort, if our Lord was not to give occular proof of His reſurrection to every man, in every age; (which would have been impoſſible;) the number of competent witneſſes was ſufficient, and even preferable to a greater multitude. But as if all human teſtimony was a ſmall matter in ſuch an important concern; God himſelf was pleaſed to bear witneſs with the apoſtles, &c, in a moſt extraordinary manner; conferring upon them the gifts of tongues, and of working miracles, by the Holy Ghoſt; and enabling them to impart the ſame to others by the laying believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains 1ſt. Jeſus appearing to Peter, and other diſciples, at the ſea of Tiberias; making himſelf known to them by a miraculous draught of fiſhes, and dining with them, 1---14. *2d. His thrice repeated enquiry of Peter, whether he loved Him? His threefold charge to him, to feed his lambs, and ſheep; his prediction of Peter's ſufferings and martyrdom; and his rebuke of his curioſity reſpecting John, with the miſtaken opinion that was deduced from it,* 15---23. *3d. The concluſion of this goſpel, ſhewing who was the pen-man of it, and the certainty of the things contained in it; and declaring that an immenſe multitude of Chriſt's actions were not recorded,* 24, 25.

on of their hands. Thus the number of unexceptionable witneſſes was increaſed; the teſtimony to our Lord's reſurrection was diffuſed on every ſide; and his moſt inveterate enemies could not deny that moſt extraordinary miracles were performed by thoſe, who atteſted that event. In this manner, the number of diſciples of Jeſus was ſpeedily multiplied, by thouſands being converted from among thoſe, who had juſt before demanded his crucifixion; and chriſtianity got ground rapidly on every ſide, in oppoſition to all the wealth, power, learning, ſuperſtition &c, of the world; and by unarmed, unlearned, poor, and deſpiſed inſtruments: till at length whole nations embraced the religion of the crucified Nazarene. And this effect which could be aſcribed to no power, but that of God; and the continuance of ſo humbling and holy a religion in the world, to this day, form a demonſtration even to us of this important fact; nor was any paſt event ſince the beginning ever proved with ſuch a complicated, and abundant evidence. The argument ariſing from St. Paul's converſion, and various other concurrent teſtimonies, will be conſidered hereafter. (See Preface, Page 10.)

V. 30, 31.] (c. xxi. v. 24, 25.) The ſigns, here ſpoken of, ſeem to refer to the evidences of our Lord's reſurrection (*Acts*, c. i. v. 3;) of which there were far more that it was neceſſary to record: But theſe were committed to writing, to induce all thoſe, who ſhould ever read them, to believe that Jeſus was indeed the promiſed Meſſiah, the King of Iſrael, the Saviour of ſinners, and the incarnate Son of God; that, by this faith, they might obtain eternal life, in his name, for his ſake, and by his mercy, truth, and power. (1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 8.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who love the Lord, will ſeek him early and diligently; and, notwithſtanding all their ſorrows, delays, and diſcouragements, they will aſſuredly find him. External forms and empty notions will no more ſatisfy the awakened enquirer, than the ſepulchre, and the grave-clothes did Mary, or the apoſtles, who ſought the Lord Jeſus in faith, and love. Under much preaching by men called chriſtians, we are ready to ſay, “ they have taken “ away the Lord, and we know not where they have “ laid him;' but though many may be pleaſed with ſuch harangues, the broken-hearted diſciple cannot be thus contented. They, who are equally in earneſt, do not always make equal progreſs: ſome men take things more quickly, others inveſtigate them more deeply; and they may be mutually helpful, in bringing each other to underſtand the ſcripture, and to eſtabliſhment in the faith.

Great love is manifeſted by proportionable ſorrow, when the beloved object is removed: thus the humble believer mourns, when he ſeeks in vain for the comfort of the Redeemer's preſence, or the opportunity of honouring him. At ſuch times, he is apt to imagine that others muſt be thinking as much of his Beloved, as he is; and the ſame ſtate of mind often incapacitates him from perceiving the evidences of Chriſt's love to him, or the grounds of his own conſolation. Thus he is led to weep, when he ſhould rejoice: but ſuch mourners ſhall be comforted; angels rejoice over, and are ready to miniſter unto them; Jeſus will manifeſt himſelf to them, as he doth not unto the world: and in this manner, the moſt diſconſolate penitents, and the chief of ſinners become the meſſengers of peace and comfort to others alſo. Our gracious Redeemer, in his higheſt exaltation deigns to call his diſciples brethren, notwithſtanding all their falls, and ingratitude: and when we conſider how low he ſtooped, and how much he ſuffered, in order to form the relation, and to fulfil the part, of a brother to us, poor ſinful worms; we ſhall not heſitate to expect the greateſt honour and felicity from Him. He hath now aſcended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, and there he continually manages all our concerns, with the moſt perfect love and faithfulneſs: yet when we aſſemble in his name, (eſpecially on his holy day,) he will meet with, and ſpeak peace to us; he will aſſure us of his forgiveneſs, counterbalance our ſorrows, and alarms from perſecuting foes, and communicate his ſacred Spirit of life, love, holineſs, and conſolation; according as our ſervices, or our difficulties require his bleſſed aſſiſtance, ſupports, and influences. But when diſciples are needleſsly abſent from the aſſemblies of his people, they will ſurely be loſers, and their unbelieving fears, and ſorrows are often prolonged, as a chaſtiſement for this negligence. Indeed unbelief, in it's manifold workings and effects, is the ſource of almoſt all our ſins, and diſquietudes. We all have too much copied the example of Thomas's incredulity, by refuſing to believe the word of God; or to rely on his help, when our evidence of his care hath been abundantly ſufficient: and we are often apt to demand ſuch proof of his truths, and of his will reſpecting us, as we have no right to expect. But he deals not with us after our iniquities, and therefore we are not conſumed. He knows all our difficulties and temptations: he will rebuke, and obviate the unbelief of thoſe, whoſe hearts are upright before him; and he will convince them who he is, and what he hath done for them; that they may truſt in, love, and obey him as

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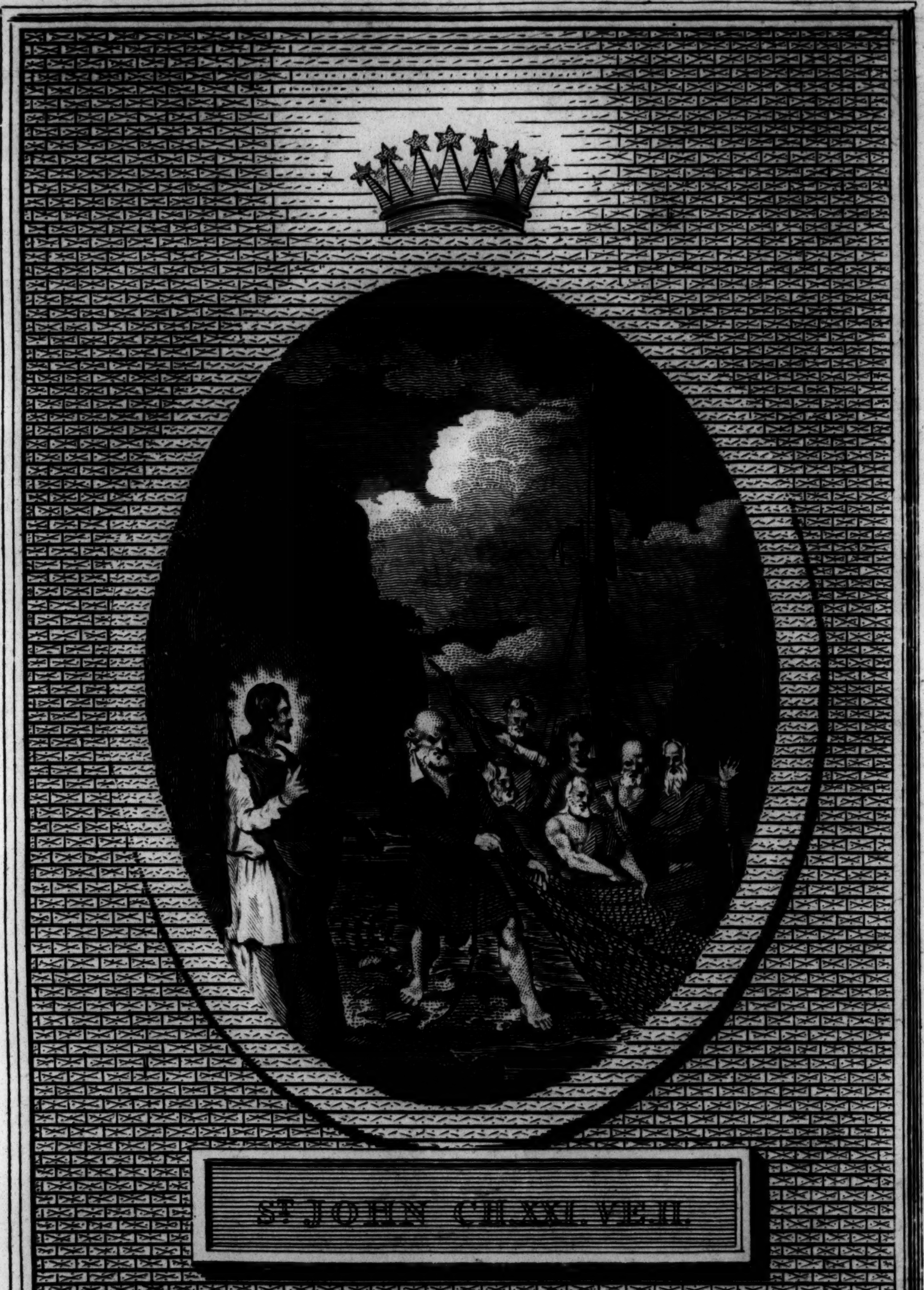
ST. JOHN CH.XXI. VE.11.

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CHAP. XXI.

AFTER theſe things Jeſus ſhewed himſelf again to the diſciples at the ſea of Tiberias; and on this wiſe ſhewed he *himſelf.*

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *ſons* of Zebedee, and two other of his diſciples.

3 Simon Peter ſaith unto them, I go a fiſhing. They ſay unto him, we alſo go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ſhip immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jeſus ſtood on the ſhore; but the diſciples knew not that it was Jeſus.

5 Then Jeſus ſaith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They anſwered him, no.

6 And he ſaid unto them, caſt the net on the right ſide of the ſhip, and ye ſhall find. They caſt therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fiſhes.

7 Therefore that diſciple whom Jeſus loved ſaith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fiſher's coat *unto him;* (for he was naked,) and did caſt himſelf into the ſea.

8 And the other diſciples came in a little ſhip, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fiſhes.

9 As ſoon then as they were come to land they ſaw a fire of coals there, and fiſh laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Bring of the fiſh which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fiſhes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were ſo many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Come *and* dine, And none of the diſciples durſt aſk him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jeſus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fiſh likewiſe.

14 This is now the third time that Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples after that he was riſen from the dead.

their Lord and their God. We have not indeed that kind of evidence, with which Thomas was favoured, and which infidels ſtill demand: yet we are equally within the reach of the bleſſing. We have abundant evidence of the Redeemer's reſurrection and glory: ſome of us, like Thomas, have withheld our credence, till we could no longer be faithleſs, but were conſtrained to believe: and theſe things were written for the benefit of every reader, that he may believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and that believing, he may have life through his name.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—14.] This tranſaction ſeems to have occurred after the diſciples had returned into Galilee, and before Jeſus had met them on the mountain, according to his appointment, Peter being unemployed, and perhaps in want, propoſed to go a fiſhing, and his brethren accompanied him: but though they laboured during the whole night, the moſt proper time for fiſhing, they were totally unſucceſsful, which was a trial of their faith and patience; and alſo an emblem of the diſcouragements, which the moſt able, faithful, and laborious miniſters often meet with in their work. In the morning Jeſus ſtood by the ſhore, near to the veſſel; but by ſome means he was pleaſed to prevent their knowing him. As they drew near to land, he accoſted them in a very friendly and familiar manner; (for ſo the term ſeems to have been uſed in common diſcourſe, and not as ſignifying a Father's addreſs to his children, as our tranſlation implies;) and he aſked them whether they had any meat? Which might be underſtood with reference to their ſucceſs in fiſhing; or as an enquiry, whether they had any proviſions to diſpoſe of? When they had anſwered in the negative; He directed them to caſt the net on the *right hand* ſide of the ſhip, and then they would ſucceed better: and though he appeared as a ſtranger, and they being weary with toiling all night, had probably deſiſted from fiſhing; yet they followed his directions, and incloſed ſo many fiſhes, that they were not able to draw the net into the veſſel again. This unexpected ſucceſs convinced John that it was "The Lord;" as it probably brought a former miracle of this kind to his remembrance. (Notes, &c. *Luke*, c. v. ver. 1—11.) As ſoon as he had informed Peter of his opinion; the latter (full of love and gratitude to Jeſus, who had ſo graciouſly forgiven his late baſe denial of him,) entirely diſregarded the net and the fiſhes; and girding on his upper garment, (having been ſtripped for his work,) he leaped into the ſea, and ſwam to ſhore, as they were not much above an hundred yards diſtant from it: but the other diſciples abode in the veſſel, to draw the net to land. When this was done, they found that Jeſus had already made preparation for their refreſhment after the labour of the night; and probably by miracle: but he ordered them to bring alſo of the fiſh, which they had then taken; and in doing this they found a great number of very large fiſhes; yet the net was wonderfully preſerved from being broken, (probably it was borrowed.) This draught of fiſhes might be ſold for a conſiderable ſum of money, which they would have occaſion for, on their

15 So when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon, *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He ſaith to him again the ſecond time, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep.

17 He ſaith uuto him the third time, Simon, *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, Loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep.

18 Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young thou girdeſt thyſelf, and walkeſt whither thou wouldeſt: but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhall ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldeſt not.

19 This ſpake he, ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorify God. And when he had ſpoken this, he ſaith unto him, Follow me.

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return to Jeruſalem, before the day of Pentecoſt. After they had ſecured the fiſhes, Jeſus called them to come, and partake of the repaſt, which was prepared for them; and in his uſual manner, he took the proviſions, and gave unto them: but they ventured not to aſk him who he was, being ſatisfied it was their Lord; though he probably aſſumed for a time a different appearance than uſual. This was the third time, that he ſhewed himſelf after his reſurrection, to ſeveral of his diſciples aſſembled together; for he had twice come amongſt them at Jeruſalem, when they were met together, on the evening of the firſt day of the week. It does not behove us to enquire, where, or how, he ſpent the reſt of his time previous to his aſcenſion.

V. 15—17.] The caſe of Peter required a more particular addreſs, than that of the other apoſtles; in order, that both He and others might derive the greater benefit from his fall, and recovery. Our Lord therefore on this occaſion, (laying aſide his diſguiſe,) enquired of him, (by his original name, as if he had forfeited that of Peter, through his inſtability;) "whether he loved him *more than theſe?*" The latter clauſe might be interpreted of his employment and gains as a fiſherman, and ſo might be a demand, whether he loved Him above all his ſecular intereſts? But Peter's anſwer determines us to another interpretation: he had, before his fall, in effect ſaid that he loved Jeſus more than any of the other diſciples did; for he had boaſted, that "though all men forſook Him, yet would not he." And Jeſus now aſked of him, whether he would ſtand to this, and aver that he loved him more than the diſciples then preſent did. To this he anſwered modeſtly by ſaying that Jeſus knew that He loved him; without profeſſing to love him more than others. Our Lord therefore renewed his appointment to the miniſterial, and apoſtolical office; at the ſame time commanding him "to feed his lambs", or his *little lambs*, even the leaſt of them, (for the word is a diminutive.) This intimated to him, that his late experience of his own weakneſs ought to render him peculiarly condeſcending, compaſſionate, tender, and attentive to the meaneſt, and feebleſt believers; and to ſuch as were harraſſed with temptations, or overtaken with a fault, or manifeſted many and great infirmities: as the ſhepherd takes the greateſt care of the moſt weak, and ſickly lambs of his flock. (*Luke*, c. xxii. v. 32.) Shortly after our Lord repeated his queſtion: but as Peter had dropped the latter part of it, he urged that no further; which proves that the interpretation above given is the true one: for Jeſus will never allow that to be true love of Him, which is not decidedly ſuperior to our love of earthly things. When Peter had again appealed to him, that he knew he really did love him; Jeſus ordered him to ſhew that love, by feeding his ſheep; or by diligently labouring to promote the edification of every deſcription of believers, as well as to ſpread the knowledge of his ſalvation. But as Peter had thrice denied Chriſt; ſo he was pleaſed to repeat the ſame queſtion a third time: this grieved Peter, as it reminded him, that he had given ſufficient cauſe, for the reality of his love being thus queſtioned. However, conſcious of his ſincerity, he more ſolemnly appealed to Chriſt, (as knowing all things, even the ſecrets of his heart;) that he knew that he loved him with moſt cordial affection, notwithſtanding the inconſiſtency of his late behaviour. Our Lord then tacitly allowed the truth of this profeſſion, and renewed his charge to him to feed his ſheep. The arguments of the papiſts for the ſupremacy of the pope from this paſſage only prove their cauſe to be deſperate: however ſuch a pre-eminence, as is here deſcribed, would not much ſuit their inclinations. To be more abundantly laborious in *really* feeding the weakeſt of Chriſt's purchaſed flock, with the wholeſome food of his pure doctrine, from love to Him and his cauſe; and to ſubmit to any abaſement or hardſhip, and to face any peril or perſecution, in this work of compaſſion and tender care to the poor, the tempted, and afflicted; this is a pre-eminence, which excites the ambition of but few, compared with the number of thoſe, who aſpire after eccleſiaſtical authority, and diſtinction. It is indeed true, that one of the words here tranſlated *feed*, may be rendered *rule*; but then it is the *rule* of a careful ſhepherd over his valued flock; and very different from that of thoſe perſons, who, both in oppoſition to Peter's example, and exhortation, have pretended to derive authority from him, "to lord it over God's heritage. (1 *Pet.* c. v. ver. 1—4.)

V. 18—23.] Peter had earneſtly profeſſed his readineſs to die with Chriſt; but had ſhamefully failed, 20 Then Peter, turning about, ſeeth the diſciple whom Jeſus loved following; which alſo leaned on his breaſt at ſupper, and ſaid, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter ſeeing him, ſaith to Jeſus, Lord, and what *ſhall* this man *do?*

22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

23 Then went this ſaying abroad among the brethren, that that diſciple ſhould not die: yet Jeſus ſaid not unto him, He ſhall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

24 This is the diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe things, and wrote theſe things; and we know that his teſtimony is true.

25 And there are alſo many other things which Jeſus did, the which, if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the world itſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written. Amen.

when put to the trial: however our Lord next aſſured him, that he would at length be called upon, and enabled to perform that engagement. In his youth, he had been uſed to gird himſelf, (as he had juſt before girded on his fiſher's coat,) and to walk at liberty as he pleaſed: but in his old age, he would be required to ſtretch out his hands, that others might bind him, and carry him to endure thoſe ſufferings, to which his nature muſt be reluctant. This, we are told, ſignified the death, by which he would glorify God, as a martyr for his truth. It is generally agreed that Peter was crucified, perhaps near forty years after this; but the circumſtances of it are variouſly related. However Jeſus next called upon him to ſignify his readineſs to adhere to his cauſe even unto death, by riſing up and following him; with which Peter complied without heſitation, (2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 13, 14:) but turning about, he ſaw John alſo, (c. xiii. v. 23—25,) without any command, ſhewing the ſame willingneſs to ſuffer death for the ſake, and after the example, of his beloved Lord: this led Peter to enquire what he was to do? Was he alſo to become a martyr, or not? To this our Lord replied, that if it were his will, that he ſhould abide on earth till his coming; that was no concern of Peter's; who ought not to indulge a vain curioſity, but to follow him as directed, for a token of his readineſs to adhere to his inſtructions, to obey his commandments, to copy his example, and to ſuffer for his ſake. Probably Jeſus meant his coming in power to ſet up his kingdom, and to execute vengeance on the unbelieving Jewiſh nation: but the diſciples had confuſed views of this ſubject; and they ſuppoſed that he meant that John would live till he came to judgment, or till he ſhould be tranſlated to heaven, as Enoch was; or that, being Chriſt's beloved diſciple, he would in ſome manner or other eſcape death: but his words had no ſuch meaning. John lived long after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and after the other apoſtles; and he ſeems to have died a natural death at laſt, in his extreme old age.

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our bleſſed Lord is often near unto us, in reſpect of his providential care, and his ſpiritual conſolations, when we are ready to conclude that he is far off from us. He does not allow his miniſters to entangle themſelves with the affairs of this life, or his people to perplex themſelves with worldly cares; but he approves of honeſt induſtry, and vouchſafes his ſpecial preſence and bleſſing to thoſe, who conſcientiouſly attend to their preſent duty. Whilſt he provides for the ſouls of his diſciples, he kindly enquires into their temporal wants, and allows them to ſtate them to him, as children to a loving Father: and he will always be mindful to provide for them ſuch things as are needful. None of our labours can proſper without his bleſſing: but our dependence on him is peculiarly to be recognized, in performing the work of the miniſtry; and he often permits his ſervants to labour for a time without viſible ſucceſs, to prove their faith and patience, to render them more obſervant of his directions, or more ſimply dependent on his aſſiſtance; and that their uſefulneſs, when afforded them, may more evidently appear to be his work. It is well, when our falls and miſtakes render us more humble, watchful, and zealous. Our gracious Lord will readily pardon the ſins of his believing ſervants: but he will rebuke them, in one way or other; that they may be more ſenſible how greatly he abhors their offences, notwithſtanding his tender mercy to their ſouls. The ſincerity of our love to him muſt at length be brought to the teſt: and it behoves us to enquire ſeriouſly whether we are able to ſtand the examination. If we indeed love him, then his character, his truths, his precepts, and his ordinances will be cordially approved, received, and obſerved by us;

15 So when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon, *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He ſaith to him again the ſecond time, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep.

17 He ſaith uuto him the third time, Simon, *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, Loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep.

18 Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young thou girdeſt thyſelf, and walkeſt whither thou wouldeſt: but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhall ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldeſt not.

19 This ſpake he, ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorify God. And when he had ſpoken this, he ſaith unto him, Follow me.

return to Jeruſalem, before the day of Pentecoſt. After they had ſecured the fiſhes, Jeſus called them to come, and partake of the repaſt, which was prepared for them; and in his uſual manner, he took the proviſions, and gave unto them: but they ventured not to aſk him who he was, being ſatisfied it was their Lord; though he probably aſſumed for a time a different appearance than uſual. This was the third time, that he ſhewed himſelf after his reſurrection, to ſeveral of his diſciples aſſembled together; for he had twice come amongſt them at Jeruſalem, when they were met together, on the evening of the firſt day of the week. It does not behove us to enquire, where, or how, he ſpent the reſt of his time previous to his aſcenſion.

V. 15—17.] The caſe of Peter required a more particular addreſs, than that of the other apoſtles; in order, that both He and others might derive the greater benefit from his fall, and recovery. Our Lord therefore on this occaſion, (laying aſide his diſguiſe,) enquired of him, (by his original name, as if he had forfeited that of Peter, through his inſtability;) "whether he loved "him *more than theſe?*" The latter clauſe might be interpreted of his employment and gains as a fiſherman, and ſo might be a demand, whether he loved Him above all his ſecular intereſts? But Peter's anſwer determines us to another interpretation: he had, before his fall, in effect ſaid that he loved Jeſus more than any of the other diſciples did; for he had boaſted, that "though all men "forſook Him, yet would not he." And Jeſus now aſked of him, whether he would ſtand to this, and aver that he loved him more than the diſciples then preſent did. To this he anſwered modeſtly by ſaying that Jeſus knew that He loved him; without profeſſing to love him more than others. Our Lord therefore renewed his appointment to the miniſterial, and apoſtolical office; at the ſame time commanding him "to feed his lambs", or his *little lambs*, even the leaſt of them, (for the word is a diminutive.) This intimated to him, that his late experience of his own weakneſs ought to render him peculiarly condeſcending, compaſſionate, tender, and attentive to the meaneſt, and feebleſt believers; and to ſuch as were harraſſed with temptations, or overtaken with a fault, or manifeſted many and great infirmities: as the ſhepherd takes the greateſt care of the moſt weak, and ſickly lambs of his flock. (*Luke*, c. xxii. v. 32.) Shortly after our Lord repeated his queſtion: but as Peter had dropped the latter part of it, he urged that no further; which proves that the interpretation above given is the true one: for Jeſus will never allow that to be true love of Him, which is not decidedly ſuperior to our love of earthly things. When Peter had again appealed to him, that he knew he really did love him; Jeſus ordered him to ſhew that love, by feeding his ſheep; or by diligently labouring to promote the edification of every deſcription of believers, as well as to ſpread the knowledge of his ſalvation. But as Peter had thrice denied Chriſt; ſo he was pleaſed to repeat the ſame queſtion a third time: this grieved Peter, as it reminded him, that he had given ſufficient cauſe, for the reality of his love being thus queſtioned. However, conſcious of his ſincerity, he more ſolemnly appealed to Chriſt, (as knowing all things, even the ſecrets of his heart;) that he knew that he loved him with moſt cordial affection, notwithſtanding the inconſiſtency of his late behaviour. Our Lord then tacitly allowed the truth of this profeſſion, and renewed his charge to him to feed his ſheep. The arguments of the papiſts for the ſupremacy of the pope from this paſſage only prove their cauſe to be deſperate: however ſuch a pre-eminence, as is here deſcribed, would not much ſuit their inclinations. To be more abundantly laborious in *really* feeding the weakeſt of Chriſt's purchaſed flock, with the wholeſome food of his pure doctrine, from love to Him and his cauſe; and to ſubmit to any abaſement or hardſhip, and to face any peril or perſecution, in this work of compaſſion and tender care to the poor, the tempted, and afflicted; this is a pre-eminence, which excites the ambition of but few, compared with the number of thoſe, who aſpire after eccleſiaſtical authority, and diſtinction. It is indeed true, that one of the words here tranſlated *feed*, may be rendered *rule*; but then it is the *rule* of a careful ſhepherd over his valued flock; and very different from that of thoſe perſons, who, both in oppoſition to Peter's example, and exhortation, have pretended to derive authority from him, "to lord it "over God's heritage. (1 *Pet.* c. v. ver. 1—4.)

V. 18—23.] Peter had earneſtly profeſſed his readineſs to die with Chriſt; but had ſhamefully failed, 20 Then Peter, turning about, ſeeth the diſciple whom Jeſus loved following; which alſo leaned on his breaſt at ſupper, and ſaid, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter ſeeing him, ſaith to Jeſus, Lord, and what *ſhall* this man *do?*

22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

23 Then went this ſaying abroad among the brethren, that that diſciple ſhould not die: yet Jeſus ſaid not unto him, He ſhall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

24 This is the diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe things, and wrote theſe things; and we know that his teſtimony is true.

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The

we ſhall love thoſe moſt, who appear moſt to love, and reſemble him; we ſhall aim to render ſome grateful returns for his unſpeakable mercies, and to recommend him to thoſe around us; we ſhall take pleaſure in ſpeaking of, or to him, in hearing him praiſed, and in promoting his glory; we ſhall be ready to labour, venture, or ſuffer for his ſake; yet after all we ſhall be grieved, and aſhamed, that we love him no more, and ſerve him no better. They, who thus love the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity, have a conſciouſneſs of it, notwithſtanding all their defects; and as they believe, and are aſſured, that he knoweth all things, and eſpecially that he knoweth whether they love him or not; ſo they will apply to him to determine the queſtion for them, and to enable them to love him, (and that more and more,) when they cannot confidently aver that they do. As obedience is the general evidence of our love to Jeſus: ſo the love of his poor, afflicted, and deſpiſed people, for his ſake, and an endeavour to be uſeful to the meaneſt of his flock, is that particular expreſſion, which he requires of every one. No man therefore can be qualified to feed the lambs and ſheep of Chriſt, who doth not love the good Shepherd more than all ſecular emolument, and preferment: and the profeſſed miniſters who are too ambitious, haughty, ſlothful, delicate, ſtudious of human learning, or occupied in worldly purſuits and pleaſures; to apply themſelves earneſtly to feed the ſouls of the people, even the weakeſt and pooreſt of them with the doctrines, and inſtructions of God's word, will be left under an awful condemnation, as utterly deſtitute of the love of Chriſt. (1 *Cor.* c. xvi. v. 22.) They, who have been greatly tempted, and have had much humiliating experience of their own frailty and ſinfulneſs, and who have had much forgiven them; generally prove the moſt tender, compaſſionate, and attentive paſtors of weak, bruiſed, and trembling believers, and the beſt guides of young converts: and the Lord often leaves thoſe whom he loves, to have many painful conflicts with temptation, and in-dwelling ſin, as well as much experience of his tender compaſſion, in order to render them more gentle to their weak brethren, and to the lambs of his flock. Thus, when they feel their unworthineſs for the leaſt work in his ſervice, they become far abler miniſters, than they were, when they had a much better opinion of themſelves, and of their qualifications for the miniſtry. The reſolutions, which honeſt young converts raſhly form and break, are ſometimes afterwards performed by them, when in a courſe of years they have been humbled and proved. They muſt firſt learn, that without Chriſt they can do nothing; and then they will be ſhewn, that they can do all things, through him, who ſtrengtheneth them. However, ſufferings, pain, and death will appear formidable to the moſt experienced chriſtian; nor would he be willing to meet them, did he not hope to glorify God by ſo doing; and were he not deſirous of leaving a ſinful world, that he may be preſent with his beloved Lord. With theſe objects preſented to his faith, he becomes ready to obey the Redeemer's call, and to follow him through death to glory; and the more love he hath experienced from him the readier will he be to tread in his ſteps. But curioſity is too apt to interrupt us in this courſe: a thouſand queſtions are ſtarted, and diſcuſſed; about which, Jeſus, as it were, ſays to us, "what is that to thee? Follow thou me." If we attend to this voice, to us death will be gain, and we ſhall be ready for his coming: and whilſt we are here, we muſt live by faith in the ſure teſtimony of his word, which never faileth thoſe, who truſt in it. We ought to bleſs God for all, that is written in the ſcriptures: but we may alſo be thankful, that they are ſo compendious: it would not ſuit our ſituation, our engagements, or our capacities in this life, to have a more copious revelation; and we want no uncertain traditions, or human additions. But we may anticipate in imagination the joy we ſhall receive in heaven, from a more complete knowledge of all that Jeſus did, and ſaid; as well as for the conduct of his providence and grace, in his dealings with us. May this be the happineſs of the writer, and of every reader. Amen, Amen.

The ACTS of the APOSTLES.

This Book was penned by Luke the Evangeliſt, and may be conſidered as the ſecond part of his hiſtory. It records the Acts, or tranſactions of the apoſtles, in executing the office entruſted to them. Yet there is comparatively little tranſmitted to us concerning any of the apoſtles, except Peter and Paul; and many things are related concerning ſuch perſons as were not apoſtles. However it gives us an inſight into the manner, in which chriſtianity was introduced, and eſtabliſhed in the world: and, as all that eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians record concerning the apoſtles, in addition to it, is involved in uncertainty, or mingled with improbability; ſo we muſt reſt ſatisfied with the information here given us, as ſufficient for our edification, and take it for granted that the doctrine, labours, ſufferings, and examples of the other apoſtles accorded to this ſpecimen. We may conſider this Book, as intended to inform us of the performance of the promiſes and many of the prophecies, contained in the goſpels; and to prepare us for the more intelligent peruſal of the ſubſequent epiſtles: and moreover to exemplify to us the apoſto-

apoſtolical manner of preaching the goſpel, both to Jews and Gentiles; and of regulating the external conſtitution of the church, the appointment of miniſters, and the adminiſtration of ſacred ordinances. The ſacred Penman begins his hiſtory with the aſcenſion of Chriſt, the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, and the ſucceſs of the goſpel amongſt the Jews, &c: afterwards he records the converſion of St. Paul; towards the latter end of the Book, he confines his narrative to the labours, ſucceſs, and ſufferings of that apoſtle, whoſe companion he was; and he cloſes the ſubject by recording his firſt impriſonment at Rome, which is ſuppoſed to have been about thirty years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt.

Anno Domini 33.

CHAP. I.

Contains 1ſt. The hiſtorian's addreſs to Theophilus: an account of what paſſed between Chriſt's reſurrection and aſcenſion; a further account of that event, and of a viſion of angels, who aſſured the apoſtles, that he would come again in like manner, 1---11. *2d. The apoſtles returning to Jeruſalem, where they continued in prayer with the other diſciples,* 12---14. *3d. Peter propoſing to appoint another apoſtle inſtead of Judas, whoſe dreadful end he related; and the nomination of two perſons, of whom Matthias was choſen by lot, accompanied by prayer,* 15---26.

THE former treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach.

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghoſt had given commandments unto the apoſtles, whom he had choſen.

3 To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Anno Domini 33.

4 And, being aſſembled together with *them,* commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the Father, which, *ſaith he,* ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they aſked of him, ſaying, Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael?

7 And he ſaid unto them, It is not for you to know the times, or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye ſhall receive power, after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you: and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt part of the earth.

N O T E S.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—3.] (Notes, &c. *Luke,* c. i. v. 1—4.) St. Luke began this hiſtory by referring his pious friend to his goſpel, which formed an introduction to it. He had therein given a ſpecimen of the miracles, actions, and doctrine of Chriſt, and the general ſcope of all, that he did and taught, from his entrance on his public miniſtry, at his baptiſm by John, till his aſcenſion into heaven: previous to which, he had given proper inſtructions, and injunctions to his choſen apoſtles. The expreſſion "by the Holy Ghoſt," may either refer to our Lord's chooſing the apoſtles, or to his commanding them after his reſurrection: but the latter ſeems rather to be intended; as he "breathed upon them, and "bade them receive the Holy Ghoſt;" and as he then "opened their underſtandings, that they might under"ſtand the ſcriptures." All that Jeſus did, and taught, in reſpect of his human nature, is aſcribed to his being anointed with the Holy Ghoſt; as well as the endowments, that he conferred upon his diſciples. It is alſo obſerved, that Jeſus ſhewed himſelf alive to his apoſtles, after his agonizing ſufferings and death, by many ſigns, or evidences, which could not poſſibly deceive them: as he was ſeen of them, at different times, for the ſpace of forty days, and converſed freely with them concerning thoſe things, which related to the eſtabliſhment, privileges, and laws of that "kingdom of God," which was about to be ſet up on the earth, by the preaching of his goſpel. Probably, very much of this kind paſſed between Jeſus and his diſciples, which is not recorded.

V. 4—8.] The apoſtles, &c, ſeem to have returned to Jeruſalem, and to have aſſembled there, by Chriſt's appointment. Though he was about to be taken from them, and they would ſeem to be without any employment in that city: yet they were ordered not to depart thence; but to wait there for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, 9 And when he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their ſight.

10 And while they looked ſtedfaſtly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men ſtood by them in white apparel;

11 Which alſo ſaid, Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jeruſalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jeruſalem a ſabbath-day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

14 Theſe all continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jeſus, and with his brethren.

15 And in thoſe days Peter ſtood up in the midſt of the diſciples, and ſaid, (the number of the names together were about one hundred and twenty,)

16 Men *and* brethren, This ſcripture muſt needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghoſt by the mouth of David ſpake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jeſus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this miniſtry.

18 Now this man purchaſed a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong,

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which he had promiſed to ſend them from the Father, (*John*, c. xiv. xv. xvi.:) for it was proper that this extraordinary event ſhould occur in the ſame place, where He had before been publicly crucified. This would fully anſwer to what John had teſtified concerning him; as it would be a moſt remarkable baptiſm by the Holy Ghoſt, both communicating to them miraculous powers, and more abundantly illuminating, and ſanctifying their ſouls. (*Matt*. c. iii. v. 11.) This took place on the tenth day after our Lord's aſcenſion. But notwithſtanding all, that He had taught them; they ſtill entertained ſome thoughts of a temporal kingdom: perhaps they ſuppoſed, that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit would induce the nation in general to acknowledge Him for their Meſſiah; and that he would then perform, what they ſuppoſed to be the meaning of the ancient prophets, in this reſpect. Yet they ſeem to have thought, that the baſe uſage, which he had received from the rulers and people of Iſrael, would interfere with the kingdom being at that time reſtored to the nation, as in the days of David and Solomon. However our Lord knew that his aſcenſion, and the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt would finally terminate theſe expectations: He therefore only checked their vain curioſity, by obſerving, that it was not proper for them to know ſuch matters; which were entirely at the diſpoſal of God, to be managed and effected by his ſovereign power and authority, without the interpoſition of any of his creatures. But he aſſured them, that they would ſoon be endued with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to perform many wonderful works; as well as emboldening and ſtrengthening them for their work, and giving them abundant ſucceſs in it. Thus they would become witneſſes of his reſurrection, aſcenſion, miracles, and doctrine, in all parts of the earth.

V. 9—12.] (Notes, &c. *Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 49—53.) The preceding inſtructions and promiſes ſeem to have been delivered, as our Lord was leading the diſciples forth, to that part of the Mount of Olives, from which he aſcended: after which he was gradually raiſed from the earth in their ſight, until a cloud intercepted their view of him. And whilſt they looked earneſtly after him, with mixed aſtoniſhment, regret, and exultation; perhaps ſome of them expecting, that he would again return to them; two angels, in the form of men, accoſted them, demanding why they gazed after their aſcended Lord, as if they either deſired his preſent return, or deemed him loſt to them? For though he was now aſcended to his glorious throne in heaven, to return no more to reſide on earth in his former condition; yet he would aſſuredly come at length in a viſible manner, in the clouds of heaven, to judge the world, and to gather to himſelf all his believing people, as he had often promiſed them: upon this they returned to Jeruſalem from Mount Olivet. The place, from which Jeſus aſcended was about a mile diſtant from Jeruſalem: this was called a ſabbath-day's journey; probably becauſe it might generally be neceſſary to go ſo far on that day, in order to attend the ſervice of the ſynagogue.

V. 13, 14.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. x. v. 1—4.) We cannot determine any thing with certainty concerning this upper room, in which the apoſtles and diſciples aſſembled, and ſpent moſt of their time together in prayer, and other religious exerciſes. The brethren, or kinſmen, of our Lord, ſeem to have been the ſame perſons, who formerly did not believe in him. (*John*, c. vii. v. 5.) This is the laſt time, in which Mary, the mother of Jeſus, is mentioned in ſcripture: and it is in a very curſory manner, as one of the company, who joined in prayer; but without any peculiar diſtinction, or the leaſt appearance of exerciſing authority over, or even of giving counſel to the apoſtles.

V. 15—22.] We are here informed, that the whole he burſt aſunder in the midſt, and all his bowels guſhed out.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jeruſalem: inſomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to ſay, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book of Pſalms, Let his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His biſhoprick let another take.

21 Wherefore of theſe men which have companied with us all the time, that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptiſm of John, unto that ſame day that he was taken up from us, muſt one be ordained to be a witneſs with us of his reſurrection.

23 And they appointed two, Joſeph called Barſabas, who was ſurnamed Juſtus, and Matthias.

24 And they prayed, and ſaid, Thou, Lord, which knoweſt the hearts of all *men*, ſhew whether of theſe two thou haſt choſen,

25 That he may take part of this miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas, by tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apoſtles.

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number of diſciples, collected together at this time, was about one hundred and twenty. The ſeventy diſciples probably were a part of them: moſt of the five hundred brethren, who ſaw Jeſus in Galilee before his aſcenſion, had tarried behind; and doubtleſs many others believed in Him, in different parts of the land; though they were not at this time with the apoſtles. Whilſt they were thus uniting together, in conſtant prayer; it occurred to Peter, probably by ſome divine admonition, to propoſe to the company the appointment of another apoſtle, to complete the original number, in the place of the traitor Judas. In his addreſs he called them "men and brethren." We do not find, that our Lord ever ſpake to the people in this manner; perhaps it implied an equality, which was not ſuitable to the dignity of his character: but it was frequently uſed by the apoſtles, in addreſſing Jews as well as chriſtians; never, I think in ſpeaking to the Gentiles: and it ſeems to imply, that they acknowledged them to be of the ſame nature, as men deſcended from Adam, and of the ſame favoured family, as deſcended from Abraham. Peter reminded them of the fulfilment of the word by David, concerning Judas, when he propheſied of Chriſt, or ſpake as a type of him; (*Pſ.* xli. v. 9:) and as it was neceſſary that theſe ſcriptures ſhould be fulfilled; ſo they ought not to be diſconcerted at it. For though Judas had been numbered with them as an apoſtle; yet he had deſerved his doom by his treachery and baſe behaviour, in conducting thoſe, who came to apprehend his Lord: but all, that he got as the wages of his iniquity, being reſtored by him to the chief prieſts, had only ſerved to purchaſe a field, (which in ſome ſenſe he might be ſaid to have purchaſed, as he ſupplied the money, which paid for it:) and then in deſpair hanging himſelf, (perhaps in this very field,) by ſome accident he fell down, and burſt aſunder; ſo that he became an horrid ſpectacle to the beholders, by the righteous judgment of God upon him. The next verſe ſeems to come in as a parentheſis, and to be the words of the hiſtorian, not thoſe of the apoſtle; who informed his readers, that this event became generally known to all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem; and the field, which had been bought with the price of the blood of Jeſus, and which coſt Judas his life alſo, was commonly called the field of blood, at the time when the hiſtory was written. Some think that Judas alſo was buried in it; if ſo, he bought a burying place among ſtrangers for himſelf, with the wages of his iniquity. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvii. v. 3—10.) However the apoſtle proceeded to obſerve, that as the ſcriptures had been fulfilled in the doom of Judas; ſo the ſame ſcriptures pointed out to them what their preſent conduct ought to be; for as it was predicted that his habitation ſhould be deſolate, ſo it was directed, that another ſhould take his important office, and charge. (*Pſ.* lxix. v. 25. cix. v. 8—11.) It behoved them therefore to take one of their company, who had attended on Jeſus with them, from the beginning of his miniſtry, to his aſcenſion into heaven; that he might be ſolemnly ſet apart to be, with them, a witneſs of his reſurrection, as well as to perform other parts of the apoſtolical office.

V. 23—26.] As the other apoſtles, and diſciples readily perceived the propriety of Peter's counſel, they proceeded to ſelect two perſons, according to the beſt of their judgment, for this important ſervice; probably they had both been of the number of the ſeventy diſciples, and were eminent for wiſdom, and integrity. But, being unable to decide which of them was the moſt fit for the charge; they referred the matter by prayer, and by caſting lots, to the Lord's determination. As Jeſus had perſonally appointed the other apoſtles, ſome good expoſitors have argued that this prayer was immediately addreſſed to him; and the language of it favours the ſuppoſition. Yet it is not ſufficiently clear to be uſed as an argument in the controverſy on that ſubject; as many other inſtances are. However they appealed to the Searcher of all hearts, (*John*, c. xxi. v. 17,) to determine which he had choſen, to take part of the authority, truſt, and labour of the apoſtleſhip, from which Judas had fallen by his atrocious crime, to go to that dreadful place of puniſhment, to which he was righteouſly condemned. In anſwer to this appeal, the Lord was pleaſed to direct the lot to fall upon Matthias; whom ſome ſuppoſe to have been the ſame with Nathaniel, becauſe both their names ſignify "the gift of God:" but this is uncertain.

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. The deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the apoſtles, 1---4. *2d. The aſtoniſhment, and different opinions of the multitudes, who were collected on this occaſion,* 5---13. *3d. Peter's ſermon to them, concerning the reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Jeſus, as evidenced by the pouring out of the Spirit upon them, according to the prophecies of the ſcriptures,* 14---36. *4th. The converſion of* 3000 *perſons, and the faith, piety, love, &c, of theſe primitive believers,* 37---47.

AND when the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we thankfully peruſe the inſtructive narrative “ of all, that Jeſus began both to do, and to teach :” let us remember that all inſtruction ſhould be reduced to practice ; and that miniſters ſhould begin *to do*, and then *to teach*, that their example may illuſtrate, confirm, and adorn their doctrine. For theſe ends we need a daily ſupply of that Spirit, by which Jeſus gave commandment to his apoſtles ; that we may be convinced effectually of thoſe truths, which, though evinced by infallible proofs, are never cordially believed, till his teaching remove the veil of pride, and worldly luſts from the underſtanding, and the heart. Then, and not before we learn to profit by what Jeſus hath ſpoken, concerning the kingdom of God ; and are induced to ſeek its privileges, and to obey its commandments. We ſhould therefore wait for this promiſe of the Father, according to the directions, which our Lord hath given us : for, though we are not to expect the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghoſt ; yet we muſt experience his purifying baptiſm, or we never can ſerve God, or be made meet for the inheritance of heaven. In proportion as this is wanting, (for it is communicated in different degrees,) even true believers remain under the influence of carnal prejudices, and cleave to earthly things ; by which they are kept in error, or betrayed into curious queſtions, and frivolous ſpeculations. But it behoves us to leave ſecret things to the Lord, to whom they belong ; and to ſubmit to his wiſdom, in all the diſpenſations of his providence and grace. It is enough, that he hath engaged to give believers ſtrength adequate to their trials, and ſervices ; that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they may, in one way or other, be witneſſes for Chriſt on earth ; whilſt in heaven he manages their concerns with the moſt perfect wiſdom, truth, and love. In our affections, and hopes we ought to follow our aſcended Saviour, that our converſation, and our hearts may be in heaven ; and that our expectation of his ſecond coming may be ſtedfaſt and joyful, by giving diligence to be found of him in peace without ſpot, and blameleſs.

In order to do this, and to ſerve the cauſe of Chriſt on earth, we ſhould ſtudy to be of one heart with all his true diſciples ; that by mutual conference we may encourage, and animate each other, and that our united prayers may be more fervent and uninterrupted. Thus we may have peace in communion with God and his ſaints, notwithſtanding the enmity and rage of an ungodly world. As the church of Chriſt at firſt conſiſted of but few perſons ; ſo we ought not to deſpiſe the day of ſmall things. A little company, united in love, exemplary in their conduct, fervent in prayer, and prudently zealous in promoting the cauſe of Chriſt by every means in their power, will generally increaſe with rapidity. We ſhould all carefully obſerve the diſpenſations of providence, and compare them with the holy ſcriptures, not only for the confirmation of our faith, but in order to learn our duty : and we ought to point out to our brethren thoſe intimations, which ſeem thus to be ſuggeſted to us ; that we may unite our endeavours to do good, as circumſtances may require, and occaſions may offer. The crimes, and awful fate of ſome profeſſed miniſters, who have been high in rank and reputation in the church, ſhould by no means lead men to deſpiſe that ſacred calling : but ſuch inſtances loudly require others to look to themſelves, to their motives, and intentions, as well as to their doctrine, and moral conduct. The nearer men approach to Jeſus in profeſſion, and office, the more deteſtable is their treachery ; if they ſecretly concur with his enemies, and betray his cauſe to them. The gain of ſuch hypocrites is the reward of iniquity ; and it will only purchaſe for them an Aceldama, a field of blood, a more awful condemnation, and more notorious infamy : for, (if they die impenitent, as is highly probable,) in what way ſoever they leave the world, and whether their habitations be left deſolate or flouriſhing ; they muſt follow Judas *to their own place*, even that prepared for the workers of iniquity. But when mercenary, and ungodly men are removed ; we ſhould beſeech the great Searcher of hearts, to fill their places in the church, with ſuch miniſters, as have known Chriſt, and are capable of being witneſſes for him, and of declaring to others the efficacy of his ſufferings, and the power of his reſurrection. They, who are entruſted in this matter, ſhould be careful to “ lay hands ſuddenly on no “ man :” but whilſt they do their beſt, to ſelect the moſt able and upright perſons for this ſacred ſervice ; they ought to pour out their moſt earneſt prayers to him, “ who knoweth what is in man,” to direct their choice, and to determine by and for them, who are, and who are not proper perſons. Where this is omitted, and when it degenerates into a form ; we need not wonder to ſee the church crowded with drones and hirelings ; inſtead of faithful, able, diſintereſted, and laborious miniſters of Chriſt, who are truly a moſt valuable “ gift of “ God,” to mankind. But indeed in every thing, when we have gone as far as we can, according to the wiſdom given to us ; we ſhould, in one way or other, refer the deciſion to the Lord : and ſurely the lot, which under both the Old, and the New Teſtament diſpenſation, hath been uſed, and owned, as a ſolemn and religious appeal to God's providence, to decide doubtful matters for his worſhippers, ought not to be uſed by chriſtians, in ſuch frivolous concerns, or in ſo irreverent a manner, as it generally is by thoſe, who “ have no “ fear of God before their eyes.”

2 And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jeruſalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noiſed abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, becauſe that every man heard them ſpeak in his own language.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—4.] (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. xxiii. v. 15—21. *Deut.* c. xvi. v. 9—12.) The word Pentecoſt implies that this was the fiftieth day; that is from the ſecond day of unleavened bread, whence this feaſt of the in-gathering of the harveſt was computed. The Iſraelites were commanded to bring a meat offering of the firſt-fruits of their corn, at this feſtival; which was alſo ſuppoſed to be obſerved in commemoration of the giving of the law from mount Sinai, fifty days after their departure out of Egypt. At this ſolemnity the Lord was pleaſed to pour out his Spirit on the apoſtles, and their company; and thus to conſecrate the firſt fruits of the chriſtian church. Multitudes from all parts of the country, and from diſtant regions were collected to Jeruſalem on this occaſion; and more than uſual ſeem to have attended, perhaps from the general expectation, which prevailed, that the Meſſiah would ſoon appear. Thus many, who at the preceding paſſover had ſeen Jeſus crucified with ignominy, and had carried the report of it to their ſeveral places of abode, would now ſee this remarkable proof of his reſurrection and aſcenſion, which would every where be made known in like manner. As Jeſus aroſe on the firſt day of the week; ſo the Holy Spirit deſcended on the ſame; ſeven weeks, or on the fiftieth day afterwards; which tended to honour that day, that was ſoon to be ſet apart as the chriſtian ſabbath. The apoſtles, &c, ſpent the intermediate time in prayer and expectation, which prepared their minds for this great event. The day of Pentecoſt, properly ſpeaking, began the preceding evening; ſo that in the morning it might be ſaid to be fully come: and the apoſtles, and their company were then collected together in entire harmony and love; probably in the upper room, where they before aſſembled for prayer, &c. No objection to this can properly be taken, on account of the room being too ſmall to hold the multitudes, that afterwards came together: for we muſt ſuppoſe, that they ſurrounded the houſe, where the apoſtles had been, and that they went out to them; as no building, which they could procure, would hold ſuch immenſe numbers. Whilſt they were thus waiting the performance of the promiſe, which the Lord had given them; there came a ſound from heaven, reſembling that of an impetuous wind, which entered and filled the houſe, where they were ſitting. This was an emblem of the invincible energy, with which the Holy Spirit works upon the minds of men; bearing down all oppoſition before him, in a manner that cannot be explained, but which is moſt manifeſt by its effects, (*John*, c. iii. v. 8.) At the ſame time there appeared the form of tongues, divided at the end of them, and reſembling fire; one of which reſted on each of the apoſtles, and probably of the whole company: this was an emblem of that gift, which was at this time beſtowed upon them, of ſpeaking divers languages, which they had never learned, in the moſt fluent, and proper manner: and the appearance as of fire, denoted the fervent zeal, with which they were enabled to ſpeak, and the effects, which their words produced upon the minds of their hearers. (Notes, &c. *Jer.* c, xxiii. v. 39. *Matt.* c. iii. v. 11.) At the time of this extraordinary appearance, the whole company were abundantly repleniſhed with the gifts, and graces of the Holy Spirit: ſo that they began to ſpeak with other tongues, or in languages, of which they had before been quite ignorant; as alſo with more diſtinct views, and lively affections, even as the Spirit ſuggeſted divine truths to their minds, and enabled them to diſcourſe upon them in a ſuitable manner. A more ſtupendous miracle than this can ſcarce be imagined; as every one muſt ſee, who carefully conſiders the ſubject, and recollects with what difficulty an adult perſon acquires the accurate knowledge, and pronunciation even of one language, ſo as to ſpeak it with propriety and without heſitation. At the ſame time it was of the utmoſt importance to the end deſigned: for whilſt it ſerved to confirm the teſtimony of the witneſſes of our Lord's reſurrection; it qualified the apoſtles, and firſt preachers of the goſpel for their important ſervice, to which their want of learning would have otherwiſe been an inſurmountable hindrance. The diverſity of languages, introduced at Babel, (*Gen.* c. xi. v. 1—9,) hath always been the great obſtacle to the diffuſion of uſeful knowledge, and of true religion: but ſuch inſtruments, as the Lord ſaw good to employ in propagating the chriſtian religion among the nations, could have made no progreſs in their work, without the knowledge of other languages, beſides their native dialect; as even the Jews diſperſed in foreign countries generally ſpake the Greek tongue: but the deficiency being ſupplied in this miraculous manner, enabled them to ſhew the credentials of their commiſſion from God, by their ability for the ſervice to which they were called, in every place whither they went.

V. 5—11.] As there were great numbers of Jews and proſelytes at that time in Jeruſalem, who had come up to celebrate the feaſt; ſo many ſeem to have taken up their reſidence there for a longer time, in order to attend on the temple worſhip, to which they had a devoted affection. When therefore *this noiſe was made*, (for thus it may be rendered, and ſo may refer to the ſound of

7 And they were all amazed, and marvelled, ſaying one to another, Behold, are not all theſe which ſpeak Galileans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Meſopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Aſia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and ſtrangers of Rome, Jews and proſelytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them ſpeak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, ſaying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking, ſaid, Theſe men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter, ſtanding up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and ſaid unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jeruſalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For theſe are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, ſeeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was ſpoken by the prophet Joel:

17 And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, (ſaith God,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all fleſh: and your ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſy, and your young men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream dreams:

18 And on my ſervants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in thoſe days of my Spirit; and they ſhall propheſy:

19 And I will ſhew wonders in heaven above, and ſigns in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of ſmoke:

20 The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

21 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* who-

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the ruſhing, mighty wind, which might be ſo ordered as to call the attention of the people to the place where the apoſtles, &c, were aſſembled :) or, when theſe extraordinary events were rumoured abroad; the multitudes came together to the place, and after they had examined the matter, they were thrown into the utmoſt aſtoniſhment, by hearing the company addreſs them ſeverally in their own languages, with the moſt exact propriety. For they ſuppoſed, by ſome previous information, or by ſome circumſtances reſpecting them, that they were all natives of Galilee, men of mean education and employment, who could not be expected to underſtand any other language, than the dialect of the Hebrew, or Syriac tongue, which was there generally uſed: yet they addreſſed themſelves to every one of the company, in that language, which was peculiar to his native country, with the utmoſt fluency; the ſame perſons alſo ſpeaking to ſeveral of them in ſucceſſion, in different languages, without the leaſt heſitation, or impropriety. From the different regions afterwards mentioned, it is computed, that ſeven or eight diſtinct languages, and many more different dialects of the ſame language, muſt have been thus ſpoken; for each of this company to hear his native tongue diſcourſed in. As the inhabitants of Judea are mentioned, diſtinct from the reſt; we may ſuppoſe, that there was a material difference, in pronunciation at leaſt, between their dialect, and that of the Galileans; and that the apoſtles, &c, were no longer diſtinguiſhable in this reſpect from thoſe of Judea. (*Mark*, c. xiv. v. 70.) "The ſtrangers of Rome," mean native Jews, and perſons proſelyted to their religion, who generally reſided at Rome, but then ſojourned as ſtrangers at Jeruſalem. But the multitude not only remarked the languages, in which the apoſtles diſcourſed: but alſo that they ſpake of the wonderful works, or the great things of God; even thoſe great things, which related to his goſpel ſalvation, and his mercy and truth to his choſen people.

V. 12, 13.] The ſtrangers, who perfectly underſtood the diſcourſe of the apoſtles, &c, were fully ſatisfied of the reality of the miracle; though they were in doubt, as to the meaning and intention of it: but others, (probably the inhabitants of Judea, who did not underſtand any foreign language, and who were more prejudiced againſt the diſciples of Jeſus, than the ſtrangers were;) derided them as a company of drunkards, who having drank too freely of the *new*, or *ſweet* wine prepared for the feaſt, uttered unmeaning ſounds in a confuſed and clamorous manner, as if they were ſpeaking in other languages.

V. 14—21.] As Peter is ſaid to have ſtood up *with the eleven*, we may ſuppoſe, that they alſo diſcourſed to the ſame effect to other companies of the aſſembled multitude, according to the different languages, which they beſt underſtood; though only the ſubſtance of His diſcourſe be recorded for our inſtruction. He lifted up his voice, and ſpake with ſuch boldneſs, and in ſo audible a manner, that he ſilenced the mixed converſation, and fixed the attention of the people. He addreſſed himſelf both to the men of Judea, and to the ſtrangers then ſojourning at Jeruſalem, demanding their ſerious regard to the intereſting ſubject, about which he was about to ſpeak. He obſerved, that the opinion of their being drunken was totally groundleſs, as many preſent muſt know: and as it was no more than nine o'clock in the morning, it was very uncandid to ſuppoſe that ſo large ſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved.

22 Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye yourſelves alſo know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain;

24 Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death: becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.

25 For David ſpeaketh concerning him, I foreſaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand that I ſhould not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover alſo, my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope:

27 Becauſe thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption.

28 Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life; thou ſhall make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his ſepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his throne:

31 He ſeeing this before ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul was not left in hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption.

32 This Jeſus hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes.

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he

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a company had been guilty of ſuch exceſs, on a ſolemn religious feſtival, when about to attend on the worſhip of the temple. On the contrary, the effects, which they witneſſed, were a ſpecimen of the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, concerning the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the laſt days, or thoſe of the Meſſiah. This prediction hath already been explained; (Notes, &c, *Joel*, c. ii. v. 28—32:) but we may obſerve, that the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt was only the beginning of it's accompliſhment: nor could Peter himſelf then underſtand the full meaning of it, as it related to *all fleſh*, to men of all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, as it was afterwards verified in the different chriſtian churches. The word, "propheſy," may denote, not only their fluency in ſpeaking of divine things, for the inſtruction of others, as the term is ſometimes uſed: but alſo their predicting future events, eſpecially thoſe concerning the approaching ruin of the unbelieving Jewiſh nation: for "the wonders," afterwards mentioned, evidently relate to the prodigies, that preceded and attended the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the ſubſequent devaſtations; and which were typical of the terrors and ſolemnities, connected with the end of the world, and the day of judgment. Whether or no we here underſtand, by "calling on the name of the Lord," an application to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, as in a parallel paſſage, (*Rom.* c. x. v. 13—15:) yet the apoſtle certainly meant to warn the Jews, that none of their prayers would be heard for deliverance from the approaching miſeries; if they continued to reject their promiſed Meſſiah, whoſe coming, reſurrection, and exaltation were atteſted to them by theſe miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit: and the connexion of the words implies the ſame warning to all, who read them, in reſpect of deliverance from the wrath to come.

V. 22—32.] The apoſtle next called the attention of his audience more immediately to the grand ſubject of his diſcourſe. They had heard or known much, concerning Jeſus, who had been deſpiſed as a Nazarene: yet it was evident, that he was *at leaſt* a man, whom God had greatly owned, and approved; as appeared from the various, multiplied, and inconteſtible miracles, which were wrought by him, in the moſt public manner, in the midſt of them, as they well knew. Yet inſtead of receiving him as the Son of God, and their Meſſiah, their rulers had taken him up, and condemned him as a malefactor; and ſo had crucified him by the wicked hands of the idolatrous Romans: and, as the multitude of the nation had preferred Barabbas to him, and clamorouſly demanded his crucifixion; ſo this moſt atrocious murder was become their own act and deed, as much as if they had performed it with their own hands. Indeed all this had been done, according to the determinate counſel, and foreknowledge of God; who had appointed this great event for the moſt wiſe, righteous, and merciful purpoſes; and had alſo predicted it many ages before: yet that was in no degree an excuſe for, or extenuation of their guilt, who were influenced by the baſeſt motives in what they did. (c. iv. ver. 27, 28. *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 22.) But though they had murdered their Meſſiah, as if he had been a deceiver; yet God had abundantly vindicated his character; having raiſed him up, (*John*, c. ii. v. 19,) and liberated him from *the bonds* of death, or from thoſe bonds, in which the pains and agonies of his cruel execution had terminated: by which indeed it was impoſſible, that he ſhould have been long confined; whether hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear.

34 For David is not aſcended into the heavens: but he ſaith himſelf, The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footſtool.

36 Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the apoſtles, Men *and* brethren, what ſhall we do?

38 Then Peter ſaid unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt.

39 For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.

40 And with many other words did he teſtify and exhort, ſaying, Save yourſelves from this untoward generation.

the dignity of his Perſon, the nature of his undertaking, the perfection of his work, the purpoſe of God, or the predictions of ſcripture were conſidered. For David ſpake expreſſly of *him* in a paſſage, with which they were well acquainted, (Notes, &c, *Pſ.* xvi:) this would be evident, if they would permit him to ſpeak freely of David, who might be termed one of the venerable patriarchs of their nation, being the progenitor of ſo numerous and honourable a family, from whom the Meſſiah was to deſcend: for it was evident that David died, was buried, and ſaw corruption like other men; and his ſepulchre had been preſerved by frequent repairs, even to that day, in honour of his memory. It therefore followed beyond all controverſy that He ſpake not of himſelf in the paſſage, that had been cited; but being a prophet, and knowing that the Meſſiah would deſcend from him, *in reſpect of his human nature*, (*Pſ.* c. ii. v. 7. *Rom.* c. i. v. 3, 4,) to reign upon his throne over the people of God for ever, (2 *Sam.* c. vii. v. 12. *Pſ.* lxxxix. v. 19—36;) in the proſpect of theſe events, He ſpake of the reſurrection of the Meſſiah, who was indeed to be put to death, but whoſe ſoul would not be left in the place of ſeparate ſpirits, nor would his body be ſuffered to lie in the grave, till it began in the leaſt to corrupt. In accompliſhment of which prophecy God had actually raiſed up Jeſus, whom the Jews had crucified, but who was indeed the promiſed Meſſiah, of the family of David, and born at Bethlehem. This event had taken place on the third day after his death, before the body had begun to "ſee corruption," (*Lev.* c. vii. v. 17;) of this the twelve apoſtles, and all the company preſent were competent witneſſes, as they had ſeen and converſed with him repeatedly after his reſurrection.

V. 33—36] The reſurrection of Jeſus, as the apoſtle proceeded to obſerve, did not however reſt on their teſtimony alone; for, having aſcended from amongſt them, he had been exalted by the power of God, at his right hand, to the higheſt dignity and authority in heaven: and having received of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, according to the promiſes of the ſcripture to the Meſſiah; (*Pſ.* lxviii. v. 18. *Iſaiah*, c. xi. v. 1—3. c. lix. v. 21:) he had poured out upon them his diſciples all thoſe miraculous gifts, and divine influences, the effects of which they witneſſed at that time, and which they could not poſſibly account for in any other manner. For David had not ariſen from the dead to aſcend into heaven, according to the meaning of the Pſalm before cited: but in another place calling the promiſed Meſſiah his Lord, though he was to be his Son; (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* cx. v. 1. *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 41—46;) he had predicted his aſcenſion into heaven, and his exaltation to the right hand of God; there to be eſtabliſhed in ſupreme authority, till he had ſubjected all his enemies, and rendered their oppoſition to him, an acceſſion to his own glory. As therefore the events, to which they bare witneſs, and to which the Holy Ghoſt given to them bare witneſs alſo, accorded ſo exactly to their ancient prophecies; the whole houſe of Iſrael might be aſſured by the moſt complete demonſtration, that God had conſtituted Jeſus of Nazareth, whom they had contemptuouſly crucified, the Lord and Judge of all worlds, and the anointed Prophet, Prieſt and King of his choſen people; ſo that he was actually poſſeſſed of complete authority both to ſave and bleſs thoſe who truſted in and obeyed him, and alſo to cruſh all that obſtinately refuſed to ſubmit to him. The ſcope of Peter's argument was to ſhew that the crucified Jeſus was indeed the promiſed Meſſiah, and that he was actually riſen, aſcended, and glorified. When the Jews were convinced of this, and were induced to believe on him in that character; they would readily learn from ſcripture, and from further inſtructions, the ſpiritual nature of his kingdom and ſalvation, the intent of his ſufferings and death, and the various doctrines of his religion.

V. 37—40.] The apoſtle's argument, and application were indeed very concluſive, and intereſting; though in other reſpects his diſcourſe was peculiarly plain and ſimple. But when we conſider the complicated evidence of our Lord's doctrine, and miracles, and the obſtinate unbelief of the Jews; we ſhall perceive, that neither Peter's words, nor yet the miracles they witneſſed, would have produced ſuch effects as followed; had not the Holy Spirit been alſo communicated to the audience, to remove the veil of pride, prejudice, and ſinful affections from their minds. "The Comforter being come, he convinced them of ſin, of righteouſneſs and of judgment:" (Note, *John*, c. xvi. v. 8—11:) the apoſtle's words therefore, attended by his powerful influences, penetrated their hearts like arrows, or as a ſharp ſword; (*Heb.* c. iv. ver. 12;) and being filled with terror on

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the ſame day there were added *unto them* about three thouſand ſouls.

42 And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every ſoul: and many wonders and ſigns were done by the apoſtles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And ſold their poſſeſſions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

46 And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart;

47 Praiſing God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.

account of their enormous guilt, in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory; they cried out to the apoſtles in deep diſtreſs, as to their friends, and countrymen, enquiring with great earneſtneſs what they muſt do? Was there any hope for them of eſcaping the vengeance of their exalted Meſſiah, whom they had ſo deeply injured? If there were, by what means could it be done? To this the apoſtle replied by exhorting them to repent of that and all their other ſins, (Note, *Matt.* c. iii. v. 2;) and to openly avow their firm belief that Jeſus was indeed the Meſſiah, by being baptized in his name. (Note, &c. *Matt.* c. xxviii. v. 19, 20.) In thus profeſſing their faith in Him, they would receive a full remiſſion of their ſins for his ſake; as well as a participation of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, which they ſaw beſtowed upon his diſciples: for the promiſe, (either the general promiſe reſpecting the Meſſiah, and the bleſſings of his kingdom, as made to Abraham their Father; or the particular promiſe of the Spirit, quoted from Joel;) was made, or propoſed to them, and to their children; and not to thoſe preſent only, but to all thoſe however diſperſed, whom God ſhould call by his word, and Spirit. If Peter's words, as ſuggeſted by the Holy Ghoſt, implied the calling of the Gentiles alſo, as they ſeem to have done; he could not himſelf underſtand them in that ſenſe. The promiſe, as made to Abraham, included alſo his poſterity; and that of the new covenant did the ſame to thoſe, who ſhould be intereſted in it; (*Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 39;) and the language here accords therewith: the male deſcendants of Abraham were to be circumciſed, as included in the promiſe, and as a part of the viſible church; and this paſſage may intimate, that the infant offspring of chriſtians, being alſo included in the promiſe, and in the covenant of their parents, and being a part of the viſible church, ſhould be admitted to baptiſm, which is the outward ſign of the ſame ſpiritual bleſſings, as circumciſion was. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xvii.) Beſides this general addreſs, Peter bare witneſs to the truth, and exhorted his audience, with many other words: the ſubſtance of which was, that they ſhould embrace the goſpel, without waiting for the concurrence of their rulers, and teachers; and, by thus entering into the church and kingdom of Chriſt, ſhould ſave themſelves from that deſtruction, which impended over that perverſe and rebellious generation of Iſrael, for obſtinately rejecting their promiſed Meſſiah; as well as that they ſhould flee for refuge to Jeſus, from the wrath to come.

V. 41. *Then,* &c.] The apoſtle had exhorted *every one* of them to be baptized, and they that gladly received the word were baptized: as therefore it is moſt improbable, that there ſhould have been none of John's diſciples in this large company; ſo we may fairly infer, that Chriſt's baptiſm was not preciſely the ſame inſtitution with John's; and that from this time *at leaſt*, John's diſciples were baptized, when they were admitted into the chriſtian church, according to the form appointed by our Lord, after his reſurrection. Though Peter exhorted the Jews to be baptized in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, as profeſſing their faith in him as the Meſſiah; yet there is no reaſon to doubt, but they were baptized, "in," or "into the name of the Father, of "the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt," as had been preſcribed. As ſo great a number was at once baptized on this occaſion, and as they were not by the river Jordan where was much water, but in the midſt of a populous city, crowded alſo with ſtrangers; ſo it is at leaſt probable that the ordinance was not adminiſtered by immerſion: eſpecially as the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, repreſented by it, is conſtantly, and in ſeveral places of the chapter, ſpoken of, as *poured* out, and *ſhed* forth upon them. The numerous converts made on this occaſion, though at firſt pricked to the heart, are ſaid to have *gladly* received Peter's word: they were deeply convinced of their guilt, and danger; and they rejoiced to hear of a free forgiveneſs, through that Saviour, whom they had joined in crucifying: ſo that they chearfully ventured all the conſequences of embracing the goſpel, and joining themſelves, by baptiſm, to the deſpiſed and perſecuted diſciples of Jeſus.

V. 42—47.] Though the converſion of this great multitude was ſo ſudden; yet their profeſſion was not tranſient or wavering: for they ſtedfaſtly attended on, received and profeſſed the doctrine of the apoſtles; though doubtleſs many efforts would be made to draw them aſide from it. They alſo aſſociated with them in religious conference, and worſhip; joining with them in "breaking of bread," as well as in prayers. This ſeems to refer to the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper, in remembrance of the atoning ſufferings and death of Chriſt; which evidently took place very frequently in the primitive times. The impreſſion alſo, which theſe

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. Peter and John at the temple healing a cripple in the name of Jeſus; and the amazement of the people, 1---11. *2d. Peter thence taking occaſion to preach the goſpel to them, and exhorting them to believe in Jeſus for ſalvation, &c,* 12---26.

tranſactions made upon the ſpectators, and all who heard of them, was very great: for all the people were overawed, and afraid of attempting any thing againſt the diſciples; as they ſaw evident and ſignal miracles performed by the apoſtles in confirmation of the reſurrection and power of the crucified Jeſus. And as many of the converts were ſtrangers, who were detained at Jeruſalem longer than they intended, in order to get a further inſight into the religion they had embraced; and as many others were poor; ſo the more affluent of the company were contented to ſhare their abundance in common with their poorer brethren. This was a remarkable evidence of their indifference about the world, their joy and confidence in, and their love and gratitude to the Lord, and their cordial affection to one another; though juſt before they had been ſtrangers to, and divided from, each other. (Notes, &c, *Iſaiah*, c. xi. v. 6—9.) Perhaps the predictions, which they heard, concerning the approaching deſolations of Jeruſalem and Judea, might concur in influencing them to ſell their eſtates, and other poſſeſſions; that they might impart to every one of the company as they had need. This was peculiarly ſuitable to the ſtate of the church at that time, and the ſame diſpoſition ought always to prevail: yet it is evident, that the ſame way of expreſſing it is not required, nor would it be in general expedient. Their minds alſo were occupied almoſt entirely with theſe important concerns: and as many of them were far from home, and probably had not many ſecular affairs to attend upon; ſo they daily continued in the moſt harmonious manner, to meet together in the courts of the temple, for the worſhip of God; and in the houſes of believers, one after another, as they had opportunity; where they hoſpitably entertained each other, as well as joined in ſacred ordinances. Thus their very meals were ſanctified; as they uſed the good gifts of God, with chearful gratitude, and in a ſimple dependence on, and deſire to pleaſe him. They were alſo frequently employed in celebrating the praiſes of God, and bleſſing him for all his unſpeakable benefits: ſo that even the Jews, who did not join them, held them in great eſtimation, and ſhewed great favour to them: and thus the Lord, from day to day, inclined the hearts of more and more of them, to embrace the goſpel, and join themſelves to the diſciples of Jeſus; and they were not mere profeſſors, but *ſaved perſons*, or ſuch, as were actually brought into a ſtate of acceptance with God, and made partakers of his regenerating grace.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſeeming delays to the performance of God's promiſes, till the appointed time be fully come, are peculiarly advantageous to thoſe, who wait upon him in patience, faith, and prayer. When a company of believers are of one heart, thus to ſeek, and hope for the pouring out of his Holy Spirit, a revival of true religion may reaſonably be expected: for, though that divine Agent be ſovereign in his operations, yet the promiſe ſtands ſure, that they ſhall be imparted to thoſe, who pray for them. We cannot indeed explain the manner, in which He works; but we may perceive that with invincible power he bears down all the oppoſition of pride, and worldly prejudices, as with a ruſhing mighty wind; and changes the heart, like a vehement fire. Sound judgment, heavenly wiſdom and knowledge, fervent affections, holy boldneſs, and a ready utterance in the things of God, are his gifts to thoſe, whom he qualifies for the ſacred miniſtry, or to ſerve the church of Chriſt in any important, and public ſituation; for which all may depend on him, according to their need: and though we expect not ſuch miraculous powers, as were communicated to the apoſtles on the day of Pentecoſt; yet we ſhare the benefit of them, both in the demonſtrative evidence thereby given to the truth of the goſpel, and in the infallible declaration they have thus authenticated and tranſmitted to us, of the way in which we may be ſaved. The remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, even in his ordinary influences, and operations, will always produce a meaſure of the ſame effects, as this extraordinary communication did. It will ſoon be noiſed abroad; many will be excited to examine into it, and to make their obſervations: ſome will be aſtoniſhed at the change made in, and the things ſpoken by, ſuch perſons, as were before known to be careleſs, ignorant, or illiterate; and they will be led to acknowledge that there is ſomething real and wonderful in it: others will ſtand in doubt, and not know what to determine about it: but others, more ignorant, malignant, and daring, will, without heſitation, or any competent information, pronounce it all enthuſiaſm, deluſion, hypocriſy, impoſture, or perhaps intoxication; and ſo treat it with ſcorn and deriſion! But wiſdom will be juſtified by all her children!

However, if we are indeed influenced by the Spirit of truth, holineſs, and love, we ſhall meekly bear with, or reply to, ſuch injurious reflections; aſſigning the cauſe of thoſe effects, which produce ſuch different opinions. Thus even men's curioſity, and malicious reproaches will give the miniſters of Chriſt an opportunity of bearing teſtimony to the truth before thoſe, who have been ſtrangers and enemies to it. On ſuch occaſions, it is peculiarly important for us to ſhew the agreement of our ſentiments, profeſſions, experience, affections, and behaviour, with the doctrines, promiſes, predictions, examples, and precepts of the ſcripture; ſolidly arguing from it, as of undoubted truth, and applying every ſubject as cogently as poſſible to the hearts and conſciences of our hearers. It ſhould alſo be noticed, as the evident doctrine of God's word, that when He remarkably pours out his Spirit, in abundance of ſpiritual gifts and graces, on numbers of every rank, and ſtation; ſo as to effect a great revival of true religion in any place: it may alſo be expected, that he will remarkably puniſh thoſe, who perſiſt in their neglect and contempt of his great ſalvation. Aſſuredly, at that ſolemn period which is ſo often foretold, and prefigured in ſcripture; when the

CHAP. III.

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is

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ſun ſhall literally be turned into darkneſs, and the whole viſible creation, be deſtroyed by one common conflagration, to introduce the great, and notable day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men; none will eſcape that dreadful condemnation, and the ſubſequent vengeance, except thoſe, who have previouſly called upon the name of the Lord, in and through his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Saviour of loſt ſinners, and the conſtituted Judge of all mankind. But on the other hand, it is an undoubted truth, that whoſoever, of any age, nation, rank, or character, ſhall call on the name of the Lord, in this appointed manner, ſhall then be completely ſaved from deſtruction, and made an heir of eternal life.

To ſuppoſe, as ſome do, that, becauſe chriſtianity is publicly profeſſed amongſt us, and we have no longer any need of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, we therefore want not his ſanctifying operations; is as unreaſonable, as it would be to argue from the preſent improved ſtate of agriculture, that the influences of the ſun and rain are become unneceſſary: and the ſtate of thoſe congregations, where ſuch notions are maintained, too plainly ſhew their real tendency If Peter, and Paul ſhould come again on earth to preach the goſpel, and to confirm their doctrine with the moſt undeniable miracles; no ſaving effects would follow, except the Holy Spirit were given to render the word ſucceſsful. But indeed the whole goſpel will ſeldom, if ever, be faithfully preached, and applied to the conſciences of men; ſave when the miniſter is in ſome meaſure enabled to ſpeak, as "the "Spirit gives him utterance." Even Peter, and the other apoſtles were manifeſtly raiſed above themſelves, when thus filled by the Holy Ghoſt; and their ſingular boldneſs, and liberty, in ſpeaking of the wonderful works of God, were as evidential of a ſupernatural aſſiſtance, as the new tongues with which they ſpake; (Note, *Mark*, c. xvi. v. 17:) and ſuch aſſiſtance we may expect, and *thus* ſhall experience, from time to time, when we are called to bear witneſs to "the truth as it is in "Jeſus."

The enmity of men's heart againſt God appears eſpecially in his contempt of and oppoſition to thoſe, whom He hath moſt evidently owned, and approved: the doctrine, miracles, character, and crucifixion of Jeſus form the chief proof of this: but inſtances to the ſame effect have been multiplied in every age, The determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God cannot be the motives that induce men to any of their voluntary actions: and therefore can form no excuſe for their ſins. In permitting ungodly men to follow the bent of their own inclinations, he brings to paſs thoſe events, which he hath purpoſed, and predicted: but his decrees, and their accompliſhment are moſt holy, wiſe, righteous, and good; whereas the inſtruments, by which he works, know nothing of his great deſigns, but are actuated by the baſeſt motives, and aim at the gratification of their vileſt affections. This was moſt evident in the crucifixion of Chriſt; which, as appointed of God, was the moſt glorious diſplay of all the divine perfections, and replete with the richeſt bleſſings to mankind; but as perpetrated by the Jews, it was the grand diſcovery of human depravity, and in all it's circumſtances the greateſt wickedneſs, that ever was or can be committed. Such men aim to counteract the purpoſes of God, at the very time when they are accompliſhing them: and when he has wrought by them, as long as he ſees good; he turns his hand againſt them to their deſtruction.

As it was not poſſible, that the Redeemer ſhould be held under the power of death, though he endured the pain of it; ſo it cannot be, that the ſcripture ſhould be broken, or that his believing people ſhould come ſhort of that bleſſed reſurrection, of which He was the glorious firſt-fruits. After his example they are taught to ſet God always before them, to walk as in his preſence in humble obedience, and in confidence that they ſhall not be moved. In proportion to the degree of their faith and hope, their hearts rejoice, and dictate praiſes to their tongues. They too learn to meet death with a comfortable hope, that though their fleſh ſee corruption in the grave, yet it ſhall not finally be left there, and that their ſouls ſhall never experience the miſeries of the place of torment. Through their crucified, riſen, and aſcended Saviour, the ways of life are made known to them alſo, and from preſent earneſts they are encouraged to expect being filled with the joy of God's preſence, and favour for evermore. But all this ſprings from their aſſured belief, grounded upon prophecies, miracles, and abundant external and internal proofs, that Jeſus is indeed aſcended into the heavens. Pious kings, patriarchs and prophets of old looked forward to theſe events with joyful expectation, and died, aſſuredly believing that the Redeemer would appear, to overcome death, and to open the gates of heaven to all that truſted in him. An innumerable company of witneſſes teſtify, that the crucified Jeſus was He; and that, being riſen from the dead, he is exalted by the hand of the Father, to communicate all bleſſings to his people, and to put all his enemies under his feet. Therefore let all men know aſſuredly that Jeſus is the Lord and Judge of the whole world, and the anointed Saviour of all who obey him. When theſe truths are declared, with plain and direct application to the conſciences of ungodly men, under the influence of the convincing Spirit; the proud, ſtout, and hard heart begins to tremble and be diſquieted: nor will the ſalvation, and kingdom of the Prince of peace ever be welcome to thoſe, who never were pricked to the heart, by humiliating, and alarming convictions of ſin, ſo as to be excited to earneſt enquiries, what they muſt do? But the moſt deſperate enemies, when thus awakened, and diſquieted, ſhould be exhorted to repent, and believe in Jeſus, and to prove and profeſs their faith, in the way preſcribed by his holy word. Still repentance, and remiſſion of ſins are preached to the chief of ſinners, in the Redeemer's name, (*Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 47;) ſtill the Holy Spirit ſeals the bleſſing on the believer's heart;

called Beautiful, to aſk alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who ſeeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, aſked an alms.

4 And Peter, faſtening his eyes upon him, with John, ſaid, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive ſomething of them.

6 Then Peter ſaid, Silver and gold have I none; but ſuch as I have give I thee: In the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth riſe up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up; and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received ſtrength.

8 And he leaping up, ſtood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praiſing God.

9 And all the people ſaw him walking, and praiſing God.

10 And they knew that it was he which ſat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which was heal-

ſtill the encouraging promiſes are to us, and to our children, (who poſſeſs manifold advantages and opportunities, through the faith, and obedience of their parents;) ſtill the ſame bleſſings are ſent to "all that are afar off, even "as many, as the Lord our God ſhall call." We ſhould therefore embrace this ſalvation ourſelves; and then as we have opportunity, we ſhould teſtify, warn, exhort, invite, and perſuade ſinners to ſave themſelves from the perverſe generation of them, who reject the goſpel: and if our neareſt relatives refuſe to go with us in the way to heaven, or would hinder us from going; we muſt ſtop our ears to their blandiſhments, perſuaſions and reproaches, and eſcape for our lives from the ruin impending over them.

Under the influences of the Holy Ghoſt convinced ſinners will gladly receive the word of ſalvation, and ſoon find peace and joy in believing; they will boldly profeſs the truth that before they deſpiſed, renouncing the company of their ungodly acquaintance, and their worldly intereſts, and pleaſures; and they will join themſelves to the Lord, and his people, and delight in attending on his ordinances, and in keeping his commandments. But when ſhall we behold the whole company of thoſe, who have been baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus, diſpoſed to copy the example of theſe firſt-fruits of the goſpel? This ſpecimen of the genuine nature and tendency of chriſtianity ought carefully to be conſidered: for unleſs our views, purſuits, affections and conduct, in good meaſure correſpond with their's; we have great reaſon to queſtion whether we be indeed believers. Indeed we ſeldom witneſs haſty converſions iſſue in a ſtedfaſtneſs in faith and practice, becoming the goſpel of Chriſt: yet theſe things have been, and will again be united; and we muſt therefore form no general rules from ſuch obſervations. Rather let us ſtudy to copy the pattern here exhibited, and pray without ceaſing for the pouring out of the Spirit, to produce ſuch bleſſed effects in us, and around us: that we too may continue ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtle's doctrine, and in fellowſhip with all true believers; that our attendance on the Lord's table may be more frequent, ſerious, and influential, than it generally is at preſent; that we may abound more in ſocial prayers and ſupplications for each other, and for the ſucceſs of the goſpel; that we may delight daily in attending to the word of God, when we have opportunity, and leiſure from other duties; that we may uſe hoſpitality without grudging, and communicate liberally to our needy brethren; and that whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all to the glory of God, in gladneſs, and ſingleneſs of heart; at a diſtance from avarice, ſelfiſhneſs, intemperance, pride, anger, envy, contention, or any of thoſe manifold evils, which corrupt, diſgrace, and divide the church of Chriſt. Thus we ſhall over-awe our inveterate enemies, even without the power of working miracles; thus we ſhall ſhew forth the praiſes of Him, who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light; thus we ſhall ſilence the ſlanders, and ſoften the prejudices of thoſe, who are without, and diſpoſe them to attend to, and favour us, and the doctrine of God our Saviour. And when the moſt unlikely perſons, (ſuch as the crucifiers of the Lord Jeſus,) are transformed by the goſpel into ſuch harmleſs, peaceful, loving, and exemplary worſhippers of God; it may be expected, that the Lord will add to his church daily ſuch as ſhall be ſaved: and even they, who have, like Peter, been overcome by temptation to act inconſiſtent with their holy profeſſion; if indeed they are deeply humbled by their falls, and made more bold in, and zealous for the cauſe of their gracious Lord; may yet hope to be employed as his inſtruments in forwarding ſo bleſſed a work, for his glory and the ſalvation of ſouls. May the Lord then pour out his holy Spirit on all miniſters, chriſtians, and congregations for theſe bleſſed purpoſes; till the earth be filled with the knowledge of his glory!

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—11.] The events, recorded in this and the following chapter, ſeem to have occurred ſoon after thoſe, that we have been conſidering. The apoſtles, and primitive believers generally attended the temple worſhip, at the hours of prayer; of which the third, and the ninth, or nine o'clock in the morning, and three in the afternoon, when the morning and evening ſacrifices were offered, with burning of incenſe, were the chief: (c. ii. v. 46. *Luke*, c. i. v. 9, 10.) However theſe two apoſtles ſeem at this time to have gone up to the temple alone; perhaps to ſeek an opportunity of preaching to the people, as well as to offered held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12 And when Peter ſaw *it*, he anſwered unto the people, Ye men of Iſrael, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye ſo earneſtly on us, as though by our own power or holineſs we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jeſus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the preſence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14 But ye denied the holy One, and the Juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raiſed from the dead; whereof we are witneſſes.

16 And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man ſtrong, whom ye ſee and know: yea, the faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all.

their ſupplications before God. The lame man, here mentioned was above forty years old, and had been a cripple from his birth, (c. iv. ver. 22.) The beautiful gate of the temple was erected by Herod the Great, it was above fifteen yards high, and about eight yards wide, being formed of Corinthian braſs, and with the moſt exquiſite workmanſhip: it is ſuppoſed to have ſeparated the court of the Gentiles from the inner court. The purpoſe of the apoſtles to work a miracle in this man's behalf, ſeems to have ariſen from an immediate divine ſuggeſtion to their mind. The declaration of Peter, that he had no ſilver or gold to beſtow upon the man, as it was after ſome at leaſt of the poſſeſſions had been ſold, and entruſted to the diſpoſal of the apoſtles; may be conſidered as a proof, that they were not in the leaſt enriched by the liberality of their brethren. But though he could not anſwer the man's expectations in this way; he was willing to help him, according to the ability committed to him. There is no occaſion to comment on the circumſtances attending this miracle: we, as it were, ſee the man making trial in every way of his limbs, and the ſtrength thus unexpectedly communicated to them; and expreſſing in the moſt lively manner his admiring gratitude to God, and his affection for the inſtruments of this mercy to him. The multitudes, drawn together by the report of this miracle, ſeem to have been collected not only from the courts of the temple, but from the adjacent parts of the city. (*John*, c. x. v. 23.)

V. 12—16.] Notwithſtanding the multiplied miracles, which Jeſus had wrought, and the aſtoniſhing events that had lately taken place at Jeruſalem: the Jews had ſo little applied their minds to a proper conſideration of them; that every new miracle excited their amazement, as if they had not ſeen any before, or could not tell what inference to draw from it. The apoſtle therefore demanded of them, why they were ſo aſtoniſhed at this work, when ſo many others, all tending to prove the ſame doctrine, had already been performed among them? Or why did they look to him and John, as if they had healed the man by their own power, or as if their own holineſs had given them ſome peculiar intereſt in the favour of God? For this was by no means the caſe: on the contrary the God of their fathers, had wrought this, and all the other wonders, which they had witneſſed, in order to honour his Son Jeſus, whom he had glorified at his right hand in heaven. Indeed they had delivered him as a condemned malefactor to Pilate, becauſe he called himſelf the Son of God; denying him to be their promiſed Meſſiah, and prevailing with Pilate by their importunity to ſentence him to be crucified, when, being convinced of his innocence, he had determined to releaſe him. Nay at the ſame time that they thus unanimouſly, and deliberately renounced all relation to this righteous Saviour, this holy One of God; they had deſired the releaſe of a baſe murderer: and thus they had wickedly preferred a wretch, who deſtroyed men's lives, to the Prince, or Author of life and ſalvation, from whom alone ſpiritual and eternal life could be obtained; and had murdered Him by the hands of the gentiles! But though they had thus atrociouſly diſhonoured the Author of life, (Note, *John*, c. i. v. 4:) yet God the Father had raiſed him from the dead, of which they were witneſſes: and the inconteſtible miracle, which at this time ſo excited the amazement of the people, had been performed by faith in the name of Jeſus, and by power derived from Him, in confirmation of their teſtimony to his reſurrection, and aſcenſion: nor had they any influence in reſtoring this cripple to perfect ſoundneſs; except as their faith had engaged the power of Jeſus to perform the cure. Every attentive reader muſt obſerve the vaſt difference, which there was in the manner of Chriſt's working his miracles, from that of his apoſtles, &c. His language was that of omnipotence and ſovereignty, "I will, be "thou clean:" "Peace, be ſtill:" "Damſel ariſe." Nor did he ever, except in the caſe of Lazarus, which hath been conſidered, (Note, *John*, c. xi. v. 41—46;) even appeal by prayer to his Father, or give the leaſt intimation of any power exerted, except what was inherent in himſelf: He never heſitated to receive the greateſt honour, which was rendered on theſe occaſions; He never cautioned any man againſt ſuppoſing that he wrought his miracles by "his own power, &c." But the apoſtles wrought their's expreſſly in his name, and by faith *in Him*; they were afraid of receiving any honour to themſelves, except as the unworthy inſtruments in the hands of Jeſus; they referred all the honour to their Lord; and they never mentioned the Father in the buſineſs, except to ſhew, that the God of Abraham was fulfilling in his Son Jeſus the promiſes made to the patriarchs, and was determined to glorify in every way that Perſon

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* alſo your rulers.

18 But thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhall ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out; when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord;

20 And he ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven muſt receive until the times of reſtitution of all things, which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began.

22 For Moſes truly ſaid unto the fathers, A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear in all things, whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you.

23 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every ſoul which will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed.

26 Unto you firſt, God, having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

whom they had treated with ſuch contempt and indignity. No ſatisfactory reaſon ever was, or ever can be given of this manifeſt difference; but by allowing that Jeſus knew himſelf to be One with, and equal to the Father; and that the apoſtles were conſcious, that they were poor ſinful worms, who depended on Jeſus alone for every thing.

V. 17, 18.] The apoſtle, having ſhewn the Jews the atrociouſneſs of their crime, was careful not to irritate them needleſsly, nor yet to drive them to deſpair. He was willing therefore to ſuppoſe, that both they and their rulers had done this deed in ignorance: doubtleſs that reſulted from pride, prejudice, and many criminal ſources; yet they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, if they had known him. (*Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 34. *John*, c. xv. v. 21—25. 1 *Cor*. c. ii. v. 8. 1 *Tim*. c. i. v. 13.) At the ſame time the apoſtle reminded them, that God had in this manner fulfilled the prophecies of the ſcripture, concerning the atoning ſufferings of their promiſed Meſſiah: ſo that, though they thought evil againſt Him, yet God meant it for good. (*Gen*. c. l. v. 20.)

V. 19—21.] As the ſin of the Jews was ſo undeniable and aggravated, and as there was yet hope for them in the mercy of God, through the Saviour whom they had crucified; ſo the apoſtle exhorted them to repent of, and turn from, that, and all their other ſins to the acceptable worſhip and ſervice of God, by faith in his Son. Thus, and thus only, all their ſins would be blotted out as a cancelled debt, never more to be charged to their account. (*Iſaiah*, c. xliii. v. 25. c. xliv. v. 22.) Some think, that the apoſtle yet expected times of proſperity to the Jewiſh nation, in caſe they could be prevailed on to embrace the goſpel: others explain “the times of “refreſhing, &c.” of the ſpiritual joy and conſolation afforded to converted perſons, after their ſorrows and alarms; others conſider the coming of Chriſt to deſtroy the unbelieving Jewiſh nation, and the ſubſequent proſperity of the chriſtian church, as here intended; and others lead our thoughts forward to the final judgment, which will be the time of complete conſolation to all believers; as the pardon of all their ſins will then be made known to the whole world, and all the painful conſequences of ſin will in reſpect of them be for ever terminated. Indeed the context ſeems to favour this latter interpretation: for the apoſtle, having told the people, that the Lord would then ſend Jeſus, who had been preached to them; added, that the heavens muſt receive him, till the “times of the reſtitution of all things,” which had been foretold by all their prophets. Theſe prophecies, from the firſt promiſe concerning the ſeed of the woman, that was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, to the cloſe of the Old Teſtament, had reſpect to the coming of Chriſt, to the eſtabliſhment of his religion in the world, to the prevalence of it over all the earth, and to the complete reſtoration of all things in the heavenly ſtate, after the day of judgment; when ſatan and all his party being ſhut up for ever in hell, ſin and miſery ſhall no more be found in any other part of God's creation. But as the apoſtles were delivered gradually from their prejudices; ſo it is not certain, that Peter had at this time exact and diſtinct views of the ſubject, or clearly underſtood the words, which the Holy Spirit ſpake by him. (2 *Pet*. c. iii. v. 11—14.)

V. 22—26.] (Note, &c. *Deut*. c. xviii. v. 15—18.) This prophecy hath already been explained. “One “cannot imagine a more maſterly addreſs than this; “to warn the Jews of the dreadful conſequence of their “infidelity, in the very words of Moſes their favourite “prophet; out of a pretended zeal for whom they were “ready to reject chriſtianity, and to attempt it's deſtruction.” (Doddridge.) The perſons, to whom the apoſtle ſpake, were the deſcendants of thoſe, to whom the prophets had been ſent, and they had inherited from them their ſacred oracles, as well as the advantages of the covenant firſt made with their fathers; eſpecially that of the Meſſiah's ariſing from amongſt them, who was that ſeed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1ſt. The impriſonment of Peter, and John; and the great ſucceſs of their preaching, 1---4. 2d. Their examination before the council, and their bold confeſſion of Jeſus, as the promiſed Meſſiah, and the only Saviour of men, 5---12. 3d. The rulers, unable to anſwer, diſmiſſing them with prohibitions, and menaces; which they avowed themſelves bound in duty to diſregard, 13---22. 4th. The united prayers of the apoſtles and their company, for boldneſs and ſupport in their work, anſwered by a ſenſible pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt; the bleſſed harmony, and pious liberality of the believers, and the great aſſiſtance and ſucceſs afforded to the apoſtles, 23---37.

the earth were to be bleſſed. Therefore the firſt propoſal of the goſpel was ordered to be made to them. For God, having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, to be a Prophet, Prieſt, and Ruler, like unto Moſes, but unſpeakably ſuperior to him; and having raiſed him from the dead, and placed him upon his glorious throne, had ſent him, in his preached goſpel, and by his Holy Spirit, to render them truly happy: not by advancing them to worldly authority and proſperity, as they had vainly expected; but by teaching, encouraging, and enabling them to turn away from all their ſins, that they might walk before him as his acceptable worſhippers, and adopted children, in the light of his countenance, and the enjoyment of his favour. (*Tit.* c. ii. v. 11—14.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſtated ſeaſons of communion with God, and the opportunities of doing good will be welcomed by us with alacrity proportioned to the degree, in which we are ſpiritually minded: for the carnal mind alone complains of their tediouſneſs, and too frequent returns; even as ſickly perſons lothe the ſight of the food, which the healthy reliſh, and feed upon. Piety and charity ſhould always be connected: they, who are diſabled from labour, ought to be ſupported by benevolence; but too often the impoſitions of the ſlothful and profligate give ſelfiſhneſs an excuſe for turning away from real objects of compaſſion. Poverty and ſimplicity in the miniſters of Chriſt are far better proofs of integrity, and contempt of filthy lucre, than affluence, ſplendour, and luxury: and whilſt the Lord employs others as his ſtewards, in diſpenſing wealth, to relieve the neceſſities of their brethren; it ſhould not grieve the ſteward of the myſteries of God, if he be conſtrained to ſay to the expecting poor, “ſilver, “and gold I have none, but ſuch as I have I give unto “thee.” In every caſe, we ought to impart to others, according to the ability, which is given to us; and where there is a willing mind it is accepted of God, according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not; and ſo it ought to be by our brethren. If we would attempt to good purpoſe the healing of men's ſouls; we muſt go forth in the name and power of Jeſus Chriſt; calling on helpleſs ſinners to ariſe, and walk in the way of holineſs by faith in Him. (*Iſaiah*, c. xxxv. v. 6.) We ſhould indeed ſhew all attention to thoſe, whom we addreſs: but nothing will be done, till the Lord puts forth his power, and then the moſt impotent will receive ſtrength to walk in newneſs of life, and ſhew forth the praiſes of God, by chearfully joining in his worſhip, and by cleaving to his miniſters and people. Thus the attention of men is excited; facts proclaim the efficacy of the goſpel, and every true convert is a monument raiſed to the honour of the great Redeemer.

They, who are employed as inſtruments in this work, ſhould be careful to remind the people, that as theſe effects are not produced by their power, ſo they are not wrought for the ſake of their holineſs; but for the glory of that divine Saviour, whom ſinners ſtill deny, and deſpiſe: for though he is the Prince of life, and the Author of eternal ſalvation to all them, who obey Him; yet numbers prefer the company and favour of the vileſt tranſgreſſors, and the indulgence of their ruinous luſts, to him, and all his purchaſed bleſſings. But whether good hath been done to ſouls, or whether we have been enabled to fight ſucceſsfully againſt ſin and temptation; it hath been effected by faith in his name: and we muſt go forth to all our future labours and conflicts by faith, engaging his Almighty arm to work in us, by us, and for us, that he may have all the glory. They who reject Chriſt do it through ignorance of one kind, or another; this can in no caſe be admitted as an excuſe, but it alleviates the guilt at ſome times far more than it does at others: and whilſt unbelievers ſhould be told of their ſins, and all their aggravations in the plaineſt manner; yet we ſhould admit of any extenuation of their guilt, which can fairly be ſuppoſed; and we ſhould always be careful to ſhew them, that the mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus gives them a ground of hope, notwithſtanding all their crimes. Bleſſed be his name, that the ſins of all, who repent and are converted ſhall aſſuredly be blotted out: the connexion is now inſeparable; and though this change muſt be wrought by the grace of God, yet repentance and converſion are men's duty: they are to be exhorted, and called upon to repent and be converted, and aſſured of forgiveneſs and reconciliation to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, in caſe they obey the call; and alſo warned, that except they repent, and be converted, neither the mercy of God, nor the blood of Chriſt will ſave them from perdition: and when ſinners are convinced of theſe things, they will begin to cry to the Lord, “turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned;” “create in “me a clean heart, and renew a right ſpirit within me.” To the penitent, converted, and believing, times of refreſhment will come from the preſence of the Lord: even the ſeaſons of his judgments on the wicked will be attended with conſolation to their ſouls; and the day of judgment, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed to take vengeance on his enemies, will complete the ſalvation, of his people; (2 *Theſ.* c. i. v. 6—8.) That ſolemn period, when the earth ſhall be burnt up, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, will be to them the reſtitution of all things, the manifeſtation of their adoption, and the redemption of their bodies; (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 19—23:) but every ſoul, that now refuſes to hear, believe, and obey that Prophet like unto Moſes, whom God

AND as they ſpake unto the people, the prieſts, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them;

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jeſus the reſurrection from the dead.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide.

4 Howbeit, many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thouſand.

5 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and ſcribes,

6 And Annas the high prieſt, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high prieſt, were gathered together at Jeruſalem.

7 And when they had ſet them in the midſt, they aſked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſaid unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Iſrael,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, that by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, *even* by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole.

11 This is the Stone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the corner.

12 Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.

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hath raiſed up unto us, will then moſt certainly be deſtroyed from among the people. Though we are not in the firſt inſtance the children of the prophets: yet we are of thoſe kindreds of the earth, who are called on to inherit the bleſſings procured by the promiſed ſeed of Abraham: to us alſo are committed the oracles of God; to us the glad tidings are preached, that God ſo loved us as to ſend his Son Jeſus to bleſs us, in turning every one of us from our iniquities. Let not ſinners then imagine that religion calls them to be uneaſy, and unhappy; but rather that it kindly offers to guide them to true felicity: let none imagine that they can be happy by continuing in ſin; when God declares that the bleſſing conſiſts in being turned from all iniquity: let none think that they underſtand and believe the goſpel, who only ſeek deliverance from the puniſhment of ſin, but do not expect happineſs from being delivered from ſin itſelf: and let none expect to be turned effectually from their conſtitutional, or cuſtomary iniquities, except by believing in, and receiving Chriſt the Son of God, as their "Wiſdom, "Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption."

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—4.] (*Luke*, c. xxii. v. 52.) The Sadducees ſeem to have increaſed in number and influence, amongſt the chief Prieſts and Rulers. As the teſtimony of the apoſtles to the reſurrection of Jeſus tended to ſubvert their ſcheme of infidelity; ſo this was an additional reaſon for oppoſing their doctrine. It could not therefore be expected, but that, on this and other accounts, the rulers of the Jews would perſecute the apoſtles, as they had done Jeſus himſelf: (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. x. *John*, c. xv. v. 18—27. c. xvi. v. 1—3:) accordingly under the guidance of the perſon, who preſided over the ſtationary guard of Levites, that conſtantly attended at the temple, the Prieſts, &c, apprehended Peter and John as they were preaching, and caſt them into priſon, as it was ſo late in the evening, that they could not then conveniently proceed againſt them. Probably they had ſpent a conſiderable time in preaching to the people; and no more than a brief abſtract of their diſcourſe is tranſmitted to us. Many expoſitors think that 5000 perſons were converted on this occaſion; but it rather ſeems that this number of believers was then completed: for it is not likely that any one day ſhould be honoured with greater ſucceſs than that, on which the Holy Ghoſt firſt deſcended: nor do the words convey that idea to the mind; yet they ſeem to imply that the whole company amounted to 5000 men, beſides women, and children.

V. 5—12.] (*John*, c. xviii. v. 13.) Caiaphas ſeems to have performed the ordinary functions of the high prieſthood; and Annas to have had the greater influence and authority in the council. The other perſons here mentioned were doubtleſs very conſiderable at that time; but we are not much concerned in the conjectures that are formed about them. However the affair excited great attention: as all parties ſeem to have conſidered their intereſt, authority, reputation, and favourite ſyſtems to be in the moſt imminent danger. In their enquiry of the apoſtles, they virtually allowed, that an extraordinary cure had been performed: but they wanted to know whether it was the effect of a divine power, or of incantation, by the uſe of ſome name, according to the notions, which then prevailed. Peter, being filled with the Holy Ghoſt, felt none of thoſe terrors, which had formerly led him to deny his Lord: but he ſpake before that great aſſembly, with the utmoſt courage, liberty, and propriety: (*Luke*, c. xii. v. 11, 12. c. xxi. v. 12—15.) He inſiſted that the action, about which they were cited to anſwer as criminals, was a good deed; an act of genuine mercy as well as of divine power: and he would have all the Prieſts, Scribes, and Rulers, and all the whole nation, to underſtand that it had been wrought by the name, or power of Jeſus the Nazarene, who was the

13 Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jeſus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed ſtanding with them, they could ſay nothing againſt it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aſide out of the council, they conferred among themſelves,

16 Saying, What ſhall we do to theſe men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, *is* manifeſt to all them that dwell in Jeruſalem; and we cannot deny *it*.

17 But that it ſpread no further among the people, let us ſtraitly threaten them, that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach, in the name of Jeſus.

19 But Peter and John anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might puniſh them, becauſe of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was ſhewed.

Meſſiah. They had indeed crucified him as a deceiver, for declaring himſelf to be the Son of God: but his reſurrection from the dead, by the power of the Father, had proved his high claim; and the man, who ſtood before them, miraculouſly cured of his hopeleſs lameneſs, was a confirmation of their teſtimony to that event. Indeed Jeſus was that Perſon, of whom David propheſied, as of a Stone, that was deſigned to be the Cement, Support, and Ornament of the whole ſpiritual temple; and they were the builders, (by office, and authority in the church,) who had ſet at nought that Stone, and thrown it aſide as utterly worthleſs, (Notes, &c. Pſ. cxviii. v. 22, 23.) But, according to that prophecy, He was then exalted to the higheſt authority in heaven, as the anointed Saviour, and the only Mediator between God and man: inſomuch that there was no ſalvation in any other perſon or way, either for the Rulers, or people; nor any other name under heaven, by which ſinners might be ſaved from deſtruction. This plainly intimated, that no man can be ſaved, except in a way of God's expreſs appointment; and that theſe proud Rulers muſt either be ſaved by that Jeſus, whom they had crucified, and whoſe diſciples they perſecuted; or they muſt periſh for ever. The attempt of ſome learned men to prove, that ſalvation here ſignifies "*healing*," may be conſidered as a ſpecimen of the way, which they take to explain the word of God into a conſiſtency with their ſchemes. The miracle of the man, who had been healed, was merely adduced as a proof, that Jeſus was exalted to be the only Saviour of ſinful men. The apoſtles, and their hearers did not all want miraculous cures of bodily diſeaſes: but they all needed a Saviour and ſalvation: the name of Jeſus is given to men of every age and nation, as that whereby alone believers are ſaved from the wrath to come; not from bodily ſickneſs and temporal death: and every reader muſt perceive what energy there was in the addreſs to the conſciences of theſe perſecutors, according to the obvious interpretation of it; and how this vain criticiſm enervates it, and cauſes all its ſpirit and vigour to evaporate. We may alſo obſerve, that the rulers never mentioned to the apoſtles the report of their having ſtolen the body of Jeſus: though they were ſo fairly called upon to do it: for they knew it to be a mere falſhood; and they muſt have reſiſted their own convictions, in pretending that they were perſuaded that Jeſus was not riſen.

V. 13—22.] The council had probably hoped to overawe the apoſtles into ſilence and ſubmiſſion: but when they found with what conſtancy and courage they replied, and with what boldneſs they charged them with having crucified the Meſſiah; and when they conſidered that they were perſons of mean education, of obſcure ſtation, and deſtitute of that knowledge, to which they were ſo much attached; they were much ſurpriſed, and recollected that they had ſeen them with Jeſus, when they had laid wait to inſnare him, as he taught in the temple. And as the man, who had been healed, was upon the ſpot, ready to atteſt the reality of the miracle; they could neither object any thing to the inconteſtable fact, nor deny the inference which was drawn from it. To conceal their perplexity! therefore, they ordered the apoſtles to withdraw for a while: and having conſulted what they ſhould do in ſuch a difficult caſe; they agreed that it would be in vain to deny the miracle, as it was ſo evident to every body; yet it was neceſſary to do ſomething effectual to ſtop the progreſs of a doctrine, which tended to bring diſgrace and ruin upon them, and their authority: they therefore determined, in defiance of their convictions, to forbid the apoſtles in the ſevereſt terms, on pain of their heavieſt diſpleaſure, to preach any more in the name of that Jeſus, whom they had juſt before puniſhed as a deceiver; which ſentence they reſolved to juſtify by proceeding againſt thoſe, that eſpouſed the ſame cauſe. To this, Peter and John replied with great conſtancy and propriety, by demanding, whether it was reaſonable, or a righteous thing in the ſight of God, to regard the injunctions of man, more than His commandments? They were divinely

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief prieſts and elders had ſaid unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and ſaid, Lord, thou *art* God, which haſt made heaven, and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy ſervant David haſt ſaid, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers were gathered together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt.

27 For of a truth, againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael were gathered together,

28 For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy ſervants, that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word,

30 By ſtretching forth thine hand to heal; and that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jeſus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and they ſpake the word of God with boldneſs.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one ſoul: neither ſaid any *of them* that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed was his own; but they had all things common.

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commiſſioned to preach in the name of Jeſus: and however they might reſpect the authority, or fear the indignation of the rulers; yet their inward conviction of the truth, and importance of their doctrine; and the remembrance of thoſe things, which they had witneſſed concerning, and heard from, their crucified, riſen, and aſcended Lord, would conſtrain them to declare his name, and ſalvation to all around them. This bold declaration induced the rulers to add ſtill ſeverer threatenings: but at the ſame time they diſmiſſed them; for, having no plauſible reaſon to alledge for puniſhing them, they dared not riſque the conſequences of ſuch a meaſure; as they perceived that the people ſhewed them great favour, and thankfully acknowledged the miraculous cure performed by them, to be a glorious diſplay of divine power, and mercy among them.

V. 23—31.] The company, to which the apoſtles are ſuppoſed to have returned, conſiſted of the 120 perſons before-mentioned, who probably were aſſembled to pray in their behalf. Under the impreſſion of the report made to them by Peter, and John, and by the influence of the ſame Spirit, they all united, as with one heart and ſoul, in prayer to the Lord, as the omnipotent Creator of the world. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* ii.) The expreſſion made uſe in applying this prophecy to Jeſus, may refer to his immaculate conception of the Holy Ghoſt, by which he received his human nature perfectly holy; as the unction of the ſame Spirit preſerved that holineſs in full perfection, through all the temptations and trials of his life and death: this conſideration tended to aggravate the guilt of thoſe, who hated, and oppoſed this "holy Child," and righteous ſervant of God. Yet both Herod the Tetrarch, or king, of Galilee, who profeſſed the Jewiſh religion, and all the rulers of God's choſen people; and Pilate, who was a profeſſed idolater, with the bulk of the Jewiſh nation, as well as the Gentile attendants on Pilate, had united together to treat Him with the utmoſt cruelty and contempt. But they had only accompliſhed the purpoſes of God, which he had, in his ſovereign appointments, and wiſe counſels, determined before to be done. (c. ii. v. 23.) The diſciples therefore were perſuaded, that the rage of *their* perſecutors would in like manner be reſtrained, and over-ruled for good; and they did not ſo much pray to be protected againſt them, as to be endued with boldneſs, to declare their doctrine with liberty and energy, at all events; and that it might be confirmed as of divine authority by continued miracles being wrought, in the name of Jeſus. Though they had been injured, and threatened; yet they deſired no miracles of vengeance, but only that God "would ſtretch forth his hands *to* "*heal*;" (*Luke*, c. ix. v. 51—56:) for love to the bodies and ſouls of men had now ſupplanted their ſelfiſh paſſions, and meliorated their zeal. Some expoſitors have thought, that this prayer was immediately addreſſed to the Holy Spirit; by whoſe power the human nature of Jeſus was formed in the womb, and who was the immediate Agent in the work of creation, and in the miracles performed by the apoſtles. But this is not evident: and indeed there are few paſſages of ſcripture, in which the Holy Spirit is evidently prayed to, perſonally, ſeparately, and diſtinctly: perhaps as prayer is preſented both *by*, and *for*, the Holy Spirit; it may be the leſs proper to addreſs it *to* Him, except as one with the Father, and in the Son, in the unity of the Godhead. However theſe petitions were immediately granted: the place, in which the diſciples were aſſembled was ſhaken, perhaps as it had been on the day of Pentecoſt by the ruſhing mighty wind; and they were all evidently filled with an abundant communication of the Holy Spirit, in all his enlivening, ſanctifying, and comforting influences, as well as in reſpect of the extraordinary powers imparted to them.

V. 32—35.] (Notes, &c. c. ii. v. 41—47. *Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 38—40.)

V. 36, 37.] Probably Barnabas had been one of the

33 And with great power gave the apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes ſold them, and brought the prices of the things that were ſold,

35 And laid them down at the apoſtles feet: and diſtribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

36 And Joſes, who by the apoſtles was ſurnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The ſon of conſolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, ſold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apoſtles feet.

ſeventy diſciples: he became afterwards ſo eminent as to be ſpoken of as an apoſtle. (c. xiv. v. 14.) His name probably was given him on account of his talent, in exhorting, and encouraging ſinners to come to Chriſt, and believers to cleave to him in the midſt of perſecution; (c. xi. v. 23, 24.) The eſtate, which he ſold, ſeems to have been an inheritance, that he poſſeſſed, perhaps in Cyprus; and not any land, which he held as a Levite. His name may be mentioned on this occaſion, either becauſe his example had a great effect on others: or, becauſe he was afterwards ſo active a labourer in the goſpel, to ſhew that he was entirely diſintereſted in his profeſſion and miniſtry. The money was laid at the apoſtle's feet, who for a time took the charge of diſtributing it: but it was ſoon found expedient to employ others in that ſervice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The zeal of avowed infidels to make proſelytes, and their grieving that others ſhould believe a future ſtate of retributions, ſeems at firſt ſight unaccountable: for if this were a deluſion it could do men no harm; if the other were true it could do them no good. But the honour of being deemed wiſer than others, and qualified to undeceive a deluded multitude, has abundant charms to the vain-glorious mind: and moreover infidels have their doubts, and only believe their own reaſonings in proportion as others ſeem to be convinced by them; when therefore contrary doctrines are taught with confidence, and ſucceſs; they probably find alarms excited in their minds, leſt after all they ſhould find themſelves miſtaken. However, whether the influencing principle be a regard to authority, intereſt, reputation, ſuperſtition, ſyſtem, or inward quietneſs, or all of them combined; ungodly men will be grieved when the goſpel is ſucceſsfully preached, and their vices and errors expoſed: and miniſters may generally expect contempt and perſecution from man, in proportion as God honours and proſpers them: but the gates of hell can never prevail againſt the church of Chriſt. The harmleſs and uſeful ſervants of God have often been indicted as criminals, for their work and labour of love; when profligates have eſcaped with impunity: and rulers, elders, chief prieſts, and their connexions have commonly been moſt forward in theſe abſurd proſecutions. Nay to this day inſtances are not wanting, in which reading the ſcriptures, ſocial prayer, and religious converſation meet with frowns and checks; when indolent and diſſipated churchmen eſcape with impunity, or are diſtinguiſhed by preferments! However, if we obſerve the inſtructions and obey the precepts of Chriſt, he will bear us out; and the teaching of his Spirit will render the moſt timid bold in his cauſe: the deſpiſed Redeemer muſt be confeſſed before his moſt malignant enemies, by all, who would be owned of him before the aſſembled world: and if ſuppoſed builders reject this precious corner Stone of the living Temple; we muſt, when called to it, fairly ſhew them their folly, guilt and danger, how much ſoever they may reſent it: for aſſuredly there is no ſalvation in any other; nor any other name given to men, by which any one under the whole heaven can be delivered from the wrath to come.

They, who boldly declare theſe truths, will commonly be conſidered as "unlearned and ignorant men;" whilſt they determine to know nothing amongſt their hearers, but Chriſt crucified: but if they ſpeak and act, as thoſe who have been with Jeſus, who have imbibed his inſtructions and ſpirit, and learned to copy his example; they will by well doing, and ſound argument, put gain-ſayers to ſilence. Yet this comes far ſhort of converting them; for when avarice, ambition, or any corrupt paſſion rules within, men ſhut their eyes, and cloſe their hearts in enmity againſt the light; and determine to bear down, if they can, by authority and violence, what in their conſciences they feel to have the ſtamp of truth and divinity upon it. But whatever deference is due to rulers, and councils; we muſt not heſitate to declare, that we will obey God rather than man, and venture all conſequences in ſo doing. Indeed when the heart is powerfully influenced by heavenly love and zeal, and the underſtanding clearly perceives the importance of the truth, and the line of duty, a man cannot but ſpeak what he hath ſeen and learned; he has a moral inability to refrain; his holy principles have a commanding influence over him, ſuperior to the tyrant's frown, or the terrors of perſecution: and as far as God hath work for ſuch a man, he will reſtrain the wrath of his moſt potent enemies, or turn the tide of popular favour in his behalf, as he ſees good.

Believers may, in various ways be confined amongſt thoſe, who fear not God: but being let go, they will return to their own company. Whatever trials we meet with, fervent prayer is our never-failing reſource; and the more unite in it, as with one heart, the more ſignal anſwers may be expected. All things are alike eaſy to him, who made the heavens, &c: vain therefore muſt be the devices, which princes, or people, how powerful, or numerous ſoever they be, can imagine againſt the Lord and his anointed Saviour; for when power, policy, and tumult have done their utmoſt, they have but effected what "the hand and counſel of the Lord had determined before ſhould be done"; and in effect, they

CHAP. V.

Contains 1ſt. The awful judgment of God on Ananias, and Sapphira, for their hypocriſy, 1---11. *2d. The multiplied miracles wrought by the apoſtles, and their great ſucceſs,* 12---16. *3d. Their impriſonment by the Rulers, and their deliverance by an angel, who ordered them to preach publicly in the temple,* 17---20. *4th. The perplexity of the council; the examination of the apoſtles before them, and their bold teſtimony to Jeſus, as exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, &c,* 21---32. *5th. The Rulers purpoſing to ſlay them, but adviſed againſt it by Gamaliel,* 33---39. *6th. The apoſtles diſmiſſed, after they had been beaten, &c; and their joy, courage, and diligence in their work,* 40--42.

BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, ſold a poſſeſſion,

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife alſo being privy *to it,* and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apoſtles feet.

3 But Peter ſaid, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghoſt, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was ſold, was it not in thine own power? Why haſt thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias, hearing theſe words, fell down, and gave up the ghoſt: and great fear came on all them that heard theſe things.

6 And the young men aroſe, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him.*

7 And it was about the ſpace of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter anſwered unto her, Tell me whether ye ſold the land for ſo much? And ſhe ſaid, Yea, for ſo much.

9 Then Peter ſaid unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy huſband *are* at the door, and ſhall carry thee out.

10 Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghoſt: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her huſband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.

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have only digged a pit for their own deſtruction, and rolled a ſtone, that will rebound upon them and cruſh them to pieces. He knoweth the power, and rage of our foes; and we ſhould not ſo much pray for exemption from trials, and protection from dangers; as for grace to enable us ſteadily to do our duty, and to glorify our God in the midſt of them all. Our prayers ſhould eſpecially be preſented in love, even to our bittereſt perſecutors: we ſhould requeſt that the Lord's hand may be ſtretched out to heal, and to ſave, not to avenge and deſtroy. Thus we may expect to be anſwered in a moſt evident manner, and to be filled with inward confidence and comfort, amidſt all our outward tribulations. But let us carefully conſider the effects produced by the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt, in thoſe bleſſed days, when "great grace was upon all" the company of believers. We do not read of their minute exactneſs about external forms, and doubtful diſputations: but they were all of one heart and ſoul; they had but one common intereſt to attend to; their love to the brethren was united with equal contempt of worldly riches; ſo that the pooreſt had no want, the wealthieſt no excluſive poſſeſſions. When ſuch diſpoſitions prevail, and are exerciſed according to the circumſtances of the times, the teſtimony of miniſters will have a peculiar energy upon the minds of their hearers; eſpecially if their own conduct exhibits an example of integrity, diſintereſtedneſs, and love; and if it be evident that, like their Maſter, they deem it "more "bleſſed to give than to receive".

N O T E S.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—11.] The reputation acquired by thoſe, who ſold their eſtates muſt have been ſo great; that we need not wonder, if in ſome inſtances it overpowered rhe fear of perſecution, and excited the ambition of thoſe, who were not upright in the ſight of God. But the increaſe of ſuch profeſſors would have diſgraced the cauſe of the goſpel, and diffuſed an infection in the church. The Lord was therefore pleaſed to check this evil, at the opening of the New Teſtament diſpenſation; as he had others, at the promulgation of that of Moſes, (Notes, &c, *Lev.* c. x. *Joſh.* c. vii.) Ananias and Sapphira, ſeeing how thoſe perſons were reſpected, who had parted with their whole ſubſtance, to ſupply the wants of their poor brethren, agreed together to ſell their land, to ſecrete a part of the money, and to give the reſt to the apoſtles as the whole price of it. In doing this, they perhaps propoſed to themſelves to have a maintenance allotted them from the common ſtock, and yet to reſerve a part of their ſubſtance to themſelves; but the deſire of reputation ſeems to have predominated: however if they could poſſibly have ſucceeded in their project, it would have opened the way to a variety of impoſitions. But Peter was immediately ſhewn the deception, which they were practiſing, and charged it upon Ananias in expreſs terms. The words he uſed on this occaſion implied, that whatever Satan might ſuggeſt, he could not have filled his heart with this wickedneſs, had he not been conſenting to it. The falſhood told to

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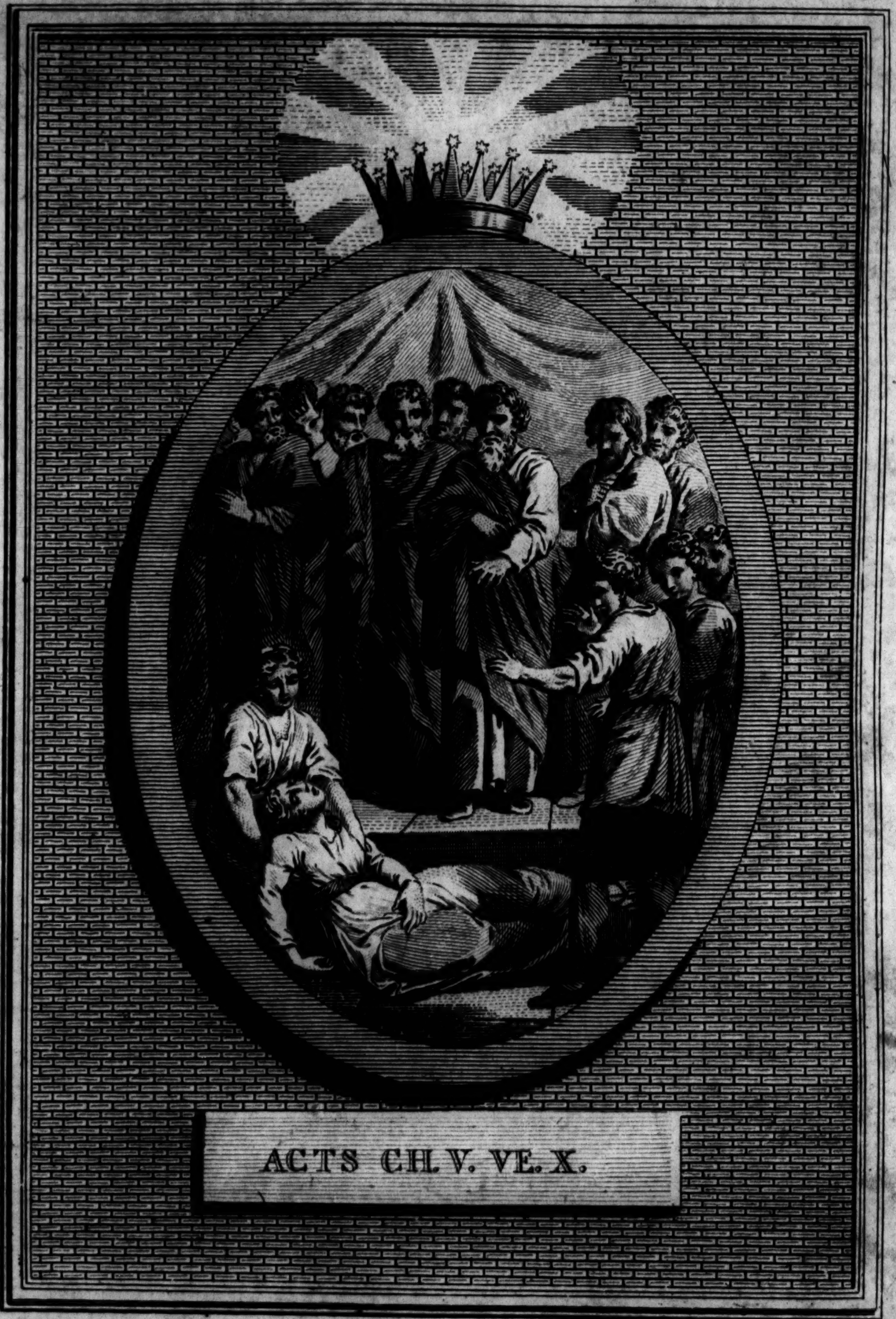

ACTS CH. V. VE. X.

Corbould del. *Grignion Sculp.*

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12 And by the hands of the apoſtles were many ſigns and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the reſt durſt no man join himſelf to them: but the people magnified them.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women;)

15 Inſomuch that they brought forth the ſick into the ſtreets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that, at the leaſt, the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by might overſhadow ſome of them.

16 There came alſo a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jeruſalem, bringing ſick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed every one.

17 Then the high prieſt roſe up, and all they that were with him, (which is the ſect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

18 And laid their hands on the apoſtles, and put them in the common priſon.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the priſon-doors, and brought them forth, and ſaid,

20 Go, ſtand and ſpeak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high prieſt came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the ſenate of the children of Iſrael, and ſent to the priſon to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the priſon, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The priſon truly found we ſhut

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apoſtles, to whom the Holy Ghoſt had ſo evidently been given, was a bold attempt to impoſe upon the Spirit of Truth himſelf; and this was to lie unto God, and not unto men; which is a plain teſtimony to the Deity, and perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt. The eſtate continued Ananias's property, even after his profeſſion of chriſtianity; the ſale of it was not a matter of compulſion, but of voluntary choice; and even the money, after it was ſold, was at his own diſpoſal: whence it appears, that this liberality was not abſolutely required of the primitive chriſtians, but was the reſult of their abundant zeal and love. So that the crime of Ananias did not ſo much conſiſt in retaining part of the price of the land; as in endeavouring in ſo ſolemn a tranſaction, to impoſe upon the apoſtles with a direct, and pertinacious lie, the reſult of avarice and oſtentation combined togerher. As his death was the immediate effect of divine power, it ſtruck terror into all that heard of it: and he was buried immediately in his own garments, without further preparation, or mourning; as Sapphira was afterwards, when perſiſting in the ſame horrid falſhood, ſhe was ſtruck dead by the ſame awful judgment of God. This apparent ſeverity on two detected hypocrites was real mercy to vaſt numbers: it excited a reverential fear, and a holy jealouſy in the whole company of believers; it doubtleſs induced them to ſtrict ſelf-examination, prayer, and circumſpection, and a dread of hypocriſy, covetouſneſs, or vain-glory: it prevented the increaſe of ſcandals in the church, and the addition of falſe profeſſors; and thus it tended to render the goſpel honourable in the eyes of the people. We may alſo obſerve, that this event was an evidence of the apoſtles integrity, and veracity, even to their enemies: God would never have inflicted ſuch a judgment at their word upon inferior diſſemblers, if their teſtimony to the reſurrection of Jeſus had been a deception: and it ſhewed that they would not connive at iniquity in thoſe of their own party, or for the ſake of their private intereſt, or that of their ſociety.

V. 12—16.] Whilſt juſt ſeverity was in one inſtance miraculouſly exerciſed, the power of God by the hands of the apoſtles was continually exerted in multiplied wonders of mercy. The whole company of believers were as firmly attached to the apoſtles, and united to each other, as before; and they conſtantly met in Solomon's porch, to join in the worſhip of God: but none of thoſe, who were not willing to renounce all for Chriſt, ventured to join them; though they were greatly honoured by the people in general, and numbers of real converts were continually added by baptiſm to the church, and by faith to the Lord. Indeed the power of God ſo evidently attended the apoſtles, that the people both in Jeruſalem, and the adjacent towns, applied for miraculous cures by laying their ſick in *every ſtreet*; that the very ſhadow of Peter as he paſſed along might fall upon them, from which they expected the benefit: nor were any of them diſappointed. (*John*, c. xiv. v. 12.) As Peter was the readieſt ſpeaker, and ſtood foremoſt in every tranſaction, and as he was one of the firſt that experienced perſecution: ſo he was more noticed by the people, than any of the other apoſtles, in theſe miracles.

V. 17—25.] Theſe tranſactions could not but perplex and enrage the high-prieſt and his party; whether their perſonal intereſts and reputation, their political views, or their ſadducean principles were conſidered. They therefore impriſoned all the apoſtles as diſturbers of the public peace, in the common jail, deſigned for the vileſt malefactors: but an angel, unperceived by the keepers, ſet them at liberty, and ordered them to go boldly into the temple, and proclaim to the people, " all with all ſafety, and the keepers ſtanding without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 Now when the high prieſt, and the captain of the temple, and the chief prieſts heard theſe things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, ſaying, Behold, the men whom ye put in priſon are ſtanding in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: (for they feared the people, leſt they ſhould have been ſtoned:)

27 And when they had brought them, they ſet *them* before the council: and the high prieſt aſked them,

28 Saying, Did not we ſtraitly command you, that ye ſhould not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Peter and the *other* apoſtles anſwered, and ſaid, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew, and hanged on a tree:

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.

32 And we are his witneſſes of theſe things; and *ſo is* alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counſel to ſlay them.

34 Then ſtood there up one in the council, a Phariſee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apoſtles forth a little ſpace;

35 And ſaid unto them, Ye men of Iſrael, take heed to yourſelves what ye intend to do as touching theſe men.

36 For before theſe days roſe up Theudas, boaſting himſelf to be ſomebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themſelves: who was ſlain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were ſcattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man roſe up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he alſo periſhed; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were diſperſed.

38 And now I ſay unto you, Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone: for if this counſel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apoſtles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they ſhould not ſpeak in the name of Jeſus, and let them go.

"the words of *this life*," that is the whole goſpel, by which alone ſinners can obtain eternal life. This direction they obeyed without heſitation; and the report brought to the council, (which ſeems to have conſiſted of many ſcribes, prieſts, and elders, who were not ſtated members of the ſanhedrim;) evidently ſhewed, that their deliverance had been miraculous, and that they were not at all afraid of their perſecutors.

V. 28. *Intend*, &c.] The rulers began to be apprehenſive for their perſonal ſafety: they feared leſt the ſucceſs of the apoſtles in preaching that the Perſon, whom they had crucified, was the promiſed Meſſiah, ſhould exaſperate the people againſt them as his murderers; and they concluded that they meant to excite them to an inſurrection againſt them, in order to deprive them of their authority or to put them to death: at leaſt they charged the apoſtles with ſuch intentions.

V. 31. *To give*, &c.] This may either ſignify, that Jeſus was exalted as Mediator, that through him the nation of Iſrael, or any of them, even the rulers who had ignominiouſly hanged him on the tree, might have encouragement to repent, by the propoſal of a free and full forgiveneſs; or that He might by his converting Spirit communicate the grace of repentance to them, as well as the pardon connected with it. (Notes, &c. c. ii. v. 36. c. iii. v. 12—26. c. iv. ver. 9—22.)

V. 33—40.] (c. ii. v. 37.) The rulers "*were ſawed*" by the words of Peter; they were convicted, tortured, enraged, and alarmed, but not humbled or changed: and therefore they deſperately counſelled to put the whole company of the apoſtles to death. But Gamaliel, whoſe reputation is very great among the Jews to this day, and who ſeems to have been a man of great temper, judgment, and prudence in ſecular matters, adviſed them againſt ſo violent a meaſure. He ſeems at this time to have had ſome conviction of the truth of

41 And they departed from the preſence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.

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the goſpel, and a favourable opinion of the apoſtles: but, as he was Saul's tutor, who proved ſo determined a perſecutor, it may be queſtioned whether he long retained, or was very ſteady in, his tolerating principles. However he was a Phariſee, and as ſuch, a decided oppoſer of the ſadducean ſcheme: and from recent inſtances, he ſhewed that the interpoſition of the council in ſo decided a manner, was neither needful nor ſafe. Learned men cannot clearly reconcile this account of Theudas, with that of Joſephus concerning an inſurgent of the ſame name: but whether Joſephus was miſtaken in any circumſtances of the tranſaction, or another Theudas be intended, it does not much concern us to determine. Certain it is that impoſtors, and inſurgents abounded in that age, which was occaſioned by a vain expectation that the Meſſiah would ſet up a temporal kingdom with the power of the ſword. (*Luke*, c. ii. v. 1. c. xiii. v. 1, 2.) From theſe facts Gamaliel juſtly inferred, that if the apoſtles were employed in propagating an impoſture, it would at length be detected, and come to nothing, without their incurring the hatred, and reſentment of the people, by contending againſt it. But on the other hand, if indeed it were the cauſe and work of God, (which they could not be ſure that it was not;) they could not poſſibly prevail againſt it: for if they put the apoſtles to death, ſome other perſons would be raiſed up to carry it on: at the ſame time they would be found to fight againſt God, and would thus bring upon themſelves the weight of his omnipotent vengeance. According to this opinion, which was the verdict of common ſenſe, and ſupported by the moſt concluſive arguments; the continuance of chriſtianity to this day, and the ruin of the Jewiſh church and nation, as well as of other perſecuting powers, are irrefragable demonſtrations, that it was no work, or counſel of men, but indeed a revelation from God; and that they who oppoſed it actually fought againſt him, and incurred his righteous diſpleaſure for ſo doing. The whole council ſo far agreed to Gamaliel's advice, that they did not proceed to put the apoſtles to death: yet their enmity and rage ſo far prevailed, that they ignominiouſly ſcourged them for their diſobedience to their former orders, and renewed their prohibition of their preaching any more in the name of Jeſus.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No ſtate of the church hath yet occurred, that hath been entirely free from falſe profeſſors, and other evils, reſulting from human depravity, and the ſubtlety of ſatan: nor is there any thing ſo excellent, which hypocrites will not counterfeit, to gratify their love of the praiſe of men. But their partiality even in external duties proves their inſincerity; and ſhews that they want to reconcile the ſervice of God and mammon, and the reputation of piety with the intereſts of the world. When ſatan is permitted thus to fill their hearts with wicked devices, they attempt, and often ſucceſsfully, to impoſe upon the miniſters of Chriſt; whilſt He, their Judge, who hath the keys of death and hell, ſees all their ſecret wickedneſs, and prepares to expoſe and puniſh it. Deceit and lies are in all things hateful to the God of truth; but much more ſo, when introduced into the immediate concerns of religion. How then muſt he abhor thoſe lying profeſſions, ſubſcriptions, and engagements, which numbers make at his table, or when they enter into the ſacred miniſtry! Surely it may be ſaid to every ſuch perſon, “why hath ſatan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy “Ghoſt? Why haſt thou conceived this thing in thine “heart? Thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God!” If any of us are conſcious of having committed ſuch an enormous crime; let us be thankful, that the doom of Ananias hath not been our's, and let us ſhew our deep repentance, by keeping at the utmoſt diſtance from a repetition of ſo atrocious a provocation. They, who combine together, and encourage one another, to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, may expect to be joined in the ſame awful puniſhment: and when notorious criminals eſcape with preſent impunity, they are only reſerved to the day of judgment for more tremendous vengeance. But ſometimes the Lord interpoſes in an extraordinary manner, to detect ſuch offenders, as are about to become a ſnare to ſome, and a ſcandal to others. Such righteous ſeverity often proves an important benefit to multitudes, by guarding them againſt hypocriſy, and exciting them to watchfulneſs and prayer. Whatever tends to the purity, and reputation of the church, eventually promotes it's enlargement: when unſound profeſſors are excluded, or detected, the ſureſt method is taken to bring in an increaſe of true believers: and if the apparent harſhneſs, which miniſters muſt at ſome times neceſſarily exerciſe, be connected with manifeſt and enlarged benevolence; that unfavourable impreſſion, which might otherwiſe be made upon the minds of men, will be prevented, and they will notwithſtanding poſſeſs confidence and affection. But that power alone, which wrought ſuch aſtoniſhing miracles by the hands of the apoſtles, can reſcue ſinners from the power of ſin and ſatan, and add believers to the company of his worſhippers. He will, in ſome degree work by all his faithful ſervants; and every one, who applies to Him, ſhall certainly be healed.

How wretched muſt they be, whoſe vexation is increaſed by the ſucceſs of the goſpel! They may grow more violent in their enmity and oppoſition; but in vain will they attempt to confine thoſe whom he wills to be at liberty, to ſlay thoſe whom he wills to live; to diſgrace thoſe whom he wills to honour, or even to diſtreſs or affright thoſe whom he wills to be joyful and courageous. His mighty angels delight to miniſter to his perſecuted ſervants; and at the leaſt intimation of his will, they are equally ready to deſtroy their perſecutors. As long therefore as we are preſerved in life, we ſhould go on with our work: and they, who are called to preach the goſpel, ſhould be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, without yielding to fear, or ſelf-indulgence, in preaching *all* the words of this life to mankind. How vain, yet how obſtinate is the conteſt, which men ſometimes main-

CHAP. VI.

Contains 1ſt. The occaſion, and manner of the appointment of deacons, and the names of the ſeven, who were firſt choſen, 1---6. 2d. The converſion of great numbers, and of many Prieſts, to Chriſt; the able and ſucceſsful miniſtry of the deacon Stephen; the oppoſition excited againſt him, and his appearance before the council to anſwer for himſelf, 7---15.

AND in thoſe days, when the number of the diſciples was multiplied, there aroſe a murmuring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe their widows were neglected in the daily miniſtration.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the diſciples *unto them*, and ſaid, It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the word of God, and ſerve tables.

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt and wiſdom, whom we may appoint over this buſineſs.

4 But we will give ourſelves continually to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word.

5 And the ſaying pleaſed the whole multitude: and they choſe Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghoſt, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proſelyte of Antioch;

6 Whom they ſet before the apoſtles: and,

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tain againſt their Creator! They ſee at times that the word, and hand of the Lord are againſt them, and they tremble for the conſequences; yet will they proceed! And after all their convictions, they are more reſtrained by the fear of man, than by the fear of Him, who is able to deſtroy body and ſoul in hell. Such have they often been, who have oppoſed their mandates and authority to thoſe of God; and who have accuſed the moſt exemplary, and peaceable miniſters of Chriſt of ſedition, and rebellion; becauſe their doctrine tended to expoſe their wickedneſs in its proper colours to all mankind. However, we muſt adhere to our principles: "we ought "to obey God rather than man:" and they, who perſiſt in oppoſing Chriſt and his cauſe, muſt bear the blame. He is a gracious Saviour to all thoſe, who ſubmit to him as a Prince; and he will employ all his power to protect, and exalt them likewiſe. He delights in forgiving the penitent, yea in giving repentance and remiſſion of ſins to all the choſen Iſrael of God; nor will he withhold theſe ineſtimable gifts, from any who aſk him for them. But he will ſurely deſtroy all thoſe, who will not have him to reign over them: this every man will perceive, in proportion as he regards the teſtimony of His apoſtles, and of the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath always given to thoſe, who obey his beloved Son.

Whilſt convincing arguments and uneaſy conſciences increaſe the rage of determined enemies; the Lord ſtill varies his methods of defeating their malignant purpoſes. He hath all hearts in his hands: and he ſometimes uſes the candour and ſound policy of learned, and eminent men, who do not cordially embrace the goſpel, to moderate the counſels of outrageous, and irrational oppoſers. Common ſenſe ſuggeſts a caution to every conſiderate man, to take heed to himſelf what he does, reſpecting thoſe, who ſeem to be the ſervants of God. Experience and obſervation determine, that the ſucceſs, or reputation of religious impoſtures will be ſhort lived. The abettors of ſuch deſigns have recourſe to unhallowed means, to gratify their ambition, or compaſs their ſecular deſigns. Many have drawn the ſword in this cauſe, and have periſhed by it; ſome have been ſcattered and come to nought; and others have expoſed their iniquity to the whole world: ſo that every counſel, or work, that is of men, will in one way or other come to nought. But whilſt the teachers of religion are harmleſs and peaceable members of the community, and appear zealous for the truths and commandments of God, according to their views of them; the caution is univerſally to be regarded, "refrain from theſe men, and let them "alone;" neither deride, revile, moleſt, or injure them; from perſonal diſlike, or from political jealouſy. If they are inſincere or erroneous, they will in time appear to be ſo; and no other means ſhould be uſed with them, except calm diſcuſſion, and kind uſage: but if their cauſe be that of God, it cannot be overthrown, and all who attempt it, will be found to have fought againſt God. But when the enmity of the carnal mind is reſtricted in it's exerciſe, and cannot, or dare not vent itſelf in bloody perſecution; it will ſeek a leſſer gratification by dealing in reproaches, menaces, inſults, and other injuries. However, we ſhould rejoice to be counted worthy to endure ſhame and pain, in that cauſe, in which "Jeſus "endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame," and for the ſake of ſo gracious and glorious a Benefactor. We ſhould daily endeavour to recommend Him and his ſalvation to all around us: and whether miniſters labour in public, and preach to large congregations, or reſort to the houſes of their friends and brethren; Jeſus the anointed Saviour of loſt ſinners ſhould be the great ſubject of their inſtructions, the centre of all their doctrines, exhortations, and encouragements, and the favourite theme of their ſocial converſation.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—6.] The Grecians were Jews, or proſelytes, who then ſojourned at Jeruſalem; but as their uſual reſidence was in other countries, ſo they ſpake the greek language; by which they were diſtinguiſhed from thoſe, who ſpake a dialect of the Hebrew. The acceſſion of numbers to the church, perhaps chiefly from among the poor, might render it more difficult, than at firſt, to afford them all ſo plentiful a ſupport, as would have been deſirable. As the greateſt part of the public when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

7 And the word of God increaſed; and the number of the diſciples multiplied in Jeruſalem greatly; and a great company of the prieſts were obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there aroſe certain of the ſynagogue, which is called *the ſynagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Aſia, diſputing with Stephen.

10 And they were not able to reſiſt the wiſdom and the ſpirit, by which he ſpake.

11 Then they ſuborned men, which ſaid, We have heard him ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt Moſes, and *againſt* God.

12 And they ſtirred up the people, and the elders, and the ſcribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council,

13 And ſet up falſe witneſſes, which ſaid, This man ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt this holy place, and the law.

14 For we have heard him ſay, That this Jeſus of Nazareth ſhall deſtroy this place, and ſhall change the cuſtoms which Moſes delivered us.

15 And all that ſat in the council, looking ſtedfaſtly on him, ſaw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

ſtock muſt have been contributed by the Hebrews; perhaps the perſons, who acted under the apoſtles in this buſineſs, thought it right to ſhew greater favour to the poor widows of that deſcription, than to the others: but we may alſo ſuppoſe, that the Grecians were rather too jealous about the matter, and ſuſpected more partiality, than there really was. However murmurs, and diſcontents having been thus excited, the moſt dangerous diſputes and diviſions might have enſued; (as hath frequently happened in great revivals of religion, to the immenſe detriment of the common cauſe:) but the apoſtles, being directed in heavenly wiſdom by the Holy Ghoſt, took a moſt effectual method to prevent theſe conſequences. They ſtated to the aſſembled diſciples, that it was not reaſonable for them to leave their important miniſtry, to employ themſelves in perſonally inſpecting the diſtribution of their contributions, and in ſeeing the tables of the poor ſupplied from them: as theſe murmurs therefore had not ariſen through their fault; ſo they could not conſiſtently attend to the proper means for ſettling them. It would therefore be adviſeable for the diſciples to elect ſuch perſons, as they beſt approved, to lay out their treaſure in the moſt ſatisfactory manner, both amongſt the poor, and in other neceſſary expences. They therefore counſelled them to look out ſeven perſons, (as ſufficient for the preſent;) who were men of known probity, and integrity, and endued with heavenly wiſdom, as communicated by the Holy Ghoſt; and they would ſet them apart for this ſervice, and commit the whole buſineſs to their management; that they might have no interruption, in giving themſelves up to the preaching of the goſpel, and to prayer for its ſucceſs. This giving univerſal ſatisfaction, the choice was immediately made, and the apoſtles ſolemnly ſet the perſons choſen apart for the work, by prayer, and impoſition of their hands. We read no more concerning any of them, except Stephen, and Philip; unleſs Nicolas were the founder of the heretical ſect, called Nicolaitans, which is not probable. (*Rev.* c. ii. v. 6.) All their names ſeem to be of Greek original; and perhaps they were choſen from among the Grecians, to give them the more entire ſatisfaction. The office of deacons was thus firſt inſtituted; and their original appointment ſeems to have been entirely to take care of the poor, to manage the charitable contributions of the church, and to regulate it's ſecular concerns. Stephen and Philip were indeed preachers; but this did not belong to them as deacons. Probably they began to preach ſubſequent to their appointment to that office; and when they were employed as evangeliſts, perhaps others were choſen to be deacons. As they were appointed to take care of the treaſure of the church, and not to the paſtoral office; the argument hence deduced to prove that every congregation ought to chooſe their own *paſtors*, is inconcluſive. Much may be ſaid for, and againſt the expediency of that arrangement; but it's divine authority is another queſtion. Men are generally careful enough to entruſt their property in the hands of ſuitable perſons; but their ſouls are ſeldom more in danger, than when they follow teachers after their own hearts: and as the majority of moſt congregations, and even of *many* churches, are unconverted, men, and others are very injudicious, and under undue influence; ſo it may be queſtioned whether ſome general interpoſition of the collective body of chriſtians and miniſters, directing, counſelling, and even limiting the choice of particular congregations, would not be preferable to their own unreſtricted election. However it muſt be allowed, that matters are far removed from what is reaſonable, ſcriptural, or profitable, in the general management of theſe moſt important matters, in almoſt every part of the viſible church.

V. 9—15.] There were ſynagogues at Jeruſalem, belonging to different deſcriptions of ſtrangers reſiding there; many of whom were proſelytes, and not of Jewiſh extraction. The Libertines ſeem to have been the deſcendants of perſons, who had been ſlaves, and were made free. Each of theſe ſynagogues had an academy belonging to it, where ſtudents were inſtructed by ſome Rabbi:

CHAP. VII.

Contains, Stephen 1ſt. Shewing before the council, from the hiſtory of Iſrael, that God's favour to their Fathers began long before the Moſaic diſpenſation; that they had ever been ready to reject thoſe, whom God employed for their deliverance; that their continual idolatry had provoked Him to threaten their captivity, and diſperſion; and that their temple was not built till the days of Solomon, and could not be eſſential to their religion, 1---50. *2d. Applying his diſcourſe in the moſt ſolemn manner to his perſecutors,* 51---53. *3d. Stoned to death by them; whilſt favoured with a viſion of Chriſt, and praying to him to receive his ſoul, and to pardon his murderers,* 54---60.

ſo that theſe teachers, or their more forward ſcholars, ſeem to have challenged Stephen to a diſputation, concerning the doctrine he taught. But they were baffled by him in argument: as he had not only truth on his ſide, and eminent abilities; but the Lord had endued him with ſuch wiſdom, judgment, temper, and utterance, as they could not withſtand. (*Luke*, c. xxi. v. 15.) However inſtead of yielding to conviction, they bribed certain unprincipled perſons to accuſe him before the people, and the rulers, as an enemy to the Jewiſh church and nation: ſo that he was violently ſeized, and brought before the council; and charged with blaſphemy, for having ſaid that Jeſus of Nazareth, (whom they mentioned with the utmoſt contempt,) had declared, that he would deſtroy the temple, and abrogate the Moſaic law. No doubt Stephen foretold, that Jeſus would deſtroy the city and temple, in caſe the nation of the Jews perſiſted in their oppoſition to Him: but, as the apoſtles did not underſtand till long after, that the Moſaic law was to be abrogated; ſo, we may conclude that this was their inference from his doctrine: and as the temple and city had before been deſtroyed, and yet the legal ceremonies had not been altered; ſo their inference was precarious, and their teſtimony falſe. But there was no blaſphemy in theſe words, if he had really ſpoken them; for they were literally verified a few years after. However when the members of the council ſtedfaſtly looked on Stephen, to obſerve whether he ſhewed any ſigns of guilt, or terror; they ſaw his countenance calm, and ſerene, and probably irradiated in a miraculous manner, as Moſes' face had been when he came down from the mount; ſo that he appeared more like an angel, than a man, as he ſtood before them. But as they diſregarded other miracles, ſo they remained unmoved even by this divine atteſtation to his character.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Unleſs undue ſelf-love could be wholly deſtroyed out of every heart, envies, murmurs, jealouſies, and diſcontents will creep in, and in ſome degree diſturb every community on earth, however collected, and governed: nor is it to be expected, that all grounds for theſe evils ſhould be removed, under any human adminiſtration. However we ſhould repreſs the firſt emotions of theſe paſſions in our own hearts; and endeavour to prevent, or remove all occaſions of them from others, as far as we can: and if they begin to appear, ſuch conceſſions and regulations ſhould be made, without delay, as may diſappoint that enemy, who thus ſeeks to divide the houſe, and kingdom againſt itſelf. In general the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould leave to others the management of ſecular concerns, even of ſuch as belong to the church, or to charitable inſtitutions; that they may keep clear of all ſuſpicion of partiality, or injuſtice, and be more at liberty for their proper work. But if it be unreaſonable, and ſinful for them to leave the word of God, even to ſuperintend the care of the poor, and ſuch ſecular concerns, as have an intimate connexion with piety and charity: how inexcuſeable muſt they be, who leave their public miniſtry, and even the care of the poor and ſick to others; and waſte their time in diſſipated pleaſures, luxurious indulgence, ambitious and covetous purſuits, and ſuch ſtudies, as are foreign to their clerical profeſſion! And if men are not qualified even "to ſerve tables," or regulate charities, except they be of honeſt report, and endued with heavenly wiſdom and grace: how pernicious muſt it be to commit the important truſt of "watching "for men's ſouls" to ſuch perſons, who are evidently devoid of theſe endowments! It therefore behoves thoſe, who in any way are concerned in chooſing, appointing, or ordaining men to any office in the church; to do it with good advice, ſerious deliberation, and fervent prayer for divine direction. When proper methods have been taken to prevent diſputes, and to preſerve the peace of the church; and to ſecure an upright, impartial, and prudent management of all her concerns; and when paſtors are left at liberty, and are diſpoſed "to give themſelves "continually to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word:" it may be expected that the cauſe of truth will gain ground, that the number of diſciples will be multiplied, and that even the moſt prejudiced will be ſoftened, and won over to embrace the goſpel: and when ſuch prieſts, or teachers, who have been blind, prejudiced, or careleſs, become obedient to the faith; it may be conſidered as a peculiar triumph of divine grace, and a moſt important advantage to the church.

They, who are full of faith will be full of power; though not for the working of miracles, yet to reſiſt temptations, to endure hardſhips, and to perform arduous ſervices: and when Chriſt calls men forth to contend earneſtly for the truth; he will give them a mouth and wiſdom, which all their enemies will not be able to gain-ſay or reſiſt. But worldly diſputants, when thus diſconcerted, commonly have recourſe to other weapons, to defend their errors, and to gratify their reſentment. In ordinary caſes, ridicule, and abuſe may ſuffice: but when enmity to the goſpel concurs with the indignation of being defeated in a vain glorious conteſt; a more baſe, and injurious method of revenge will frequently be deviſed. But how irrational a creature is man! To aſſert that an intelligent Being is capable of ſuſtaining a ſyſtem of religion by ſubornation, perjury, lying teſtimony, and murder, might have been deemed a libel on reaſon itſelf; had it not been done in numberleſs inſtances. But the blame reſts not upon the underſtanding, ſo much as

THEN ſaid the high prieſt, Are theſe things ſo?

2 And he ſaid, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

3 And ſaid unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I ſhall ſhew thee.

4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *ſo much as* to ſet his foot on: yet he promiſed that he would give it to him for a poſſeſſion, and to his ſeed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

6 And God ſpake on this wiſe, That his ſeed ſhould ſojourn in a ſtrange land; and that they ſhould bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.

7 And the nation to whom they ſhall be in bondage will I judge, ſaid God: and after that ſhall they come forth, and ſerve me in this place.

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumciſion: and ſo *Abraham* begat Iſaac, and circumciſed him the eighth day; and Iſaac *begat* Jacob; and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, ſold Joſeph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wiſdom in the ſight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his houſe.

11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no ſuſtenance.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he ſent out our fathers firſt;

13 And at the ſecond time Joſeph was made known to his brethren; and Joſeph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 Then ſent Joſeph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threeſcore and fifteen ſouls.

15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the ſepulchre, that Abraham bought

upon the heart of a fallen creature, which is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked. They, who prefer human traditions and reaſonings to divine revelation, will often charge thoſe with blaſphemy, who ſpeak according to the oracles of God: and falſe teſtimony is often borne, through prejudiced inferences from, and conſtructions put upon men's words. But the ſervant of the Lord, poſſeſſing a clear conſcience, a chearful hope, and divine conſolations, may ſmile in the face of danger, and death; and may appear amidſt his moſt furious perſecutors, not only as a lamb in the midſt of wolves, but even as an angel ſurrounded with malignant demons.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—8.] This ſpeech of Stephen may be conſidered either as an anſwer to the accuſation brought againſt him, or as his teſtimony to Jeſus Chriſt: and the ſame argumentation would ſerve either purpoſe. As He was not permitted to conclude; ſo we have here rather an introduction to his main ſubject, than the whole of his diſcourſe. There was peculiar wiſdom in referring to theſe ancient records of the nation, and in ſpeaking honourably of thoſe characters, to which his hearers profeſſed ſo great a veneration, and ſo ſtrong an attachment; though they neither underſtood the general plan of God's dealings with their anceſtors, nor entered into their views, nor copied their examples. The animation, and beauty of the addreſs muſt be, in great meaſure, loſt to us; unleſs we can ſuppoſe ourſelves in the very ſituation of the Jews, and appropriate, as it were, their peculiar ſentiments and feelings on theſe ſubjects. Stephen was accuſed of predicting the abrogation of the ceremonial law; as if the intimation of ſuch a change were blaſphemous: whereas in fact the beſt, and moſt eminent perſons among their anceſtors lived before the promulgation of that law; which could not therefore be eſſential to the acceptable worſhip of God. This ſeems to have been covertly inſinuated in the beginning of his diſcourſe, which he opened in the language of reſpect, deference and affection. He obſerved, that the God, who is altogether glorious, and the fountain of glory, and who had ſhewn his viſible glory in the camp of Iſrael, in the tabernacle, and in the temple, *firſt* appeared to Abraham, (not in Canaan, to which they thought his peculiar preſence limited, but) in Meſopotamia. As the hiſtory has already been conſidered, I ſhall here only advert to thoſe things, which involve difficulty, or form an eſſential part of Stephen's argument. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xi—xxxvi.) The 400 years, here mentioned (a round number,) may be dated from the birth of Iſaac, though it was a few more; for the deliverance of Iſrael out of Egypt was juſt 430 years after the calling of Abraham.

V. 9—16.] Joſeph was the peculiar favourite of God, for a ſum of money of the ſons of Emmor, the *father* of Sychem.

17 But when the time of the promiſe drew nigh, which God had ſworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.

18 Till another king aroſe, which knew not Joſeph.

19 The ſame dealt ſubtilly with our kindred, and evil-entreated our fathers, ſo that they caſt out their young children, to the end they might not live.

20 In which time Moſes was born, and was exceeding fair, and nouriſhed up in his father's houſe three months:

21 And when he was caſt out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nouriſhed him for her own ſon.

22 And Moſes was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to viſit his brethren the children of Iſrael.

24 And ſeeing one *of them* ſuffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppreſſed, and ſmote the Egyptian:

25 For he ſuppoſed his brethren would have underſtood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they underſtood not.

26 And the next day he ſhewed himſelf unto them as they ſtrove, and would have ſet them at one again, ſaying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thruſt him away, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didſt the Egyptian yeſterday?

29 Then fled Moſes at this ſaying, and was a ſtranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two ſons.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderneſs of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire, in a buſh.

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end an eminent type of Jeſus; yet his brethren hated and envied him: but they could not prevent his exaltation, which was the means of their preſervation. I find no ſatisfactory ſolution of the difficulty, ariſing from the difference in the number here mentioned of thoſe, who went down into Egypt, from that of Moſes. (Note, *Gen.* c. xlvi. v. 21. 27.) It hath been ſhewn that Benjamin's grand-children are included by Moſes; yet ſome expoſitors inadvertently form a computation upon the ſuppoſition of his being at that time unmarried! Perhaps Stephen gives us the number, which actually went down into Egypt, including his ſons wives, &c: whereas Moſes mentions not the women, but adds ſuch heads of families in Iſrael, as were born after their deſcent into Egypt: as Benjamin's grand-children, and thoſe of Judah by Thamar muſt have been. It is probable from this account, that the bodies of all the ſons of Jacob, as well as that of Joſeph, were embalmed, and carried by their deſcendants to be interred in Canaan. As Jacob, (not Abraham,) evidently bought the ſepulchre of Emmor, or Hamor, the Father of Sychem, or Shechem; ſo it ſeems neceſſary to allow, that ſome very ancient tranſcriber ſeeing "He bought," officiouſly and erroneouſly ſupplied the word "Abraham," which thus crept into the text; for to ſuppoſe that either Stephen, or Luke ſaid Abraham, and meant Jacob, increaſes, inſtead of removing, the difficulty. (*Gen.* c. xxxiii. v. 19. c. xlviii. v. 22. *Joſh.* c. xxiv. v. 32.) The argument of this paſſage ſeems to have been, that as their fathers muſt have periſhed, if Joſeph, whom they had envied and injured, had not been advanced to authority, and thus enabled to preſerve them: ſo muſt the Jews periſh, unleſs Jeſus, whom they had deſpiſed, and crucified, but whom God had highly exalted, ſhould graciouſly ſave them. As therefore Joſeph's brethren at length ſubmitted to, and were forgiven by Him; ſo ought they to ſubmit to, and ſeek forgiveneſs from the glorified Meſſiah. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxxvii—l.)

V. 17—29.] (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. i, ii.) The words here rendered, "exceeding fair," are literally "fair to God;" and ſome have thought that they mean that Moſes was amiable in the ſight of God, as well as a moſt beautiful child. He ſeems indeed to have poſſeſſed every corporal and mental accompliſhment from his infancy: but there is no reaſon to think, that he was a partaker of divine grace, till a ſhort time before he viſited his brethren: if therefore the expreſſion be any thing more than a Hebraiſm, denoting his ſingular beauty; it muſt refer to the Lord's ſpecial purpoſes of love towards him, which induced him to preſerve him, when other children were deſtroyed; and his extraordinary beauty was the means, that he uſed for that purpoſe. He might be "mighty in words," as capable of calm, forcible, and concluſive reaſoning; and yet be ſlow of ſpeech, and deſtitute of the graces of elocution, as he modeſtly pleaded concerning himſelf.

V. 30—36.] (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. iii—xxxvi.) It hath before been obſerved, that the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moſes, and the voice of the Lord came to him: but Stephen ſpeaks of it more fully. Some make the expreſſion, that "God ſent Moſes, by the hand of the Angel," an objection to our concluſion, that this

31 When Moſes ſaw *it*, he wondered at the ſight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32 *Saying*, I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moſes trembled, and durſt not behold.

33 Then ſaid the Lord to him, Put off thy ſhoes from thy feet: for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground.

34 I have ſeen, I have ſeen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now, come, I will ſend thee into Egypt.

35 This Moſes whom they refuſed, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the ſame did God ſend *to be* a ruler and a deliverer, by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the buſh.

36 He brought them out, after that he had ſhewed wonders and ſigns in the land of Egypt, and in the Red ſea, and in the wilderneſs forty years.

37 This is that Moſes which ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear.

38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderneſs, with the angel which ſpake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thruſt *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moſes, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

41 And they made a calf in thoſe days, and offered ſacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worſhip the hoſt of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye houſe of Iſrael, have ye offered to me ſlain beaſts and ſacrifices *by the ſpace of* forty years in the wilderneſs?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Mo-

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was not a created angel, but the "Angel Jehovah," the Angel or Meſſenger of the covenant; the Word and Son of God, by whom he hath always been declared unto men. But this only implies the diſtinct perſonality of the Father, and the Son; and that the Son, having undertaken to become incarnate, always was the medium of communication between the inviſible God, and ſinful man; and though he often appeared in human form, yet was he the God of Abraham, &c, being One with, and equal to the Father. It may be obſerved, that as Moſes was ordered to put off his ſhoes, &c: ſo the prieſts under the law are ſuppoſed to have miniſtered barefoot, in the ſanctuary; as no ſhoes or ſandals are mentioned, though particular orders were given about all their other garments. This was an expreſſion of reverence, and an emblem of circumſpection. The inference from the example of Moſes ſhewed the Jews, that it was no new thing for their nation to reject thoſe, whom God had ſent to rule over and deliver them; and therefore it was the leſs wonderful, that they had rejected and crucified their promiſed Meſſiah.

V. 37—43.] (Notes, &c. c. iii. v. 22, 23. *Deut.* c. xviii. v. 18—22.) As Moſes had predicted that a Prophet like to him would be raiſed up among them, to whom they were to hearken, even in preference to him; ſo it might be expected that this Prophet would change ſome at leaſt of the externals appointed by Moſes. Though they then profeſſed ſuch an attachment to him; yet their fathers, even after he had brought them out of Egypt, and when they were daily witneſſing the moſt ſtupendous miracles, which God wrought by him, were by no means ſo ſubmiſſive. For even this Moſes, for whom they were about to reject the Meſſiah, when he was in the congregation of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, attended by the manifeſted preſence of the great Angel of the covenant, even Jehovah who ſpake to him and them from Sinai, and from whom he received thoſe revelations of the divine will, which contained the way of ſalvation, and eternal life, could not ſecure their obedience to his authority: on the contrary they thruſt him from them, deſired to return to their Egyptian bondage, and ſeduced Aaron to make the golden calf, in contempt of Moſes, as well as of the Lord. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xxix—xxxiv.) This had been an earneſt, and ſpecimen of their ſubſequent idolatries, to which God *judicially* gave them up, till at length he ſentenced the nation to captivity, under the Aſſyrians and Chaldeans. (Note, &c. *Amos*, c. v. ver. 25—27.) As this had been the conduct of their anceſtors in all former ages, the Jews had no cauſe to glory in them: as God had before given up the nation to idolatry and captivity; ſo they had no reaſon to confide in their preſent external privileges; but rather to fear the terrible judgments of God for crucifying the Meſſiah: and as the prophets had formerly predicted the Aſſyrian, and Babyloniſh captivity, which had come to paſs accordingly; ſo they had no right to blame him for predicting the approaching ruin of their city, temple, and nation, if they perſiſted to oppoſe the religion of Jeſus.

loch, and the ſtar of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worſhip them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witneſs in the wilderneſs, as he had appointed, ſpeaking unto Moſes, that he ſhould make it according to the faſhion that he had ſeen:

45 Which alſo our fathers that came after brought in with Jeſus into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

46 Who found favour before God, and deſired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But Solomon built him an houſe.

48 Howbeit, the moſt High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as ſaith the prophet,

49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footſtool: what houſe will ye build me? ſaith the Lord; or, what *is* the place of my reſt?

50 Hath not my hand made all theſe things?

51 Ye ſtiff-necked and uncircumciſed in heart and ears, ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt: as your fathers *did*, ſo *do* ye.

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers perſecuted? and they have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the coming of the juſt One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

53 Who have received the law by the diſpoſition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

54 When they heard theſe things they were cut to the heart, and they gnaſhed on him with *their* teeth.

V. 44—50.] After the giving of the law, their fathers had worſhipped God, not in Canaan, or at Jeruſalem, but in the wilderneſs; and not at a ſtately temple, but at a moveable tabernacle. This was carried into the promiſed land by their fathers, under the leading of Jeſus, or Joſhua, (the type of Jeſus the Meſſiah;) and as it witneſſed God's gracious preſence with them, and their relation to him, being typical of good things to come, which appeared by the injunction given to Moſes, about forming it; (Note, &c. *Exod.* c. xxv. v. 40:) ſo it ſerved them for ſeveral hundred years after their ſettlement in Canaan. And though David, having been highly favoured and proſpered, deſired greatly to build a temple; (Notes, &c. 2 *Sam.* c. vii:) yet he was only allowed to make preparation for it; becauſe he had been a warrior, and had ſhed blood, and therefore the building of the temple was reſerved for Solomon his peaceable Son, who was an eminent type of the Meſſiah. Yet when Solomon had finiſhed his magnificent edifice; he conſidered it merely as a ſymbol of God's merciful preſence with his true worſhippers, and not as a real habitation for the Deity; as if He muſt needs continue his regard to it and the people, however they behaved: and the language of their prophets, as well as that of the Babyloniſh captivity, ſhould have taught the Jews to expect that the temple would be deſtroyed, whenever their preſumption, and rebellion had provoked God to turn againſt them, and be their enemy; (Notes, &c. 1 *Kings*, c. viii. v. 27. *Iſaiah*, c. lxvi. v. 1—3.)

V. 51—53.] It is probably conjectured that the council, perceiving the ſcope of Stephen's diſcourſe; and the inferences which he was about to draw from it, in favour of the goſpel, in condemnation of their conduct, and in juſtification of his own doctrine, grew ſo tumultuous, and ſhewed ſuch indications of anger and impatience; that he found he ſhould not be allowed to bring his argument to a regular concluſion. He was therefore emboldened, and influenced by the Holy Spirit to apply it in few words, but in the terms of moſt ſevere reproof, to the conſciences of his furious and malignant judges. He addreſſed them therefore as an obſtinate untractable people, who reſted in the outward ſign of circumciſion, whilſt their hearts were cloſed by pride, enmity, and unbelief againſt the truth of God. Indeed to reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, by rejecting the teſtimony of inſpired prophets, and by ſinning in defiance of his convictions, had always been characteriſtic of their nation. Thus their fathers had done in every age; they had oppoſed and perſecuted the prophets, almoſt without exception, from Moſes, to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who foretold the captivity; and to thoſe that aroſe afterwards, who all, in one way or other, foretold the coming of that righteous Saviour and King, whom they had now traiterouſly delivered up to Pilate, and thus moſt baſely murdered. They had indeed received the law, as given to Moſes on Mount Sinai, by Jehovah, amidſt ranks of attendant and worſhipping angels; and they were proud of that diſtinction: but they had never applied their minds to underſtand, obſerve, or obey it, in its ſpiritual meaning, and with reference to "Chriſt, the end of the law for "righteouſneſs to every believer." The ſuppoſition beforementioned is the more probable; as Stephen began his defence in the moſt calm, and reſpectful language, and touched on ſuch topics as were ſuited to conciliate, and gain the attention of the audience: but nothing can well exceed the marked ſeverity of his concluſion. Had we not been aſſured that he was full of the Holy Ghoſt, when he ſpake it, we ſhould have been almoſt ready to cenſure him: but probably he was ſenſible, that they were determined upon his death, out of deſperate enmity to his Lord; and he was moved to bear this awful teſtimony againſt them, and thus to warn them againſt that deſtruction they were about to bring upon themſelves; without further reſpect to their rank, or fear of their vengeance, but not without tender compaſſion for their ſouls, as his dying prayer evinced.

V. 54—60.] (Note, &c. c. v. ver. 33.) The concluſion of Stephen's addreſs enraged the malignant

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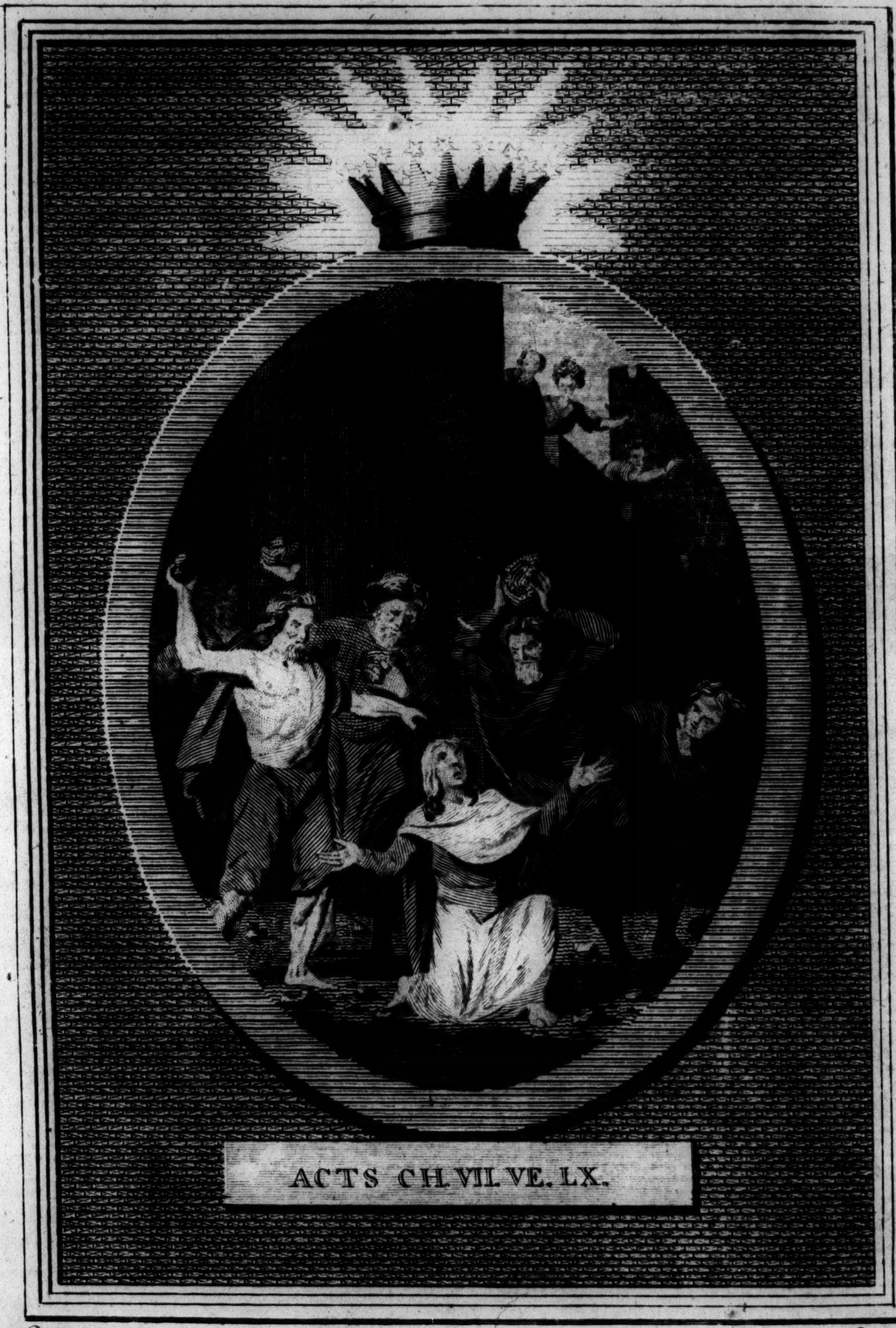

ACTS CH. VII. VE. LX.

Dayes del. W. G. Walker sc.

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55 But he being full of the Holy Ghoſt, looked up ſtedfaſtly into heaven, and ſaw the glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God,

56 And ſaid, Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and the Son of man ſtanding on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and ſtopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And caſt *him* out of the city, and ſtoned *him:* and the witneſſes laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whoſe name was Saul.

59 And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge. And when he had ſaid this he fell aſleep.

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rulers even to madneſs; and they ſeemed like beaſts of prey, who were about to devour him: but he was not intimidated by their fury; for looking up to heaven as appealing to God, and being filled with the Holy Ghoſt, he was favoured with an extraordinary viſion; (as Ezekiel and other prophets had been;) in which he ſaw a diſplay of glory, which denoted the preſence of God, and Jeſus as Mediator ſtanding at his right hand, that is in the place of pre-eminent dignity and authority. On other occaſions He is ſpoken of as "ſitting on his throne;" but here he appeared *ſtanding*, to ſignify his readineſs to plead the cauſe, and receive the ſoul of his ſuffering diſciple. Immediately Stephen proclaimed aloud before his enraged enemies, what a glorious ſcene, was now opened to his view: but they, treating it as blaſphemy, or determined to hear no more, ſtopped their ears, furiouſly ran upon him, hurried him out of the city, and ſtoned him to death. The witneſſes, who had accuſed him of blaſphemous words, being required to begin the execution, laid down their clothes at the feet of Saul. As he was a native of Cilicia, (c. vi. v. 9,) he had probably heard, or even taken part in, the preceding diſputation with Stephen; and thus the firſt time we read of this moſt eminent apoſtle, we find him conſenting, and acceſſary to the death of the firſt martyr for the faith of Chriſt! As the viſion ſtill continued, Stephen invoked his incarnate Lord, and committed his departing ſoul into his hands, in nearly the ſame words which Jeſus had uſed in addreſſing the Father, when he expired on the croſs: the whole was undeniably a prayer to Chriſt, for the word *God* is not in the original: he alſo calmly kneeled down; and in the agonies of this violent death, he copied his Lord's example when he prayed for his crucifiers, beſeeching Him, not to charge the guilt of this atrocious murder to thoſe, who perpetrated it; (*Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 34—46:) and with theſe words he expired with the compoſure of one, who falls aſleep. This was a moſt direct act of adoration, and divine worſhip rendered to Jeſus, appearing in human nature, as the Son of man, and attended by a viſion of the glory of God. To receive a departing ſoul to glory, and to pardon the guilt of moſt aggravated murder, are acts of divine power and authority; and it would be evidently moſt unreaſonable, as well as unſcriptural, to make ſuch requeſts to any mere creature, whether preſent or abſent. Indeed the Socinians are moſt grievouſly perplexed by this undeniable fact: after many other attempts to evade our inference from it, in which they have been evidently baffled in the argument; ſome very learned men have lately ventured to ſay, that the example of a man, in an extacy of devotion, and in the agonies of death, is not proper to be imitated by the whole church of God! As if modern reaſoners could better direct our faith, and practice, than this apoſtolical Proto-martyr, when full of the Holy Ghoſt, when immediately favoured with the viſions of God, and when replete with the very light, joy, and temper of heaven itſelf! May I be found a follower of Stephen; and not left to follow the *ignis fatuus* of modern illumination, as retailed by *Monthly reviewers.* And let it here be obſerved, that we bring a very large number of poſitive evidences to ſupport the truth of our doctrine: if then theſe objectors make only feeble efforts to invalidate the teſtimony of each of them, conſidered as detached from the reſt, ſo that each ſtill evinces the point in queſtion; how very powerful muſt be the combined proof of the whole? For if twenty, or forty, or more ſuch texts were expunged out of the Bible, we ſhould not want ſufficient, yea unanſwerable evidence of the Deity of Chriſt: ſo that the labour of theſe men is endleſs; and whatever they may think, they have not yet ſo much as made a beginning of their work; if the verdict is to be brought in by unprejudiced, calm inveſtigation, which admits the plain teſtimony of God's word as a principle, that is not to be queſtioned, and from which we may argue, as from a ſelf-evident, or demonſtrated axiom. It is here alſo enquired, by what authority the Jewiſh council put Stephen to death? In the caſe of Jeſus, they allowed, that they had no ſuch authority: and it is probable that the caſe was ſtill the ſame. Had they proceeded to paſs a legal ſentence on Stephen, they would perhaps have obtained permiſſion from Pilate to execute it: but they ſtoned him in a popular fury, and the governor might chooſe to connive at it, as he did at ſome of their ſubſequent perſecutions. When the Jews would afterwards have put Paul to death, the chief captain, and the governor hindered them: but perhaps they the more zealouſly interfered in his behalf, becauſe he was a Roman citizen. However the ſceptre was gradually departing from Judah; and the Romans continually intrenched more and more upon the authority of the high-prieſt and council, till the whole was ſubverted; for Shiloh was come, and now the gathering of the people was *to Him.* (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 10.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould be ready to give a reaſon of the hope that

CHAP. VIII.

Contains 1*ſt. The church perſecuted, by Saul eſpecially; the diſperſion of the diſciples; and the burial of Stephen, &c,* 1---4. 2*d. Philip preaching the goſpel in Samaria; Simon Magus's ſorceries, profeſſed faith, and baptiſm; Peter and John ſent to confer the gift of the Holy Ghoſt on the new converts; Simon offering money for the power, and ſharply rebuked by Peter, &c,* 5---25. 3*d. Philip ſent to preach to the Ethiopian eunuch, who receiving the goſpel was baptized, and returned home rejoicing; whilſt Philip was miraculouſly conveyed from him to preach in the cities on the ſea coaſt,* 26---40.

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is in us, to enquirers of every deſcription: and though this ſhould be done in meekneſs, and with a cautious fear of diſgracing a cauſe, that ought to be dearer to us, than our lives; yet we may confidently rely on the Lord to give us in the ſame hour, what we ſhould ſpeak; if we are called to anſwer for ourſelves before the enemies of his truth. Whatever bold application we may intend to make of the doctrines of God's word; we ſhould addreſs men with benevolence; and it is proper to render civil reſpect and honour even to thoſe ſuperiors, againſt whoſe uſurped or abuſed authority we are conſtrained to proteſt. In all addreſſes to thoſe, who allow the truth of the ſcriptures, we ſhould call their attention to them, lodge our appeal with them, and thence deduce our arguments. It is very lawful and expedient to accede to men's opinions, as far as conſiſtent with truth, and even to let their leſſer prejudices alone; in order that we may reaſon with them from their own principles, and ſo turn them againſt their erroneous concluſions, and evil practices. It is alſo profitable to recur to the firſt riſe of thoſe uſages, or ſentiments, which have been warped, or perverted: would we know the nature and effects of juſtifying faith; we ſhould ſtudy the character of the father of the faithful: and his calling out of his own country, by the God of glory, to whom he had been a ſtranger, and his obedience, and walk with Him, as his friend and worſhipper, may teach us the efficacy and freeneſs of divine grace, the nature of converſion, and the way to follow the Lord in faith, and hope, and to wait for him in humble patience. Here too we may ſee that external forms, and diſtinctions, though idolized by numbers, are as nothing, compared with dependence, ſubmiſſion, obedience, ſeparation from the world, and devotedneſs to God. The promiſed ſeed muſt be ſojourners in a ſtrange land; their inheritance is in reverſion, and muſt be waited for; they will be evil intreated in this world, and they ſhould leave it to God to judge their oppreſſors. Our deliverance from the bondage of ſin and ſatan is an introduction to our ſerving the Lord, according to his word: and though the external ſeals are not always poſterior in time to the grace of the covenant; yet they are always greatly ſubordinate to it: yet exact obedience in theſe, and all other things, is our duty. They, whom God moſt favours, will often be envied and injured, even by thoſe, who are in reputation in the viſible church. But though the troubles of the righteous may ſeem grievous and tedious; yet the Lord will deliver him out of them all; and wiſdom, favour, and preferment are given by Him alone. He often renders the moſt deſpiſed perſons the inſtruments of ſaving thoſe, who contemned them; even as the crucified Jeſus was exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance, and forgiveneſs to Iſrael. The promiſes of God will all be accompliſhed in due ſeaſon, and nothing can retard or haſten that appointed time. All earthly friends may fail, or requite our ſervices with black ingratitude; but the Lord will not forſake his people. In the darkeſt times of perſecution, when treachery and cruelty have combined to deſtroy the church; the moſt eminent inſtruments of its deliverance have been raiſed up: and when peculiar ſervices are to be performed, God will furniſh his ſervants with ſuitable qualifications, and ſome times by means of thoſe aliens, againſt whom they are to be employed. Many uſeful perſons have lived for years among the enemies of God, and have poſſeſſed authority, wealth or reputation in the world: but when He puts it into their hearts to join themſelves to him, and his people; they readily renounce their advantages, and endure reproach, hardſhip and affliction for his ſake. But difficulties and perils await the believer, not only from open enemies, but from falſe, or heartleſs brethren: and they, by whoſe hands the moſt extraordinary ſervices have been performed, have long found that the people underſtood not the Lord's intentions reſpecting them. They, who do wrong, are generally impatient of rebuke: and Jeſus himſelf is rejected as a Ruler, and a Judge, becauſe his commands and deciſions run counter to men's luſts, and iniquities. He, who labours to perſuade the profeſſed people of God to ceaſe from their diſgraceful, and pernicious conteſts with each other, will generally meet with abuſe from thoſe, who are moſt evidently in the wrong, as if he wanted to uſurp authority not belonging to him. But though men thus prolong their own miſeries; yet the Lord will take care of his ſervants, and compaſs his own deſigns of mercy: and years of retired contemplation, devotion, and humble induſtry, are as uſeful to his ſervants, as thoſe ſpent in a learned education, or in the active ſcenes of life: whilſt a willingneſs to *labour* in obſcurity, after having ſhone in more public ſtations, is a happy indication of heavenly wiſdom, and genuine magnanimity.

But the beſt of men have cauſe to ſtand in awe, and even to tremble, in the preſence of God: though in infinite condeſcenſion he be pleaſed to dwell in his church, as in a burning buſh; to put honour on it, notwithſtanding its meanneſs, and to preſerve it amidſt its fiery trials. He ſees the affliction, and hears the groaning of his people: yet he often ſends his miniſters to reſcue ſinners, when they are diſpoſed to reject them. If we would have Jeſus for a deliverer, we muſt ſubmit to him as a ruler, and wait for him as a judge; elſe we ſhall periſh with the Egyptians, and not be ſaved with the Iſraelites. He is the great Angel of the covenant, who brings his people from bondage, through the wilderneſs to their promiſed reſt; and all the ſcenes exhibited in Egypt at the Red Sea, at Sinai, and in Canaan, only ſhadowed forth his excel-

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CHAP. VIII.

AND Saul was conſenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great perſecution againſt the church which was at Jeruſalem; and they were all ſcattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every houſe, and haling men and women, committed *them* to priſon.

4 Therefore they that were ſcattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of

lencies, and his glorious ſalvation. But as Iſrael thruſt Moſes from them, and would have returned to their bondage; ſo men in general will not obey Jeſus, becauſe they love this preſent evil world: and any kind of falſe religion, or irreligion, however abſurd, by which men rejoice in their own works, and imaginations, is more ſuitable to the carnal mind, than his ſpiritual truth, and worſhip. Thus God is provoked to give men up to their luſts, and deluſions, and ſo they fill up their meaſure of ſin, and periſh. Every review of the hiſtory of the world, of the church, or of our own hearts and lives tends to exclude boaſting, and to cover us with ſhame: and the whole ſcripture proclaims man to be a proud, ungrateful rebel againſt God; who works by various means, and inſtruments, and men are almoſt univerſally guilty of neglecting, or of idolizing them. But as heaven is his throne, and the earth his footſtool: ſo none of our ſervices can profit Him, who made all theſe things: and next to the Human Nature of Chriſt, the broken and ſpiritual heart is his moſt valued temple. The plaineſt arguments, and the moſt inconteſtable facts only irritate thoſe, whoſe intereſts, and paſſions have engaged them againſt the truth: and it is proper, that they ſhould be ſhewn in the moſt explicit manner their guilt and danger, who with determined obſtinacy reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt; who are baptized infidels; who tread in the ſteps of thoſe, that betrayed and murdered that Juſt One, that came into the world to ſave ſinners; and who habitually violate thoſe very precepts, which they ſubſtitute in the place of His righteouſneſs and atonement. The application is generally the moſt uſeful and offenſive part of a diſcourſe, without which the reſt will make but a tranſient impreſſion: but when ſinners are convicted and not humbled, they will be exaſperated; and the greateſt wiſdom and grace cannot mollify them. Though we are not favoured with prophetic viſions, we may by faith ſtedfaſtly fix our thoughts, and affections on heavenly things: thus we may ſee the glory of God, and Jeſus ever appearing in the Father's preſence for us, enthroned in power, pleading our cauſe, and prepared to help us in all our diſtreſſes, and at laſt to receive our departing ſouls. We muſt not then refuſe to confeſs his name, to declare his glory, and to avow our obligations to him, in the preſence of his moſt furious enemies. If we be called to ſuffer for his ſake, we ſhould the more earneſtly call upon his name, to ſupport us under our trials, and to bring us to his glory; never forgetting to beſeech him to forgive and bleſs our enemies and perſecutors. Thus may we follow thoſe, who through faith and patience now inherit the promiſes; that whilſt we live, we may glorify Him, and whenever we die, we may fall aſleep in the arms of his power, truth, and love; to be received into his preſence, where is fulneſs of joy, and to ſhare the pleaſures, that are at his right hand for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—4.] As the rulers had compaſſed the death of Stephen, without exciting an inſurrection of the people, or the reſentment of the Governor; they ventured to carry on their perſecution with increaſing violence. The whole ſubſequent hiſtory ſhews, that a great number of believers ſtill continued at Jeruſalem; though perhaps many of thoſe, who commonly reſided in other countries, returned home at that time. But the preachers, being the perſons chiefly aimed at, ſeem to have been intended, when it is ſaid, that "they were *all* ſcattered, &c." There were then the ſeventy diſciples, and probably ſeveral others, who had before this been called forth to preach the goſpel; and theſe eſpecially being driven away by the perſecution, went every where proclaiming the doctrine of Chriſt. In ſome ſenſe indeed every chriſtian may be ſaid to preach the word; and in ſuch circumſtances many might preach, who had never received a regular ordination: yet it ſeems neither reaſonable nor ſcriptural, that men ſhould become ſtated public preachers, without being in ſome way ſanctioned by thoſe, who have been miniſters before them; or that they ſhould be the ſole judges of their own abilities, or call to that moſt important work. At leaſt this paſſage does not give ſo much countenance to that irregular practice, as ſome have inadvertently ſuppoſed. Amidſt this perſecution, the apoſtles, though principally obnoxious, ſtood their ground: they were ſatisfied that their work was ſtill at Jeruſalem, and that it became their character to ſhew their brethren an example of intrepidity: yet their enemies were ſo reſtrained, or overawed, that they did not venture to aſſault them; though we may be ſure, they zealouſly and diligently laboured to promote the goſpel. As the diſciples had before lived in ſuch harmony and comfort together; they would not perhaps have thought of ſeparating ſo ſoon, had not this ſtorm ariſen: thus the efforts of ſatan and his ſervants were over-ruled for the ſpread of the goſpel; whilſt the apoſtles were competent for all the work, that was to be done in Jeruſalem, and the perſecution would not prevent, but rather favour their ſucceſs. It ſeems that the very day, on which Stephen had been ſtoned, gave riſe to the ſubſequent perſecution; and that Saul, having conſented to Stephen's death, was immediately engaged in that odious ſervice: ſo that he entered as a ſavage beaſt of prey among the ſheep of Chriſt, and made dreadful havock of them. We know not what number ſuffered martyrdom on this occaſion; but doubtleſs ſeveral did. (c. xxvi. v. 10.) However, even in the

Samaria, and preached Chriſt unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake, hearing and ſeeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean ſpirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were poſſeſſed *with them:* and many taken with palſies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, which before-time in the ſame city uſed ſorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himſelf was ſome great one;

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the leaſt to the greateſt, ſaying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, becauſe that of long time he had bewitched them with ſorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himſelf believed alſo: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and ſigns which were done.

14 Now when the apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt.

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proſpect of this riſing ſtorm, ſome devoted ſervants of Chriſt ventured to give an honourable interment to the mangled body of Stephen; and to lament their own loſs, and that of the church, in the premature removal of ſo hopeful a miniſter. This muſt have given great offence to the malicious rulers, and perhaps ſerved as a pretence for their further outrages.

V. 5—8.] It is evident that Philip the apoſtle was not here meant, for he continued at Jeruſalem; and the miſſion of Peter and John to Samaria evinces the ſame: and as Philip the deacon was the only perſon of that name, which the hiſtorian had mentioned, he was doubtleſs here ſpoken of. But he ſeems to have been advanced to the office of an evangeliſt before this: for had he continued a deacon of the church at Jeruſalem, he would ſcarce have left the ſpot, where his duty required his attendance; we may therefore ſuppoſe, that another had taken that place, and that he was employed in a higher ſervice. As Jeſus had ſtayed three days among the Samaritans, and had mentioned them amongſt thoſe, to whom the apoſtles were to preach, (c. i. v. 8;) ſo they ſeem not to have heſitated about their admiſſion into the church, notwithſtanding the bigoted enmity of the Jews againſt them. Probably Philip went to the ſame city, Sychar, where Chriſt had preached; and though the impreſſions made by his miniſtry, might in ſome inſtances have been effaced; yet when Philip preached Jeſus to them as the promiſed Meſſiah, and wrought many ſignal miracles in proof of his reſurrection from the dead; they with one conſent attended on his miniſtry, and expreſſed great joy, throughout the city, that this bleſſed goſpel of ſalvation had been ſent to them, and that they were invited to ſhare the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom.

V. 9—13.] It ſeems evident that Simon actually uſed ſorcery, and produced many extraordinary effects by ſatanical influence, and not merely by human impoſture; (Note, *Exod.* c. xxii. v. 18:) ſo that whilſt he boaſted, "that he was ſome great one," the Samaritans were ſo exceedingly aſtoniſhed at his ſorceries, that they ſeemed even to be faſcinated into a belief, that he was "a man, by whom the great power of God" was moſt ſignally diſplayed, and exerted: perhaps he pretended to be the promiſed Meſſiah. Eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians have given us ſtrange accounts of the horrid blaſphemies, which this man propagated; but theſe ſeem to have been ſubſequent to the events, that we are now conſidering. However the evident and beneficent miracles of Philip, confirming his doctrine concerning the kingdom of God, and the ſalvation of Jeſus Chriſt, being attended by a peculiar bleſſing, effectually reſcued them from this infatuation, and prevailed on them to profeſs their faith in Chriſt, by being baptized: and as in Chriſt there is no diſtinction of male, or female, ſo both men, and women were admitted to that ordinance. Perhaps Philip had expoſed the nature and tendency of Simon's magical arts: however that ſorcerer profeſſed himſelf a believer in Chriſt, and probably had ſome conviction of the truth of the goſpel: accordingly he too was baptized, and continued to attend on Philip with the greateſt aſſiduity; being as much aſtoniſhed by beholding his miracles, as the Samaritans had been by his ſorceries: for it is the ſame word, which is here tranſlated "*wondered,*" that was before rendered "*bewitched.*" Perhaps Simon deemed Philip a magician of ſuperior ſkill, and attainments, and hoped to get acquainted with the ſecret of his art, by which he produced effects, which far exceeded all, that he had been able to perform.

V. 14—17.] The apoſtles ſeem to have acted in concert, as a collective body, no one pretending to aſſume any authority over the reſt; but every one paying a great regard to the determination of the whole company. Therefore Peter, who was in every thing the moſt forward to ſpeak and to act, and John the beloved diſciple, were *ſent* by their brethren to confirm the converted Samaritans in the faith. When they came thither, and ſaw the effects of Philip's miniſtry; they, by prayer, and impoſition of hands, obtained for them the Holy Ghoſt; that is, in his miraculous gifts, and operations:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.)

17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.

18 And when Simon ſaw that through laying on of the apoſtles hands the Holy Ghoſt was given, he offered them money.

19 Saying, Give me alſo this power, that on whomſoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghoſt.

20 But Peter ſaid unto him, Thy money periſh with thee, becauſe thou haſt thought that the gift of God may be purchaſed with money.

21 Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the ſight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterneſs, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

24 Then anſwered Simon, and ſaid, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of theſe things which ye have ſpoken come upon me.

25 And they, when they had teſtified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jeruſalem and preached the goſpel in many villages of the Samaritans.

for though, as true believers, they partook of his regenerating grace, yet they had not before been favoured with theſe extraordinary communications. The rite of confirmation, as practiſed by many chriſtian churches, hath often been ſtated to be a continuation of this apoſtolical impoſition of hands, for the confirmation of new converts, by the Holy Ghoſt thus given to them. But it is far from evident, that this was done univerſally by the apoſtles, or thoſe who immediately ſucceeded them. However as miraculous powers, rather than ſanctifying grace, were thus conferred; unleſs ſuch gifts were now connected with that obſervance, the parallel muſt fail. How far ſomething of this kind, properly regulated, and conducted, might be rendered ſubſervient to the edification of young perſons, deſcended from chriſtian parents, may be another queſtion: but to advance this obſervance into a ſacrament, and even above a ſacrament, (as it is, when the Holy Ghoſt is ſuppoſed to be conferred by impoſition of hands, and the uſe of the apoſtle's words;) puts the ſubject in a very different light. Doubtleſs it was at firſt thus magnified, in order to exalt the epiſcopal order, to whom it was confined, as if they were properly entruſted with apoſtolical authority: but as miracles are out of the queſtion, to follow the apoſtles in faith, humility, diligence, piety, ſelf-denial, &c, is the only adequate method of magnifying either the clerical, or epiſcopal office: aſſuredly, as this matter is too generally managed, it muſt be allowed to be an evil; and it ought either to be attended to in another manner, or not at all.

V. 18—25.] Many teachers, and private chriſtians wrought miracles, and ſpake with tongues, "as the "Spirit gave them utterance:" but the honour of being inſtrumental in communicating thoſe gifts, by impoſition of hands and prayer, was generally at leaſt confined to the apoſtles: yet neither in exerciſing that, or their other miraculous powers, were they able to proceed when, and as they pleaſed; but were under a continued divine direction. However when Simon ſaw the effects, which followed from the laying on of their hands; he concluded, that they could impart to him a ſimilar power, if they choſe. This he ſuppoſed would admirably ſubſerve his purpoſes of obtaining honour and wealth: for by enabling men to ſpeak foreign languages, without the trouble of learning them, and to cure diſeaſes by a word ſpeaking; he ſhould not only carry on a moſt lucrative trade, but be almoſt adored as a deity. Indeed every age produces demonſtrations how eagerly men part with their money to purchaſe any pretended ſecrets of this kind, though of far inferior value if they were real, and though they carry all the marks of impoſture about them. Simon therefore, judging of the apoſtles by himſelf, and ſeeing that they were poor men, ſuppoſed that they would have willingly conferred this power on him, for a ſum of money, and ventured to make this infamous propoſal to them. His ambitious mind could not be ſatisfied with the power of working miracles himſelf; (though this ſeems not to have been conferred on him:) but he wanted the unreſtricted power of communicating the Holy Ghoſt for the ſame purpoſes, to whomſoever he pleaſed. Inſtead of deeming the loweſt place among God's people too great an honour for one, whoſe ſorcery, impiety and blaſphemy had been ſo atrocious; as he certainly would have done, if he had been truly converted: he aſpired, with horrible pride and ambition, at equality with the apoſtles in power and authority; whilſt he meant to proſtitute the ſacred operations of the Holy Ghoſt to gratify his love of filthy lucre, and of human applauſe, and would have ſeduced the apoſtles to concur in the deteſtable ſacrilege! Whatever miraculous power of diſcerning men's ſpirits Peter might poſſeſs, and on ſome occaſions exerciſe; he had no need of it in this caſe: but perceiving the extreme wickedneſs, and hypocriſy of Simon, he expreſſed his abhorrence of his money, and of his crime, in the moſt decided manner: let him take his treaſure with him, if he could, into that perdition, to which he was evidently haſtening; for Peter would have none of it. This was not a wiſh that he might periſh; but an awful warning that he was in moſt extreme danger of perdition, which he could not eſcape, if he proceeded further in his preſent courſe. Peter added, that he ſaid this, becauſe, being utterly ignorant of God and ſpiritual things, and

26 And the angel of the Lord ſpake unto Philip, ſaying, Ariſe, and go toward the ſouth, unto the way that goeth down from Jeruſalem unto Gaza, which is deſert.

27 And he aroſe and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treaſure, and had come to Jeruſalem for to worſhip,

28 Was returning, and ſitting in his chariot, read Eſaias the prophet,

29 Then the Spirit ſaid unto Philip, Go near, and join thyſelf to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Eſaias, and ſaid, Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?

31 And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me? And he deſired Philip that he would come up and ſit with him.

32 The place of the ſcripture which he read was this, He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who ſhall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch anſwered Philip, and ſaid, I pray thee, of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of ſome other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the ſame ſcripture, and preached unto him Jeſus.

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch ſaid, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

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awfully blinded by ſatan, he had blaſphemouſly thought that the free, and moſt precious gift of God's Spirit might be bought, and ſold by a mercenary traffic. He was therefore evidently deſtitute of true faith, and had neither part or lot in the bleſſings of the goſpel; as his heart was not right in the ſight of a holy God, nor was his profeſſion of chriſtianity ſincere. If he would then eſcape perdition, let him deeply repent of this moſt horrid wickedneſs, and pray earneſtly to God, that this blaſphemous thought of his depraved heart might be pardoned: for though all manner of ſin and blaſphemy would be forgiven to the true penitent; yet his crime came *at leaſt* ſo near to that againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which never can be pardoned, that it was a very doubtful caſe, whether God would ever give him true repentance. Indeed he was, as it were, ſo plunged and drenched in impiety, as in the bittereſt gall, that he muſt be moſt loathſome in the ſight of God, and expoſed to the moſt dreadful puniſhment; and he was evidently ſo bound in the chains of ſin, and ſatan, that the Almighty power of God alone could deliver him. (Notes, &c. *Deut.* c. xxix. v. 18—20. 2 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 25, 26.) Nothing can be more evident, than that the apoſtle here exhorted an unconverted ſinner to repentance, and prayer; yea one, whom he feared had committed the unpardonable ſin, though he did not look upon his caſe as abſolutely hopeleſs. But as this inſtance deſtroys root and branch an erroneous ſyſtem, for which ſome men, and even good men, have too zealouſly contended: ſo even Simon Magus has had his cauſe pleaded, and it hath been imagined that He might be a converted man? If we may not conclude, that ſuch an argument proves that they, who maintain it, ſcarce know what converſion means; yet we muſt infer that zeal for a ſyſtem is often a very dangerous thing, influencing a man on ſome occaſions to admit, that the moſt depraved habitual ſtate of the judgment, and affections, as well as the moſt atrocious deliberate crimes, may conſiſt with a man's being born of God, and in a ſtate of grace; rather than ſuppoſe that themſelves can be miſtaken in a ſpeculative ſentiment: and then by unnatural criticiſms to wreſt the word of God that it may ſeem to favour, or at leaſt not to contradict the dangerous ſuppoſition. However when Simon heard this awful warning, denunciation, and exhortation, he deſired the apoſtles to pray for him, not that he might be delivered from his ambition, avarice, and impiety; but that he might be exempted from the puniſhments they had mentioned. Perhaps he feared a doom ſimilar to that of Ananias and Sapphira: or he hoped, that by inducing the apoſtles to conceal his crime, he might eſcape infamy, and have an opportunity of carrying on his deluſions. For he does not ſeem to have pretended repentance, or to pray for himſelf: but credible hiſtorians inform us, that he retained a ſort of profeſſion of chriſtianity, which he diſtorted by the moſt horrible and ſenſeleſs blaſphemies; and thus he became the founder of a moſt multifarious ſect of heretics, who were long the plague, and ſcandal of the church. From his infamous attempt to bargain for the power of conferring the Holy Ghoſt, all mercenary contracts for church benefices, and other methods of turning the concerns of religion into a lucrative trade, have been called Simony: of which there have been, and are, various ſpecies, and will be, whilſt men continue covetous and ambitious, and verily ſuppoſe that gain is godlineſs. It is therefore much eaſier to expoſe, and declaim againſt ſuch impious practices, than to find an effectual remedy for them. The apoſtles, having executed their commiſſion, ſet out to return to Jeruſalem, and in their journey they preached in many villages of the Samaritans. John was one of thoſe, who formerly wanted to call for fire from heaven, to conſume certain of that nation: but his Lord had now taught him another leſſon.

V. 26—40.] Philip ſeems to have continued ſome time among the Samaritans after the return of the apoſtles: at length, an angel was ſent to order him, without

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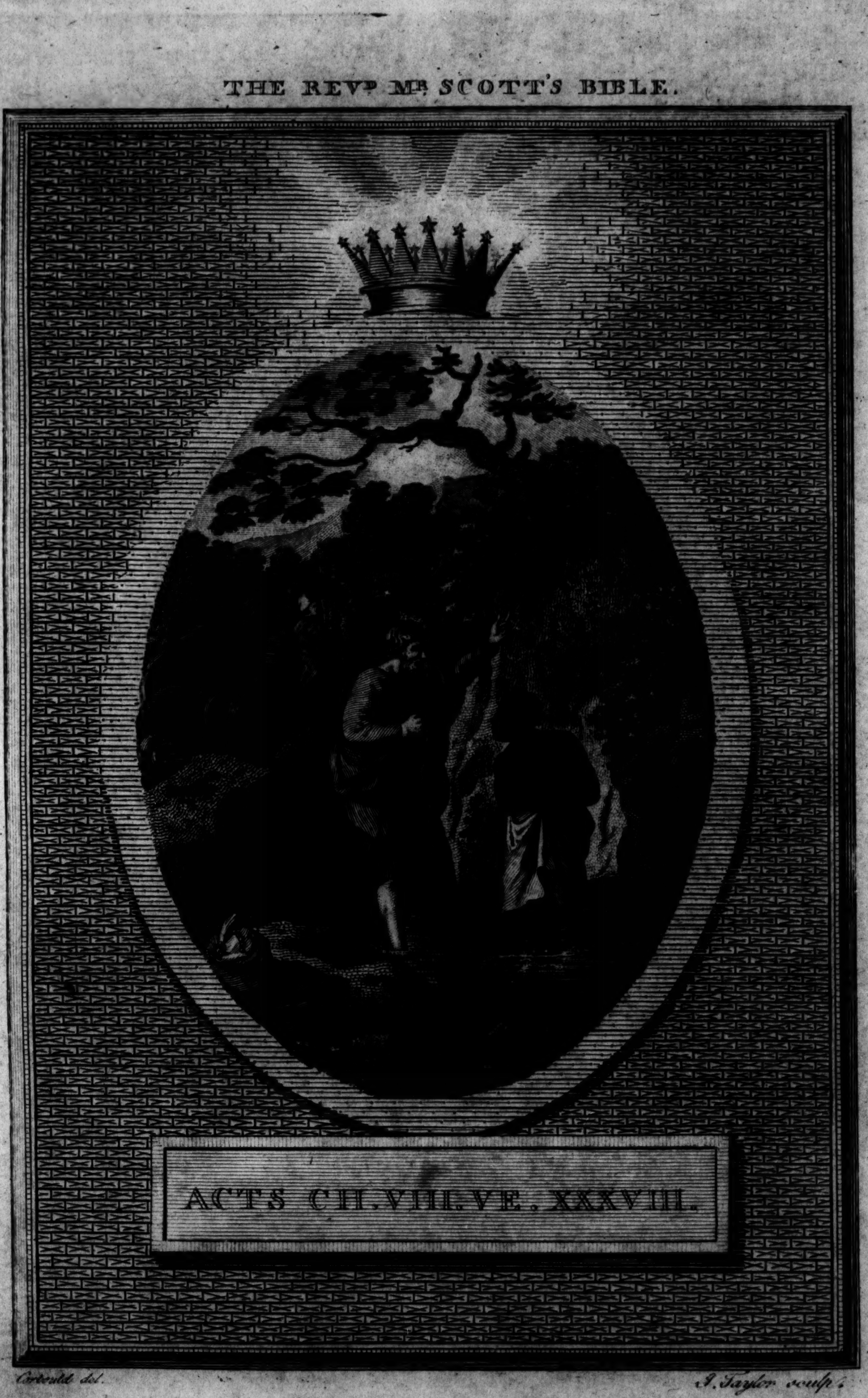

ACTS CH. VIII. VE. XXXVIII.

Corbould del. J. Taylor sculp.

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37 And Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt. And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to ſtand ſtill: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch ſaw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and paſſing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Ceſarea.

delay, to a deſert part of the road, between Jeruſalem and Gaza: and he obeyed without demurring; though it was apparently ſtrange to be ſent into a deſert, without being told what he was to do when he came there. But juſt when he arrived at the ſpot, the appearing of a chariot paſſing on the road began to ſhew for what end he had been ſent. In this ſat an Ethiopian eunuch, or chief officer, who was the high treaſurer of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia, and poſſeſſed great authority in the management of all public concerns. That country ſeems generally to have been governed by queens, and Candace was a name commonly given to them. Probably he was a negro. As Cornelius the Centurion is ſuppoſed to have been the firſt Gentile convert; this Ethiopian is concluded to have been a proſelyte to the whole Jewiſh religion; and not merely a favourer of ſome of its grand doctrines and precepts. However, he had taken a very long journey, in order to worſhip at Jeruſalem, where he had heard nothing favourable concerning Jeſus, from the Prieſts, Scribes, and Rulers: yet there was a preparation in his heart for receiving the truth; and as he rode in his chariot, he employed his time in reading the ſcriptures, and that aloud, perhaps that his ſervants too might hear. By an immediate ſuggeſtion from the Spirit of God Philip was ordered to approach the chariot; and, being conſcious of a divine miſſion, he, without heſitation enquired of the eunuch, whether he underſtood what he read? And he, ſenſible of his diſadvantages, and humbly deſirous of inſtruction, was not offended with the queſtion, though propoſed by a ſtranger, and a poor man. On the contrary he allowed, that he could not make out the prophet's meaning, without ſome interpreter: and collecting from Philip's addreſs, attire, or appearance, that he could give him ſome information on the ſubject, he took him up to him into the chariot. The paſſage here quoted hath been conſidered, (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. liii. v. 7, 8:) the variation between this quotation, and the original does not materially alter the meaning. In our Lord's humiliation, his judgment was taken away; for man treated him with the greateſt injuſtice, and God did not immediately appear to plead his cauſe. The main difficulty, which the eunuch found in this ſcripture related to the perſon, of whom the ſacred writer ſpake. This gave Philip an opportunity of Preaching the goſpel to him, to the greateſt advantage. We may ſuppoſe, that he ſhewed him the circumſtantial, and exact accompliſhment of the prediction, in the Perſon, doctrine, conduct, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus; concerning whom he muſt have heard many diſadvantageous reports, whilſt at Jeruſalem. When the whole had been explained, and applied, and the prediction, and it's accompliſhment ſhewn to coincide in ſo wonderful a manner; the eunuch was convinced, through the concurrent teaching of the Holy Ghoſt, that Jeſus was the promiſed Meſſiah, and was made to underſtand the nature of his kingdom and ſalvation; and he deſired to be numbered amongſt his diſciples. Doubtleſs Philip had ſhewn him the nature of baptiſm, as the initiatory ordinance of chriſtianity: when therefore they came to water, he deſired to be baptized, and confeſſing his full perſuaſion that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, the Son of God, he was admitted to that ordinance. Men will form their conjectures concerning the mode, in which Philip baptized him, according to their different ſentiments on that ſubject: but the difference of opinion about that matter amongſt conſcientious and humble chriſtians, ſhews that this circumſtance is of far leſs importance, than eager diſputants would repreſent it. It may however be obſerved that the original words, rendered *into*, and *out of*, are often tranſlated *to*, and *from*; ſo that they contain no argument on either ſide. As ſoon as the eunuch was baptized, the Spirit of God miraculouſly conveyed Philip away from him, ſo that he ſaw him no more: but this rather tended to confirm his faith; ſo that he went on his way home, rejoicing; not in his outward baptiſm, (for in that, Simon Magus might have rejoiced alſo,) but in Chriſt, and in his glorious ſalvation. Hiſtory informs us that he became a preacher of the goſpel in Ethiopia, and the adjacent regions, and there founded a flouriſhing church, which continued for ſeveral ages afterwards. So that Philip's preaching to a ſingle hearer was extenſively and durably uſeful! And he, being conveyed to Azotus, or Aſhdod, proceeded to preach in the ſeveral cities on the ſea coaſt, till he came to Ceſarea.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The death of eminent miniſters, and chriſtians ought to be lamented as a public loſs to the ſurvivors, though it be *their* greateſt gain; and we ſhould honour their memory, however men may diſgrace them, or hate us for our regard to them. But the Lord needs not the ſervices of the moſt eminent men: if he permit them to be cut off, when they ſeem ſcarce to have begun their work, or if perſecution make havock in the church; he can over-rule ſuch events to the glory of his name, and the ſpread of his goſpel. At the ſame time the moſt furious enemies cannot touch or even terrify thoſe, who are moſt obnoxious to them; unleſs He give them leave. The glory of his grace often ſhines forth with peculiar luſtre, when we conſider the ſcenes, in which his moſt honoured ſervants ſpent their years before their converſion. Who, that witneſſed Saul ready to embrue his hands in

CHAP. IX.

Contains 1ſt. Saul going to Damaſcus to perſecute the chriſtians; met upon the way by the Lord Jeſus, with a great light from heaven; his ſpeaking to him; Saul's enquiries and ſubmiſſion; and his blindneſs and faſting for three days after he came to Damaſcus, 1---9. 2d. Ananias directed in a viſion to go to him, and reſtore his ſight, which, after ſome objections, he did; and Saul's baptiſm, and preaching at Damaſcus, till conſtrained to eſcape for his life, 10---25. 3d. His journey to Jeruſalem; the ſuſpicions of the diſciples concerning him; his admiſſion amongſt them, and his preaching, till the Grecians ſought to ſlay him; his departure to Tarſus; and the peace and increaſe of the churches, &c, 26---31. 4th. Peter healing Eneas at Lydda, and at Joppa reſtoring Dorcas to life, 32---43.

the blood of Stephen, and waſting the church like a wolf, or a tyger, would have expected that he would at length prove the moſt eminent of all, who ever laboured to promote the Redeemer's cauſe? Wherever the eſtabliſhed believer is driven, he carries with him his knowledge of the goſpel; and in one way or other he will make known the preciouſneſs of Chriſt in every place: and where a ſimple deſire of doing good influences the heart, it will be found impoſſible to exclude a man wholly from all opportunity of uſefulneſs. Facts authenticate the truth, when it is faithfully preached: though miracles be no longer wrought; yet ſinners will be converted, and unclean ſpirits will reluctantly quit poſſeſſion of thoſe, over whom they have long reigned with uncontrolled ſway: and the goſpel will bring with it ſubſtantial and permanent joy to every heart, houſe, pariſh, or city, in which it is cordially received.

But where Chriſt's miniſters labour with ſucceſs, ſatan's ſervants will endeavour to counteract them. The magicians of Egypt will do the ſame with their enchantments, as Moſes by his rod: yet the men of God ſhall in due time obtain a decided victory. Human artifice, and ſatanical influence may effect ſtrange things to aſtoniſh, and faſcinate the deluded multitude: and thus wicked men may give out that they are ſomething extraordinary; and many from the leaſt to the greateſt may give heed to them, as if they were the great power of God: but when the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt are powerfully brought home to men's hearts, the charm will be diſſolved, and the truth will be triumphant. Indeed whoever compares the juggles, and ambiguous pretences to miracle or extraordinary operation, that ſhrink from inveſtigation, and are only calculated to enrich thoſe, who are in the ſecret, which every age produces, and foſters, and then detects and deſpiſes; with the open, beneficent, inconteſtable, and diſintereſted miracles of Chriſt and his apoſtles, will eaſily diſcern the moſt manifeſt difference, or rather the moſt entire contrariety. The one can only ſubſerve the credit, or intereſt of deſigning men, and abet deluſion, hypocriſy, or immorality; the other evidently tended to promote the beſt of all cauſes, even that of truth and holineſs: the former have ever ſunk into neglect in proportion as they have been diſpaſſionately examined; the other have only been deſpiſed by ſuperficial and ſelf-conceited enquirers; whilſt men of ſuperior wiſdom, piety, and diligence in ſearching deeply into ſuch matters, have always decidedly borne their teſtimony to their reality, and importance. But when vile impoſtors have exhauſted their ingenuity, in deviſing ſchemes for deceiving mankind; they ſometimes aſſume a religious profeſſion as their laſt ſhift: perhaps they pretend to embrace the goſpel, they attend on the ordinances of God, they attach themſelves to his miniſters, as greatly impreſſed and affected by their words and works; and thus aſpire to a character for ſanctity, in ſubſerviency to their ſelfiſh deſigns. Nor ſhould we haſtily cenſure thoſe ſervants of God, who are thus impoſed upon: the Lord alone ſearches the heart: we know that his grace is ſufficient for the vileſt of ſinners; we ought to hope the beſt, of profeſſed believers, till they prove the contrary; and ſuch men often carry matters very plauſibly, till ſome ſuitable temptation puts them off their guard, and then they are made manifeſt in their true character.

The abundant unction of the Holy Ghoſt tends to diveſt men of their narrow and ſelfiſh prejudices, and teaches them to own all as brethren, who receive the word of God, and to deſire to impart to them ſome ſpiritual good: for in theſe matters there is properly no room for competition; as no man is impoveriſhed by others being enriched. Yet the carnal mind will convert even ſpiritual gifts into nutriment to oſtentation, envy and ambition: ſelfiſh hypocrites judge of others by themſelves; and covetous men deem a large ſum of money an irreſiſtible allurement, and a valuable conſideration for the moſt ſacred offices, and endowments. Unſound profeſſors are often detected by their deſire of pre-eminence, and by deviſing to render religion ſubſervient to their worldly intereſt. But if men attempt to put filthy lucre in competition with the truths, ordinances, precepts, gifts, and glory of God: we muſt abhor their favours and bribes, and warn them that they are in the way of perdition. Indeed many high and plauſible pretenſions are ſufficiently detected to be baſe impoſtures, by the mercenary ſpirit of thoſe who boaſt of them, and then ſet the pretended gift of God to ſale, and diſpoſe of it for ready money. But though ſimoniacal practices are every where exclaimed againſt; yet they are almoſt univerſally inſinuating themſelves into every thing relative to religion. Commonly they, who aſpire to be the chief, have neither part nor lot in the matter; for a proud and covetous heart cannot be right in the ſight of God. But when we moſt plainly perceive that men are in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity; and when we moſt ſolemnly warn them of their guilt and danger; we ſhould ſtill exhort them to repent of their wickedneſs, and to pray to God, if peradventure it may be forgiven. Men often fancy, that their thoughts are free, and have no ſin in them: yet we ſee that the thought of the heart may be ſo atrocious, as to exclude a man from repentance and forgiveneſs. Many deſire others to pray for them, who do not humbly pray for

CHAP. IX.

AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord, went unto the high prieſt,

2 And deſired of him letters to Damaſcus to the ſynagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jeruſalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damaſcus; and ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice ſaying unto him, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?

5 And he ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt. *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks.

6 And he trembling and aſtoniſhed ſaid, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *ſaid* unto him, Ariſe, and go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.

7 And the men which journeyed with him ſtood ſpeechleſs, hearing a voice, but ſeeing no man.

8 And Saul aroſe from the earth: and when his eyes were opened he ſaw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damaſcus.

9 And he was three days without ſight, and neither did eat nor drink.

themſelves; and many dread puniſhment, who yet reſolutely proceed to commit the moſt horrible impieties. However the miniſters of Chriſt muſt teſtify againſt ſuch men, and preach the word of God, in cities, or villages, as they have opportunity, and ſo leave the event with the Lord.

We ſhould not be diſcouraged when called to miniſter in obſcure places, or to few hearers: ſeldom was more good done in the moſt numerous aſſembly, than followed upon Philip's preaching to one ſtranger in a deſert: and implicit obedience and ſubmiſſion become the ſervants of God. He knoweth whom he hath choſen; and a thouſand incidents, apparently caſual, form a part of his great plan, for bringing them to the knowledge of his ſalvation. In this view nothing can be decidedly deemed little, or unimportant, as we know not what vaſt effects may be connected with it. The Lord will have ſome of all ranks, nations, and complexions amongſt his redeemed people; to ſhew the power and largeneſs of his grace: where he has implanted a deſire after himſelf, he will in due time ſatisfy it; though ſuch enquirers may go to thoſe places, and amongſt thoſe perſons, where the moſt religion might be expected; and yet learn nothing of Jeſus, and even come away more prejudiced or bewildered than before. They, who ſeek the truth, will improve their leiſure time in ſearching the ſcriptures; even when they have but ſmall advantages for underſtanding it: but alas, how few of our nobles, and miniſters of ſtate ſtudy that ſacred volume, as they ride in their chariots, or are willing to take long journeys to enquire after, or worſhip God? Surely this Ethiopian will riſe up in judgment againſt them and condemn them! Should any of them be ſometimes found employed in reading the ſcriptures; and ſhould a miniſter of Chriſt, in the moſt grave, courteous, and modeſt manner, enquire of them, whether they underſtood what they read? It is to be feared, many of them would reſent the queſtion as impertinence. But humility is teachable, and leads to wiſdom: and when we are conſcious of our ignorance, and willing to gain information even from an inferior, or a ſtranger; we ſhall not be left without inſtruction. In reading the word of God, we ſhould pauſe to enquire of whom, and of what, the ſacred writers ſpake? But we ſhould eſpecially employ our thoughts about that meek, and holy, that patient, and ſuffering Redeemer, who was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, and was dumb as a lamb before the ſhearer. In his humiliation, his judgment, and his life were taken away: but he is now exalted at the right hand of the Father; his generation as the Son of God is abundantly declared, the generation of the righteous own Him as their ſpiritual Progenitor, and all judgment is veſted in him. Such prophecies are excellent texts, from whence to preach Jeſus to ſinners; for they at the ſame time explain, and demonſtrate his doctrine: and as this is the ſubſtance of all our preaching, when we take it in its due latitude; ſo we may expect that it will be crowned with peculiar ſucceſs. If we believe with all our heart, that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and profeſs that faith by ſuch methods as we can, we ſhall ſurely be accepted in our attendance on God's ordinances: and when the enquirer after ſalvation becomes acquainted with Jeſus, and his precious goſpel, he will go his way rejoicing, to fill up his ſtation in ſociety, from other motives, and in another manner than heretofore: and thus the converſion of one man may prove a bleſſing to numbers. The communion of ſaints on earth, though pleaſant, is commonly tranſient: their different employments and ſervices call them into different places: but under the influence of the ſame Spirit, they will all ſerve their generation, and then they will meet before the throne, to part no more, but to join in unceaſing and joyful praiſes to their common Lord, and Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—9.] It is not certainly known at what time Saul was converted: perhaps it might be three, or four years after our Lord's aſcenſion. However he perſiſted in perſecuting the diſciples for a conſiderable time, with increaſing violence: and he menaced the whole multitude of them with ſlaughter, and extirpation; as if he could not breathe without venting threatenings againſt them. Probably the diligence, and ſucceſs of thoſe, whom he had driven from Jeruſalem, in propagating the goſpel, increaſed his rage and animo-

10 And there was a certain diſciple at Damaſcus, named Ananias; and to him ſaid the Lord in a viſion, Ananias. And he ſaid, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

11 And the Lord *ſaid* unto him, Ariſe, and go into the ſtreet which is called Straight, and enquire in the houſe of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarſus: for behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath ſeen in a viſion a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his ſight.

13 Then Ananias anſwered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy ſaints at Jeruſalem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief prieſts to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord ſaid unto him, Go thy way: for he is a choſen veſſel unto me, to bear

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ſity. Being a volunteer in the ſervice, he deviſed, as well as executed, deſigns for exterminating the religion of Jeſus: and with this view he propoſed to the High Prieſt, (probably Caiaphas,) that he ſhould give him letters from the council and chief Prieſts, to the Rulers of the Synagogues in Damaſcus; for them to apprehend thoſe, who profeſſed chriſtianity, and to ſend them bound to Jeruſalem to be puniſhed. The ſanhedrim had no doubt an eccleſiaſtical authority over the Jewiſh ſynagogues in other countries: yet they could not exerciſe it in many reſpects, without the concurrence of the ſynagogues themſelves, and the connivance of the civil Rulers. Damaſcus had long been the capital city of Syria: it was ſtill very large and populous, and vaſt numbers of Jews reſided there: it does not clearly appear, in whoſe hands it was at this time; but the ruling powers were probably diſpoſed to concur in the execution of the commiſſion, granted by the high prieſt, and council of the Jews. Perhaps ſome of the perſons, who had been converted on the day of Pentecoſt, or ſoon after, had firſt carried the goſpel thither; and they, who had been ſcatterred by the preceding perſecution, ſeem to have laboured ſucceſsfully amongſt the Jews at Damaſcus. The diſciples, when they heard of Saul's commiſſion, would doubtleſs unite in prayer for deliverance from his hands: but perhaps ſcarce one of them thought of that method, by which the Lord intended to reſcue them. For when Saul drew near to the city, and doubtleſs pleaſed himſelf with the idea of the confuſion he was about to occaſion among the chriſtians; he was immediately ſurrounded with a dazzling ſplendour, which was brighter than that of the meridian ſun: and falling to the ground with terror and amazement, he heard the voice of one calling to him by name repeatedly, and demanding why he perſecuted Him? Saul imagined, that he was attempting to reduce a company of deluded, and obſtinate heretics, and that he was doing God ſervice by his zeal for the law of Moſes, and the traditions of the Elders, againſt a ſect of dangerous innovators: but it now appeared that he was perſecuting the Lord of glory, who conſidered the cauſe of the diſciples as his own. And why did he do this? Had they done him any harm? Could he ſay that there was no evidence that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, after all the miracles wrought by him, and his apoſtles? Could he hope to ſucceed in his oppoſition, or to obtain any advantage from it? Saul, in aſtoniſhment at this expoſtulation, enquired who that glorious Lord was, who thus appeared and ſpake to him? To which it was anſwered, that He was Jeſus, the Nazarene, whom he had ſo often derided and blaſphemed, and whom he now perſecuted in his diſciples: but, as it would be hard, or painful, for a man to kick againſt the ſpikes, by which he could only wound himſelf; ſo he could only injure and ruin himſelf, by contending with One, who poſſeſſed all power in heaven and earth. On hearing this, Saul was terrified and aſtoniſhed exceedingly; probably he dreaded the immediate vengeance of that glorious Lord, whom he had ſo deeply offended: his guilt was undeniable, his pleas were all ſilenced; and the concurring influence of the Holy Spirit enlightening, convincing, and humbling his heart, he ſubmitted without reſerve, and only deſired to know what the Lord Jeſus would have him to do? If mercy could be extended to him, he was prepared to do, or to ſubmit to any thing, that was required of him. Accordingly he was directed to go into the city, and there to wait for further orders. In the mean time his attendants, who at firſt fell to the ground as well as he, having ſomewhat recovered themſelves roſe up, but ſtood ſpeechleſs with terror, and amazement: they indeed heard a voice, though they underſtood nothing of what was ſpoken; (*John*, c. xii. v. 28, 29:) but they ſaw no man; whereas it is probable that Saul in viſion ſaw Jeſus in human form, as Stephen had done; (1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 8:) and we find from the account, which he afterwards repeatedly gave of this tranſaction, that more paſſed between Jeſus, and him, than is here recorded. (c. xxii. v. 1—16. c. xxvi.) I have endeavoured to explain this narration in conſiſtency with thoſe, and with continual reference to them: but without anticipating the circumſtances, which muſt hereafter be conſidered. However Saul now aroſe from the earth: but though his eyes were open, he found that the ſplendour with which he had been ſurrounded, had blinded him. This effect proved the whole tranſaction to have been a reality, and not merely an illuſion of the imagination. He was therefore led to Damaſcus; and he entered that city as harmleſs as a lamb, though he had ſet out to journey thither with the fierceneſs of a ſavage tyger. We are not informed whether his attendants were converted, or not. After his arrival in the city, terror, remorſe, anxiety, prayers, and divine viſions ſo occupied his mind, and his body alſo was ſo diſordered; that he took no ſuſtenance for three days: for it pleaſed the Lord to leave him ſo long to his reflections, before he ſent him any relief, or further inſtruction.

V. 10—16.] Ananias had been a very devout perſon according to the law of Moſes, and was now become a

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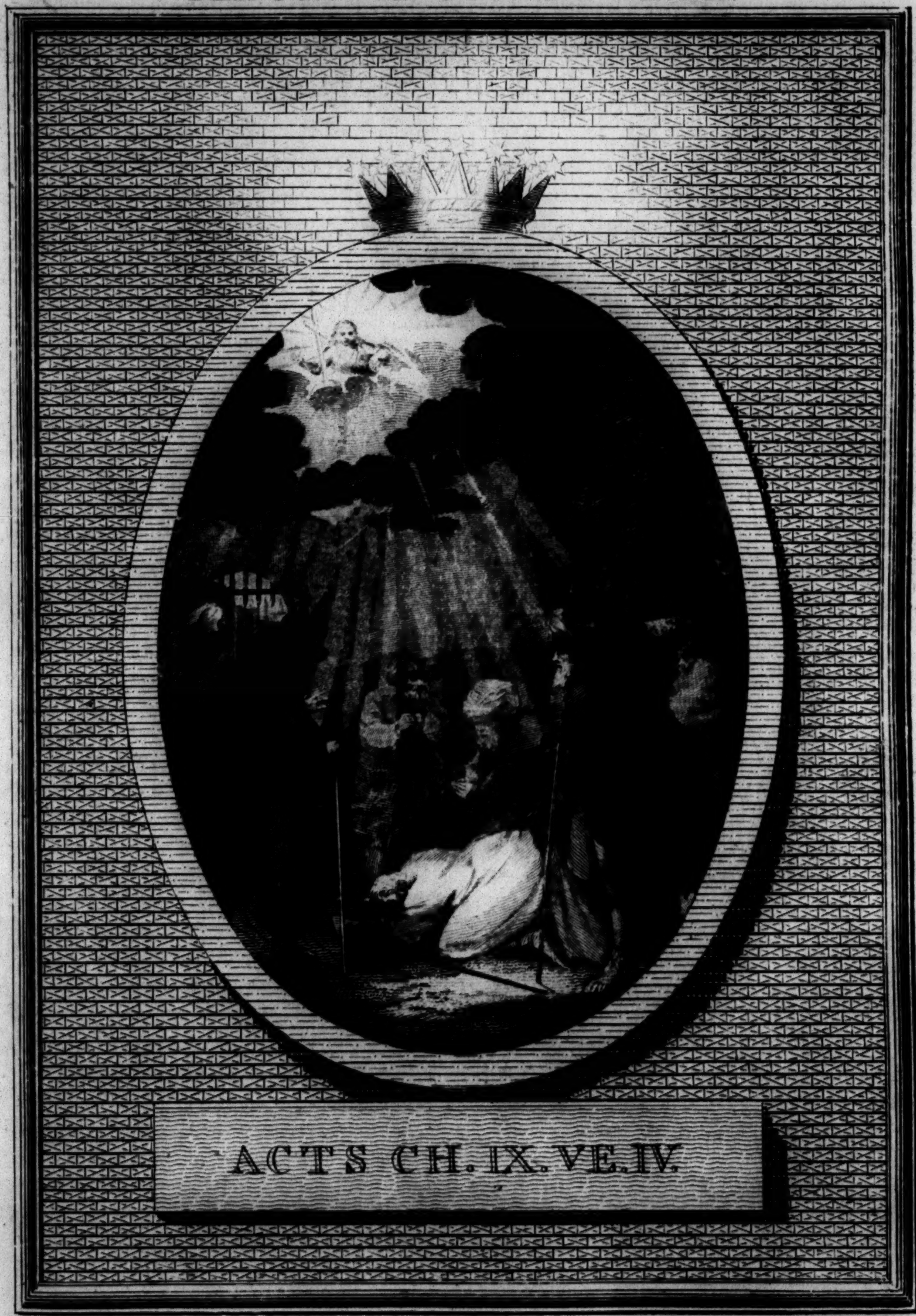

ACTS CH. IX. VE. IV.

W. Walker del. W. & J. Walker sculp.

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my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Iſrae :

16 For I will ſhew him how great things he muſt ſuffer for my name's ſake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the houſe; and putting his hands on him ſaid, Brother Saul, the Lord, (*even* Jeſus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou cameſt,) hath ſent me, that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the Holy Ghoſt.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been ſcales; and he received ſight forthwith, and aroſe, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat he was ſtrengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the diſciples which were at Damaſcus.

20 And ſtraightway he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this he that deſtroyed them which called on this name in Jeruſalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief prieſts?

22 But Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damaſcus, proving that this is very Chriſt.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counſel to kill him.

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diſciple of Chriſt, and probably a preacher of the goſpel, though it is not likely that he was one of the ſeventy diſciples: to him the Lord appeared in a viſion, and directed him to go to Saul of Tarſus, who was employed in fervent prayer, and was prepared for his coming to reſtore his ſight, of which he had lately been bereaved. Saul, having been a ſtrict Phariſee, had doubtleſs made long, formal and conſtant prayers before this: but he now prayed as a ſinner for ſalvation, and probably to that Saviour, whom he had before perſecuted: and as it was wonderful, that he, who before breathed out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord, ſhould now pour out humble prayers to him; ſo it was to be conſidered as a ſufficient proof, that he had ſubmitted, and was changed, and therefore ought to be encouraged. However Ananias was aſtoniſhed at hearing the name of Saul in this connexion; he conſidered the meſſage, on which he was ſent, as replete with peril: and he ſpake, as if Jeſus had been ignorant of Saul's previous conduct, or the intent of his journey to Damaſcus. "To call on the name of Jeſus," is here uſed as the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of a chriſtian: ſome would indeed render it, "who are called by thy name;" but the former is by far the more ſimple conſtruction of the words; and the expreſſion would not have been ſo repeatedly uſed, if it had not been true, in its moſt obvious meaning. However our Lord ſilenced Ananias's objection, and bade him go without delay: as this violent perſecutor was a choſen veſſel, whom the Lord had foreknown, and meant to employ; that being filled with the treaſure of the goſpel, he might convey his name, and doctrine among the nations of the earth, and even to their kings, as well as to his people the Jews: and at the ſame time, he would ſhew him, what great things he ſhould ſuffer for his ſake, according to the ſufferings, which he had inflicted on others. Some think that a particular repreſentation was made in a viſion to Saul's mind of all the various perſecutions, which he afterwards underwent: at leaſt he had ſuch a diſcovery made of them, as rendered his ſubſequent miniſtry a lively copy of Chriſt's own example, who foreſaw every thing that he was to endure from the very firſt.

V. 17—22.] Ananias now obeyed Chriſt, without further heſitation: he no longer conſidered Saul as a perſecutor, but as a diſciple; and laying his hands upon him, he called him "Brother Saul;" whilſt he informed him that he was ſent to him by the Lord of glory, (even that Jeſus, whom he had ſeen by the way,) that he might miraculouſly be reſtored to ſight, and then made partaker of the Holy Ghoſt. We are not informed, whether the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were communicated to Saul, whilſt Ananias laid his hands upon him; or whether this was ſubſequent to his baptiſm. If the former were the caſe; it was an exception to the general rule, of this effect being produced only by apoſtolical impoſition of hands: but Saul's was in every thing an exempt caſe. However, at the words of Ananias, there fell from his eyes, as it were ſcales, which had occaſioned his blindneſs. This had been an emblem of the benighted ſtate of his ſoul, amidſt the full light of the goſpel; as the recovery of his ſight, by the power and mercy of Chriſt, were of his ſpiritual illumination. When this token of reconciliation had been granted him, he aroſe, and by receiving chriſtian baptiſm profeſſed himſelf a diſciple of the Lord Jeſus; and having thus obtained hope and peace, he took proper refreſhment and found his vigour and ſtrength of body reſtored to him. Theſe extraordinary events being then made known by Ananias to his brethren, Saul was received amongſt them, and continued ſome time with them at Damaſcus: but inſtead of delivering his letters to the ſynagogues; he boldly went to them, and preached Chriſt to the Jews there aſſembled; ſhewing that Jeſus was indeed the promiſed Meſſiah, and the Son of God. As his character was well known, and the intent of his journey thither: ſo this change excited the amazement of all men, and probably in many inſtances gave energy to his teſtimony, though others were offended by it. But he grew more ſtrong in faith, and more powerful in argument; ſo that the Jews there could by no means anſwer his proofs from ſcripture, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, and that all the ancient prophecies had been fulfilled in him. We learn from his own account, that he received his knowledge of the goſpel, immediately by revelation from Jeſus Chriſt. (*Gal.* c. i. v. 11, 12.)

V. 23—31.] When Saul had preached a while at

24 But their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the diſciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a baſket.

26 And when Saul was come to Jeruſalem, he aſſayed to join himſelf to the diſciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a diſciple.

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apoſtles, and declared unto them how he had ſeen the Lord in the way, and that he had ſpoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damaſcus in the name of Jeſus.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jeruſalem.

29 And he ſpake boldly in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and diſputed againſt the Grecians: but they went about to ſlay him.

30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Ceſarea, and ſent him forth to Tarſus.

31 Then had the churches reſt thoughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.

32 And it came to paſs, as Peter paſſed throughout all *quarters*, he came down alſo to the ſaints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years and was ſick of the palſy.

34 And Peter ſaid unto him, Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole: ariſe, and make thy bed. And he aroſe immediately.

35 And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron ſaw him, and turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain diſciple named Tabitha, which by interpreta-

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Damaſcus, he went into Arabia, and laboured there for a conſiderable time: and after his return to Damaſcus, the Jews enraged at his ſuppoſed apoſtacy, and his pertinacity in preaching Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, took counſel to ſlay him. (*Gal.* c. i. v. 17, 18.) It ſeems that Aretas, an Arabian king, had got poſſeſſion of Damaſcus at this time; and that the governor appointed by him favoured and abetted theſe deſigns againſt Saul. (2 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 32.) The Jews either preferred this method of proceeding againſt him, to ſending him bound to Jeruſalem; or they had been deprived of that power by the change of the government. However Saul providentially diſcovered, and eluded their malice; and he went from thence to Jeruſalem. This was three years after his converſion, yet when he would have joined the chriſtians there; they queſtioned his ſincerity, and ſuſpected that his enmity to them had only aſſumed another form; and that he attempted that miſchief to them by ſubtlety, which before had been effected by violence. Damaſcus was only about 150 miles from Jeruſalem: but modern conveniences for a regular correſpondence between diſtant places were then unknown: Saul had ſpent much of his time in Arabia, in an obſcure ſituation; and the former perils, alarms, and ſufferings, which the diſciples had experienced from them, had rendered them unreaſonably ſuſpicious of him. However, Barnabas, who by ſome means had obtained a fuller information on the ſubject, and had contracted an acquaintance with Saul, introduced him to the apoſtles Peter, and James; for the other apoſtles were on ſome account abſent at that time; (*Gal.* c. i. v. 18, 19:) and having given them a ſatisfactory account of the manner, and the effects of his converſion, he was admitted to communion with the diſciples both public and private, and ſoon began to preach the goſpel amongſt them: he eſpecially diſputed with the Grecians, whom he had joined againſt Stephen; and his arguments ſo exaſperated them, that they purpoſed to kill him too. He therefore retired to Tarſus his native city, and preached there and in the adjacent places, for ſome time, till at length Barnabas went, and brought him to Antioch. (c. xi. v. 25, 26.) As this grand inſtrument of perſecution was now become a zealous preacher, and was removed from the reach of his enemies: ſo the perſons concerned ſeem to have been diſheartened; and other cauſes perhaps concurring, the perſecution was ſuſpended, and the churches were left in peace to ſettle their concerns. And they improved their opportunity to edify one another in knowledge, faith, and every good thing: ſo that the profeſſors of the goſpel generally walked in a reverential regard to God's authority and precepts, as his upright worſhippers; and enjoyed much comfort by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the hope and peace of the goſpel: by which means others were won over to them, and their numbers were continually increaſed.

V. 32—35.] We have hitherto read but little of the labours of the apoſtles except at Jeruſalem; though we may be ſure that they inceſſantly endeavoured to promote the goſpel in every way, they could. Here we find that Peter made a circuit through various parts of the land, probably to viſit thoſe places, where the goſpel had been planted by thoſe, whom the late perſecution had ſcattered: and coming to the ſaints, or believers, at Lydda, a town near the ſhore of the Mediterranean Sea, he wrought a miracle, in the name of Jeſus, and by his power, which was the means of convincing and converting to the faith of Chriſt the inhabitants in general of that, and an adjacent town: ſo that they believed him to be the Lord, the Meſſiah, and became his diſciples.

V. 36—43.] The words Tabitha, and Dorcas, the one Hebrew, and the other Greek, ſignify a hind, or

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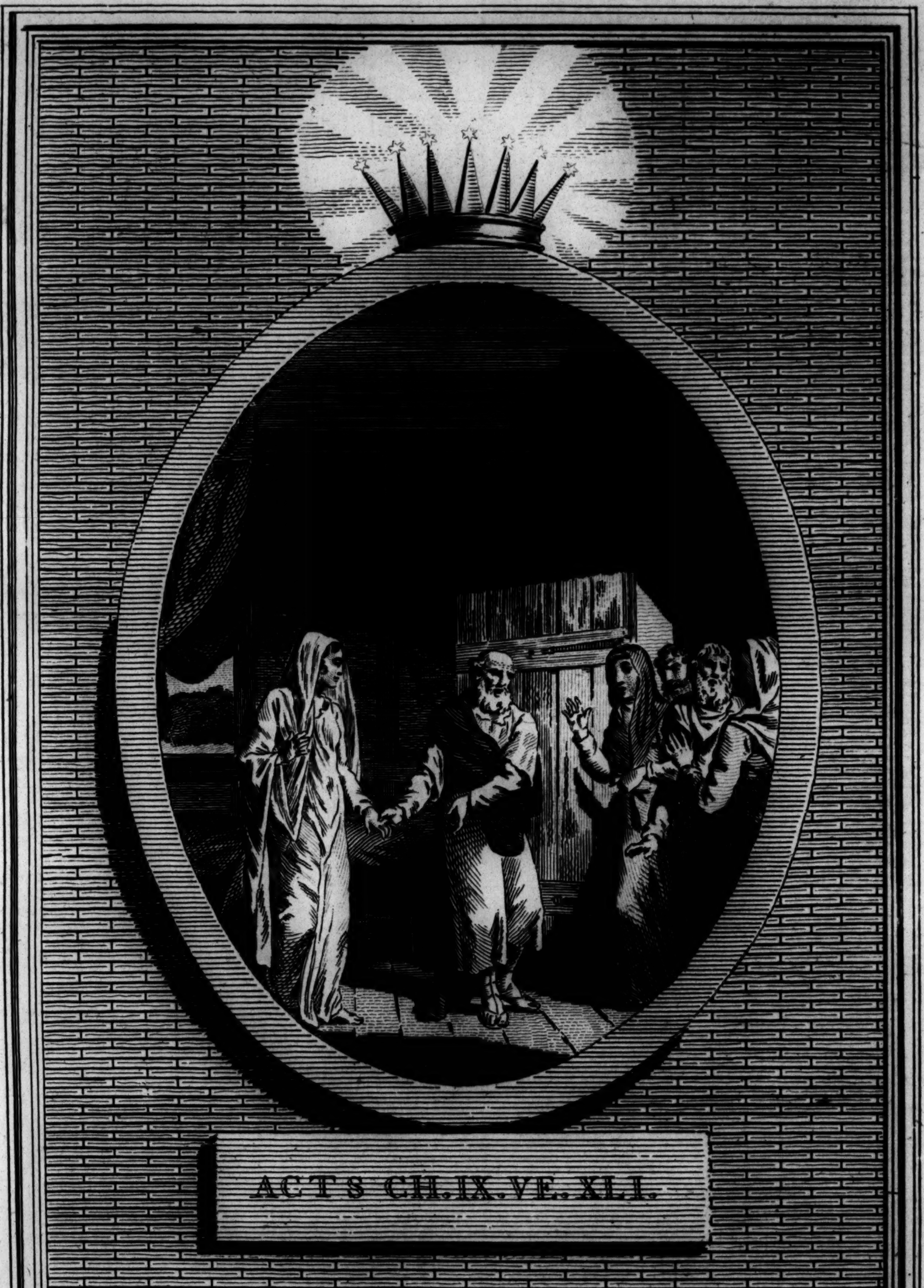
ACTS CH.IX.VE.XLI.

Dayes del. *Gignoux sc.*

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tion is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which ſhe did.

37 And it came to paſs in thoſe days that ſhe was ſick, and died: whom when they had waſhed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

38 And foraſmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the diſciples had heard that Peter was there, they ſent unto him two men, deſiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

39 Then Peter aroſe and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows ſtood by him weeping, and ſhewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while ſhe was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed; and turning *him* to the body, ſaid, Tabitha, ariſe. And ſhe opened her eyes: and when ſhe ſaw Peter, ſhe ſat up.

41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the ſaints and widows, he preſented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to paſs, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

doe, but whether this pious woman was thus named, for any particular reaſon or not, is uncertain. She was a peculiar ornament to the goſpel, which ſhe had embraced: as ſhe ſo abounded in good works, and alms-deeds, that her whole life was a continued ſucceſſion of them; as a tree is full of fruit, when every branch is loaded with it. She not only gave away her ſubſtance, but ſhe employed herſelf in labouring for the poor widows, and other believers. So that her death was conſidered as a public loſs to the whole company: and, having heard of Peter's miracle at Lydda, which was but about ſix miles from Joppa, they ſent for him, in hopes that he would be enabled to reſtore her to life again. When he came, and had witneſſed the ſincere mourning of thoſe, who expreſſed at once their gratitude and their loſs, by ſhewing the garments Dorcas had made for them; he went alone into the room where ſhe lay, and there prevailed by prayer for her reſtoration to them. In performing this miracle Peter uſed an expreſſion ſimilar to what Jeſus employed on ſimilar occaſions: but he had prefaced it with humble prayer upon his knees; he was doubtleſs aſſured, that this requeſt was granted, before he addreſſed Dorcas; he ſaid not "I ſay unto thee ariſe," in the language of authority, but ſimply, "Tabitha, "ariſe," as an intimation, that Jeſus had reſtored her life; and there was no witneſs to the tranſaction. This miracle was not only a benefit to the admiring, thankful company of the believers; but it was the means alſo of converting many to the faith. Peter therefore, finding an opening for uſefulneſs at Joppa, continued there ſome time, lodging at the houſe of one Simon a tanner, and not with Tabitha; perhaps leſt he ſhould *ſeem* to receive a recompence for the exerciſe of his miraculous powers. It is remarkable, that there is no inſtance in ſcripture of a prophet, or eminent miniſter of religion being raiſed from the dead; and but few of their miraculous recoveries from ſickneſs, &c, (c. xiv. v. 19, 20:) though we ſhould perhaps have thought, that theſe were the moſt proper caſes, for a divine interpoſition: but the Lord might ſee good to ſhew us in this manner, that the moſt eminent men were not needful to, though they were made uſeful in, his work.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The power of doing evil hath ſeldom been adequate to the inclination, even in thoſe, who have been moſt miſchievous in the church, or in ſociety: for could perſecutors execute their threatenings as readily as they utter them, their very breath would be replete with deſtruction to the diſciples of the Lord. But the reſtraints providentially impoſed upon us, previous to our converſion, prevent much miſchief; or the bad hiſtory of our paſt lives would have been ſtill worſe. Even when ſinners are moſt eager to execute their rebellious purpoſes; the Lord ſometimes makes known his thoughts of mercy towards them; and thus the extremity of their wickedneſs illuſtrates the infinite riches, and power of his grace. Whilſt we are praying in imminent dangers, or over-whelming troubles; we are apt to be diſcouraged, if we can ſee no way, by which we may be delivered: but he, who in a moment can change furious perſecutors into zealous preachers, can perform his promiſes by various methods, of which we have not the leaſt conception. The manifeſted light and glory of the divine juſtice, holineſs, and power would ſink the ſtouteſt rebel on earth to deſpair at once; if it were not accompanied with ſome indications of his mercy and grace: but he ſends convictions and terrors to abaſe men in the duſt, that their hearts may be prepared for peace and joy in believing. Sinners can never have any good reaſon for their rebellion againſt God's authority: he hath given them no cauſe for it, nor can any good come of it; for "it is hard to kick againſt the pricks." Little do proud Phariſees, and deſpiſers of the goſpel imagine, whilſt they are venting their contempt and malice againſt thoſe, whom they deem wild enthuſiaſts, or obſtinate ſectaries, that they are perſecuting the Lord himſelf, and that he will reſent it accordingly. He is One with his diſciples, and they with Him: he will requite every favour done to them, as if done to himſelf; and whoſo injures them, touches the pupil of his eye. But many of theſe oppoſers of the goſpel do not believe that Jeſus is the Lord of glory; and that all their hard ſpeeches, and ſtrenuous endeavours againſt Him, are a direct attack upon the Lord of Hoſts himſelf. When he ſhall therefore appear, in far more terrible majeſty, than he did to

CHAP. X.

Contains 1*ſt. Cornelius, a devout Centurion, directed by an angel, to ſend for Peter, to inſtruct him in the goſpel,* 1---8. 2*d. Peter divinely admoniſhed to go to him, and accompanying his meſſengers to Ceſarea,* 9---23. 3*d. Cornelius rendering Peter undue honour, which he refuſed; and relating his viſion, with a declaration, that he and his friends were prepared to receive the word of God from him,* 24---33. 4*th. Peter ſhewing them the way of ſalvation by faith in Jeſus Chriſt; the Holy Ghoſt given to Cornelius, and his friends; and their conſequent baptiſm,* 34---48.

Saul of Tarſus; they will tremble with aſtoniſhment at the awful danger of that conduct, in which they now fancy there is much merit, or by which they ſeek renown. When a ſinner is brought to a proper ſenſe of his own ſtate, character, and conduct; he will ſubmit without reſerve, allowing that he might juſtly be left to periſh, caſting himſelf wholly on the mercy of the divine Saviour, and enquiring what he would have him to do? This will thenceforth be the language of his heart, and prayers continually: "What muſt I do to be ſaved? In what way muſt I come? What means ſhall I uſe? What method ſhall I take to obtain aſſurance of my reconciliation? What return can I make for thy mercy? How ſhall I recommend thy ſalvation to others? Shall I enter upon this or the other buſineſs, or no? How ſhall I behave in theſe circumſtances, or manage this matter?" Theſe and ſuch like queſtions the believer will have daily to propoſe to the Lord, in faith and prayer; deſiring to be taught, inclined and enabled to know and do his will. When this ſubmiſſion hath been made; the Lord will take the humbled ſinner under his direction, and will teach him what he would have him to do: yet he will not ſhew them the whole at once, but gradually, as it becomes neceſſary: and he uſes his ſervants as inſtruments in this work; that his appointments may be honoured, and the communion of the ſaints may be promoted. Nor does he generally bring tranſgreſſors to peace and joy in believing, without ſuch previous rebukes, ſorrows, and diſtreſſes of conſcience, as may evince the atrociouſneſs of their crimes, and lay a foundation for their future humility, gratitude, patience and meekneſs. Under great remorſe of conſcience, and when the ſoul is deeply engaged about eternal things, a man loſes his deſire after animal recreation: ſo that faſting in ſuch circumſtances is often a matter of courſe, rather than an impoſed duty. But happy are they, who thus ſow in tears, for they ſhall reap in joy.

But behold the proud Phariſee, or the prouder infidel prayeth! Behold the licentious profligate, the iniquitous publican, the unmerciful oppreſſor, or the daring blaſphemer prayeth! What happy tidings are theſe, when well authenticated, to ſuch as underſtand the nature and efficacy of prayer; of ſuch prayer, as the humbled ſinner preſents before a merciful God for the bleſſings of a free ſalvation! Yet even eminent diſciples are ſometimes ſtaggered at the commands of their gracious Lord; though they expreſs their readineſs to obey: and whilſt they allow the infinite ſufficiency of his mercy and grace; they are apt to aſſign limits to it, according to the particular prejudices of their own hearts. But it is the Lord's glory to over-paſs all our limitations, and ſcanty expectations; and to ſhew that they are the choſen veſſels of his mercy, whom we were ready to conſider as the objects of his moſt righteous vengeance: nay, that perhaps, he intends them to do and ſuffer more in his cauſe, and for his ſake, than thoſe, who ſtand higheſt in our eſtimation. This was the caſe with him, who had done ſo much evil to the ſaints of the Lord Jeſus at Jeruſalem, and was preparing to do all he could to thoſe, who called on his name at Damaſcus; and in leſſer inſtances, the ſame is taking place continually. He expects implicit obedience from his ſervants: all their objections ariſe from unbelief; and when they are in a right frame, they would go even into the lion's den, ſhould their obedience require it, aſſured that he will be with them to ſupport, or deliver them. Converting grace renders believers the children of the ſame Father, aboliſhes their former diſtinctions, and terminates their enmities: and when the bittereſt foe, or the vileſt malefactor becomes a real diſciple, we are required to own, and to love him as a brother, without any upbraidings, prejudice, or reſentment; and we ſhould rejoice to be uſeful to him, either in his temporal, or ſpiritual concerns. The efficacious teaching of the Holy Ghoſt cauſes the ſcales of ignorance, prejudice, and pride to fall from the eyes of the underſtanding, which before excluded the clear Light of the goſpel: then the ſinner receives his ſight, and profeſſes the faith, which once he deſpiſed: then he paſſes from the kingdom of ſatan to that of God; and being a new creature, he lives in a new element, and joins himſelf to new companions; and as he hath opportunity, and ability, he endeavours to recommend Jeſus, the anointed Saviour, and the Son of God, to the attention of his former aſſociates in iniquity, or infidelity.

Whilſt many who witneſs ſuch changes, are amazed; but few in compariſon are effectually convinced by them. Even Saul's converſion, though it be at this day a real demonſtration of the truth of chriſtianity, a fact that can neither be doubted, nor accounted for upon any other principle whatſoever; even when it firſt took place, and when it concurred with his convincing arguments, and moſt ſtupendous miracles, could not of itſelf effect the converſion of one enemy to the goſpel: for nothing can produce true faith, but that power, that new creates the heart. Thus the Jews both at Damaſcus and Jeruſalem rejected Saul's unexceptionable teſtimony; and ſought to kill him, as he had ſought the deſtruction of thoſe, that had been chriſtians before him.

Believers are apt to carry their ſuſpicions too far, in reſpect of thoſe, againſt whom they have imbibed ſtrong prejudices, and from whom they have received great injuries. Indeed the world is ſo full of deceit, and the viſible church of hypocriſy; that it is hard for us to be ſufficiently cautious, without verging to the extreme. However the Lord will clear up the characters of the up-

THERE was a certain man in Ceſarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

2 *A* devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his houſe, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

3 He ſaw in a viſion evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and ſaying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him he was afraid, and ſaid, What is it, Lord? And he ſaid unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now ſend men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter;

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whoſe houſe is by the ſea ſide: he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do.

7 And when the angel which ſpake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſoldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all *theſe* things unto them, he ſent them to Joppa.

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right: he will bring them acquainted with his people, and give them opportunities of bearing teſtimony to his truth; perhaps before thoſe, with whom they once concurred in enmity, and oppoſition to it. He ſees good to prove his churches by tribulations, and perſecutions: but by taking off their enemies, converting ſome, and diſmaying others, or finding them other work; he will give ſeaſons of reſt and peace; in which we ſhould diligently edify ourſelves and each other, that we may be prepared for future trials, in caſe they ſhould be allotted us. When believers walk conſcientiouſly in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the goſpel; they appear to be an excellent and happy people, and they are generally multiplied: but it behoves us to watch againſt dejection, as much as againſt known ſin; as it tends to prejudice the minds of unbelievers againſt the truth, and to render them afraid of it.

The unwearied labours of the primitive preachers of the goſpel ſhould be ſtudied, and imitated by all their ſucceſſors in the miniſtry: and the diſplays of the power and grace of Chriſt ſhould encourage us in all our difficulties. He can heal our bodies, or our ſouls, of the moſt inveterate maladies, whenever he pleaſes: his long delays to help us do not prove that he never intends it; and he can make our tedious afflictions or temptations, and our merciful deliverances, the means of ſaving the ſouls of thoſe around us. Whilſt we live upon the fulneſs of Chriſt for our whole ſalvation; we ourſelves ſhould deſire to be full of good works, for the honour of his name, and the benefit of his ſaints. Then they, who go before us, will be our witneſſes in heaven; and they who ſurvive us, will teſtify on earth, to the reality of our faith and love. Many ſeem to think, that none can glorify Chriſt, or help to ſpread his goſpel, except miniſters: but ſuch perſons as Tabitha are as much wanted, and are as uſeful in their places, even as able, faithful preachers: for whilſt the latter proclaim the truths of the goſpel by their word; the other ſubſtantiate, illuſtrate, and demonſtrate their excellency in their lives. How mean then is the grovelling ambition of thoſe numerous females, who aſpire to no greater diſtinction, than that of external decoration, and accompliſhment; and who waſte their lives in trifling purſuits: when their multiplied charities, and labours of love might have rendered them, at leſs expence of time, and treaſure, a bleſſing to numbers, and an ornament to chriſtianity! When ſuch triflers die, their all dies with them; and their loſs is not much felt, or lamented: whilſt even ſuch, as have had little in their power; but who have laboured working with their own hands, that they might relieve the poor and needy, will be ſubſtantially uſeful through life, and ſincerely lamented at their death; and their works will follow them, and be graciouſly rewarded in heaven. We cannot expect, nor ſhould we deſire the return to life of thoſe, who have thus ſerved their generation, and are fallen aſleep: yet the preſence, converſation and prayers of faithful miniſters may be a benefit to the ſurvivors; and they ſhould ever be ready to embrace ſuch opportunities of comforting the mourners. The Lord can make up every loſs; he over-rules every event for the good of thoſe who truſt in him, and for the glory of his own name: and unoſtentatious piety, diſintereſted diligence, and indifference about outward accommodations ſhould mark the whole conduct of thoſe, who preach the goſpel of God our Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—8.] Hitherto none had been admitted by baptiſm into the chriſtian church, but Jews, Samaritans, and Proſelytes; who were all circumciſed perſons, and who afterwards obſerved the ceremonial law: but the time was now come, when the gentiles were openly to be called to partake of all the privileges of God's people; without any further neceſſity of being proſelyted to Judaiſm, either before, or after their converſion to chriſtianity. The character of that perſon, whom God was pleaſed to ſelect, as the firſt-fruits of this harveſt from among the gentiles, was ſuited, as much as any thing could, to abate the prejudice of the Jewiſh converts againſt that alteration: and Peter, the apoſtle of the circumciſion was choſen to act on this occaſion; rather than Paul the intended apoſtle of the uncircumciſion. (c. xv. v. 7. 14.) Cornelius was a centurion, or the commander of an hundred men, in the Italian band of Roman ſoldiers, which then attended the governor, who now generally reſided at Ceſarea. Probably he was a native of Italy; and perhaps he deemed it a grievance, when ordered ſo far from his country, and connexions. But in Judea he had become acquainted with the true God; he had been led to renounce idolatry, and to worſhip the Lord, with reverence, and

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the houſe-top to pray, about the ſixth hour:

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance;

11 And ſaw heaven opened, and a certain

obedient attention. He had taught his family to do the ſame, and was a liberal friend to the poor Jews, among whom he reſided; and he was conſtant in his devotions, both with his family, and in ſecret: and he alſo ſet apart ſeaſons for faſting and prayer; probably to ſeek further directions from God, reſpecting his truth, and will. He was in ſome meaſure acquainted with the ſcriptures, and the promiſes of a Meſſiah; though it may be queſtioned whether he had learned to rely on him as a ſpiritual Redeemer, that was to come. He had not been circumciſed; nor did he attend to the ſacrifices, and purifications of the law, which were typical of that redemption. Many writers are very full and exact about two ſorts of proſelytes to the Jewiſh religion; and others argue againſt that diſtinction: but the nature of the caſe, and the facts recorded in ſcripture render it evident, that ſome of the gentiles were circumciſed, profeſſed obedience to the whole Moſaic law, and were completely incorporated among the native Jews: and that others became worſhippers of the true God, and profeſſed obedience to the moral precepts, who were not circumciſed, nor obſervant of the ceremonial law. Of this latter deſcription Cornelius was; and therefore conſidered entirely as a gentile, though of good report among the Jews. However the promiſed Saviour was now come; and the way of a ſinner's ſalvation by him was openly preached: it was therefore proper, that all, who feared God, ſhould explicitly believe in him, and profeſs themſelves his diſciples. There was evidently a preparation in the heart of Cornelius, for the reception of the goſpel; he had doubtleſs a true faith in God's word, as far as he underſtood it; though he had not an explicit faith in Chriſt. (*Heb.* c. xi. v. 6.) This preparation and faith were the fruits of the regenerating Spirit of God, which was given to him, through the mediation of Jeſus, even before he knew him; as indeed is the caſe with all of us, when we are quickened, who before were dead in ſin. Through Him alſo his prayers, and alms were accepted; which otherwiſe would have been rejected. Had it been poſſible for him, in this ſtate of mind, to have refuſed the goſpel ſalvation, when propoſed to him; he could not have been ſaved by his works: but this could not be; for God had diſpoſed him to welcome the goſpel, becauſe he intended to call him to believe it: ſo that he could neither be ſaved without faith in Chriſt, nor could he periſh through want of it. It is mere trifling to enquire, as ſome have done, what his ſtate would have been, had he died after his prayers were heard, and before he had believed in Chriſt? For it goes upon the abſurd ſuppoſition of the Lord's beginning a work, and not bringing it to the intended completion. It is an univerſal rule, that whatever is from God, of a ſpiritual and gracious nature, will for Chriſt's ſake be accepted of him: but it may be doubted whether he ever communicates regenerating grace, where he has not given, and does not mean to ſend, ſome meaſure of the light of his word: though it doth not behove us to limit his mercy; nor can we tell how ſmall a portion of divine truth may be the ſeed, or food of divine life in the ſoul. This we may know certainly, that the regenerate man will not finally reject the goſpel, when propoſed to him. Many objections, and ſophiſtical reaſonings, and much confuſion on this ſubject, amongſt perſons of contrary ſyſtems, ſeem to ariſe from ignorance of, or inattention to this truth; *that nothing ſpiritually good, or acceptable to God, can be produced from the heart of a fallen creature, except by the regenerating Spirit of Chriſt:* where that is communicated, all things neceſſary to ſalvation will in due time follow; but when, or in what order, cannot be previouſly aſcertained. But many things morally good, and many ſpecious appearances of evangelical religion, are as diſtinct from *ſpirituality, or the choice and love of, and reliſh for the holy excellency of God, and heavenly things;* as poliſhed braſs in it's higheſt perfection is different from pure gold. Perhaps theſe obſervations may aſſiſt the reader in underſtanding this intereſting chapter, which can not eaſily be made to accord with the exactneſs of ſyſtematical writers upon theſe ſubjects. Cornelius, influenced by divine grace, was acting conſcientiouſly, and waiting for further diſcoveries of the will of God: and when he was keeping a ſolemn faſt, and praying, at the hour, when the evening ſacrifice was offered, (to which hour of prayer he probably had a reference;) he ſaw, in a viſion, an angel in human form, and ſhining garments, who addreſſed him by name, as he entered his apartment. Being alarmed at the viſion, (as probably his doors were faſtened;) and being aware, that this was a heavenly viſitant, he deſired in the language of reverence to know what was the meaning of his coming? The angel then aſſured him, that his alms and prayers were come up before God with acceptance; and he was thereby, as it were, reminded of his promiſes and purpoſes to do him good. He therefore was come, not to be his inſtructor, but to direct him to ſend for Peter to Joppa, who would ſhew to him the way of truth, and ſalvation, about which he ſo earneſtly enquired. Thus the angel left it to the apoſtle to preach the goſpel to Cornelius, that the ſacred miniſtry might be honoured, and that he might become acquainted with the diſciples of Chriſt for his future benefit. Accordingly Cornelius, having pious ſervants and attendants through the influence of his example, and inſtructions, immediately ſent three meſſengers to Joppa, to enquire for a man, of whom he had probably never heard, before the angel made him known to him.

V. 9—16.] The prejudices of Peter were ſtill ſo ſtrong againſt uncircumciſed perſons, that the report of Cornelius's viſion would not have ſatisfied his mind, in reſpect of the propriety of going to him; unleſs the Lord had otherwiſe prepared him for the ſervice, to which he was called. When the meſſengers, therefore, drew near to Joppa; Peter had retired for prayer to ſome veſſel deſcending unto him, as it had been a great ſheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth;

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Riſe, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter ſaid, Not ſo, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice *ſpake* unto him again the ſecond time, What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the veſſel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himſelf what this viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean, behold, the men which were ſent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's houſe, and ſtood before the gate,

18 And called, and aſked whether Simon, which was ſurnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the viſion, the Spirit ſaid unto him, Behold, three men ſeek thee.

20 Ariſe, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have ſent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were ſent unto him from Cornelius, and ſaid, Behold, I am he whom ye ſeek: what *is* the cauſe wherefore ye are come?

22 And they ſaid, Cornelius the centurion, a juſt man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to ſend for thee into his houſe, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

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convenient ſolitude, which he had upon the top of the houſe, it being then about noon; for, like David, and Daniel, he prayed at leaſt three times a day. Whilſt he was there he became uncommonly hungry, and would gladly have eaten; but before his ordinary repaſt was got ready, he fell into a trance, or extacy; in which his ſenſes were cloſed to external objects, but inviſible things were preſented to his mind as if he ſaw them with his eyes. In this ſtate there appeared to him a great veſſel, reſembling a vaſt ſheet or wrapper, of which the four corners were faſtened together: this ſeemed to come down from heaven to the earth; and upon further obſerving it, he found that it contained all kinds of living creatures, clean and unclean. At the ſame time he heard a voice directing him to ſatisfy his hunger, by immediately killing, and eating whatever he choſe. To this he objected, though he ſuppoſed it to be the voice of the Lord; as he had always obſerved the ceremonial law, in this matter, with the moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs. To this objection, it was replied, "what God hath cleanſed, that call not "thou common," or polluted. To impreſs his mind the deeper, and to ſhew the certainty of the inference, the tranſaction was thrice repeated, and then the whole viſion diſappeared. The ſame law, which eſtabliſhed the diſtinction between clean, and unclean meats, had alſo marked that between Jews and Gentiles, and reſtricted the intercourſe between them. But the pride and bigotry of the Jews had carried the ſeparation further than the law required; and even to a contempt of the Gentiles, however friendly or conſcientiouſly they behaved to them. Moreover the law concerning the diſtinction of meats, and of animals had both been an emblem of, and a means of preſerving, the diſtinction between clean, and unclean perſons. (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. xi.) To inform a Jew, that God had cleanſed thoſe animals, that had been declared unclean, and that they were no longer to be deemed common, or rejected as ſuch, was in fact to announce the abrogation of the Moſaic law, and the introduction of another, and more enlarged diſpenſation: and it plainly intimated, that uncircumciſed Gentiles, whom God had cleanſed by faith and grace, were to be received into the church, without any regard to the ceremonial law, or their uncleanneſs according to it. This great veſſel might therefore ſignify the chriſtian church, as living under the new diſpenſation of the covenant of grace; whoſe origin is from heaven, though it's ſituation is upon earth. It's ſecurity by the promiſe, oath, and covenant of God, and the engagements of his unchangeable wiſdom, power, truth, and love may alſo be intimated by the veſſel being knit at the four corners. The animals of various ſpecies may repreſent ſinners of every nation, deſcription, and previous character, as gathered into the church by the preaching of the goſpel, and by the faith of the operation of God; (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. xi. v. 6—9.) And the voice, repeatedly addreſſing Peter, evidently meant, that he was thenceforth to aſſociate with converts to Chriſt from among the Gentiles, and to make no diſtinction between them, and the Jewiſh diſciples; for God had cleanſed them: and that he was to preach to the Gentiles, even as to the Jews, for God intended to cleanſe them. (c. xv. v. 9.)

V. 17—23.] Peter did not readily underſtand the import of this viſion; though he knew that it contained ſome weighty inſtruction, which he diligently applied his mind to diſcover. Whilſt he was thus employed, the meſſengers of Cornelius arrived, and enquired for

24 And the morrow after they entered into Ceſarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinſmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worſhipped *him*.

26 But Peter took him up, ſaying, Stand up; I myſelf alſo am a man.

27 And as he talked with him he went in, and found many that were come together.

28 And he ſaid unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation: but God hath ſhewed me that I ſhould not call any man common or unclean.

29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainſaying, as ſoon as I was ſent for: I aſk therefore for what intent ye have ſent for me?

30 And Cornelius ſaid, Four days ago I was faſting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my houſe, and, behold, a man ſtood before me in bright clothing,

31 And ſaid, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the ſight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter; he is lodged in the houſe of *one* Simon a tanner, by the ſea ſide; who, when he cometh, ſhall ſpeak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I ſent to thee; and thou haſt well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and ſaid, Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.

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him: but to ſatisfy his mind more fully, this fact was circumſtantially revealed to him, before he was otherwiſe informed of it; and he was ordered to go with the meſſengers, without ſcruple or heſitation. God had ſent theſe meſſengers, by means of his angel who appeared to Cornelius: but the Spirit ſaid to Peter "I "have ſent them:" this is the language of Deity and perſonality. Accordingly Peter having heard the report of the meſſengers concerning Cornelius's character, and viſion, hoſpitably entertained them till the next day, and then went with them. But he took with him ſome of the believers, who dwelt at Joppa; that they might witneſs, and be ready to atteſt, the whole of what paſſed on this unprecedented occaſion.

V. 24—33.] Cornelius, expecting a ſatisfactory diſcovery of the divine will from Peter, had collected his friends, (who ſeem to have been previouſly diſpoſed to receive inſtruction even as he was,) that they might ſhare the benefit. Peter had been made known to him in ſo extraordinary a manner, that he ſeems to have ſuppoſed, that he was ſomething more than man: perhaps he thought that he was the Meſſiah, of whom he had read ſuch glorious things. However he proſtrated himſelf before the apoſtle, and rendered him ſuch homage, as he deemed improper to be received by any one, who was but a mere man like himſelf; and therefore he reſolutely rejected it: yet Jeſus continually accepted of the very ſame; (*Matt.* c. ix. v. 18. *Mark*, c. v. ver. 22.) Being entered into the houſe, where ſo many uncircumciſed perſons were collected; he obſerved, that they knew it to be contrary to their law for a Jew to aſſociate with thoſe of another nation; but God had ſhewed him, that this diſtinction was no longer to be ſtrictly adhered to. He had therefore come to them without objecting; and he now deſired to be more particularly informed, on what account he had been ſent for. Upon which Cornelius repeated his viſion, expreſſed his ſatisfaction in his having come to them ſo readily; and aſſured him, that he and his friends were met together, as in the immediate preſence of God, and prepared to give an implicit aſſent, and a cordial welcome to the divine meſſage, which he was about to deliver.

V. 34, 35.] The circumſtances of this tranſaction ſo impreſſed the apoſtle's mind, that he opened his diſcourſe by allowing, that he had been erroneouſly prejudiced in favour of the Jews, and againſt the Gentiles: for he was now aſſured, that "God was no reſpecter of per-"ſons." *To reſpect perſons*, is entirely different from *diſcriminating characters*, or *conferring unmerited favours on one man, and not on another:* though many reaſonings on this ſubject are involved in obſcurity, for want of marking this difference. A judge reſpects perſons, if he condemn one, and acquit another, or decide in favour of the injurious party, from partiality to his friend, or one of his own nation, ſect, or party: yet in private life, he may ſend a preſent to what friend he pleaſes, or give alms to what beggars he chooſes, without giving others a ground for charging him with reſpect of perſons. If the Lord had accepted a man's worſhip merely becauſe he was a Jew; and rejected that of another man of exactly the ſame diſpoſitions and character, merely becauſe he was a Gentile; there would have been cauſe to aſſert that he was "a reſpecter of perſons:" but if he had favoured a proud, wicked, or hypocritical Jew, merely on account of his circumciſion or relation to Abraham; and rejected a humble, pious, believing, ſincere worſhipper, becauſe of

36 The word which *God* ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt; (He is Lord of all;)

37 That word, *I ſay*, ye know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptiſm which John preached;

38 How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil: for God was with him.

39 And we are witneſſes of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jeruſalem; whom they ſlew, and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witneſſes choſen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

his uncircumciſion, or his gentile extraction; there would have been an evident ground for the charge. Yet the Jews in general carried ſo far their ideas of God's ſpecial favour to their nation, that they involved theſe conſequences: and Peter now clearly ſaw, and frankly acknowledged the falſity of them. The ſame principles may be extended to all other nations, profeſſions, and ſects: but it does not follow that God will accept from any man that ſervice, which is deſtitute of *ſpiritual good*; or that any man will do that, which is ſpiritually good without ſpecial grace; or that God is bound in juſtice to give his ſpecial grace to an unconverted man, becauſe of any external decency of character, or formal ſervices performed by him; or that he may not give this unmerited mercy to any man, as he ſees good, without reſpecting perſons; or that even the fruits of this ſpecial grace can claim, or even meet, acceptance on any other ground, than that of the covenant of mercy, through the merits and atonement of our divine Surety. In ſhort, where the eſſence of true religion is found, God will graciouſly accept of it, without regarding names, forms, or ſects: but he will accept of no man of any ſect, or nation without it. So that, “in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him:” for when theſe are genuine, they compriſe the ſubſtance of true religion, they are the effects of ſpecial grace; they are the evidence, though not the meritorious cauſe, of a man's acceptance; and whatever may yet be wanting in his explicit knowledge and faith; it will in due time be communicated, from Him, who hath begun the good work, with an intention to complete it, in his own time, and manner.

V. 36—43.] The apoſtle next proceeded to ſtate his meſſage: this would ſcarce have been neceſſary, if Cornelius had been ſo accepted for the ſake of his good works, as not to need the merits of Chriſt; or if, as ſome argue, every man may be ſaved by his own religion, if he be ſincere in it. In this caſe, Cornelius would not have been ſaved by believing Peter's words, but by his own works. (c. xi. v. 14.) In fact his prayers for inſtruction, being accompanied by obedience according to his preſent light, were accepted; and in conſequence the only way of ſalvation was made known unto him, and his heart was prepared to welcome it. Peter therefore obſerved, that the company muſt have known ſomething of the preaching of Jeſus the Nazarene, and of the rumours, that had been circulated concerning him; though their information had been imperfect, confuſed, and unfavourable. This was indeed the very meſſage, which God had ſent him to deliver to them; even the word, which he had ſome time before ſent to the Jews, preaching reconciliation to himſelf, and peace with each other, by this Jeſus, who was the promiſed Meſſiah, the anointed Saviour, and King of Iſrael, yea the Lord of all men, whether Jews, or Gentiles; of all creatures, whether men or angels; and of all worlds, even of all things in heaven, earth, or hell; both in reſpect of his divine nature, as the incarnate Son of God, and as the Mediator between God and man, the Law-giver, Governor, and Judge of all. The apoſtle declared that he came to confirm that doctrine, which they knew had been publiſhed throughout all Judea; though it was firſt more ſtatedly preached in Galilee, after John had prepared the way for it by his miniſtry and baptiſm. This principally related to God's having anointed Jeſus with the Holy Ghoſt, in an evident manner, at his baptiſm, when he had declared him to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed; and to the divine power, which confirmed his doctrine, and which he exerciſed “in going about doing good,” and performing all kinds of miraculous cures; eſpecially delivering thoſe, who were oppreſſed by evil ſpirits, as an emblem of his reſcuing ſinners from the yoke and ſervice of ſatan: for God was evidently with, and in him, as appeared by the authority, and beneficence of his miracles. To this, Peter and the other apoſtles were appointed to bear witneſs; as they had been his conſtant attendants, and the ſpectators of theſe intereſting ſcenes. Till at length the Jewiſh rulers, hating his holy doctrine, and envying his reputation, had ſeized, and condemned him to death as a deceiver; and had procured the execution of their ſentence from Pilate, ſo that he had been ignominouſly and cruelly put to death by crucifixion. But though it pleaſed God for wiſe purpoſes to permit their malice to ſucceed thus far: yet he had raiſed him from the dead, and ſhewn him openly after his reſurrection, not indeed to all the people, whoſe conduct had rendered them unworthy of ſuch a favour; for that method would not have

43 To him give all the prophets witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.

44 While Peter yet ſpake theſe words the Holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumciſion which believed were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghoſt.

46 For they heard them ſpeak with tongues, and magnify God. Then anſwered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

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been ſo ſatisfactory to all thoſe, in every age, and nation, who were concerned in this event; (Note, *John*, c. xx. v. 26—29:) but to a competent number of witneſſes, whom he had before choſen for that purpoſe; even to the twelve apoſtles, and many others, who had ſeen, converſed, eat and drank with him after he aroſe from the dead. He had alſo commanded them to preach theſe things to mankind, and to aſſure them, that He, who was then propoſed to them as a Saviour, was ordained of God to be the Judge of thoſe, who ſhould at the laſt day be found living on earth, and of the innumerable multitudes, which would then be raiſed from the dead. Theſe things indeed were no other, than what had been predicted in the ſcriptures, with which Cornelius and his friends were become in ſome meaſure acquainted: and in due time they would ſee, that the ſeveral particulars relating to his perſon, character, miracles, doctrine, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, &c, were accompliſhments of ancient prophecies; and that they all, in one way or other bare witneſs to Him, and directed mankind to expect acceptance through his merits, and ſacrifice: ſo that whoſoever of any nation, or deſcription, ſhould believe in him, ſhould receive a free, and complete remiſſion of all his ſins. (*Iſaiah*, c. liii. v. 10—12. *Dan.* c. ix. v. 24—27.) We muſt ſuppoſe that this is only an abſtract of Peter's diſcourſe; and as he was interrupted in it by the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the company: ſo we need not wonder that various points of chriſtian doctrine are not explicitly ſtated in it; for they were left to be communicated afterwards, and by degrees.

V. 44—48.] (c. xi. v. 15.) The deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on this occaſion ſeems not to have been accompanied by the ſame circumſtances, as on the day of Pentecoſt; but the effects were evident, and ſimilar to thoſe, which were then produced. The gentile converts were immediately enabled to ſpeak in languages, which they had not previouſly learned; and to magnify God, in reſpect of the glory diſplayed in the work of redemption. As they were thus undeniably baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, not only by his ſanctifying influences, but by his miraculous gifts alſo; Peter juſtly concluded, that it would be abſurd to refuſe them the baptiſm of water: and when none of his companions could ſay any thing againſt it, he ordered the ordinance to be adminiſtered to them. Probably he did not baptize them with his own hands; and doubtleſs they were baptized "into "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the "Holy Ghoſt."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Pure, and undefiled religion is ſometimes found where we ſhould leaſt have expected it; (Note, &c. *Matt.* c. viii. v. 5—13;) and the veſſels of mercy are often brought acquainted with God by means, of which at the time they know not the tendency, and which perhaps thwart their inclinations, and diſappoint their ſchemes of future life. The grace of God teaches men to worſhip him with reverence, and godly fear, to ſerve him conſcientiouſly, to unite juſtice and charity, and to pray with conſtancy and perſeverance: it leads men to order their houſholds in the fear of God; and commonly they become inſtrumental to the good of thoſe around them. This Roman ſoldier was more like a ſon of Abraham, even before he became a chriſtian, than moſt of that patriarch's lineal deſcendants were: and doubtleſs he will riſe up in judgment againſt, and condemn numbers of nominal chriſtians, and even profeſſors of evangelical truth. Yet all this diligence, liberality, equity, piety, and ſelf-denial could not have ſaved him, without the merits of Chriſt: even *he* muſt be accepted, and admitted into heaven in the ſame way, with Saul the perſecutor, with the converted jailor, and the thief upon the croſs; that no fleſh ſhould glory in the preſence of God. What then will become of thoſe, who, without one moiety, or one tenth, of the external appearance of his piety, and charity; preſume that they ſhall go to heaven upon the ſcore of their good works, and reject the way of ſalvation by faith in Jeſus Chriſt? But where theſe things are genuine, they will be attended with an humble, teachable, and enquiring diſpoſition: and they, who practiſe what they know, without being proud of it, or truſting to it; and who at the ſame time wait upon God for further teaching, by faith, and prayer, ſhall never periſh for want of inſtruction. Should the Lord create ſuch a diſpoſition in the heart of an inhabitant of China, Japan, or Otaheite; he will ſooner ſend an angel from heaven, or a miniſter from the uttermoſt part of the earth, to ſhew him the way of ſalvation, than leave him deſtitute of that knowledge, for which he longs and prays without ceaſing. For the alms, and ſupplications of ſuch perſons ſpring from proper principles, and go up as a memorial before God; not to merit his favour, but to plead with him to fulfil his gracious promiſes. The ſublime ſubjects, which pertain to redemp-

CHAP. XI.

Contains 1ſt. Peter blamed for going amongſt the Gentiles, and ſatisfying them concerning his conduct, by a narration of the whole affair, 1---18. *2d. The ſucceſs of the goſpel, eſpecially at Antioch: Barnabas ſent thither, rejoicing over the converts, and exhorting them to perſevere; fetching Saul to help him in the work; and their joint ſucceſs; and believers firſt called Chriſtians at Antioch,* 19---26. *3d. Agabus predicting a general famine, and the converts at Antioch ſending relief to their brethren in Judea,* 27---30.

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tion through the blood of the Son of God, ſeem more proper for the tongues of angels to proclaim, then for us poor worms of the earth: doubtleſs in many reſpects, they could preach them unſpeakably better; yet our humiliating, thankful experience may balance ſomething on the other ſide. However in that caſe, it would not be ſo evident, that the excellency of the power, which makes the word ſucceſsful, is wholly of God; nor would their preſence and language be ſo ſuited to man's weakneſs, or ſo conducive to his comfort. The Lord knoweth where, and about what, his ſervants are employed; and when he hath further work for them, he will ſurely let them know. Implicit obedience tends to increaſing light and comfort: and pious ſervants, or attendants are a great bleſſing, which we ſhould ſeek from God, uſe proper means to obtain, and ſhew a proper value for, when they are granted to us.

The Lord's thoughts and ways are far above our's: the beſt of men are ſeldom entirely free from ſome remaining prejudices; even they, who were infallibly guided by the Holy Ghoſt, to declare the doctrine of Chriſt to mankind, were gradually let into the ſecret deſigns of God, and delivered from their miſtakes, and prejudices, as it became needful: how abſurdly then do they act, who want to put the new convert at once in full poſſeſſion of that whole ſyſtem, which perhaps themſelves have been learning for years! The Lord may command his ſervants without aſſigning his reaſons: but he generally ſatisfies them about the propriety of thoſe ſervices to which he calls them: and their frequency and fervency in prayer very much conduce to it. He, that inſtituted any mode of religious worſhip, hath authority to alter it, as he ſees good. When pious perſons conſcientiouſly deny themſelves, in obedience to what they deem the command of God, without ſelf-righteouſneſs, or ſpiritual pride; their conduct may evidence their ſincerity, and exhibit to others a very uſeful example, even ſhould it appear that they were miſtaken in their ſcruples. What a motley company are they, who are collected together into the church of God, and ſecured by the covenant of grace; if we advert to their previous characters, and diſpoſitions! Some of them were fierce as beaſts of prey; others worldly drudges like their cattle; others grovelling in ſenſuality like the creeping things of the earth; and others ſoaring aloft in ambitious purſuits, and towering ſpeculations, or giddy, volatile, and diſſipated, like the fowls of the heaven. In ſhort ſome were addicted to one vice, ſome to another; but all eſtranged from God, and true holineſs: but when they are truly converted, they become all of one mind and judgment, in the grand concerns of religion; they have the ſame faith, hope, and love, and the ſame motives and diſtinguiſhing principles; and their ſeveral natural diſpoſitions, and capacities, being corrected, regulated, and moderated by ſanctifying grace, render them more qualified in different ways to ſerve the common cauſe of the goſpel. Let us then learn not to call thoſe common, whom God hath cleanſed; not to deſpiſe thoſe, whom he hath received; and not to deſpair of, or neglect thoſe, whom he may yet call to the knowledge of himſelf. If we diligently endeavour to diſcover the meaning of God's word, the diſpenſations of his providence, and our own experience will often throw light upon it; and, without any immediate revelation, we ſhall be directed and encouraged to proceed nothing doubting, in the path of duty. But how ſtrong muſt prejudice be; when ſo many divine monitions were requiſite to induce an apoſtle to attend upon a man of ſo fair a character, and good report, who by the warning of an angel had ſent for him, that he might receive the inſtructions of life from his lips!

They, who love the truth, will deſire to bring their friends acquainted with it, and will diligently uſe their influence with them for that purpoſe. Whilſt numbers deſpiſe the ſervants of God, ſome will honour them in an improper manner; and it becomes them decidedly to refuſe ſuch exorbitant reſpect; for humility, and modeſty are the peculiar ornaments of piety. But alas, how ſeldom are we called to ſpeak to ſuch auditories, however ſmall, in which it may be ſaid, that "they are "all preſent in the ſight of God, to hear all things "that are commanded us of God." Whatever men may aſſert, or object, it will be found, "that God is "no reſpecter of perſons:" and if any do not ſee the conſiſtency of this with evangelical truth, or with the ſovereignty of his diſpenſations; let them learn to admit, that this is wholly owing to their narrow capacities, and the ſelf-love of their carnal hearts. Nor will the Lord limit his conduct by the rules, or according to the ſyſtems of bigotted, and prejudiced perſons: he will give grace to whom he pleaſes, and as he ſees beſt; and the fruits of that grace will always meet with his acceptance, through the mercy of the covenant, and the merits of it's great Mediator. When He begins, he will carry on his work: and by whatever way he leads a ſinner to heaven; he will be prepared to join the chorus of the Redeemed, in ſinging ſalvation to God, and the Lamb. That preventing grace, which leads men to fervent prayer, and conſcientious obedience, is not given to ſuperſede the neceſſity of the goſpel; but to make way for it. The miniſter of Chriſt muſt therefore declare to ſinners of every character, that word, which God hath ſent to men, preaching peace to them by Jeſus, the Prince of peace, and the Lord of all, by whom alone they can be ſaved, and to whom they muſt at length ſubmit, in one way or other. Many ſerious enquirers hear reports of this doctrine, but ſo diſtorted, and miſrepreſented, that they are for a long time ſet againſt it: and they are aſtoniſhed, when in anſwer to

AND the apoſtles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had alſo received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jeruſalem, they that were of the circumciſion contended with him.

3 Saying, Thou wenteſt in to men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearſed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, ſaying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I ſaw a viſion, A certain veſſel deſcend, as it had been a great ſheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which, when I had faſtened mine eyes, I conſidered, and ſaw four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice ſaying unto me, Ariſe, Peter; ſlay and eat.

8 But I ſaid, Not ſo, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice anſwered me again from heaven, What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the houſe where I was, ſent from Ceſarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, theſe ſix brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's houſe:

13 And he ſhewed us how he had ſeen an angel in his houſe, which ſtood and ſaid unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter;

14 Who ſhall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy houſe ſhall be ſaved.

15 And as I began to ſpeak, the Holy Ghoſt fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he ſaid, John indeed baptized with water; but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt.

17 Foraſmuch then as God gave them the

their prayers, the Lord leads them to hear, and receive his truth from the very perſons, againſt whom they have been ſo prejudiced; and when they find their doctrine ſo different in its nature, and tendency, to what they expected, and ſo exactly ſuited to their wants, and deſires. Whilſt we conſider the effects of our Redeemer's immeaſurable unction by the Holy Ghoſt; let us endeavour to copy his example, being unwearied in doing good, and in promoting the deliverance of our fellow ſinners from the oppreſſion of ſatan, by all the means we can deviſe: thus it will appear that God is with us, whatever men may ſay of, or do to us. Receiving the teſtimony of apoſtles and prophets to the efficacy of his ſacrifice, and the free remiſſion of our ſins, through faith in his name; let us daily prepare to meet him, as the conſtituted Judge of the living and of the dead. When we thus endeavour to mix faith with the word of God, and to yield obedience to it; we may expect to be more fully illuminated, ſanctified and comforted by the gift of the Holy Ghoſt: that through the love of God being ſhed abroad in our hearts, we may uſe our tongues to celebrate his praiſes. This inward baptiſm of the Spirit is eſpecially to be valued; yet outward ordinances are not to be neglected: and they, who pretend that they have no occaſion for the external ſigns, becauſe they have received the internal grace of the covenant, ſpeak and act in a very unſcriptural manner, and give reaſon for ſuſpecting, that they deceive themſelves. Yet if we have both the outward ſign, and the inward and ſpiritual grace; it is not of ſo much importance in what order we have received them: and they, who have learned, and experienced the things of God, will deſire the further company of his miniſters, to build them up in their moſt holy faith. But ſurely, we ſinners of the gentiles ſhould read this chapter with peculiar gratitude and admiring praiſe: thus the partition wall was broken down, the law of ordinances that was againſt us was aboliſhed, the door of mercy was opened to us; that we might become fellow heirs with God's ancient people, in all the bleſſings of his covenant, and ſalvation. May the Lord ſpeedily recall the Jews into the church, and bring in the fulneſs of the Gentiles; that his name may be hallowed, his kingdom eſtabliſhed, and his will done, throughout the whole earth, as it is by all the angels in heaven!

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—4.] The conduct of the Jewiſh converts, when they heard of Cornelius's converſion, emphatically illuſtrates the degree, in which that nation was prejudiced againſt the Gentiles: how much ſoever they appeared to worſhip God, and however exemplary their general conduct was; unleſs they were circumciſed, and became obedient to the Moſaic law. If the whole company of believers, who were under the influence of the Holy Ghoſt, could be ſo alarmed and offended at Peter, for eating, on ſuch an occaſion, with perſons of ſo good a report as Cornelius, and his friends; what muſt have been the thoughts of the Jews in general like gift as *he did* unto us who believed on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, what was I, that I could withſtand God?

18 When they heard theſe things they held their peace, and glorified God, ſaying, Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

19 Now they which were ſcattered abroad upon the perſecution that aroſe about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And ſome of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, ſpake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jeſus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of theſe things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jeruſalem: and they ſent forth Barnabas, that he ſhould go as far as Antioch;

23 Who when he came, and had ſeen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the

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concerning the ſtate of the Gentiles, however diſtinguiſhed! (c. x. v. 34, 35.) We can ſcarce think that the apoſtles, and the whole church at Jeruſalem contended with Peter on this account: yet if the general opinion had not been inimical to his conduct, we cannot ſuppoſe that any perſons would have publicly called him to an account about it, or have warmly conteſted the point with him. This fact is indeed an unanſwerable proof, that the primitive church had no idea of Peter's ſupremacy: nay it ſeems that the perſons concerned did not render due reſpect to his apoſtolical authority. However he pleaded no exemptions of this kind; but with a becoming candour and frankneſs, he ſtated the whole tranſaction to them, and thus vindicated what he had done beyond the poſſibility of objection.

V 18. *Then*, &c.] The evidence of the divine will, which appeared in all the circumſtances of this buſineſs, overpowered even the prejudices of theſe objectors; and they could not but admire and adore the grace of God, which had opened a way even to the gentiles to obtain eternal life, when they repented of, and forſook their idolatry, and wickedneſs, and turned to God and his worſhip and ſervice; and which had indeed given to ſome of them this ſaving repentance, through faith in Jeſus Chriſt. It may hence be inferred, that the Jewiſh converts did not before conceive it poſſible, that the repentance of a gentile could be ſincere and acceptable, unleſs it led him to embrace the Jewiſh religion. This ſhews that many things, which learned men have ſtated, concerning "*the proſelytes of the gate*," and their privileges, have been carried much too far; and that their hypotheſes rather ſhew what ought to have been, than what really was, the caſe.

V. 20. *Grecians*, &c.] Some copies read *Greeks*, meaning the gentiles; and many good expoſitors ſuppoſe, that the perſons ſpoken of, having heard of the converſion of Cornelius, ventured to preach indiſcriminately to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; and their ſucceſs, by the immediate power of the Lord Jeſus attending their word, proved his approbation of their conduct. Indeed the contraſt between thoſe, who only preached to the Jews, and thoſe, who preached to the Grecians alſo, ſeems to require this interpretation; for the Grecians, in the common acceptation of the original word, were Jews ſpeaking the Greek language, as moſt of them did at Antioch and in other foreign countries. So that this ſeems to have been the firſt inſtance of the goſpel being preached to idolatrous gentiles: for there is no ſcriptural foundation for the opinion, that theſe preachers only addreſſed thoſe gentiles, who had previouſly renounced idolatry.

V. 23—26.] Barnabas ſaw the grace of God, in it's happy effects upon the conduct and diſpoſition of theſe converted gentiles; and this greatly rejoiced his benevolent mind. But he was aware that their faith would be aſſaulted by manifold temptations, and perſecutions; and that they would be diſcouraged through the prejudices of their Jewiſh brethren: he therefore, exhorted, encouraged and beſought them, by every argument, and motive that he could deviſe, to cleave to or abide with the Lord Jeſus, by a continued exerciſe of faith, and in a bold profeſſion of his name, and obedience to his commandments, whatever they might be called to renounce, venture, or ſuffer for his ſake; aſſured that he would not fail to accept, comfort, ſupport, and reward them For he was a *good man*, a perſon of remarkable affection, philanthropy, and genuine candour, as well as eminent for grace, and the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and the exerciſe of a vigorous faith, in the midſt of danger and perſecution. Through his labours therefore, and thoſe of the other teachers, great acceſſions were made to the number of profeſſed chriſtians: ſeeing therefore ſo large a field of uſefulneſs, he went to Tarſus to procure the aſſiſtance of Saul; and having prevailed with him to accompany him, they laboured together at Antioch for one year, in further inſtructing the numerous converts, and in reducing the church there to order and regularity, as well as in preaching the goſpel to the unconverted inhabitants. Probably the name of Chriſtians was given to the believers at Antioch, by a divine monition; for ſo the original word ſeems to imply. Their enemies had hitherto called them Nazarenes, or Galileans: and if they had deviſed ſome other opprobious name; they would probably have derived it from the word Jeſus, rather than from Chriſt, or the Meſſiah, which they would never allow that the cruci-

Holy Ghoſt, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarſus, for to ſeek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to paſs, that a whole year they aſſembled themſelves with the church, and taught much people. And the diſciples were called Chriſtians firſt in Antioch.

27 And in theſe days came prophets from Jeruſalem unto Antioch.

28 And there ſtood up one of them, named Agabus, and ſignified by the Spirit that there ſhould be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to paſs in the days of Claudius Ceſar.

29 Then the diſciples, every man according to his ability, determined to ſend relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:

30 Which alſo they did, and ſent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

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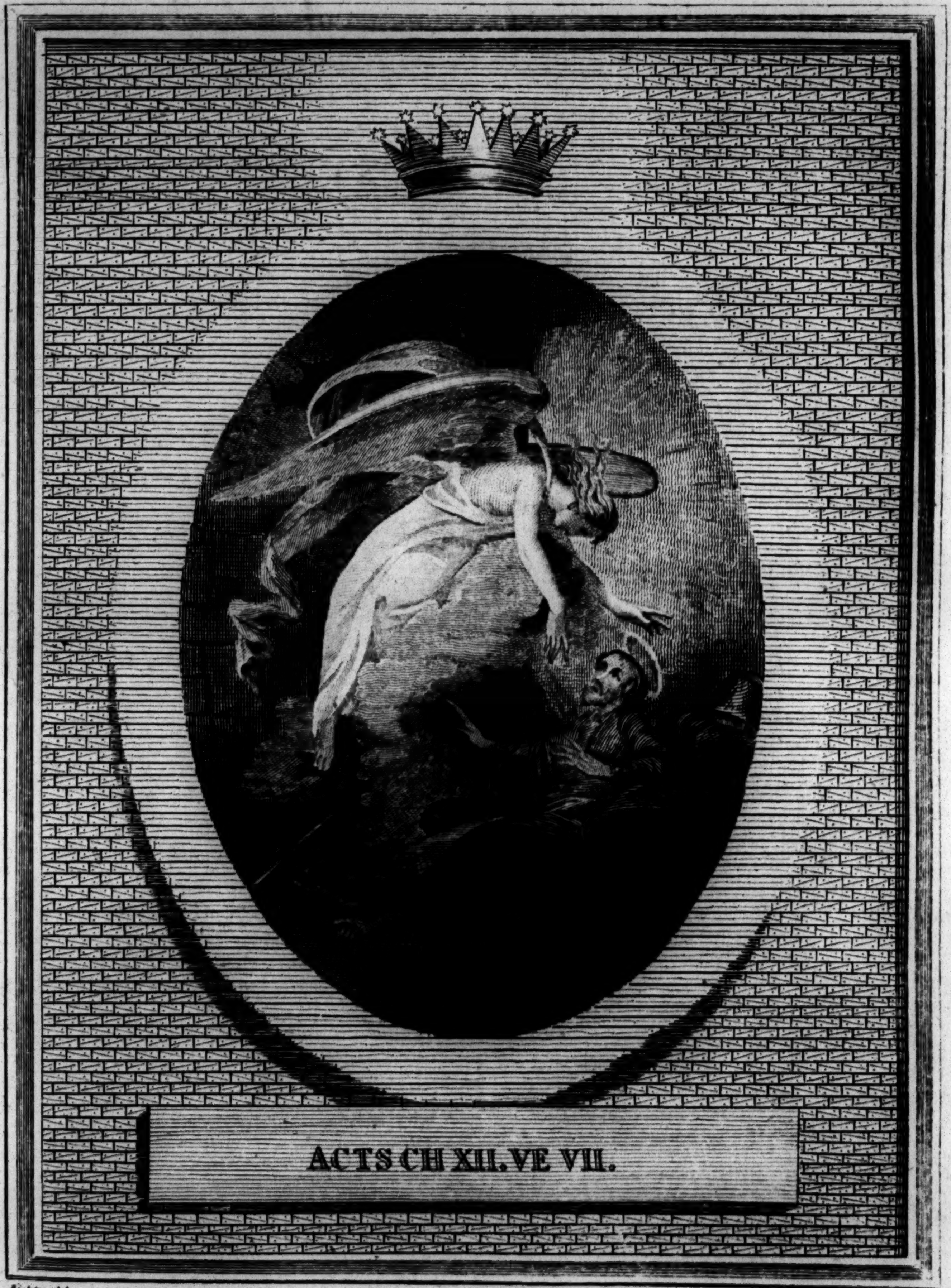
fied Nazarene had been. On the other hand, the diſciples had called each other brethren, believers, and ſaints, which were not ſufficiently diſtinguiſhing: but the word Chriſtian aptly denoted their reliance on that anointed Prince and Saviour, who was generally rejected with diſdain by Jews and Gentiles: it alſo implied, that they too were partakers of an unction by the Holy Spirit. Doubtleſs it was afterwards uſed as a term of reproach by their perſecutors, though it was ſo honourable in its meaning, and original. At preſent it is applied promiſcuouſly to ſo vaſt, and heterogenous a multitude, that it ſcarce implies either honour or reproach: and they, who ſeriouſly profeſs to believe in and obey Chriſt, are diſtinguiſhed by other names, whether they are ſpoken of with reſpect, or in deriſion.

V. 27—30.] Theſe prophets were evidently endowed by the Holy Ghoſt with the power of foretelling future events, and were a ſuperior order of extraordinary miniſters; however the word may ſometimes be uſed. (c. xxi. v. 10, 12.) The ſcarcity predicted by Agabus was to be throughout *all the world*; as the Roman empire was oſtentatiouſly called. Some indeed would explain the original word of the land of Judea, and Galilee, &c; but the expreſſion ſeems incapable of that meaning: and the famine might be very general, and ſeverely felt in the various provinces of the empire; though ſome places might be leſs ſtraitened than others. The believers at Antioch, which was a rich and trading city, were probably far more affluent than thoſe in Judea; and theſe had impoveriſhed themſelves by ſelling their eſtates, after the day of Pentecoſt. For theſe reaſons, and perhaps becauſe the Gentile converts wiſhed to conciliate the affections of their Jewiſh Brethren; they determined to make a collection, according to their gain in trade, or from their eſtates, and to ſend a ſum of money to relieve the poor chriſtians in Judea. Barnabas and Saul were entruſted to carry theſe fruits of the faith and love of the gentile converts to Jeruſalem: and as the apoſtles were probably abſent, preaching the goſpel in other places, they delivered the money to the elders, that they might entruſt it to the deacons to be diſtributed. This is the firſt time elders are mentioned; but we ſhall have a more favourable opportunity of conſidering ſeveral queſtions relative to their offices.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The imperfection of human nature, even in its beſt eſtate, appears, when godly perſons are offended and grieved at thoſe things, which ſhould excite in them the moſt lively joy, and gratitude: ſometimes they are diſpleaſed to hear even of the word of God being preached and received, becauſe the peculiarities of their own ſect or ſyſtem have not been adhered to; and they are ready to find fault with the Lord's plan of bringing ſinners to repentance and faith in Chriſt, and with thoſe that execute it; becauſe *their plan, and their narrow prejudices* have been broken in upon. Hence it is that the zealous ſervant of God may expect to be cenſured on account of thoſe things, in which his maſter hath moſt owned him, and by thoſe perſons whom he moſt eſteems, and loves! However we ſhould meekly bear with the infirmities of our brethren; and, inſtead of taking offence, or anſwering with warmth, we ſhould candidly explain our motives, and ſhew the nature of our proceedings, in order to ſatisfy and conciliate the minds of thoſe, who have blamed us. It behoves every one to remember who, and what he is: whilſt men are very zealous for their own regulations, they ſhould take care, that they do not withſtand God, or preſcribe other terms of admiſſion to their communion, than he hath appointed for admiſſion into his church; leſt they ſhould reject and grieve thoſe, who have believed in Chriſt, and received the gift, and the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, even as they. Candid perſons though they have been prejudiced, will be ſatisfied with a proper anſwer, and a ſufficient explanation, and reaſon: and they who love the Lord, will glorify him, when they are certified that he hath given repentance unto life, to the moſt abject of their fellow ſinners. When the Lord Jeſus is preached in ſimplicity, and according to the ſcripture; his hand will attend the word to give it ſucceſs: and when ſinners are thus brought to believe, and to turn unto the Lord; real good men, who are full of faith, and of the Holy Ghoſt, will diſcern, admire, and rejoice in the grace of God beſtowed upon them; and they will exhort all, who profeſs the goſpel, to cleave to the Lord Jeſus with purpoſe of heart, knowing how many efforts ſatan will employ to draw them aſide from him. When there is a proſpect of great uſefulneſs, they will beſtow pains to procure the aſſiſtance of the moſt able, and zealous miniſters, though they ſhould be thereby eclipſed: and when ſuch men proceed with one heart in the work, believers will be encouraged in aſſembling together, in order to their edification and eſtabliſhment. We, at this day are called by the ſame name, as theſe ancient diſciples; may we be



ACTS CH XII. VE VII.

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BRITISH
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CHAP. XII.

Contains 1ſt. Herod perſecuting the church, putting James the brother of John to death, and impriſoning Peter, &c, 1---4. *2d. Peter, in anſwer to the prayers of the church, ſet at liberty by an angel, &c,* 5---19. *3d. Herod, amidſt his pride, and impious oſtentation, ſmitten by an angel, eaten by worms, and dying miſerably,* 20---23. *4th. The continued ſucceſs, and the return of Barnabas and Saul to Antioch,* 24---25.

NOW about that time Herod the king ſtretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the ſword.

3 And becauſe he ſaw it pleaſed the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter alſo. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in priſon, and delivered *him* to four quarternions of ſoldiers to keep him; intending after Eaſter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in priſon; but prayer was made without ceaſing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the ſame night Peter was ſleeping between two ſoldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the priſon.

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light ſhined in the priſon: and he ſmote Peter on the ſide and raiſed him up, ſaying, Ariſe up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

8 And the angel ſaid unto him, Gird thyſelf, and bind on thy ſandals: and ſo he did. And he ſaith unto him, Caſt thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wiſt not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he ſaw a viſion.

10 When they were paſt the firſt and ſecond ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and paſſed on through one ſtreet, and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himſelf, he ſaid, Now I know of a ſurety that the Lord hath ſent his angel, and hath delivered me out

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anointed with the ſame Spirit, and walk in their ſteps! A Chriſtian is a member of Chriſt's myſtical body, a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, an adopted child of God, an anointed king and prieſt unto him, and an heir of everlaſting glory. May we be ambitious of theſe honours, which belong to all his ſaints; may we walk worthy of this vocation, wherewith we are called; and may "all "who call themſelves chriſtians be led into the way of "truth, and hold the faith, in unity of ſpirit, in the "bond of peace, and in righteouſneſs of life." Such chriſtians indeed will ſympathize with their brethren in all their afflictions: the various diſpenſations of providence will give them opportunity of ſhewing their love, by diſtributing according to their ability to the neceſſity of the ſaints: thus God will be glorified, the harmony amongſt believers promoted; the faith and hope of the poor encouraged, their prayers and praiſes excited, and fruit brought forth, which will abound to the account of thoſe, by whom it is produced. (2 *Cor.* c. ix. v. 10—15.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—4.] This Herod was ſurnamed Agrippa: he was grandſon to Herod the Great, by Ariſtobulus; nephew to Herod Antipas, who ſlew John Baptiſt; brother to Herodias his inceſtuous paramour; and father to King Agrippa, of whom we ſhall read hereafter. The emperor Caligula made him Tetrarch of Galilee; and Claudius afterwards made him king of Judea, becauſe he had been ſerviceable to him in obtaining the empire. Being inveſted with his new dignity, he endeavoured by every means to ingratiate himſelf with the Jews: and this probably united with his hereditary enmity to the goſpel, in exciting him to perſecute the church. He ſeems to have harraſſed other chriſtians for ſome time, before he attacked the apoſtles: but at length he ſeized upon James the ſon of Zebedee, and beheaded him immediately. Thus was he baptized with his Lord's baptiſm; (*Matt.* c. xx. v. 20—23;) and received the crown of martyrdom before any of the other apoſtles. As Herod found the Jews in general much pleaſed with this meaſure; he apprehended Peter alſo: and he probably intending to put the other apoſtles alſo to death, when he could get them into his power: but as the paſſover was then celebrating; he meant to defer his proceedings againſt Peter, till that was over. He therefore committed him to ſixteen ſoldiers, who were to guard him in priſon, night and day, four at a time by rotation; intending as ſoon as the feaſt was over, to gratify the Jews by his public execution. If it could be proved, that Eaſter was obſerved at that time in the chriſtian church; it muſt be evident that Herod would pay no regard to it: it is therefore ſurpriſing that the venerable tranſlators of the Bible ſhould uſe the word *Eaſter*, inſtead of *the paſſover*, in this place.

V. 5—11.] The time of Peter's impriſonment gave the church an opportunity, not of concerting meaſures for his reſcue, but of pouring out their fervent prayers for the preſervation of his uſeful life. Probably they met together in different places for that purpoſe; and of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had conſidered *the thing*, he came to the houſe of Mary the mother of John, whoſe ſurname was Mark, where many were gathered together, praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damſel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when ſhe knew Peter's voice, ſhe opened not the gate for gladneſs, but ran in, and told how Peter ſtood before the gate.

15 And they ſaid unto her, Thou art mad. But ſhe conſtantly affirmed that it was even ſo. Then ſaid they, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and ſaw him, they were aſtoniſhed.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the priſon. And he ſaid, go ſhew theſe things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as ſoon as it was day, there was no ſmall ſtir among the ſoldiers what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had ſought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* ſhould be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Ceſarea, and *there* abode.

20 And Herod was highly diſpleaſed with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him; and having made Blaſtus

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one company ſucceeding to another; there was literally no intermiſſion of their prayers for him, day nor night. Yet he was free from anxiety about the event: and the night before his intended execution, whilſt others were earneſtly praying for his life, he went to ſleep with the utmoſt compoſure; though his poſture muſt have been very uneaſy, being chained with two chains, one on each hand, to the two ſoldiers, between whom he lay. Even the great light, which attended the angel's entrance into the dungeon, did not immediately awake him; but when the angel gently ſmiting his ſide, cauſed him to ariſe, he found his chains immediately looſed. Yet neither the voice of the angel, the light in the priſon, the falling of the chains, nor the preparation of Peter to depart, were noticed by the keepers, who were ſupernaturally thrown into a deep ſleep! Nay Peter himſelf ſuppoſed that he only ſaw a viſion, as he had ſometimes before done: and that it was not a reality. The wards, or watches here mentioned, ſeem to have included the ſtated guard of the priſon, as well as the other ſoldiers appointed to keep Peter: theſe too were rendered inſenſible to the whole tranſaction. The great iron gate ſeparated the environs of the priſon from the city, and was doubtleſs barred in the ſtrongeſt manner: yet it opened of its own accord! When the angel had led Peter out of the reach of his keepers, and into a part of the city, which he knew; he departed from him, and then he became ſenſible of the reality of his deliverance.

V. 12—17.] This Mary was the ſiſter of Barnabas. (*Col.* c. iv. ver. 10.) Probably it had been cuſtomary for ſome of the believers to aſſemble at her houſe for religious worſhip; though it is not likely, that Peter knew they were at that time joining in prayer for him. However he deemed it beſt to go thither. But either their hopes were ſunk very low, or they expected their prayers to be anſwered in ſome other way: for they were utterly indiſpoſed to believe the report of the damſel, who informed them that he ſtood at the gate: and when ſhe inſiſted upon it, that it was Peter, for ſhe knew his voice; rather than ſuppoſe, that he had actually obtained his liberty, they concluded "that it was his angel," they ſeem to have ſpoken according to the notion, (true or falſe,) which hath generally prevailed; that when people are near death, or are actually expired, a ſpirit, or angel in their exact form, and ſpeaking with their voice, ſometimes appears to their friends, or acquaintance: which perhaps firſt aroſe from the opinion, that every man hath his guardian angel appointed to take care of him For to ſuppoſe that they only meant that it was a meſſenger from him, is abſurd; as a meſſenger could not ſpeak with his well-known voice, though he might uſe his name. However, when Peter at length obtained admiſſion: their tranſport of ſurpriſe was ſo great; that he could hardly obtain a hearing, in order to inform them how the Lord had anſwered their prayers in his deliverance. The other apoſtles ſeem to have beon abſent from Jeruſalem: but James the ſon of Alpheus, who wrote the epiſtle, was in ſome place of concealment in the neighbourhood; and Peter deſired eſpecially that he ſhould be informed of his deliverance, for his encouragement: having thus given proper directions to the diſciples, he deemed it his duty to retire to ſome place of greater ſafety.

V. 18, 19.] The aſtoniſhment of the ſoldiers, when they found Peter was gone; their endeavours to throw the blame from themſelves upon each other; and their dread of Herod's vindictive rage may eaſily be conceived. Indeed they had cauſe to tremble: for that tyrant, exaſperated at his diſappointment, and unwilling that it ſhould be thought that Peter had been miraculouſly delivered, ordered them to immediate execution; probably pretending that Peter's eſcape was owing to their negligence, and ſleeping upon guard. Yet he probably perceived that Peter had been reſcued in a ſupernatural manner, as all the apoſtles had before been; (c. v. ver. 17—23:) and we may ſuppoſe that this induced him to ſuſpend the perſecution: and perhaps the chagrin at being thus baffled might haſten his departure to Ceſarea, the king's chamberlain their friend, deſired peace; becauſe their country was nouriſhed by the king's *country*.

21 And upon a ſet day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, ſat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a ſhout, *ſaying*, *It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord ſmote him, becauſe he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghoſt.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jeruſalem, when they had fulfilled *their* miniſtry, and took with them John, whoſe ſurname was Mark.

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and influence him to continue there: though Joſephus informs us, that he went thither to celebrate certain heatheniſh games, in honour of the Roman emperor.

V. 20—24.] The Tyrians and Zidonians, being engaged in trade, depended almoſt entirely on Judea, and Galilee for corn, and other proviſions: Herod therefore, having taken great offence at ſome part of their conduct, was diſpoſed to declare war againſt them; and by cutting off their ſupplies, he could ſoon have reduced them to diſtreſs. This conſideration led them to pay court to the king's favourite, by whoſe good offices they made their peace with him; having made the needful conceſſions, and ſubmiſſions. This gave occaſion to Herod, on an appointed day, to diſplay his magnificence in a moſt oſtentatious manner, of which Joſephus hath given a particular account: and having from his throne delivered a ſpeech, with much affectation of eloquence, and boaſtings of his equity and clemency, &c: the people, either impreſſed by the ſplendour of the ſcene, and by the graces of his elocution; or courting his favour by the moſt abominable flattery, exclaimed "that it was "the voice of a god, and not of a man." Many heathen princes had received, nay arrogated to themſelves, divine honours: but it was far more horrible impiety in Herod, who was acquainted with the word and worſhip of the living God, to accept of, and be pleaſed with ſuch idolatrous, and ſacrilegious adorations; without rebuking the blaſphemy, and giving God the glory. Immediately therefore an angel ſmote him with an incurable diſeaſe; ſo that his bowels bred worms, which conſumed them; and after lying a ſhort time a moſt abject and loathſome ſpectacle, and in the moſt excruciating pain, he died miſerably by the righteous judgment of God upon him for his atrocious crimes. Joſephus aſcribes his wretched end to the judgment of God on him for the impiety here recorded: but he ſuppreſſes ſome circumſtances, probably from regard to his family; and it was reſerved for an inſpired writer to inform us, that his diſeaſe aroſe from a ſtroke inflicted by an angel. Many perſecutors have ended their days by this horrid diſeaſe, which has rendered them as loathſome whilſt alive, as any putrid corpſe can be; as well as filled them with the moſt intolerable pains. After the death of this enemy, the word of God continued to grow and multiply; like ſeed, the produce of which is ſown again the next year, and ſo on from year to year: thus the believers, who ſprang up from the firſt preaching of the word, ſtill further diffuſed the knowledge of the goſpel; and the cauſe of Chriſt got ground on every ſide, notwithſtanding the oppoſition that was excited againſt it.

V. 25. *And,* &c.] Probably Barnabas and Saul left Jeruſalem, after a ſhort continuance there, and perhaps before the beginning of this perſecution: but the narrative, as it concerns them, is here reſumed. John Mark was a different perſon from Mark the evangeliſt; (v. 12:) he was nephew to Barnabas, and was taken by him and Saul, that he might be trained up for future uſefulneſs, and in the mean time be ſerviceable to them in the multiplicity of their engagements.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enmity of the human heart againſt God, and the inſtigations of ſatan will concur in exciting oppoſition to the church from time, to time: and when wicked rulers find, that the vexation and murder of God's people are agreeable to their ſubjects; they will be encouraged to proceed in that diabolical work. Thus ſome of the ſaints of God, having finiſhed their teſtimony, are removed to their reſt: their pains are tranſient, and mitigated by divine conſolations; and their ſubſequent felicity is unſpeakable, and eternal: but amidſt the many devices, which are in the heart of man, the counſel of the Lord alone ſhall ſtand. When time is given for prayer, and great numbers are excited to join therein, as with one heart and ſoul; it may be regarded as an indication, that the Lord intends to grant their deſires. He does not love to reject the petitions of his children; and therefore he ſometimes ſuddenly executes his purpoſes, without giving them the opportunity of interpoſing their requeſts to the contrary. But the lives of eminent ſaints are more deſired by their brethren, than by themſelves. A peaceful conſcience, a lively hope, aud the conſolations of the Holy Spirit can produce the moſt entire compoſure in the immediate proſpect of death, even in thoſe very perſons, who have ſometimes been the moſt diſtracted with terrors on that account. When the Lord ſees good to deliver, all obſtructions are inſignificant: his angels gladly viſit the dungeons, or cells, where his poor and afflicted children lie: even they can defeat, or ſuſpend all the powers of men; and they delight to miniſter to the comfort of the heirs of ſalvation. Whether we are waiting for deliverance from the bondage of ſin, or for the termination of our trials and ſorrows; whilſt the Lord affords us his light, and puts forth his power, to excite our attention, and expectation; we ſhould implicitly follow his directions, and wait his will. Thus will he lead us forth to liberty, and ſafety, and deliver us from the power and expectation of our ſtrongeſt enemies. He ſometimes anſwers prayer in ſo unexpected a manner; that his people can ſcarce believe, that it is a reality; (*Iſaiah*, c. lxv. v. 24:) nay their fears, and miſappre-

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1ſt. Barnabas, and Paul, by divine direction, ſent forth to preach in diſtant places; and their ſucceſs in Cyprus, where Elymas was ſmitten with blindneſs, and Sergius Paulus the proconſul was converted, 1---12. *2d. Their progreſs through Pamphylia to Antioch in Piſidia; where Paul preached in the ſynagogue, ſhewing that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, and warning his hearers not to reject him,* 13---41. *3d. The Gentiles deſiring to hear the goſpel again; ſome of the Jews, and religious proſelytes attending upon the apoſtles; the other Jews oppoſing and blaſpheming; the apoſtles turning to the Gentiles, and having great ſucceſs among them; the Jews, &c, driving the apoſtles from Antioch; their arrival at Iconium; whilſt the new converts at Antioch were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghoſt,* 42---52.

NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrach, and Saul.

2 As they miniſtered to the Lord, and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had faſted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they ſent *them* away.

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henſions may for a time exclude the joy, to which he calls them; and even that joy, being accompanied with other tumultuous paſſions, may unfit them for the employment of the preſent moment: but the whole will ſurely iſſue in glad thankſgivings. It is our duty to take care of our lives, whilſt the Lord ſees good to preſerve us; to ſhelter ourſelves from the violence of furious enemies; and to give encouragement from our experience to thoſe, who are expoſed to ſimilar dangers; as well as to excite them to praiſe God in our behalf.

The inſtruments of perſecution are expoſed to great danger: the wrath of God is ſuſpended over all, who engage in this hateful work; and the tyranny of perſecutors, when obſtructed in its courſe, is apt to vent itſelf on every one, that comes in its way, without regard to equity, and mercy. But ſuch men ripen apace for more ſignal vengeance, whilſt they are buoyed up with ſucceſs and flattery into the moſt extravagant pride, and arrogance. We may learn wiſdom from the policy of the Tyrians, and Zidonians: for we have juſtly offended the Almighty Lord with our ſins; we entirely depend on him for life, and breath, and all things; it ſurely then behoves us to humble ourſelves before him, that through the appointed Mediator, who is ever ready to befriend us, we may be reconciled to him, before wrath come upon us to the uttermoſt: as it did upon proud Herod, who would not fear the Almighty God, though others trembled at his impotent rage. But a haughty ſpirit is before a fall: God reſiſteth the proud, as his rivals, and enemies; angels gladly vindicate his glory, by cruſhing ſuch ſacrilegious competitors; the whole creation ſtands ready to avenge its Creator's cauſe upon thoſe, who refuſe to give him the glory; and the moſt contemptible vermin are able to degrade, vilify, and torment thoſe haughty rebels, who have affected to be worſhipped as deities. The triumphing of the wicked is ſhort: the word of God, and the cauſe of the goſpel have ſtood their ground againſt, and outlived many ſuch boaſting perſecutors and oppoſers as Herod; their deſtruction has given it more abundant ſucceſs; and the ruin of every one, who ever ſhall, in any way, engage againſt the cauſe of Chriſt, will make way for its ſtill further progreſs. Whilſt they, who labour to promote it, ſhall go from ſtrength to ſtrength, and proceed from one ſervice to another, till their work be done; and then they ſhall enter into thoſe glorious manſions, from which their eyes ſhall behold, and only behold the deſtruction of the workers of iniquity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—3.] As the firſt conſiderable church of the gentile converts ſeems to have been collected at Antioch in Syria: ſo it was the principal place of reſidence for thoſe teachers, who went forth to preach among the Gentiles; even as Jeruſalem was in reſpect of the Jewiſh converts. Several eminent perſons were at that time reſident there, beſides their ſtated paſtors; who were well qualified as teachers, and endowed with the gift of prophecy. The ſurname of Niger, or Black, by which Simeon was known, ſeems to have been given him on account of his complexion; perhaps he was a negro: ſome have conjectured that this was Simon the Cyrenian, who was compelled to bear the croſs after Jeſus: if ſo, Lucius was of the ſame country. Manaen, who was educated along with Herod Antipas the Tetrarch, had probably renounced conſiderable proſpects for the ſake of the goſpel. Whilſt theſe perſons were employed in their ſacred miniſtry, and were obſerving a ſeaſon of ſolemn faſting and prayer, in order to ſeek a further bleſſing on their labours, and direction concerning their future progreſs in their work; they were ordered by an immediate ſuggeſtion of the Holy Spirit to their minds, to ſeparate Barnabas, and Saul for the work, whereunto he had called them. This language evidently implies the perſonality, and deity of the Holy Ghoſt. The work intended was the preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles at large, of which Saul had had previous information, when he was converted, (c. xxvi. v. 17, 18:) and their appointment to the apoſtolical office alſo ſeems at that time to have been made known. The prophets, and teachers, in laying their hands on them with faſting and prayer, acted by immediate orders from the Holy Ghoſt; and thus gave a public teſtimony to their aſſurance of their divine appointment to that ſervice, and expreſſed their fervent deſires of their ſucceſs

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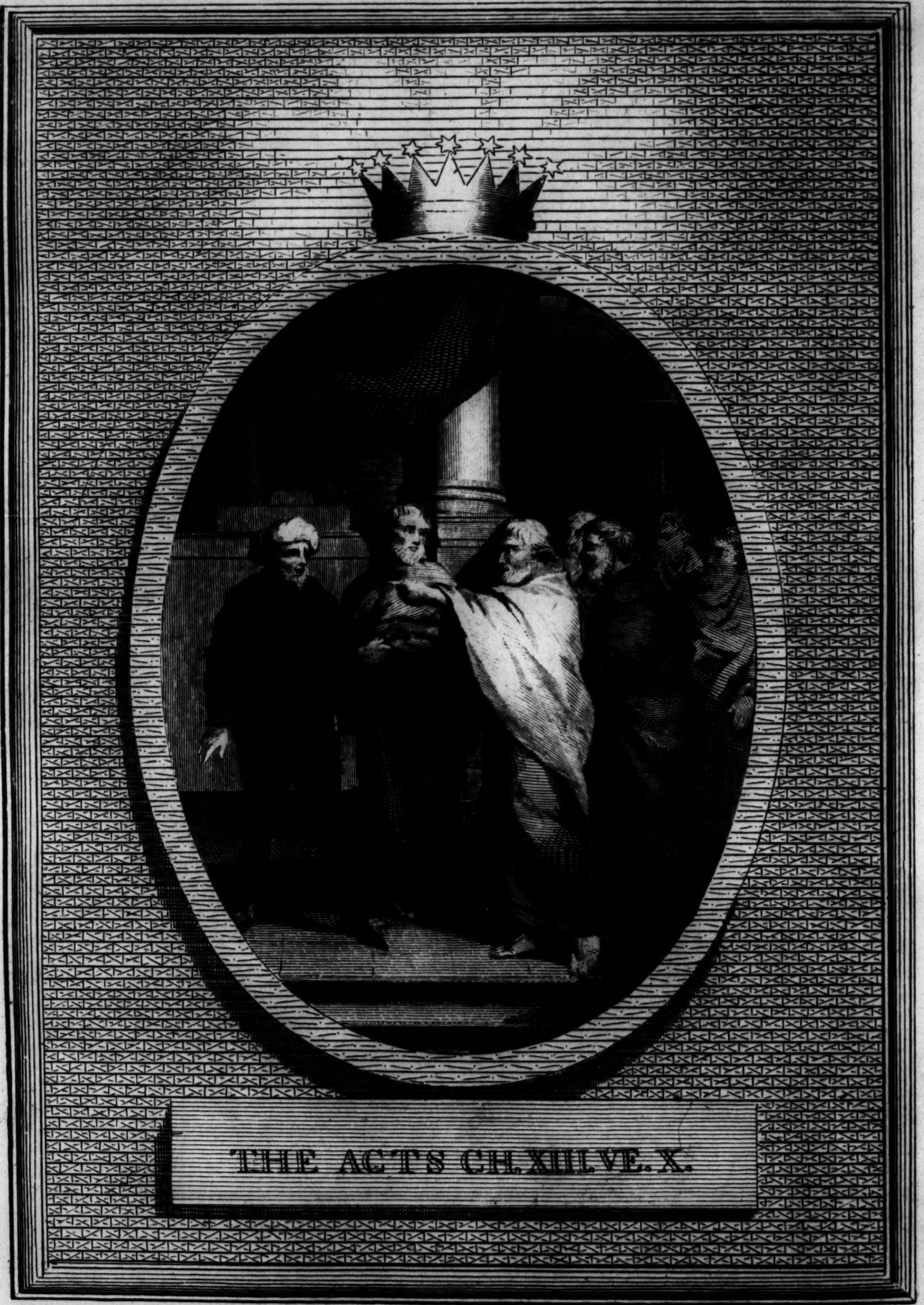

THE ACTS CH.XIII.VE.X.

Dodd del.   Walker Sculpt.

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4 So they, being ſent forth by the Holy Ghoſt, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they ſailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis they preached the word of God in the ſynagogues of the Jews: and they had alſo John to *their* miniſter.

6 And when they had gone through the iſle unto Paphos, they found a certain ſorcerer, a falſe prophet, a Jew, whoſe name *was* Bar-jeſus;

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and deſired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the ſorcerer, (for ſo is his name by interpretation,) withſtood them, ſeeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, who alſo *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſet his eyes on him.

10 And ſaid, O full of all ſubtlety, and all miſchief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteouſneſs; wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou ſhalt be blind, not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon. And immediately there fell on him a miſt, and a darkneſs; and he went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he ſaw what was done, believed, being aſtoniſhed at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his company looſed

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in it. Accordingly in the next verſe, they are ſaid to have been ſent forth by the Holy Ghoſt.

V. 4—12.] Seleucia was a ſea port about fifteen miles from Antioch. It does not appear that the apoſtles preached there: but from thence they paſſed into the iſland of Cyprus, the native place of Barnabas; where they had the opportunity of preaching in the ſynagogues at Salamis, the firſt city they came to. If the ſentence of excommunication, which had been publiſhed againſt thoſe, who confeſſed Jeſus to be the Chriſt, was ſtill in force; it is evident, that it was little noticed at a diſtance from Jeruſalem: for the apoſtles were not refuſed admiſſion into the ſynagogues, and were conſtantly allowed to preach in them; as it was cuſtomary for any perſon, who was ſuppoſed to be qualified, to expound the ſcriptures, and inſtruct the auditories, that were there aſſembled. The apoſtles went through this large and populous iſland, preaching in moſt of the cities as they had opportunity, (doubtleſs with ſome ſucceſs, both among the Jews and the Gentiles;) till they arrived at Paphos, on the oppoſite ſide of it. This city was celebrated for the temple there dedicated to Venus, and it was infamous for the licentiouſneſs practiſed at it. Here the apoſtles met with a noted ſorcerer, or magician, named Bar-jeſus, or the ſon of Jeſus, or Joſhua; this man, being a Jew, pretended to be a prophet of the Lord, and confirming his pretenſions by his magical arts, he was endeavouring to gain the attention of the proconſul of Cyprus, (or the Roman Governor appointed by the ſenate:) but he was an intelligent and conſiderate perſon, who deſired to know the truth in ſuch intereſting matters; and having heard of Saul and Barnabas, and the doctrine they taught, he invited them to come, and declare the word of God unto him. But Bar-jeſus, (who was alſo called Elymas, from an Arabic word ſignifying a ſorcerer, as is generally ſuppoſed;) foreſeeing the ruin of his own character and influence, in caſe the proconſul ſhould embrace the goſpel, did all he could to oppoſe the apoſtles, and to prejudice the proconſul againſt their doctrine. Probably he diſputed againſt the truth of the facts, which they teſtified; miſrepreſented the nature and tendency of their doctrine; inſinuated many things in a ſubtle, and malicious manner againſt their intentions, and to their diſadvantage, and perhaps performed ſome of his lying miracles, to ſupport his own pretenſions againſt them. But Saul, under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghoſt, fixed his eyes upon him, as expreſſing his abhorrence of his crimes; declared him to be a man, full of ſubtlety, malignity, and miſchief; a child of the devil, that bare his image, and ſupported his cauſe; and an enemy of all righteouſneſs, notwithſtanding his plauſible pretences; and then enquired why he perſiſted to oppoſe, miſrepreſent, and vilify the right ways of the Lord, that he might countenance his own vile impoſtures? And, then to prove that this ſevere rebuke was warranted of God, he denounced ſentence upon him, that he ſhould be ſtruck blind, ſo that *for a ſeaſon*, he ſhould be unable to ſee the light of the noon-day ſun; though in caſe he repented the calamity might at length be removed. This ſentence was immediately executed by the power of God; and being enveloped in darkneſs, and filled with horror and confuſion; he ſought ſome perſon to lead him out of the place, being unable to find his way: an apt emblem of the benighted ſtate of his ſoul! This evident victory of the apoſtles over their opponent, being connected with the other evidences of the truth of the goſpel, and made effectual by the power of the Holy Spirit, induced the proconſul to embrace and profeſs chriſtianity; for he was aſtoniſhed both at the energy of the doctrine upon his heart and conſcience, and at the power of God by which it was confirmed. Some think that he was the firſt idolatrous Gentile, that was converted to Chriſt: but it cannot be proved, that all the gentile converts at Antioch had previouſly been proſelyted from idolatry; or that Saul and Barnabas had made no converts from idolatry in their profrom Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jeruſalem.

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Piſidia, and went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſat down.

15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the ſynagogue ſent unto them, ſaying *Ye* men *and* brethren, If ye have any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on.

16 Then Paul ſtood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, ſaid, Ye men of Iſrael, and ye that ſear God, give audience.

17 The God of this people of Iſrael choſe our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as ſtrangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years ſuffered he their manners in the wilderneſs.

19 And when he had deſtroyed ſeven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges, about the ſpace of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they deſired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the Son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the ſpace of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raiſed up unto them David to be their king; to whom alſo he gave teſtimony, and ſaid, I have found David the *ſon* of Jeſſe a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's ſeed hath God, according to *his* promiſe, raiſed unto Iſrael a Saviour, Jeſus:

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greſs through Cyprus. However, the converſion of ſo eminent a perſon was a very memorable event: probably he continued for ſome time in his high ſtation; ſerving the Lord Jeſus in the uſe of his authority, and countenancing the profeſſors and preachers of the goſpel, by his influence and example. Saul is here ſaid to have been called Paul; and henceforth he bears that name. As this is the ſame with the proconſul's ſurname; ſome have thought that he aſſumed it on account of his converſion: but it is more probable that before this the Greeks called him Paul, and the Hebrews Saul, and that, being from this time generally converſant with the Gentiles, he was commonly known by the former name.

V. 13—15.] It does not appear whether the apoſtles had any opportunity of preaching the goſpel at Perga, or in Pamphylia: but John Mark, by this time grew weary of the fatigue and hardſhip of the journey; and foreſeeing that they ſhould meet with many perils, and perſecutions in their future progreſs; he conſulted too much his own eaſe and inclinations, and ſo leaving them he returned to Jeruſalem. This indicated an inconſtancy of mind, unbecoming one, that was engaged in ſo important a ſervice; and we ſhall hear again of the conſequences produced by it. However Paul and Barnabas proceeded to Antioch in Piſidia, a province of the leſſer Aſia, which was at a great diſtance from Antioch in Syria, whence they ſet out. There they went into the Synagogue on the ſabbath-day: and after the ſections from the law of Moſes, and from the writings of the prophets, had been read; the rulers of the ſynagogue invited them to ſpeak to the congregation. Either they had previouſly heard of, or from them; or ſomething in their conduct indicated their deſire to be heard. The apoſtles frequented the ſynagogues on the ſabbath days, in order to find an opportunity to preach the goſpel: but the diſciples in general obſerved the firſt day of the week for their aſſembling together. Yet the Jewiſh converts ſeem alſo to have kept the ſabbath for ſome time; and this change, as well as ſome others, appears to have been brought about gradually to avoid giving needleſs offence to the Jews.

V. 16—23.] Paul perhaps obſerved, that ſome preſent were indiſpoſed to attend to his diſcourſe: he therefore beckoned with his hand, to intimate his deſire of a candid hearing; and then introduced his doctrine by ſuch a reference to the hiſtory of Iſrael, as was ſuited to conciliate their minds, and to fix their attention. Some explain the expreſſion, "Ye that fear God," of the religious proſelytes, who were preſent, (v. 43:) and indeed it is plain, that there were Gentiles, or proſelytes, of different deſcriptions, in ſome part of the ſynagogue; perhaps ſome place was allotted to them, in hopes that they would ſoon embrace the Jewiſh religion entirely, as others already had done. Paul obſerved, that the God of their Fathers had formerly raiſed their nation from a ſtate of deep depreſſion in Egypt to great honour and proſperity in Canaan. He had powerfully delivered them from bondage, graciouſly borne with their provocations for forty years in the wilderneſs, deſtroyed the Canaanites, and then divided the land amongſt them. This was both an accompliſhment of the promiſes made to Abraham, &c, in whoſe ſeed all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed: and a type of a better, and more ſpiritual redemption. After this, God gave them judges for about 450 years: as the temple of Solomon was begun 480 years after the departure of Iſrael out of Egypt, (1 *Kings*, c. vi. v. 1;) and as about ſixty three years elapſed between the Exodus, and the death of Joſhua; and near the ſame term from the choice of Saul to be king to the fourth year of Solomon, when the foundation of the temple was laid: ſo theſe accounts cannot be reconciled. Some expoſitors join theſe words to the preceding verſe, and ſuppoſe that the 450 years denote the ſpace between the birth of Iſaac, and the entrance of

24 When John had firſt preached before his coming the baptiſm of repentance to all the people of Iſrael.

25 And as John fulfilled his courſe, he ſaid, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whoſe ſhoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to looſe.

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent.

27 For they that dwell at Jeruſalem, and their rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every ſabbath-day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

28 And though they found no cauſe of death *in him*, yet deſired they Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a ſepulchre.

30 But God raiſed him from the dead:

31 And he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jeruſalem, who are his witneſſes unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promiſe which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſecond pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another *pſalm*, Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption.

36 For David, after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God, fell on ſleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption:

37 But he whom God raiſed again ſaw no corruption.

Iſrael into Canaan: others think that it ſhould be 350 years, being an error of ſome tranſcriber, which indeed might eaſily be made. But the whole of that part of the chronology is full of difficulties, the ſolution of which is comparatively of ſmall conſequence. It hath before been obſerved, that the forty years aſcribed to Saul include alſo a great part of Samuel's adminiſtration. (Note, &c. 1 *Sam.* c xii. v. 2.) The mention of David gave the apoſtle the occaſion to introduce his main ſubject; as the Meſſiah was to be the Son of David, which he could ſhew Jeſus to be.

V. 24—37.] The Jews preſent had doubtleſs heard of John's miniſtry, and his declaration that he was not the Meſſiah, but his fore-runner; and probably ſome report had reached them of his teſtimony to Jeſus: the apoſtle therefore referred them to that teſtimony, whilſt he preſſed them as deſcendants of Abraham, and worſhippers of God, to believe and embrace the word of ſalvation ſent to them. He then proceeded to obviate the prejudice, that would ariſe in their minds againſt his doctrine, from the conduct of their rulers at Jeruſalem: he obſerved, that they indeed had not known their Meſſiah, when he appeared among them; nor had they underſtood the ſcriptures, which were publicly and conſtantly read amongſt them: and they had thus ignorantly fulfilled them, by condemning Jeſus, and procuring his crucifixion from Pilate, though they could alledge no crime againſt him, except that he declared himſelf to be the Son of God. And when they had fulfilled the various predictions of his ſufferings and death; they had allowed him to be taken down from the croſs, and buried, and then guarded the ſepulchre with all care to prevent any impoſition. But God had raiſed him from the dead; which was teſtified by a great number of moſt unexceptionable witneſſes. Accordingly they had journeyed ſo far to declare to them the glad tidings, that God had fulfilled in their days the promiſes made to Abraham, Iſaac, Jacob, and David, in raiſing from the dead the Lord Jeſus, and thus atteſting him to be his only-begotten Son, according to the prophecy of the Meſſiah contained in the ſecond pſalm. (Note, *Pſ.* ii. v. 7—9.) The paſſage here quoted ſhews that the Meſſiah was the Son of God in a peculiar ſenſe; and the decree was confirmed, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power by his reſurrection from the dead. (*Rom.* c. i. v. 3, 4.) In reſpect of that event, it might be inferred from the words of the Lord by his prophet, declaring that he would give to believers "the ſure mercies of "David;" (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. lv. v. 1—3:) theſe "ſure mercies" eſpecially referred to the promiſed Meſſiah, and his kingdom and ſalvation: but the ſame prophet had juſt before predicted the ſufferings, and death of the Meſſiah, in the ſtrongeſt terms; (*Iſaiah*, c. liii:) and theſe ſure mercies therefore could not be conferred, but through his reſurrection, and exaltation. Wherefore David alſo propheſied in another pſalm, that "God "would not ſuffer his holy One to ſee corruption." (Notes, &c. c. ii. v. 24—31. *Pſ.* 16.) This could not be underſtood of David himſelf: for having ſerved the intereſts of Iſrael, during that generation in which he lived, according to the will of God, he fell on ſleep, or died ſatisfied, and in hope; and being laid to his fathers, 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins.

39 And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.

40 Beware therefore leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in the prophets,

41 Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye ſhall in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the ſynagogue, the Gentiles beſought that theſe words might be preached to them the next ſabbath.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proſelytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, ſpeaking to them, perſuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next ſabbath-day came almoſt the whole city together, to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews ſaw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and ſaid, It was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you: but ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles:

47 For ſo hath the Lord commanded us, *ſaying*, I have ſet thee to be a Light of the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was publiſhed throughout all the region.

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he ſaw, or turned to corruption. But Jeſus, his deſcendant and Antitype, having ariſen on the third day, ſaw no corruption at that time; nor was he again to die, and return to the grave the ſcene of corruption; but to live for ever in heavenly glory. Every part therefore of the doctrine accorded to the predictions of their prophets; which concurred with their teſtimony to the reſurrection of Jeſus, and with the miracles wrought by Him and them, to demonſtrate that he was the promiſed Meſſiah.

V. 38—41.] The apoſtle here proceeded to apply the doctrine, that he had before ſtated and proved. It was of the utmoſt importance to the people, to be certified, and aſſuredly convinced, that through *that Perſon*, even Jeſus, the incarnate Son of God, forgiveneſs of ſins was preached to them, as the purchaſe of his atoning ſacrifice, and the gift of his mercy: for none of them could poſſibly obtain that benefit, ſave by faith in him. But, through Him, all that believed, would be completely juſtified from every charge brought againſt them, on account of any of their ſins; and in ſuch a manner, as could not be done, according to the Moſaic law. There were ſeveral crimes, for which no ſacrifices were appointed, but to which the ſentence of death was annexed by that law: nor could the legal ſacrifices ever take away guilt from the conſciences; except as the penitent offender through them had a believing dependence on the promiſed Redeemer, and his atoning ſacrifice. That whole diſpenſation alſo was then virtually aboliſhed; having loſt all its efficacy, as to thoſe, who rejected the ſalvation of Jeſus. It therefore behoved them to beware, leſt the awful denunciations of the prophets, upon the deſpiſers of God's mercy and juſtice ſhould come on them. The work, here intended, may either be that of redemption by the blood of Chriſt, or that of approaching vengeance on the Jews for their contempt of him: each of theſe were fully teſtified, authenticated or predicted; but the ſcornful men of that age and nation would not believe them, and therefore they would be filled with aſtoniſhment, and ſo periſh; (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xxviii. v. 14—19. *Hab.* c. i. v. 5) Theſe prophecies ſeem primarily to have related to the Babylouiſh captivity; yet they were ſtill more awfully accompliſhed in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the rejection of the Jews for their oppoſition to the goſpel.

V. 42—49.] As the congregation left the ſynagogue, (the Jews in general deſiring to hear no more about the goſpel,) the Gentiles deſired that it might be preached again to them the next ſabbath-day. Some would render the words, "in the intervening week;" but the concourſe of people on the enſuing ſabbath eſtabliſhes the ſenſe of our tranſlation: though it is probable, that the private labours of Paul and Barnabas, during the week, concurred in bringing together ſo vaſt a multitude on the next ſabbath-day. However, ſeveral Jews, and religious Proſelytes, (who ſeem to be diſtinguiſhed from the Gentiles afore-mentioned,) followed the apoſtles, and profeſſed to believe their doctrine: and they exhorted, and perſuaded them to continue in attendance on, and belief of the goſpel; and in dependence on the mercy and grace of God revealed in it: and not to ſuffer themſelves to be diſcouraged, or perverted by any of the reaſonings, or perſecutions, which were uſed to turn them aſide from the truth. On the enſuing ſabbath, almoſt all the inhabitants of the city, idolaters as well as others, were drawn together by various motives, to hear what the apoſtles had to communicate to them. This, 50 But the Jews ſtirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raiſed perſecution againſt Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coaſts.

51 But they ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the diſciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghoſt.

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inſtead of rejoicing the Jews, filled them with envy, and indignation; becauſe the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and the peculiar privileges of God's people, were thus openly propoſed to the deſpiſed gentiles: and their prejudices againſt the goſpel being thus increaſed; they ſet themſelves to contradict the teſtimony and doctrine of the apoſtles, reviling and blaſpheming the Lord Jeſus, and his miracles and authority, in the moſt virulent manner. When therefore Paul and Barnabas ſaw the inveteracy of their malice; they took more courage to teſtify againſt them; obſerving, that it was indeed neceſſary, according to the promiſes of the ſcripture, and the command of Chriſt, that the goſpel ſhould firſt be propoſed to them: but as they ſo decidedly rejected it, and were condemned out of their own mouths, as unworthy of eternal life, and improper perſons to receive ſo infinitely valuable a gift; ſo they would thenceforth unreſervedly make the ſame propoſal to the Gentiles, and aſſociate with them: for this, they had not only the command of the Lord Jeſus, but the authority of their ſcriptures; which had declared that the Meſſiah was to be ſet for the Light of the Gentiles, and for ſalvation to the ends of the earth; (*Iſaiah*, c. xlix. v. 5, 6.) This declaration rejoiced the Gentiles, who honoured and reſpected the word of God, whilſt the Jews oppoſed, and perverted it: and though all, who were thus affected at firſt, did not actually believe unto ſalvation; yet many did, even all that were ordained, or appointed unto everlaſting life. Some interpret the word here uſed, of the internal diſpoſition of the heart of the hearers: they, who were in earneſt to obtain eternal life at all adventures, believed the goſpel. This does not ſeem the meaning of the word; yet as ſuch a diſpoſition is the effect of ſpecial grace, it ſtill leads us back to that humiliating doctrine, which ſo many arts of criticiſm are employed in vain to obſcure.

V. 49—52.] The indefatigable and ſucceſsful labours of the apoſtles in preaching the goſpel exaſperated, more and more, the unbelieving Jews: and they, being deſtitute of authority, excited ſome women of rank, who had embraced, and were very zealous for the Jewiſh religion; and by their means the magiſtrates were excited againſt the apoſtles, and an edict was obtained, baniſhing them from the city, and its adjacent territory, as diſturbers of the public peace: and they, having ſolemnly warned their perſecutors, in the way which Jeſus had commanded, that they were thus expoſing themſelves to the wrath of God, (*Matt.* c. x. v. 14;) went to Iconium, a city to the north-eaſt of Antioch. But the new converts, whom they left behind, inſtead of being diſcouraged by this oppoſition, were filled with holy joy; being made partakers of the extraordinary gifts, as well as the graces and conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord raiſes up, and brings forth his inſtruments for his work, from various places, and ſituations in life: and the zeal for his glory, with which he inſpires their hearts, induces them to renounce the moſt flattering connexions and proſpects, that they may be employed in promoting his cauſe. Whatever means are uſed, or rules obſerved, for ordaining miniſters; the Holy Ghoſt alone can fit them for, and call them to, that important work; but ſolemn faſting and prayer are proper attendants on their ſeparation to that ſacred ſervice. Yet this example is not followed by all thoſe, who profeſs to adhere moſt cloſely to the ſcripture in this matter. They, who "are moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take this office "upon them," and "are ſent forth by Him," will find ſome opportunity of exerciſing their miniſtry, in preaching the word of God: but, though ignorance, careleſſneſs, and profligacy obſtruct their uſefulneſs; yet falſe prophets, and vain pretenders to religion are the moſt pernicious oppoſers of the goſpel: for they prejudice the minds of enquirers againſt it, by leading them to think, that all profeſſors are alike; or by inducing them, through miſrepreſentations and perverſions, to embrace ſome vain deluſion, inſtead of the Holy Truth of the ſcripture. However, prudent men, who know the value of their ſouls, and the importance of eternal things, will deſire to hear the word of God, and to give it a fair and careful inveſtigation, whatever their rank in the world may be. It does not behove us, who pretend to no miraculous powers, or infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, to uſe ſuch decided language as Paul did to this ſorcerer: yet we may plainly expoſe the hypocriſy, diſingenuity, malice, and enmity of thoſe children, and ſervants of the wicked one, who ſhew themſelves to be enemies to all righteouſneſs, by pertinaciouſly oppoſing, and perverting the right ways of the Lord, and the evident truths of the goſpel, to promote their own credit and intereſt. Aſſuredly their end will be according to their works; their wilful blindneſs will expoſe them to judicial blindneſs, and this will terminate in the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever; unleſs they repent during the ſeaſon of the Lord's long-ſuffering towards them; and the truth of God will be eſtabliſhed, and made ſucceſsful, by the ruin and confuſion of its opponents.

They, who put their hands to the plough, and look back, are not fit for the kingdom of God: if we are not prepared to face oppoſition, and to endure hardſhip; we are not properly qualified for the work of the miniſtry. Yet ſome, who have at firſt diſappointed the expectation of ſenior miniſters, have afterwards been recovered, and made uſeful. The reading of the ſcriptures, in the public aſſemblies of God's people, is an ancient and excellent uſage: and they, who are called to preach the word, will find a peculiar advantage, in laying their credentials and inſtructions in this manner before the people. Yet alas many, both read, and hear the word of God, who do not underſtand or believe it. The goſpel is to be preached to every creature: yet, they are peculiarly to be addreſſed, who fear God, and en-

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains 1*ſt. The apoſtles preaching ſucceſsfully at Iconium; driven thence by perſecution to Derbe, Lyſtra, &c, and there exerciſing their miniſtry,* 1---7. 2*d. Their healing of a lame man at Lyſtra; the prieſts and people attempting to ſacrifice to them as gods; and hardly reſtrained by their earneſt expoſtulations,* 8---18. 3*d. Paul ſtoned, and left for dead, but miraculouſly reſtored; and, with Barnabas, reviſiting the churches, appointing elders over them, returning to Antioch in Syria, and rehearſing the ſucceſs, which God had given them,* 19---28.

AND it came to paſs in Iconium, that they went both together into the ſynagogue of the Jews, and ſo ſpake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews, and alſo of the Greeks, believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews ſtirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected againſt the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they ſpeaking boldly in the Lord, which gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apoſtles.

5 And when there was an aſſault made, both of the Gentiles, and alſo of the Jews,

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quire after the way, in which his favour may be obtained. On ſome occaſions, it is adviſable to put the caſe moſt favourably, in reſpect of the diſpoſitions, and profeſſion of our hearers; that we may thence take occaſion to reaſon with them from their own principles, and to exhort them to behave conſiſtently with their characters. Every tranſient view of the Lord's dealings with his church reminds us of his mercy and long-ſuffering, and of man's ingratitude and perverſeneſs: when he grants our *inordinate* deſires, we may expect a ſcourge inſtead of a comfort. But he will remove thoſe, who rebel againſt him; that he may raiſe up others in his church, who may act more according to his own heart, to fulfil all his will. Yet the moſt honoured ſervants of God have ſhewn their great imperfections; and have confeſſed themſelves unworthy to perform the meaneſt ſervice to Jeſus the divine Saviour. They call men to repentance, and direct their attention to him: but they ſoon fulfil their courſe to ſerve their generation, and are gathered to their fathers; whereas Jeſus ever liveth to ſave to the uttermoſt all them, that come to God through him. Still this word of ſalvation is ſent to us; and every one that feareth God will accept of it. But too many fulfil the ſcriptures by oppoſing the truth, through ignorance and unbelief: after the example of thoſe, that crucified the Lord of glory. May we then look to Him, as declared to be the Son of God by his reſurrection from the dead, now no more to ſee corruption; as teſtified to by prophets, and apoſtles; and as the ſubſtance and repoſitory of the ſure mercies of David: that by faith in him, we may walk with God, and ſerve our generation according to his will, and when death comes, may fall aſleep in him, with a joyful hope of a bleſſed reſurrection.

That forgiveneſs of ſins is preached through Him, and him alone, ſhould be made known to all men: for this is the moſt needful bleſſing for every ſinner, and an introduction to all others: and by him, all that believe are juſtified from all their ſins, how many and heinous ſoever they be; a privilege, which no law, or inſtitution beſides could ever confer. But woe to thoſe deſpiſers, who will neither believe the teſtimony of God concerning the redemption, that he hath wrought; nor concerning the judgment, which he hath appointed: but treat the declaration of them, with infidel contempt, or careleſs indifference! With what aſtoniſhment will they at length hear the deſpiſed Jeſus denounce the ſentence of everlaſting condemnation upon them! But whilſt many thus judge themſelves unworthy of everlaſting life; others, and thoſe the moſt unlikely perſons, often deſire to hear more of the glad tidings of ſalvation: thus the prodigal comes to himſelf, returns home, and is welcomed, and feaſted: whilſt the elder brother is filled with indignation, and envy; and begins to oppoſe, contradict and blaſpheme. Yet we muſt not be ſatisfied with hopeful impreſſions: but ſhould exhort thoſe, who are thus diſpoſed to continue in the grace of God; and inſtruct them to reſiſt the temptations, to which they will be expoſed. And as many as are ordained to eternal life will believe: but we know not who theſe are; and muſt declare, that "Jeſus is placed for a Light of the Gen-"tiles, and for ſalvation to the ends of the earth:" and we ſhould publiſh his truth, as extenſively as we can; and bear our teſtimony againſt thoſe, who oppoſe and reject it; however honourable, or devout they may appear to be. Thus the word of God will be glorified in the midſt of perſecution: and he will fill his diſciples with grace, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, to ſupport them under their tribulations, and to render them triumphant over all the power and ſubtlety of the enemy of their ſouls.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 3, *Long,* &c.] The apoſtles deemed it neceſſary to continue at Iconium for a conſiderable time, boldly exerciſing their miniſtry; in order to encourage and eſtabliſh the new converts, that the oppoſition, to which they were expoſed, might not ſubvert them: and the Lord was pleaſed in this emergency to enable them to work many miracles; and by means of the two parties, that were formed in the city, they were for a time protected, notwithſtanding the enmity of the Jews and their adherents.

V. 5. *Rulers,* &c] Or the magiſtrates of the city: for the Rulers of the ſynagogues ſeem not to have poſſeſſed the requiſite authority. The relative ſituation of with their rulers, to uſe *them* deſpitefully, and to ſtone them,

6 They were aware of *it*, and fled unto Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the goſpel.

8 And there ſat a certain man at Lyſtra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The ſame heard Paul ſpeak; who ſtedfaſtly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people ſaw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, ſaying in the ſpeech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, becauſe he was the chief ſpeaker.

13 Then the prieſt of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done ſacrifice with the people.

14 *Which* when the apoſtles Barnabas and Paul heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And ſaying, Sirs, why do ye theſe things? we alſo are men of like paſſions with you, and preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein;

16 Who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheleſs, he left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs.

18 And with theſe ſayings ſcarce reſtrained they the people, that they had not done ſacrifice unto them.

19 And there came thither *certain* Jews

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the cities, here mentioned, may be better underſtood by looking upon a map, than by any words, which we can uſe.

V. 8—18.] Paul perceived that this cripple "had "faith to be healed:" by a divine ſuggeſtion to his mind he knew, that the man expected a cure from the power of the Lord Jeſus, and that it was a proper occaſion for him to perform a miracle. He therefore called to him with a loud voice to ſtand upright on his feet; and he was enabled at once to uſe his limbs with entire eaſe, agility and vigour, as though he had never been lame: and when the idolaters ſaw ſuch an aſtoniſhing effect follow upon the ſpeaking of a word; they concluded, according to their fabulous traditions, that two of their deities had become viſible in human form. The age and gravity of Barnabas ſuggeſted to them the opinion that he was Jupiter, their ſupreme deity; and Paul's promptitude in ſpeaking led them to ſnppoſe that he was Mercury, the patron of eloquence, and the interpreter, as they imagined, of their gods. And ſo firmly were they perſuaded of theſe things, that the prieſt of Jupiter, whoſe temple was near the gates of the city, was induced to bring oxen, and garlands, either to decorate the ſacrifices, or the intended objects of their worſhip; and they were about immediately to ſeek their favour by divine honours, and a propitiatory offering! But the apoſtles, perceiving their intention, were more diſcompoſed by it, than by all the perſecution they had met with: and to expreſs their deteſtation of ſuch idolatrous practices, they rent their clothes and ran in among the people, expoſtulating with them about their conduct, proteſting againſt the ſacrilegious honours intended them; declaring that they were no more than mere men like themſelves, and liable to the ſame paſſions, infirmities, ſufferings and death; and reminding them that they came to preach to them, that they ſhould relinquiſh ſuch vanities, and deluſions, that they might worſhip the great Creator of the univerſe. This was very bold and decided language to theſe zealous idolaters and their prieſts, in ſuch a critical juncture: and it hath been properly contraſted with the temporizing conduct of the heathen philoſophers; who, being convinced of the folly and falſhood of the vulgar theology, and ſuperſtition, yet not only conformed to it, but inſtructed their pupils to do the ſame, as a part of their duty to the republic. Thus they made hypocriſy and diſſimulation, in ſo important a matter, an eſſential part of their inſtructions, confirmed it by their example, and perpetuated as much as they could the moſt ſtupid idolatry from generation to generation. Let the intelligent reader alſo compare this conduct, and declaration of the apoſtles towards the worſhippers of Jupiter, with ſome modern admired effuſions of expanded candour, in which the worſhip of God, whether men call him, Jehovah, Jovah, Lord, or by any other name, is ſuppoſed to be equally accepted of him. With them, it is of no conſequence whether Jehovah, or Jupiter, or Baal be God; either the prophets and apoſtles were bigots, or theſe men have virtually renounced chriſtianity. Paul and Barnabas further added, that God had, in his unſearchable wiſdom, juſtice, and long-ſuffering, hitherto ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways; and therefore idolatry had generally prevailed. Yet were the idolaters without excuſe; as God had not left himſelf without witneſs: ſee-from Antioch and Iconium, who perſuaded the people; and, having ſtoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, ſuppoſing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the diſciples ſtood round about him, he roſe up, and came into the city; and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the goſpel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lyſtra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch,

22 Confirming the ſouls of the diſciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with faſting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

24 And after they had paſſed throughout Piſidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia;

26 And thence ſailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearſed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the diſciples.

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ing he ſtill had done them good in his providence; and afforded them ſo many temporal benefits, as both ſatisfied their bodily neceſſities, and conduced to the joy and gladneſs of their hearts. By theſe diſcourſes, they with difficulty reſtrained them from proceeding with their ſacrifice: yet the people do not ſeem to have been diſpoſed to hear their doctrine at this time, but rather to have been diſguſted with their refuſal of the honours intended them.

V. 19—23.] The apoſtles continued ſome time at Lyſtra, in order to improve the advantage, which the miracle they had wrought, ſeemed at firſt to promiſe them. But when the Jews of Antioch and Iconium heard of their ſucceſs, and reputation, they followed them to Lyſtra; and by their arguments and inſinuations they induced the people to treat them as impoſtors, and diſturbers of the peace. Accordingly they firſt aſſaulted Paul, whoſe activity rendered him peculiarly obnoxious both to the Jews, and the idolaters; and they ſtoned him till they ſuppoſed he had been dead, and then dragged him out of the city with the utmoſt indignity. But though he was bereft of ſenſe and motion for a time; yet his life was in him: and whilſt the diſciples ſtood around him, probably intending to bury him; it pleaſed God to reſtore him miraculouſly to his ſtrength, and to heal his bruiſes; ſo that he was able to travel the next day with Barnabas to Derbe. And after they diſcipled many in that city alſo, they reviſited the ſeveral cities, whence they had been driven by perſecution; to inſtruct, encourage, eſtabliſh, and exhort the new converts to continue in the profeſſion, and exerciſe of the faith; and to ſhew them, that the kingdom of God, and his heavenly felicity muſt be entered into, through many afflictions, trials, and perſecutions. They alſo appointed elders over them, in every church: theſe elders were their ſtated paſtors who preſided in the worſhip of God, and preached his word to them. Many expoſitors are of opinion, that the original word, here tranſlated "*ordained*," has reference to the choice of the people, ſignified by holding up their hands; and many others oppoſe this ſuppoſition: but we cannot imagine that the apoſtles, in ſuch circumſtances, would pretend to appoint any perſons to the ſacred miniſtry, who were not acceptable to the people; or that they would ordain any without their own full ſatiſfaction that they were proper perſons, whatever the people might have been inclined to. There ſeems therefore to have been the moſt perfect harmony in the management of this important concern: yet it can ſcarce be doubted, but that both the apoſtles, and thoſe to whom in ſome ſenſe they delegated a part of their authority, interfered with their judgment and influence in the nomination of proper perſons to the miniſterial office; as well as ſet them apart by impoſition of hands and prayer. In all ſuch queſtions, the middle, between the extreme points contended for by the zealots of oppoſite parties, ſeems to be the neareſt to the true ſtate of the caſe. As the churches increaſed, deacons were doubtleſs choſen, under the ſuperintendency of the elders: but the apoſtles ſeem not to have done it at this time. After theſe matters were ſettled, the apoſtles, by prayer and faſting, commended the new converts to the gracious keeping of the Lord Jeſus, in whom they had believed.

V. 24—28.] After ſome other labours in the provinces of the Leſſer Aſia, the apoſtles returned to Antioch, in Syria, whence they had been recommended, by the prayers of their brethren, to the grace of God for the work, in which they had been ſo proſpered. To them they related their ſucceſs; and ſhewed how God had, by their miniſtry, opened the door of faith, by which numbers of the poor Gentiles had entered into the church: and finding much work at Antioch, they continued there a long time among the diſciples.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Perſeverance in doing good, amidſt dangers, hardſhips, ingratitude, and perſecution, is a bleſſed evidence

CHAP. XV.

Contains 1ſt. A controverſy ſtarted at Antioch, concerning the circumciſion, &c, of the Gentile converts; and Paul and Barnabas going to Jeruſalem, and ſtating the queſtion to the apoſtles and elders there, 1---5. 2d. The diſcuſſion of the ſubject in an aſſembly of the church; and the apoſtles, &c, decreeing by the Holy Ghoſt, that the Gentile converts need not be circumciſed; propoſing to them certain rules for their obſervation, and ſending Barſabas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas, to certify their determination to the church at Antioch, 6---29. 3d. The return of the apoſtles, the joy occaſioned by their report; and the miniſtry, &c, of Judas and Silas among them, 30---35. 4th. Paul and Barnabas purpoſing to reviſit the churches, they had planted; but ſeparated by a ſharp contention concerning John Mark, and proceeding to preach the goſpel in different directions, 36---41.

of grace, an expreſſion of the mind that was in Chriſt, and a diſtinguiſhing mark of his faithful miniſters. The Lord will enable ſuch followers of him "ſo to ſpeak," and will ſo bleſs their word; that ſome will in every place, and of divers deſcriptions, be brought by their labours to the obedience of faith. But great ſucceſs commonly excites vehement oppoſition: and the more envious and malicious unbelievers will excite the minds of thoſe, who are more moderate, and thus render them evil-affected againſt the brethren. However, this ſhould not diſcourage thoſe, who are proſpered in their work: on the contrary, they ſhould labour the more boldly and diligently, in dependance on the Lord, and to promote his cauſe; leaving it to him to bear teſtimony to the word of his grace, in ſuch ways, as he ſees good. In all cities, towns and villages, where the goſpel hath hitherto been effectually preached, a diviſion hath taken place among the people; and frequently ſome unconverted perſons for a time take part with the preachers and profeſſors of the truth, by means of whom the Lord reſtrains the fury of his enemies, till his own purpoſes are effected; and then he lets them looſe as far, as he knows to be ſubſervient to his own glory, and the good of his choſen people. Wherever his ſervants are driven, they ſhould ſeek opportunities of making known his truth; without being intimidated by former perils, or ſufferings. None can profit by the power of Chriſt, as exerciſed through his miniſters, and ordinances, until they are made partakers of faith: but all things are poſſible to thoſe that believe. When we receive this moſt precious gift of God, we ſhall be delivered from that impotency, in which we were born, and from the dominion of thoſe inveterate habits, which we have ever ſince been contracting: and we ſhall be enabled to ſtand upright, and walk with chearfulneſs in the ways of the Lord. The ſervants of God might often more eaſily obtain undue honour to themſelves, if they would connive at men's errors, and vices, than they can prevail with them to honour God, by renouncing their vanities, believing his truth, and worſhipping his name. But they muſt dread and deteſt all ſuch ſacrilegious homage, more than any reproach, or injuries whatſoever: they ought never to allow their hearers to think of them, in any other light, than as men of like paſſions with themſelves; who having been taught the knowledge of God and of his ſalvation, are ſent to preach it to thoſe, who have hitherto been left to walk in their own ways. We ſhould ſhew the greateſt affection to the perſons of men, and bear with many of their miſtakes and prejudices in a candid ſpirit: but we muſt not ſpare decidedly to proteſt againſt thoſe deluſions, and ſuperſtitions, which are as ruinous to men's ſouls, as the groſſeſt immoralities. The Lord ſaw good for a long time to ſuffer all nations to walk in their own ways; and He ſtill is pleaſed to leave vaſt numbers to follow lying vanities: This ſhould lead us to thankfulneſs for our peculiar advantages, and to adore the depth of his unſearchable wiſdom, and juſtice: but it ſhould not induce us to palliate the idolatries or impieties of our apoſtate race. God never left himſelf without witneſs, in any place, or in any age: his long-ſuffering, and the exuberant bounty of his providence, towards enemies, and rebels againſt his authority, are very wonderful; and they proclaim how worthy he is of univerſal love and adoration, and how inexcuſable man is, in his forgetfulneſs of, and enmity againſt him. The moſt cogent arguments, the moſt earneſt and affectionate addreſs, nay the moſt ſtupendous miracles are ſcarce ſufficient to reſtrain men from the greateſt abſurdities, or the vileſt abominations: much leſs can they, without ſpecial grace, convert the hearts of ſinners to God and holineſs. Yet unleſs this change be effected; they will be liable to be ſeduced by ill-deſigning men from one extreme to another: and to treat thoſe as the vileſt of malefactors, whom juſt before they were ready to honour, as more than men. This ſhould teach us not to deſire, or value popularity, or human applauſe; but to ſeek only the honour that cometh from the unchangeable God. Safety, life, breath, and comfort are entirely at his diſpoſal: and if we have experienced his protection, and conſolation, in the midſt of perils and afflictions; we ſhall be the better able to confirm the ſouls of new converts, to exhort them to continue in the faith, and to animate them to preſs forward in the way to heaven, though they muſt paſs thither through much tribulation. When proper means have been uſed, and regulations made for the edification of new converts, and infant churches; we may confidently commend them with faſting and prayer, to that faithful, gracious, and powerful Lord, in whom they have believed; in caſe we be compelled to leave them. If faithful miniſters are made uſeful to ſouls; they think little of the hardſhips, and trials, to which they have been expoſed. They, who have joined in prayer for a bleſſing on their labours, will be glad and thankful to hear them rehearſe all that God hath done with them: and all who love the Lord Jeſus, and their fellow-ſinners, will rejoice to hear, that he hath opened the door of faith to thoſe, who before were ſtrangers to him, and his ſalvation.

AND certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, *and ſaid,* Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no ſmall diſſenſion and diſputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, ſhould go up to Jeruſalem, unto the apoſtles and elders about this queſtion.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they paſſed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the converſion of the Gentiles: and they cauſed great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jeruſalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apoſtles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there roſe up certain of the ſect of the Phariſees which believed, ſaying, That it was needful to circumciſe them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moſes.

6 And the apoſtles and elders came together for to conſider this matter.

7 And when there had been much diſputing, Peter roſe up, and ſaid unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth ſhould hear the word of the goſpel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witneſs, giving them the Holy Ghoſt, even as *he did* unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the diſciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.

11 But we believe, that through the grace

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—6.] (*Gal.* c. ii. v. 1—10.) The events recorded in this chapter took place about ſeventeen years after St. Paul's converſion. The perſons, who taught the Gentile converts at Antioch, that they could not be ſaved, unleſs they were circumciſed, and obſerved the whole ceremonial law, pretended to ſpeak the ſentiments of the apoſtles, and church at Jeruſalem; but they were falſe brethren, who came to ſpy out, and deſtroy their chriſtian liberty. Their doctrine could not but prove a great diſcouragement and temptation to the Gentile converts, and an immenſe hindrance to the ſpread of the goſpel: at the ſame time it tended to falſe ſentiments concerning juſtification, and would eventually have been ſubverſive of genuine chriſtianity. Therefore Paul and Barnabas vigorouſly oppoſed theſe perverſions, and uſed all their authority, and every proper argument to ſatisfy the minds of the people, and to ſilence the falſe teachers: yet this did not ſuffice; and therefore it was determined that they ſhould go up to Jeruſalem, and refer the matter to the apoſtles, &c; that by their authority and influence the controverſy might be terminated, and the peace of the church preſerved. We find from the before cited ſcripture, that this meaſure was adopted "by revelation;" the Lord having made it known to them by the mouth of ſome of the prophets reſiding there, that he would have them do ſo. Accordingly they ſet out on their journey, being attended part of the way by the paſtors, or principal perſons of the church, who thus ſhewed their reſpect to them, and the pleaſure they took in their company: and as they paſſed through Phenicia and Samaria, they gave a particular account to the chriſtians there of the converſion of the Gentiles, both at Antioch, and in the provinces of the Leſſer Aſia, which greatly rejoiced them. In like manner when they came to Jeruſalem, the church, with the apoſtles and elders, welcomed them; and there they declared more fully, than they had before heard, what God had done by their miniſtry. But though theſe things gave general ſatisfaction; yet ſome of the Phariſees, who had embraced the goſpel, but who ſtill retained an undue regard for the ceremonial law, contended that they ought to comply with its precepts. As therefore there was not an entire agreement upon the ſubject, it was deemed expedient for the apoſtles, elders, and others of the church to meet together, and to give the important ſubject a full diſcuſſion, in order that it might be finally determined to the ſatisfaction of all concerned in it. This hath commonly been called "the "firſt general council;" and it ſeems to have alſo been the laſt, where it could properly be ſaid, "It ſeemed "good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us, &c."

V. 7—11.] Several perſons ſeem to have ſpoken with great earneſtneſs upon the ſubject, on both ſides; before the apoſtles gave their ſentiments, and brought the matter to a determination. Indeed it is not certain that any of the apoſtles were preſent, except Peter, James and John: perhaps the reſt were employed in preaching the goſpel at a diſtance. However thoſe preſent choſe rather to hear the arguments of their brethren upon the ſubject, and to ſhew the reaſons of their own concluſions; than to decide upon it merely by virtue of their apoſtolical authority. But at length Peter aroſe, and reminded them, that ſome years before God had expreſly choſen, and directed him to preach the goſpel to Cornelius and his company, that they might be brought to believe in Chriſt: and the heart-ſearching God had borne witneſs to the truth and acceptableneſs of their faith, by the gift of the Holy Ghoſt; even as he had done to the believing Jews: putting no difference be-of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall be ſaved even as they.

12 Then all the multitude kept ſilence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 And after they had held their peace, James anſwered, ſaying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me.

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the firſt did viſit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will ſet it up;

17 That the reſidue of men might ſeek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, ſaith the Lord, who doeth all theſe things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my ſentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

20 But that we write unto them, that they abſtain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things ſtrangled, and *from* blood.

21 For Moſes of old time hath in every

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lieving Jews: putting no difference between them, having "purified their hearts by faith." The heart may here ſignify the ſoul, with all its faculties and powers; and the expreſſion refers not only to the ſanctification of the ſoul by the Holy Spirit, but alſo to the purifying of the conſcience through the blood of Chriſt from the guilt of ſin. After this internal purification through faith in Chriſt, they wanted not the legal purifications, which were types and ſhadows of theſe ſubſtantial bleſſings: and as God had, in this firſt extraordinary caſe, decided the queſtion; why ſhould they again put it to the trial, as if they meant to tempt him to impoſe ſo heavy a yoke on the Gentile converts? This related not merely to circumciſion, but to the whole ceremonial law, which, though proper and uſeful for the time, required ſo many nice diſtinctions, burdenſome purifications, expenſive ſacrifices, long journeys, &c; that it was a very uneaſy yoke in every age even to the inhabitants of the promiſed land, and ſtill more to thoſe Jews, who reſided in other countries: and whilſt it ſerved to prevent idolatry from being univerſal; it alſo tended exceedingly to prevent the general diffuſion of true religion. Peter further argued, that there could be no occaſion to impoſe this yoke upon the Gentiles, which themſelves could ſo hardly endure: as even they did not expect to be ſaved in any degree by obſerving the Moſaic law, but merely by faith in Chriſt, exactly in the ſame manner with the Gentile believers; though, being deſcended of Jewiſh parents, and brought up in that religion; they deemed it a part of their duty to be obedient to it.

V. 12. *Then*, &c.] The miracles, which God wrought by the apoſtles, when they were preaching to the Gentiles, atteſted his approbation of their conduct, and proved that they did right in not requiring them to be circumciſed.

V. 13—21.] When Paul and Barnabas had concluded their narrative, the apoſtle James cloſed the conference. He firſt referred them to the account given by Simeon, or Simon Peter, of the manner, in which God firſt viſited the Gentiles in mercy, to take from among them a people to worſhip, and glorify his name: and he ſhewed them, that, though this might be contrary to their prejudices, yet it accorded with the predictions of the prophets. (Note, *Amos*, c. ix. v. 11, 12.) The quotation here varies in ſome reſpects from the paſſage, as it ſtands in our Bibles: Edom was a common type of the enemies of the church; by the houſe of David poſſeſſing the remnant of Edom, &c, the converſion to Chriſt of a remnant from thoſe nations which had been moſt inimical to the Jews might be meant; ſo that the Lord's name ſhould be called upon, or uſed in connexion with, perſons of every nation. This the Lord had undertaken to perform: and as all his works were known to him from the beginning of the world; ſo he was now evidently accompliſhing his plan, which he had before arranged, and of ſome parts of which he had given theſe previous intimations. His opinion therefore was, that the Gentile converts ought not to be moleſted about circumciſion or the ritual law: but that it might be expedient and proper to point out to them ſome particulars, which they would do well to obſerve. He would therefore propoſe to write to them, that they ſhould abſtain from meats, which had been offered to idols, and polluted in that abominable worſhip; that they might decidedly ſhew their entire renunciation and abhorrence of idolatry: and to caution them againſt fornication; this was not in general held in that abhorrence among the Gentiles, that it ought to be; and it even mingled itſelf with their idolatrous feaſts: the new converts might therefore be in danger of being ſeduced into it, to the diſhonour of their profeſſion, the injury of their own ſouls, and the great detriment of their domeſtic comfort, and union in the worſhip of God. They ſhould alſo be counſelled to abſtain from things ſtrangled, and from eating blood: this was a reſtriction of another nature: the law of Moſes had long been publiſhed in the ſeveral cities, where the goſpel was then planted, being read in their ſynagogues every ſabbath; the people therefore every where knew, that the eating of blood was prohicity them that preach him, being read in the ſynagogues every ſabbath-day.

22 Then pleaſed it the apoſtles and elders, with the whole church, to ſend choſen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely* Judas, ſurnamed Barſabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren;

23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apoſtles, and elders, and brethren, *ſend* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia:

24 Foraſmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, ſubverting your ſouls, ſaying, *Ye muſt* be circumciſed, and keep the law; to whom we gave no *ſuch* commandment:

25 It ſeemed good unto us, being aſſembled with one accord, to ſend choſen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul;

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

27 We have ſent therefore Judas and Silas, who ſhall alſo tell *you* the ſame things by mouth.

28 For it ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than theſe neceſſary things;

29 That ye abſtain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things ſtrangled, and from fornication: from which, if ye keep yourſelves, ye ſhall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were diſmiſſed they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together they delivered the epiſtle:

31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the conſolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets alſo themſelves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

33 And after they had tarried *there* a ſpace, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apoſtles.

34 Notwithſtanding, it pleaſed Silas to abide there ſtill.

35 Paul alſo and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others alſo.

36 And ſome days after Paul ſaid unto

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bited very ſtrictly: this was from reverence to the blood of the ſacrifices, which being the life of the animal, was as it were the eſſence of the atonement, as typical of that of Chriſt. It would therefore have needleſſly grieved and ſtumbled the Jewiſh converts, and prevented their friendly intercourſe with their brethren, and further prejudiced the unconverted Jews againſt the goſpel; if the Gentile converts had thus ſhewn ſo open a diſregard to the ſolemn ſacrifices, which were ſtill offered at the temple. This ſeems to have been the reaſon of this reſtriction: as long as the ſacrifices continued to be offered, we may ſuppoſe that it was obſerved: but as every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed; as there is no further intimation to this effect in the apoſtolical epiſtles; and as the reaſon of it, which is here annexed, hath long ſince ceaſed: ſo we muſt conclude that we are left as free in this, as in other ſimilar matters.

V. 22—30.] In order to authenticate their deciſion more fully, the apoſtles, and elders, &c, thought good to ſelect two eminent perſons amongſt them, to go with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. Judas ſurnamed Barſabas might perhaps be the brother of Joſeph, who had that ſurname, of whom we read before, (c. i. v. 23.) By them they wrote circular letters, not only in the name of the apoſtles, and elders, but of the whole church, to the chriſtians at Antioch, &c, in which they doubtleſs meant to include all thoſe churches, that were eſtabliſhed in other cities. In theſe they acknowledged and ſaluted the Gentile converts as brethren; and they diſowned thoſe perſons who had gone out from them, to trouble them with their doctrine, and to ſubvert the foundations of their faith and hope. They had therefore unanimouſly agreed, when met together, to ſend two other brethren, with Paul and Barnabas, (whom they greatly loved, and honoured, for having ventured their lives for the name of Chriſt,) to inform them of the ſame things by word of mouth, and to explain them more fully if requiſite. For being warranted to declare themſelves directed by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghoſt: they were aſſured that it ſeemed good to Him, as well as to them, to impoſe on them no other burden, than the things before-mentioned; which were indeed neceſſary, either on their own account, and in reſpect of preſent circumſtances; and in attending to them they would do well, and be accepted of God. We may ſuppoſe from this harmonious concluſion of the buſineſs, that they, who at firſt were of another opinion, were at length convinced, and made no further oppoſition to the general deciſion.

V. 31—35.] This epiſtle ſettled the diſpute at Antioch, and rejoiced the hearts of the diſciples: and the miniſtry of Judas and Silas, who were prophets, of conſiderable authority in the church, and of eminent gifts, tended greatly to eſtabliſh them in the faith. So that Silas did not chooſe to return with Judas; having a proſpect of greater uſefulneſs at Antioch, and perhaps having an eye to that ſervice, which he afterwards performed.

Barnabas, Let us go again and viſit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and ſee* how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whoſe ſurname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was ſo ſharp between them, that they departed aſunder one from the other: and ſo Barnabas took Mark, and ſailed unto Cyprus:

40 And Paul choſe Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

V. 36—41.] The primary view of Paul, in propoſing to Barnabas another journey into thoſe diſtant places, was to reviſit the churches, which they had planted, and ſee whether they went on proſperouſly: but doubtleſs he meant alſo to ſeek further opportunities of ſpreading the goſpel. Barnabas ſeems to have been too partial to his nephew, and perhaps Paul was too ſevere with him. Doubtleſs they were both betrayed into undue warmth, and pertinacity: which ſhews the remains of human depravity in the hearts of the beſt of men; and the impartiality of the inſpired hiſtorian. Thus theſe two fellow-labourers parted, probably to meet no more on earth: however neither of them remitted any thing of his zeal and diligence, on account of this diſagreement: ſo that two miſſions were ſent forth inſtead of one; both of which were recommended to God by the prayers of the brethren. We read nothing further concerning Barnabas; doubtleſs he laboured and proſpered to the end of his life: but the reſt of this book relates primarily to the miniſtry and ſufferings of Paul and his companions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Satan is continually deviſing to ſtop the progreſs of the goſpel, by exciting diviſions amongſt thoſe, who preach and profeſs it; and to corrupt it's purity, and obſcure the free grace of it, by introducing needleſs additions, or ſubſtituting a falſe foundation: for theſe ends, he avails himſelf of the errors, bigotry, and narrow prejudices of ſome well-meaning perſons; and of the ambition, and ſelfiſhneſs of falſe brethren. Wiſe and good men will deſire to avoid controverſy, diſſention, and diſputation, as far as they can; yet they ought not to determine againſt, or condemn, them indiſcriminately: for when falſe teachers come in unawares to ſubvert men's ſouls; when the fundamental truths of the goſpel are oppoſed, or perverted, and the principles of men are poiſoned by pernicious tenets; we ought to contend earneſtly, (though not furiouſly,) for the truth once delivered to the ſaints: and to decline controverſy in ſuch circumſtances would argue luke-warmneſs, and cowardice, rather than meekneſs, and wiſdom. When fair argument, and ſcriptural evidence fail to convince gainſayers; we ſhould be careful that we be not be ſeduced into the uſe of improper means of conducting the diſputation: and if any method, of ſatisfying men's minds, and preſerving peace and truth, can be ſuggeſted; we ſhould ſubmit to any perſonal inconvenience or apparent degradation, to accompliſh ſo deſirable an end. Sometimes the opinion of thoſe, who ſeem to be pillars, will go further than any arguments: and we may fairly in ſuch circumſtances appeal to their judgment, in order to ſtop the mouths of thoſe, who pretend to ſpeak their ſentiments; and to ſatisfy ſuch, as may have imbibed prejudices againſt us, that cloſe their minds to our arguments. But we ought never ſo to engage in any ſingle queſtion; as to ſlip our opportunities of declaring what God hath done for, or by us, or of being helpers to the joy of our brethren in every place,

It may be uſeful for the miniſters and diſciples of Chriſt to meet together, to conſider any controverted ſubject, in order that they may form the more accurate and decided judgment upon it: yet great humility, prudence, temper, candour, and integrity will be requiſite, to prevent ſuch conventions from degenerating into party cabals, or ſcenes of contention and confuſion. This hath brought eccleſiaſtical councils and ſynods into general diſrepute: and indeed little good can be expected from them, when they are very numerous; or when they are ſo conſtituted, as to give an opening for the introduction of political conteſts, or party intereſts: yet ſelect companies meeting in the fear of God, and in the ſpirit of humble prayer for divine teaching, may help each other to inveſtigate truth, and in deciding difficult and important queſtions. We ſhould however remember that the apoſtles themſelves aſſigned the reaſons of their determinations: and did not require the elders and churches to ſubmit to their authority, without knowing the grounds, on which they went: and in ſuch diſcuſſions, we ſhall frequently find, that, by examining the ſource of the ſubject in queſtion, it will appear to have been already decided by the Lord himſelf; and that it would be tempting of him to debate the matter any further. We ſinners of the Gentiles have great cauſe to bleſs God, that we have heard the goſpel. May we have that faith, which the great Searcher of hearts approves, and atteſts by the ſeal of the Holy Spirit! Then our hearts and conſciences will be purified from the pollution, and guilt of ſin; and we ſhall need none of thoſe burdenſome ſuperſtitions, and inventions, which many have attempted to impoſe on the necks of the diſciples, inſtead of the abrogated ceremonial law. Thoſe ordinances, which God hath appointed as means of grace to our ſouls, and of our rendering him the worſhip due to his name, we ſhall delight in attending upon; we ſhall account his ſervice perfect freedom, and the Redeemer's yoke eaſy and pleaſant; and we ſhall adopt or reject mere circumſtantial regulations, as they appear to promote edification, or the contrary: but we ſhall place no dependence on any of theſe things, be-

C H A P. XVI.

Contains 1ſt. Paul taking Timothy as an aſſiſtant, and circumciſing him; and delivering the decrees of the apoſtles, &c, to the ſeveral churches; with an account of their increaſe, 1---5. *2d. The Holy Spirit prohibiting Paul and Silas from preaching in Aſia, and Bithynia; a viſion directing them to paſs over into Macedonia, and their arrival at Philippi,* 6---12. *3d. Lydia converted and entertaining them; and the caſting out of a familiar ſpirit from a female ſlave, occaſioning the apprehenſion, ſcourging, and impriſonment of Paul and Silas,* 13---24. *4th. The priſon-doors opened by an earthquake, whilſt they were ſinging praiſes to God; the jailor prevented by Paul from killing himſelf, and converted with his family,* 25---34. *5th. Paul and Silas refuſing to leave the priſon, till requeſted by the magiſtrates to depart,* 35---40.

THEN came he to Derbe and Lyſtra; and, behold, a certain diſciple was there, named Timotheus, the ſon of a certain woman which was a Jeweſs, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lyſtra and Iconium:

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumciſed him, becauſe of the Jews which were in thoſe quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

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lieving that we ſhall be ſaved by the grace of the Lord Jeſus, even as theſe primitive chriſtians were. This is the way of eternal life, to which God of old affixed the ſeal of miracles; which he confirms to us by the teſtimony of prophets, and apoſtles; and the preaching of which he bleſſes for the converſion of ſinners, in every age and nation. Thus did he firſt viſit the Gentiles, to take a people from among them, for the honour of his name: and thus is he building the tabernacle, and ſetting up the kingdom of the Son of David, in every part of the earth. He, who doeth all theſe things, carries on his work according to the counſel of his own will; for known unto him were all his works, from the beginning of the world: his providential diſpenſations illuſtrate, and fulfil his word; and it doth not behove us to attempt to modify his operations to a conformity with our limited, or prejudiced apprehenſions. We ſhould not therefore trouble thoſe about mere forms or notions, who are evidently turned unto God; much leſs ought we to impoſe upon them by authority, or as neceſſary to ſalvation, ſuch things as never could plead a divine ſanction. However it may be proper to warn them to keep at a diſtance from all occaſions, or appearances of thoſe evils, to which they were before moſt addicted, or to which they are now moſt likely to be tempted; and to caution them to uſe their chriſtian liberty, with ſuch moderation and prudence, as the good of their brethren, their friendly intercourſe with them, and the ſucceſs of the goſpel may render expedient.

They, who poſſeſs influence and authority, ſhould uſe it to ſupport their faithful brethren, whoſe uſefulneſs may be cramped by the prejudices gone forth againſt them: and they ſhould embrace opportunites of decidedly ſpeaking in their commendation, and againſt thoſe, who trouble the church, and ſubvert men's ſouls, by oppoſing their miniſtry: and, if other things are equal, they are entitled to moſt reſpect, and affection from their brethren, who have ventured and ſuffered moſt for the name of the Lord Jeſus. Unanimity amongſt miniſters and chriſtians gives great weight to their determinations: what they do with one accord may often be conſidered as the mind, and work of the Holy Spirit; eſpecially when their counſels, and meaſures are evidently conſonant to ſcripture, and conducive to the peace and purity of the church; and when the whole is managed in the ſpirit of unaſſuming love: but arbitrary injunctions, and furious anathemas have long diſtinguiſhed the proceedings of anti-chriſtian councils from thoſe of this chriſtian ſynod. Inſtructions, arguments, and exhortations are the proper means of producing conviction and obedience, and of confirming men in the faith: and chriſtian liberty, ſoberly explained and uſed, is conducive to conſolation and gratitude. Whilſt we approve, and imitate the zeal, love, and indefatigable diligence and courage of the apoſtles, in propoſing to reviſit the churches, where they had been ſo perſecuted: we muſt alſo note the effects of human imperfection in the beſt of men; that we may watch, and pray againſt all occaſions of contention, and all ſharpneſs and pertinacity in contending with our brethren. Yet we ſhould alſo admire the wiſdom of God, in diſappointing the devices of the enemy, and over-ruling the infirmity of the apoſtles, to promote the cauſe of the goſpel: and we ſhould copy their example, in not allowing any perſonal differences, to take us off from, or to make us negligent or unfaithful in, the work, to which the Lord hath ſeverally called us.

N O T E S.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—3.] Timothy had been piouſly educated, and acquainted with the ſcriptures from his youth: and he had doubtleſs been brought to believe in Chriſt, when Paul and Barnabas were before at Lyſtra. As he bare an excellent character among his fellow chriſtians, and was endowed with very promiſing abilities, Paul engaged him to accompany him in his travels and labours: but as his father was an uncircumciſed Gentile, it was known that he had not been circumciſed in his infancy; and he therefore deemed it expedient for him to ſubmit to that ordinance, previous to his entrance on his public work. Not that circumciſion was at all needful for him, as a Gentile convert, or that the apoſtle thought that the Jewiſh believers were bound to obſerve the ceremonial law: but leſt the knowledge of his father, as a Gentile, ſhould prejudice the Jews in the adjacent cities, againſt Paul, and his miniſtry; if they had ſuppoſed that he had taken an uncircumciſed perſon, 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apoſtles and elders which were at Jeruſalem.

5 And ſo were the churches eſtabliſhed in the faith, and increaſed in number daily.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghoſt to preach the word in Aſia,

7 After they were come to Myſia, they aſſayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit ſuffered them not.

8 And they paſſing by Myſia, came down to Troas.

9 And a viſion appeared to Paul in the night; There ſtood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, ſaying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had ſeen the viſion, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, aſſuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the goſpel unto them.

11 Therefore looſing from Troas, we came with a ſtraight courſe to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13 And on the ſabbath we went out of the city by a river ſide, where prayer was wont to be made, and we ſat down, and ſpake unto the women which reſorted *thither*.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a ſeller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worſhipped God, heard *us*: whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended unto the things which were ſpoken of Paul.

15 And when ſhe was baptized, and her houſhold, ſhe beſought *us*, ſaying, If ye

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to be his intimate companion and aſſiſtant. He therefore thus far condeſcended to their prejudices, that he might not impede his own uſefulneſs among them: though ſome time before at Jeruſalem, he would not agree to the circumciſion of Titus, when it was conſidered as requiſite for ſalvation: (1 *Cor*. c. ix. v. 19—23. *Gal*. c. ii. v. 3.)

V. 6—12.] It ſeems to have been at this time, that Paul preached ſo ſucceſsfully in Galatia, as to found thoſe flouriſhing churches, to which he wrote his epiſtle. He probably intended to have gone regularly from place to place in that neighbourhood, planting the goſpel as he proceeded; but by an immediate revelation the Holy Spirit forbad him and his companions, to preach in the proconſular Aſia, or in Bithynia; theſe were diſtinct parts of the Leſſer Aſia, in which the ſeveral cities, and regions before mentioned were ſituated. It was the will of God, that they ſhould proceed to a ſtill greater diſtance from home; in the mean time the goſpel would be gradually diffuſing it's influence in thoſe parts by other means and inſtruments: and we find that ſoon after, flouriſhing churches were eſtabliſhed in thoſe very places, where they were now prohibited to preach. They therefore journeyed on to Troas, on the coaſt of the Egean Sea: and whilſt they there waited to know the will of God concerning them; Paul had a viſion, from which they aſſuredly concluded, that they were to croſs the ſea into Europe, to preach the goſpel to the inhabitants of Macedonia. Accordingly they took ſhip, and paſſed by the uſual courſe to Philippi, which was a principal city, if not *the* chief city in that diviſion of Macedonia; and a Roman colony, being moſtly inhabited by Roman citizens, who had various privileges, and were governed by their own laws. The hiſtorian on this occaſion begins to ſpeak in the firſt perſon plural, ſaying *we* endeavoured, &c: hence we learn that he attended Paul in this voyage, and probably in moſt of his ſubſequent labours; though he modeſtly avoided mentioning any thing particular concerning himſelf.

V. 13—15.] Perhaps this was the firſt time, that the goſpel was preached in our quarter of the globe; though we can determine nothing with certainty about it. There were Jews reſiding in moſt, if not all, the cities which the apoſtles, and evangeliſts viſited; though they ſeem to have been but few at Philippi. They probably had not a ſynagogue with rulers, &c: but there was a ſmall oratory without the city, by the river ſide, where a few people were accuſtomed to aſſemble for the worſhip of God, on the ſabbath-days. Thither the apoſtle, and his friends reſorted, and took the opportunity of diſcourſing to the *women*, concerning the goſpel of Chriſt: for it does not appear, that there were any *men* in the aſſembly. Among the reſt there was a native of Thyatira a city of Aſia, who reſided at Philippi, to traffic in purple clothes, which were then in great eſtimation: ſhe ſeems to have been of Gentile extraction, but proſelyted to the Jewiſh religion: and the Lord was pleaſed to open her heart to attend to, and believe the apoſtle's doctrine. This implies, that pride, prejudice, and ſin ſhut out the truths of God; till his grace makes way for their admiſſion into the underſtanding and affections: (*Luke*, c. xxiv. v. 45.) Thus ſhe was led to profeſs the goſpel, and was baptized with her houſhold; the adult part of which no doubt were inſtructed in, and embraced chriſtianity, along with her. There is no proof that there were any children in her family: the Syriac verſion indeed renders it “the children of her “houſe;” but this only ſhews the ſentiments of have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my houſe, and abide *there.* And ſhe conſtrained us.

16 And it came to paſs as we went to prayer, a certain damſel poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of divination met us, which brought her maſters much gain by ſoothſaying;

17 The ſame followed Paul and us, and cried, ſaying, Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation.

18 And this did ſhe many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned, and ſaid to the ſpirit, I command thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt to come out of her. And he came out the ſame hour.

19 And when her maſters ſaw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the market place unto the rulers,

20 And brought them to the magiſtrates, ſaying, Theſe men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to obſerve, being Romans.

22 And the multitude roſe up together againſt them; and the magiſtrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them.*

23 And when they had laid many ſtripes upon them, they caſt *them* into priſon, charging the jailor to keep them ſafely:

24 Who having received ſuch a charge, thruſt them into the inner priſon, and made their feet faſt in the ſtocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed,

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thoſe, who formed that early tranſlation: ſo that we can decide nothing from this expreſſion alone. After this ſhe beſought the apoſtle, and his company, to lodge in her houſe; for probably they before were but poorly accommodated: and by her urgent invitations ſhe overcame their reluctancy to put her to ſo much trouble and expence. By this it appears that ſhe was a perſon in affluent circumſtances: many others ſeem about this time, or ſoon afterwards to have been converted.

V. 16—24.] As the apoſtle and his friends went from the houſe of Lydia to the oratory above mentioned; they were met by a female ſlave, who was influenced by an evil ſpirit to utter ambiguous predictions, or divinations, after the manner of the prieſteſſes of the Pythian Apollo. Thus ſhe had acquired great reputation, as a kind of oracle, or fortune-teller, and for making ſtrange diſcoveries; which were probably accompanied by various agitations, and diſtortions of her body, and a peculiar kind of voice and articulation; as theſe were common on ſuch occaſions. By this practice ſhe brought her maſters a conſiderable gain, and became exceeding valuable to them. But being inſtigated by the evil ſpirit, who deſired to diſcredit, and bring into ſuſpicion the miniſtry and miracles of the apoſtle, &c; ſhe cried aloud, that they were the ſervants of the moſt High God, who came to ſhew men the way of ſalvation. For ſome days Paul waited, perhaps to ſee in what manner the Lord would ſilence ſo ſuſpicious, and diſgraceful a teſtimony to his truth: at length being grieved by the damſel's perſeverance, he caſt out the evil ſpirit by the power of Chriſt: and ſhe returned to the full poſſeſſion of her faculties; every one ſoon perceived that ſhe could utter no more divinations, and perhaps ſhe was converted to chriſtianity. This event demonſtrates, that ſuch pretenſions are not always human impoſtures; but are ſometimes real ſatanical operations. Had this damſel's divination been a mere juggle between her and her maſters, the command of the apoſtle could not have detected it, or prevented them from carrying on the deception: nor could he at once, or indeed at all, have convinced the whole multitude, and city, that it was a mere impoſture; for men are not ſo eaſily undeceived in ſuch matters. And if mere jugglers had been convinced that Paul, and his friends were indeed the ſervants of the true God, and teachers of the way of ſalvation; they would never have ventured to addreſs them in this manner. But as the woman was really inſtigated, and, in a ſenſe, inſpired by an evil ſpirit; and as in the paroxyms of her diſtraction, and amidſt ſtrange, and wild actions, and geſtures, ſhe actually utterred ſuch things, as were apparent prophecies, and wonderful diſcoveries; (ſuch as ſatan could at any time make by his foreſight and conjectural knowledge, if the Lord would permit him:) ſo the change was manifeſt, when the diſpoſſeſſion took place; and all concerned were fully ſatisfied, that ſhe could divine no longer, and that it was in vain to apply to her for that purpoſe. Her owners therefore were ſenſible that no further lucre could be made by her, and were exceedingly exaſperated by their loſs: and when they had ſeized upon Paul and Silas, and accuſed them before the magiſtrates as diſturbers of the peace, and teachers of unlawful cuſtoms; the multitude alſo, being enraged at the loſs of their propheteſs, joined in the tumultuous accuſation: whereas had the apoſtle ſatisfactorily detected an artful impoſtor; they, who had been convinced of the cheat, would have been enraged at thoſe, who had duped them of their money, and not at him, who had undeceived them. It does not appear that the Jews were forbidden to exerciſe their religion at Philippi, or in other cities of the Roman empire, at this time: ſo that the accuſation was altogether malicious and groundleſs. Yet the magiſtrates, concurring with the popular fury, violently rent off the garments of Paul and Silas; and having ſeverely ſcourged them without any previous trial, they caſt them into priſon, and charged the jailor to keep them ſafely; as if they had

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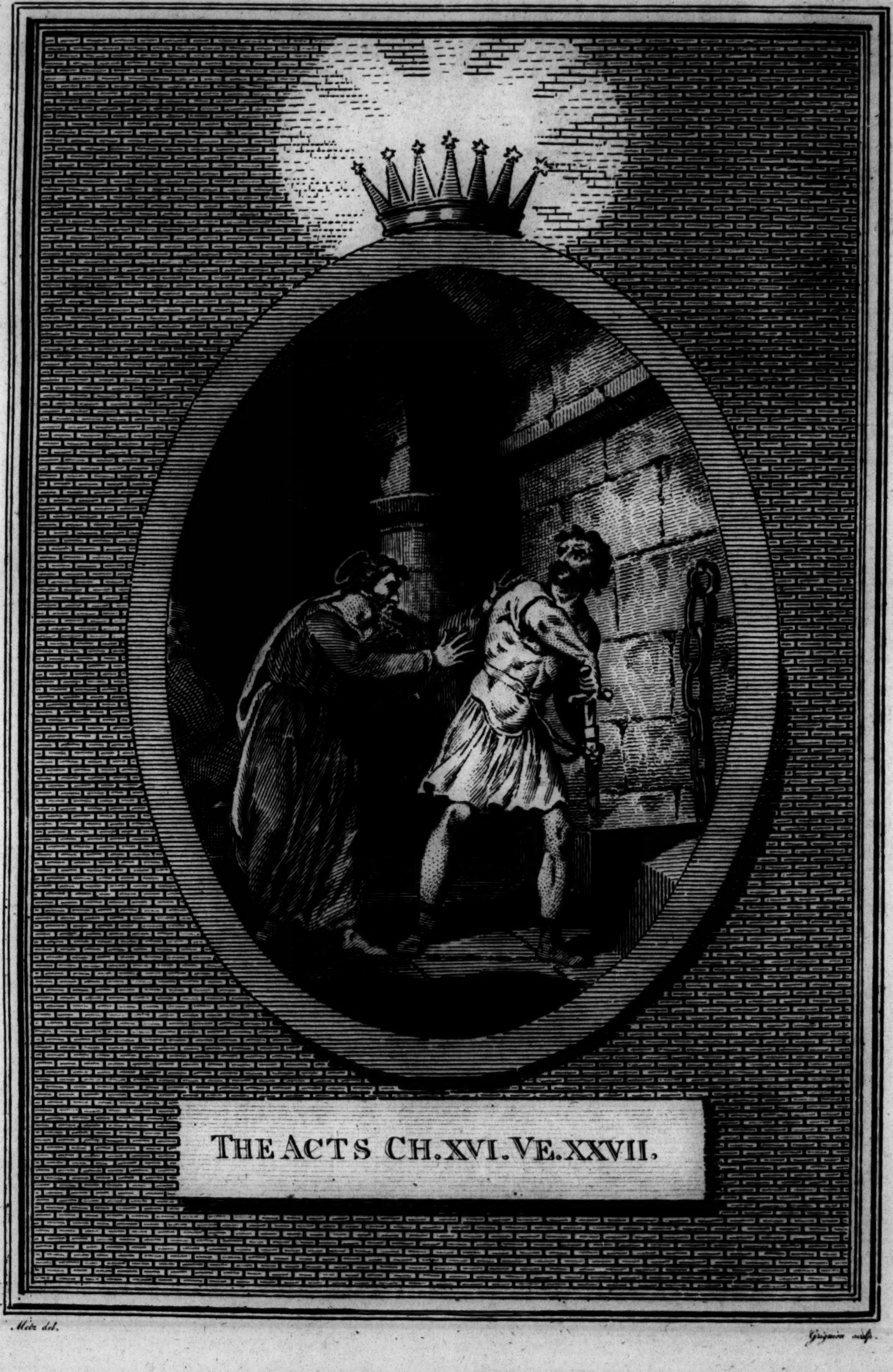

THE ACTS CH. XVI. VE. XXVII.

Metz del. *Grignion sculp.*

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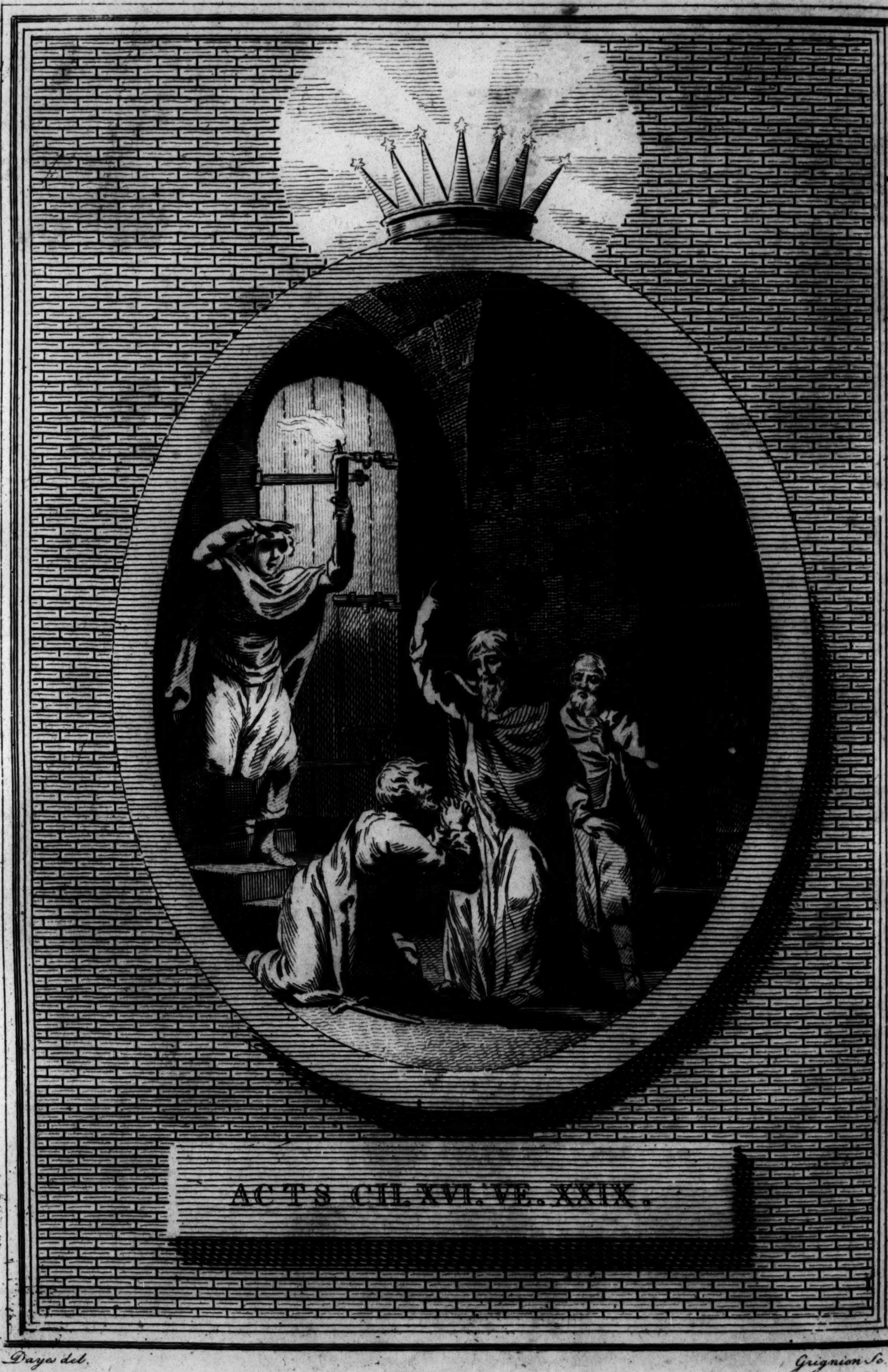

ACTS CH. XVI. VE. XXIX.

Dayes del. Grignion Sc.

Publish'd as the Act directs by Bellamy & Roberts April 2. 1791.

and ſang praiſes unto God: and the priſoners heard them.

26 And ſuddenly there was a great earthquake, ſo that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were looſed.

27 And the keeper of the priſon awaking out of his ſleep, and ſeeing the priſon doors open, he drew out his ſword, and would have killed himſelf, ſuppoſing that the priſoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Do thyſelf no harm; for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?

31 And they ſaid, Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy houſe.

32 And they ſpake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his houſe.

33 And he took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed *their* ſtripes; and was baptized, he and all his, ſtraightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his houſe, he ſet meat before them, and re-

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been dangerous, and artful criminals, who would certainly effect their eſcape, if it were poſſible. And he, being probably a man of a ſevere temper, and deſirous of pleaſing his employers; and perhaps deſpiſing them on account of their religion, caſt them into the inner place, or the darkeſt and moſt noiſome part of the dungeon; and there faſtened their feet in the ſtocks, which muſt have rendered their ſituation very painful, however they were framed. Thus they were left with their wounds undreſſed, in the cold, and dark dungeon, without any refreſhment, to wear away the night; expecting the next day to be further proceeded againſt. But neither they, nor any of the perſons concerned, had a thought of that gracious deſign, for the ſake of which the Lord had permitted theſe ſufferings to come upon them.

V. 25—28.] We might have expected, that Paul and Silas would have vented their feelings in bitter lamentations, and exclamations againſt the cruelty, and injuſtice of their treatment. Yet at midnight, when their wounds and bruiſes would become doubly painful, they firſt poured out their hearts in prayer, and doubtleſs remembered their perſecutors, and eſpecially the jailor: and being thus filled with divine conſolation, they joyfully ſang praiſes to God, and ſo loudly that the other priſoners heard them. At this very time the Lord was pleaſed to bear teſtimony to their innocency, by an extraordinary earthquake, which probably was felt all over the city; but which eſpecially ſhook the foundations of the priſon, burſt open all the doors, and in a wonderful manner brake off the bonds and fetters of all the priſoners: and yet no perſon ſeems to have been hurt by it! This tremendous concuſſion awakened the jailor, who ſuppoſing, from the doors being open, that the priſoners had fled, was about to murder himſelf. For he expected to be called to a ſevere account, and to be diſgraced, or put to an ignominious death, for allowing them to eſcape; and therefore, according to the falſe notions of honour which then prevailed, and in a mixture of infidelity, pride, and deſperation, he was about to plunge himſelf into eternity with all his unrepented ſins upon his head, and by another act of moſt daring contempt of, and rebellion againſt God. But Paul diſcovering, either by his exclamations, or by a divine monition, what he was about to do, cried out aloud, (being in earneſt to ſave him from deſtruction, even as if he had been a friend or brother,) exhorting him to do himſelf no harm, for he and the other priſoners were there, not having attempted to take advantage of this event.

V. 29—34.] The friendly conduct of Paul, and Silas, connected with this extraordinary interpoſition of God in their favour, ſeems to have been made effectual by the Holy Spirit, at once to convince the jailor, that theſe were indeed the ſervants of the moſt high God, though he had probably before derided that pretenſion, and concurred with thoſe, who perſecuted them on that account. Thus he was led to a conviction of his guilt in treating them with cruelty and contempt, as well as to a ſenſe of all his former ſins: and he began to tremble, leſt he ſhould immediately be deſtroyed by the righteous vengeance of God, and ſink into miſery in another world. Yet remembering, that they came to ſhew men the way of ſalvation; he ſeems to have conceived hopes of that deliverance. Calling therefore for lights, in great haſte and terror, he came in, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and bringing them out of the ſtocks and the inner priſon, he addreſſed them moſt reſpectfully, and enquired of them, "what he muſt do to be ſaved?" By which he doubtleſs meant deliverance from preſent death, and from future condemnation. Nor were they reluctant to give inſtruction or encouragement to him, on account of paſt injuries, or to deſpair of his ſalvation, or to preſcribe harder terms to him than to others, becauſe of his atrocious crimes: on the contrary they exhorted him to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and aſſured him that in doing this he would certainly be ſaved. This faith doubtleſs implied a belief of their teſtimony concerning Jeſus, as the promiſed Meſſiah, and concerning his perſon, character, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, &c; and a reliance on him for all things pertaining to ſalvation. They alſo included his houſhold in this aſſurance; not that his faith could ſave them; but his example might lead them to believe in Chriſt alſo; and in and with him, they would become a part of the viſible church, and have the benefit of the means of grace for their ſalvation.

joiced, believing in God with all his houſe.

35 And when it was day, the magiſtrates ſent the ſerjeants, ſaying, Let thoſe men go.

36 And the keeper of the priſon told this ſaying to Paul, The magiſtrates have ſent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul ſaid unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have caſt *us* into priſon; and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay, verily; but let them come themſelves and fetch us out.

38 And the ſerjeants told theſe words unto the magiſtrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and beſought them, and brought *them* out, and deſired *them* to depart out of the city.

40 And they went out of the priſon, and entered into *the houſe of* Lydia: and when they had ſeen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

They then inſtructed him, and his family, more fully in the doctrine of the goſpel; and the Lord ſo bleſſed the word, that he was immediately humbled, ſoftened, and changed from a lion, as it were, into a lamb: ſo that he firſt compaſſionately waſhed, and dreſſed their ſtripes, and then profeſſing faith in Chriſt, he was baptized in his name, though he might fear the heavy diſpleaſure of the magiſtrates for thus embracing the cauſe, which they had ſet themſelves to oppoſe: and at the ſame time all his houſhold was baptized likewiſe. Now therefore regarding Paul and Silas with the greateſt reſpect, and moſt endeared affection, he brought them into his houſe, and entertained them at his table: at the ſame time his trembling was turned into joy; as he believed in God with all his family, and truſted in the divine mercy, power and truth, for his and their protection and ſalvation. When a Gentile houſholder was converted to the Jewiſh religion, all the males in his family, including infants were circumciſed with him; unleſs any of the adults, after inſtruction refuſed to be ſo: it is therefore obvious to ſuppoſe, that the ſame rule was obſerved, in the baptiſm of thoſe houſholds, of which we read in the New Teſtament: for it hath already been ſhewn, that the covenant, and the meaning of theſe two ordinances were ſubſtantially the ſame. (Notes, *Gen.* c. xvii.) Such paſſages alone, will not indeed prove this: but the language, concerning the baptiſm of believers, and their houſholds, ſo much accords to that concerning the circumciſion of Abraham and his houſhold; that in connexion with other ſcriptures, which will in due time be conſidered; with the general and early uſe of infant baptiſm in the primitive church; and with the conſideration that we do not read of one ſingle inſtance, in which the children of chriſtian parents were baptized adult; it muſt be allowed to countenance ſtrongly the ſentiments and practice of pœdo-baptiſts: though we ſuppoſe, that the change of the initiatory ordinance, as far as infants were concerned, was introduced ſilently and gradually; like that reſpecting the ſabbath: the Jewiſh converts ſtill circumciſing their male children, to avoid giving needleſs offence to the unconverted Jews. It ſeems alſo probable *to me at leaſt*; that Paul and Silas, in the priſon, and in their painful condition, did not baptize the jailor and his family by immerſion.

V. 35—40.] Perhaps the earthquake, and ſome reports of what had taken place at the priſon, concurred in diſmaying the magiſtrates from proceeding further againſt Paul and Silas: however, they were probably conſcious, that they had done more than they could juſtify; and they therefore ſent their ſerjeants or beadles to give orders to the jailor to releaſe them, which he delivered with great joy and affection. But Paul, though willing to ſuffer for the cauſe of Chriſt, and not at all diſpoſed to avenge himſelf; yet deemed it proper to remind theſe iniquitous magiſtrates, that they had acted illegally, and might be ſeverely puniſhed for it: for this would tend to procure more equitable treatment for the chriſtians, and indeed for the other citizens, in future. In the tumult of the proceedings againſt him and Silas the day before, they had not judged it expedient to plead their privilege as Romans: but Paul now charged them with ſcourging them publicly, and impriſoning them in a cruel and ignominious manner, though they had not been condemned of any crime, and though they could prove themſelves Roman citizens: and now they meant to ſet them at liberty in an underhand manner, that they might conceal their own injuſtice: but they did not chooſe to go away under the imputation of having deſerved ſuch puniſhment; if they would therefore have them to depart, they muſt come themſelves, acknowledge their fault, and diſmiſs them in a more honourable manner. This meſſage might well alarm the magiſtrates: for as no man could claim the privilege of a citizen falſely, without expoſing himſelf to the ſevereſt puniſhment; ſo a proſecution for ſuch illegal treatment would have ſubjected the magiſtrates to heavy penalties, and incapacitated them for ever exerciſing authority any more: if not to capital puniſhment. They therefore came, and ſubmiſſively intreated Paul and Silas to leave the city, leſt further commotions ſhould be excited, in which they might not be able to protect them: and as they meant not to require any reparation for the injury, they went to the houſe of Lydia, and having viſited and encouraged the other new converts, they departed. The epiſtle to the Philippians ſhews what a flouriſhing church was at this time planted; and in what a happy event theſe troubles terminated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The wiſdom, that is from above, is peculiarly requiſite, in order to know when, and how far, we may connive at men's prejudices, in order to do them good; and when we muſt reſolutely oppoſe, and proteſt againſt them. But when a man has it at heart to carry his point, if it be poſſible; and when he is delivered from the preva-

CHAP. XVII.

Contains 1ſt. Paul and Silas labouring ſucceſsfully at Theſſalonica; driven thence by perſecution, and arriving at Berea, 1---10. 2d. The noble Spirit of the Bereans, many of whom were converted; the Jews of Theſſalonica following Paul and Silas, to perſecute them; and Paul going to Athens, 11---15. *3d. His zeal excited by obſerving the exceſſive idolatry of that city; his preaching in the ſynagogue, and diſputing in the forum with the philoſophers; his diſcourſe in the Areopagus, concerning the true God, and his worſhip, and concerning Jeſus, and his reſurrection, &c; with the mockery and diſregard of moſt preſent, and the converſion of Dionyſius, and a few others,* 16---34.

lence of pride, ſelfiſhneſs, obſtinacy, and moroſeneſs; he will be directed by circumſtances, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to act in conſiſtency with the word of God: yet his conduct will often appear incongruous, and inconſiſtent with itſelf, to the ſuperficial, and conceited obſerver; who will thus be tempted to ſpeak evil of thoſe things, which he underſtands not. The greateſt precaution ſhould be uſed, that the miniſters of Chriſt be perſons of good report; that they, who are of the contrary part may have no evil thing to ſay of them; and that they may not have perſonal prejudices to combat, as well as the carnal enmity of men's hearts, againſt their meſſage. This and other proper regulations tend exceedingly to the eſtabliſhment of believers in the faith, and to the increaſe of the church in numbers. Though we are not directed by expreſs revelations, in the various actions of our lives: yet, whilſt we act according to the beſt of our judgment, in obedience to the word, and dependence on the Spirit of God; we ſhall find circumſtances, apparently caſual, operate as prohibitions, and directions, ſubverting our plans, and ſubſtituting others in their ſtead. He that holds the ſtars in his right hand, directs his miniſters to the ſeveral places, where he means to employ them; and often contrary to their intentions and expectations. By whatever means we are ſatisfied of the Lord's will reſpecting us; we ſhould prepare to follow it, to whatever hardſhip, labour, and peril it may expoſe us: and they, who go in ſimplicity, faithfulneſs, and affection to preach the goſpel among ignorant and careleſs ſinners, do the moſt for their help and benefit, that man can do: though it ſeldom happens, that ſuch perſons are very forward to invite them.

Whilſt the ſervants of Chriſt wait upon Him in his ordinances; he will find them ſome opening to ſpeak in his name: nor ſhould the moſt eminent miniſter be averſe to preach to the ſmalleſt number of the moſt obſcure perſons. The Lord alone can open the heart for the reception, and belief of his word: true faith, and a proper profeſſion of the goſpel, are always connected with love to the ſervants of Chriſt: ſuch believers deſire to approve themſelves faithful to the Lord, as his ſtewards, to uſe hoſpitality without grudging, and to employ their ſubſtance in ſupporting, and promoting the goſpel: and they will commonly be a bleſſing to their houſholds alſo. The powers of darkneſs vary their methods of prejudicing men's minds againſt, or drawing off their attention from, the light of the goſpel. Lying miracles, and uſeleſs divinations are far more ſaleable in this evil world, than the truths and precepts of God would be, if they could be thus communicated: impoſtures, and diabolical arts of this kind have tended greatly to deceive mankind, and to ſet them againſt true religion. Satan the father of lies can declare the moſt important truths, when it will ſubſerve his purpoſe of deception, and murder: and if he were permitted, he could do more miſchief by ingeniouſly connecting the doctrines of the goſpel with pernicious errors, and immoral practice; than by every ſpecies of ſuperſtition, perſecution, and infidelity. Much he actually effects in this way, by means of antinomian, enthuſiaſtical, and ſcandalous preachers of the goſpel; who being confounded with the real ſervants of Chriſt, bring them alſo into contempt and abhorrence with thouſands of ſuperficial obſervers. But we muſt ſtrenuouſly diſclaim ſuch coalitions: and the commendations of bad and ſuſpicious characters, ſhould more excite our grief and indignation, than all their calumnies, and reproaches. The converſion of ſinners, from the power of ſatan unto God, often deprives thoſe connected with them of the gains, which they made by their vices: thus the goſpel interferes with the worldly intereſts of ſuch men, as will do any baſe thing for money; and this concurs with other principles in exciting their rage, and perſecution. They therefore, who do more good, than other men, by drawing ſinners off from ſatan's ſervice, may expect to be reviled as exceedingly troubling the city: and whilſt they teach men to fear God, to repent of ſin, to believe in Chriſt, and to live ſober, righteous and godly lives; they will be accuſed of teaching cuſtoms, that are illegal, impracticable, or ruinous to the community. Too often indeed the laws of the ſtate interfere with thoſe of God; and the cuſtoms of the world will contradict the wiſdom and holineſs of his ſervice: yet intereſted men often make theſe things a mere pretence for perſecution; whilſt they are actuated only by avarice, ambition, or revenge. The vileſt of malefactors may therefore expect more favourable treatment, than ſuch perſons, as will not let ſinners go on unmoleſted in the ways of deſtruction. Pride, cruelty, contempt, and enmity have often concurred in uniting the mob, and the magiſtrates againſt them: and if we eſcape abuſe, ſtripes, dungeons, the ſtocks, and the ſtake; we ſhould bleſs God for our mild government, and that equitable conſtitution, by which he ſecures us: and we ought to ſhew our gratitude for our peculiar liberty and privileges, by ſubmitting chearfully to, and praying earneſtly for, our rulers; and by turning away our ears from thoſe innovators, whom nothing but licentiouſneſs can ſatisfy.

But the conſolations of God are neither few nor ſmall to his ſuffering ſervants: He giveth them, in anſwer to their prayers, ſongs in the darkeſt night of tribulation, and in the moſt painful, and dreary ſituation. What different perſons are true chriſtians from what they are ſuppoſed to be! They are happier than their moſt proſperous foes, when they have done their worſt to make

NOW when they had paſſed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Theſſalonica, where was a ſynagogue of the Jews:

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three ſabbath-days reaſoned with them out of the ſcriptures;

3 Opening and alledging that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead: and that this Jeſus, whom I preach unto you, is Chriſt.

4 And ſome of them believed, and conſorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and gathered a

them miſerable: they need not to be ſtrictly guarded, when God wills them to lodge in a priſon; and walls, bars, bolts, fetters, and keepers are as nothing, when He wills them to be at liberty. In the moſt deſtitute ſtate they have an omnipotent Friend: all nature ſtands ready to plead their cauſe: they are capable of becoming the beſt of benefactors in their moſt abject penury; and they are ready to do good to their moſt cruel enemies. How wonderful alſo are the varied methods of the grace of God! And how unlikely the objects of it! He ſometimes brings ſinners acquainted with himſelf, by means of their own crimes; and frequently through the ſufferings of his ſervants. He gently, and by degrees leads ſome perſons into the knowledge and experience of his truth. Others he alarms by moſt tremendous diſpenſations, and ſnatches them by a gracious violence from the jaws of deſtruction. Some are brought as near to hell, as can be conceived; and then are ſuddenly reſcued, and made heirs of heaven: under the influence of their mad paſſions, many have been powerfully inſtigated by ſatan to plunge themſelves into the bottomleſs pit by their own hands; juſt at the time, when God was about to lead them into the ways of peace and felicity. Thus He illuſtrates and demonſtrates the ſovereignty, and efficacy of his grace; and gives occaſion to praiſes and thankſgivings, which will be varied almoſt infinitely to all eternity. Whatever men have been, or have done to us; we ought to prevent them from doing harm to themſelves, if we can: and we ſhould be as earneſt in this, on proper occaſions, with reſpect to our greateſt enemy, as if he were our brother, and friend. When ſinners begin to enquire under terror, and diſtreſs of conſcience what they muſt do to be ſaved? They muſt all be anſwered in the ſame way, whatever their previous character hath been. "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt "be ſaved," ſuits the caſe of every enquirer: none can be ſaved in any other way; none are excluded from ſalvation, who thus apply for it. Yet we ſhould further inſtruct men, in reſpect of the object, nature, and effects of this faith, as we have opportunity: and when ſinners are thus converted, they will ſoon learn to love and honour thoſe, whom they before deſpiſed and hated: they will alleviate the ſufferings, which before they derided, and augmented: they will ſupply the wants of the indigent ſervants of God; and join themſelves to them, by profeſſing their faith in Chriſt, and venturing reproach and perſecution for his ſake: and they will deſire that all, who belong to them, may be devoted to the Lord, and trained up in his ſervice. When ſuch fruits of faith begin evidently to appear; we ſhould not be ſurpriſed, if terrors are ſpeedily ſucceeded by confidence, and joy in God: and thus thoſe eventr, that menaced the moſt fatal conſequences, often iſſue in mutual congratulations and thankſgivings.

The ſervants of Chriſt ſhould indeed ſuffer perſecution peaceably, and forgive injuries readily: yet there may be caſes, in which it will be proper for them to claim the protection of the laws, and to proteſt againſt the flagrant injuſtice of oppreſſive magiſtrates: this may conduce to public juſtice, the peace of the church and of the community, and the credit of their profeſſion. But when proper conceſſions are made; they ſhould never expreſs perſonal reſentment, or inſiſt ſtrictly upon perſonal reparation; but manifeſt a diſintereſted, public ſpirit in every thing. Thus their enemies will be aſhamed, ſilenced, or conciliated: the Lord will make them more than conquerors in every conflict: and inſtead of being caſt down by their ſufferings, they ſhall become the comforters of their brethren, who have been exempted from ſo large a ſhare of tribulation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1—4.] Either no Jews reſided at Amphipolis, and Apollonia; or Paul had no opportunity of preaching among them: and he therefore journeyed on to the weſtward, till he arrived at Theſſalonica. And there, according to cuſtom, he went to the Synagogue, and reaſoned from the ſcriptures, to the Jews, and other aſſembled worſhippers, for three ſucceſſive Sabbath-days: adducing many paſſages from the prophets, explaining their meaning, and thence evidently ſhewing, that the promiſed Meſſiah was to ſuffer death, and to riſe again; and proving from the exact fulfilment of theſe predictions in Jeſus, that he was indeed that expected Deliverer. Theſe reaſonings did not convince the Jews in general, for their hearts were ſet upon a temporal kingdom: yet ſome of them, and many of the worſhipping Gentiles believed, and joined the company of Paul; and among the reſt ſeveral of the principal women in the city. From the Epiſtles to the Theſſalonians it is evident, that the apoſtle was alſo remarkably ſucceſsful among the idolatrous Gentiles; and that he continued here a conſiderable time: but after the firſt three ſabbaths, he probably left the Jews, and preached chiefly to the Gentiles. As the hiſtorian ſays *they* not *we*; it is conjectured that he tarried behind at Philippi, and did not join the company till ſome time after.

V. 5—9.] The unbelieving Jews were enraged, and filled with envy, becauſe the apoſtle preached to the company, and ſet all the city on an uproar, and aſſaulted the houſe of Jaſon, and ſought to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jaſon and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, Theſe that have turned the world upſide down are come hither alſo:

7 Whom Jaſon hath received; and theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Ceſar, ſaying, That there is another king, *one* Jeſus.

8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard theſe things.

9 And when they had taken ſecurity of Jaſon, and of the other, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately ſent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who, coming *thither*, went into the ſynagogue of the Jews.

11 Theſe were more noble than thoſe in Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo.

12 Therefore many of them believed; alſo of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Theſſalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither alſo and ſtirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren ſent away Paul, to go as it were to the ſea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there ſtill.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all ſpeed, they departed.

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his ſpirit was ſtirred in him, when he ſaw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore diſputed he in the ſynagogue

Gentiles, that they might be ſaved; (1 *Theſſ.* c. ii. v. 14—16.) They therefore raiſed a mob, from amongſt the loweſt and moſt licentious people in the city, who threw every thing into diſorder; and then they violently aſſaulted the houſe, where the apoſtle and his company lodged, in order to drag them before the people as public diſturbers. Jaſon, the owner of this houſe, ſeems to have been a relation of Paul, and a Jew. (*Rom.* c. xvi. v. 21.) As Paul and his friends were abſent, or concealed at this time; the mob dragged Jaſon, and ſome other of the new converts before the magiſtrates: exclaiming, that the men, of whom they had heard many reports, as having excited great confuſion in every place, and having attempted ſuch innovations, as tended to turn the world upſide down, and ſubvert the whole eſtabliſhed order in religion, and civil government, were at length come thither alſo, to make inſurrections, and diſturbances; and that Jaſon had lodged them in his houſe, and had embraced their doctrine, as many others had done. But all theſe had broken the edicts of the Roman emperor, and rebelled againſt his authority; as was evident, in that they avowed that there was another king, one Jeſus; who had been crucified, yet they averred that he was riſen again, and was exalted to a dominion independent of, and ſuperior to that of Cæſar. This accuſation gave much diſquietude both to the magiſtrates, and the aſſembled multitudes; as they feared the diſpleaſure of the emperor, if they ſhould neglect ſuch a charge; and yet they knew not how to proceed upon it. However, at preſent they only required Jaſon and his friends, to give ſecurity for their peaceable behaviour, and to make their appearance if further called upon.

V. 10—15. The Chriſtians at Theſſalonica deemed it to be no longer ſafe for Paul and Silas to continue among them; and therefore they ſecretly ſent them to Berea, an adjacent city: and without delay, fear, or reſentment, they proceeded to declare their meſſage in the ſynagogue. The Jews in this place proved to be of a more ingenuous, candid, liberal, and teachable diſpoſition, than thoſe of Theſſalonica; and more deſerving of the honourable diſtinction of Abraham's ſeed: for they applied their minds with all readineſs, and ſeriouſneſs to the word, which Paul preached to them. And though they did not implicitly receive his doctrine, or ſubmit to his arguments; yet they impartially and diligently inveſtigated the ſubject. And not only did they hear him preach on the Sabbath-days, or at other times; but they *daily* employed themſelves in ſearching the ſcriptures, and comparing its predictions with the facts atteſted to them. Thus many of them were led to a ſolid conviction of the truth; and with the Jews there were ſeveral religious proſelytes, and ſome of the moſt affluent and honourable women of the city, who embraced chriſtianity. But the envious Jews of Theſſalonica, hearing of their ſucceſs, followed them to Berea, and there excited a ſtorm of popular fury againſt them: as Paul was moſt obnoxious to them, it was judged neceſſary for him to recede from the danger; and they therefore conducted him towards the ſea coaſt, that it might be ſuppoſed he was embarked for Aſia. Thus he arrived at Athens, one of the moſt famous cities of Greece, having left his companions behind him to regulate the affairs of the church at Berea; and having ſent word to them to come as ſoon as they could to him, he waited for them there.

V. 16—21.] Paul does not ſeem to have intended to open his miniſtry at Athens, till Silas and Timothy joined him: perhaps he was not determined whether he ſhould attempt to preach there, or whether he ſhould paſs over into Aſia. Whilſt he continued in this renowned city, the centre of polite learning, philoſophy, the fine arts, &c.; the fragments of whoſe elegant and with the Jews, and with the devout perſons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philoſophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoicks encountered him. And ſome ſaid, What will this babbler ſay? other ſome, he ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods: becauſe he preached unto them Jeſus, and the reſurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, ſaying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou ſpeakeſt, *is*?

20 For thou bringeſt certain ſtrange things to our ears: we would know therefore, what theſe things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and ſtrangers which were there, ſpent their time in nothing elſe, but either to tell or to hear ſome new thing.)

22 Then Paul ſtood in the midſt of Mars'

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finiſhed productions are to this day eſteemed the moſt perfect models, of their kinds; and which was, as it were, the univerſity of the Roman empire, and of the world: he took little notice of their paintings, ſculpture, edifices, theatres, exhibitions, &c. Though he is univerſally allowed to have been a man of fine taſte, and cultivated genius: his thoughts were too much occupied about more ſublime and intereſting ſubjects, to make many obſervations about theſe little elegancies: for his ſpirit was agitated, grieved, ſharpened, and filled with indignation and aſtoniſhment, to ſee a city, that was deemed ſo enlightened, entirely enſlaved to the moſt ſtupid idolatry. It hath been aſſerted that there were more idols at Athens, than in all the reſt of Greece: the Athenians always imported the deities, and ſuperſtitions of every nation, along with their arts and learning: ſo that a ſatyriſt ludicrouſly obſerved, "that it was eaſier "to find a god than a man in that city." This fact moſt completely demonſtrates the inſufficiency of ſcience and philoſophy to guide men in matters of religion. The barbarous Scythians, the wild Indians, nay the ſtupid Hottentots, have never deviated further from truth, or ſunk into groſſer darkneſs in reſpect of God, and religion, than did the ingenious, and philoſophical Athenians! The apoſtle was thus excited to enter upon his work without delay: and firſt in the ſynagogue he propoſed his doctrine to the Jews and proſelytes, and earneſtly endeavoured to convince them, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah: but as the whole ſeems to have been *a diſputation*, we may conclude, that he had not much ſucceſs among them. He alſo diſputed in the market place, or forum, with ſuch of the philoſophers, and ſtudents, or other perſons, as he could meet with: for there ſuch perſons uſed to converſe and debate concerning their different opinions. Here he was encountered by certain philoſophers of different ſects. The Epicureans were gay, and ſuperficial Infidels, who amuſed themſelves and others with various curious ſpeculations. They aſcribed the original of all things to chance: they pretended to allow the exiſtence of the gods; yet they contended, that they interfered not in the creation, or government of the world, but indolently ſatisfied themſelves with their own undiſturbed felicity: they deemed the enjoyment of this preſent world the ſupreme good; and they denied a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. The Stoicks allowed the exiſtence of the gods, but ſuppoſed them to be bound by eternal and irreſiſtible fatality: they pretended almoſt to extinguiſh their own feelings, and paſſions: they were moſt extravagantly proud, and obſtinate: they deemed a virtuous man, according to their notions of virtue, to be independent of, and in ſome ſenſe ſuperior to, their deities; and ſpake as if he might defy fate itſelf: they deemed virtue to be its own reward, and ſpake very obſcurely about a future ſtate of retributions. Theſe two ſects of philoſophers, being alike oppoſite in their tenets, to the doctrines of the goſpel; and being full of the pride of their ſuperior learning, encountered Paul, and thought of ſilencing him in the argument: and ſome of them deſpiſed him as a babbler, or a man who had picked up a few ſcraps of learning in different places, and wanted to make a ſhew of them, and was fond of hearing himſelf ſpeak, even among thoſe, who had ſtudied ſo much more than he had. But others concluded, that he meant to introduce ſome new deities to their notice: for, being accuſtomed to deify virtues, vices, health, diſeaſes, &c; they ſuppoſed that he preached to them Jeſus as a God, and *Anaſtaſis*, or the Reſurrection, as a goddeſs, whom they ought to worſhip in preference to any of their preſent idols. And, as the multitude ſeems to have collected around them, they conducted him, not as a criminal, but as a philoſophizing ſpeculator, to that part of the city, which was called the Hill of Mars, (being conſecrated to their god of war;) where their ſenate uſed to convene: and before that renowned body, and a number of their philoſophers and other citizens and ſtrangers, they civilly deſired him to ſhew them more accurately, what was the new doctrine of which he ſpake: for in all their reading, and enquiries, they had never met with the ſentiments, which he had delivered: ſo that they were entire ſtrangers to them, and wiſhed to be made acquainted with the meaning of them. This enquiry was merely the reſult of a vain curioſity: for all the Athenians, and the ſtrangers that came thither to ſtudy from every part of the world, occupied themſelves almoſt entirely in deviſing, learning, or propagating ſome new ſentiment, or ſpeculation. The original word ſignifies *newer*: the new imagination, or ſyſtem of the preceding year, month, or week ſoon became like an almanack out of date: it was the taſte of the age and place to diſcard, and antiquate every hypotheſis, as ſoon as it became vulgar; and to ſubſtitute ſome newer fancy in its place: and lively ingenious ſtudents, eſpecially in metaphyſics, have commonly run into this humour. If Paul therefore could ſtart ſome *newer* ſpecu-

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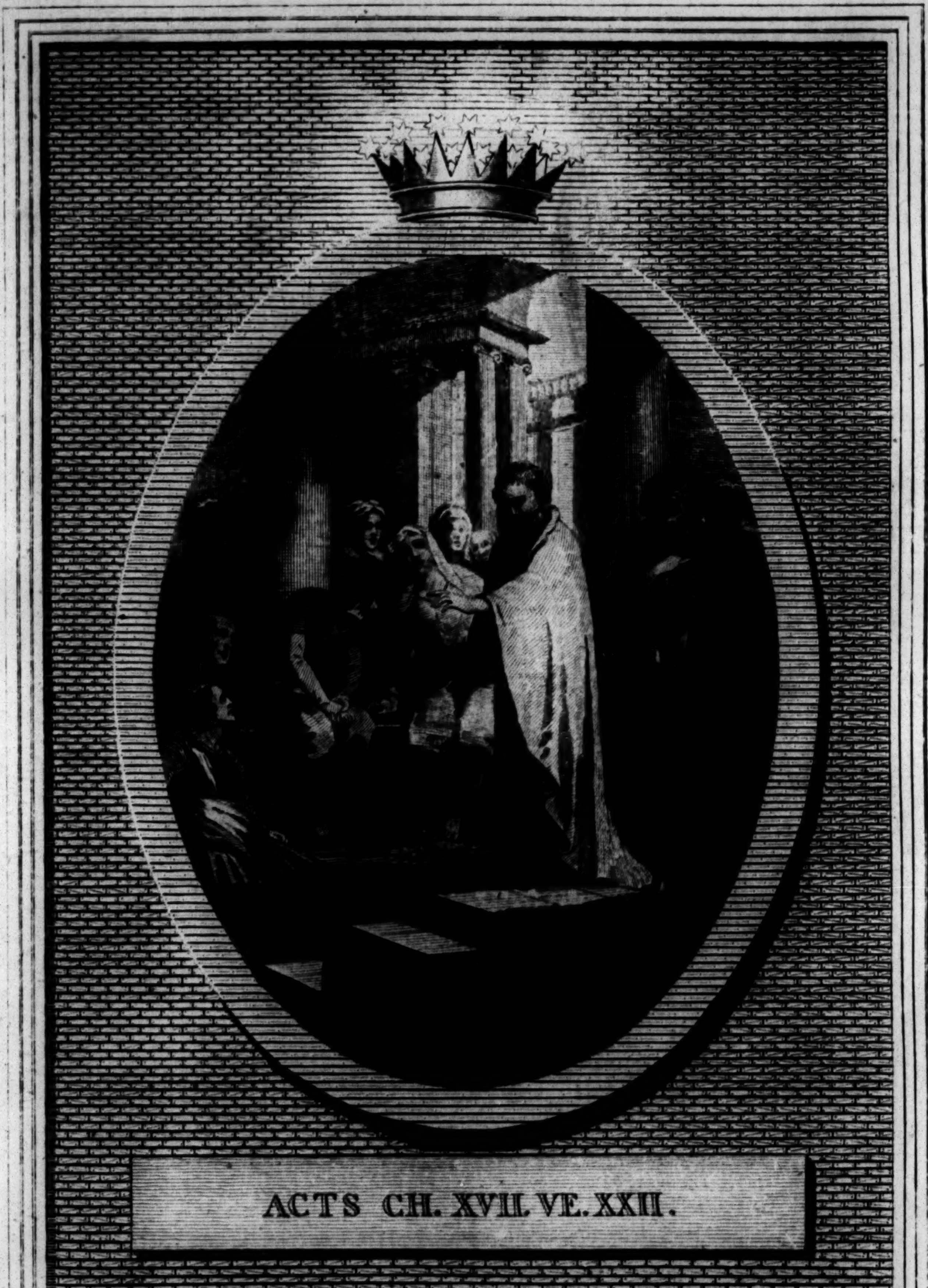

ACTS CH. XVII. VE. XXII.

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hill, and ſaid, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too ſuperſtitious.

23 For as I paſſed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worſhipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him: though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain alſo of your own poets have ſaid, For we are alſo his offspring.

29 Foraſmuch then as we are the offſpring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or ſilver, or ſtone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

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lation, than the *neweſt* faſhion of philoſophy amongſt them; his doctrine would gratify, and amuſe them exceedingly.

V. 22—31.] The apoſtle being thus called upon to declare his doctrine, and placed in a convenient ſituation for being heard by the ſenators, philoſophers, and people; entered upon his ſubject with very different views from thoſe of his curious auditors. He obſerved to them, that he perceived them to be exceedingly addicted to the worſhip of the gods. The word he uſed is ambiguous, and might be underſtood either as a commendation, or a cenſure; and doubtleſs he choſe it for that reaſon. They were indeed very religious in their way; but their worſhip was altogther ſuperſtitious, and idolatrous. This he choſe at firſt to hint in the moſt inoffenſive language, and to unfold his ſentiments on the ſubject gradually. In ſurveying their city, and eſpecially in examining their temples, and modes of worſhip; he had met with an altar inſcribed "*To the unknown God.*" This fact is atteſted by many writers: and ſome think, that having imported the deities and worſhip of moſt other nations; they had erected this altar to the God of the Jews, who was always ſpoken of as inviſible, and incomprehenſible, and whoſe names the Jews even then ſeem to have ſcrupled to mention. Various other conjectures have been formed on this ſubject: but perhaps, after multiplying their deities to the utmoſt, ſome of them ſuſpected, that there was another ſuperior to them all, of whom they had no knowledge; and therefore they prevailed to have an altar dedicated to Him alſo. Either way it ſuited the apoſtle's purpoſe to make this inſcription the motto of his diſcourſe; and he informed his learned audience, that he came to declare to them *this unknown God*, of whom they confeſſed themſelves ignorant, even whilſt they profeſſed to worſhip him. Indeed He was the great Creator of Heaven and Earth; (which neither exiſted from eternity, nor were produced by chance, or neceſſity, as ſome were of their philoſophers had imagined; but formed by the One, living, eternal, Almighty God.) And as he was the Proprietor, and Governor of heaven and earth; he could not be ſuppoſed to inhabit temples, as their idols did; nor could he be ſerved with the workmanſhip, or oblations of men's hands; as if he wanted ſomething from his creatures to conſummate his felicity: whereas he was the univerſal Benefactor, and the ſource of being, life, breath, and all things to all his creatures: and they were on that account required to worſhip and acknowledge their obligations to him. He had indeed formed the whole race of men of one family, in that one man and woman, from whom they were all deſcended; that they might dwell upon the face of the earth, as brethren, without injuring, or deſpiſing each other: and not blind chance, or invincible neceſſity, but He the ſovereign Lord of all, had in his wiſdom and juſtice, appointed the different ages of the world for the accompliſhment of his predetermined councils; and He had allotted to every one the period, in which he ſhould live, and the bounds of his habitation. All this was intended to lead them to ſeek after Him and his favour, and after the knowledge of his perfections, his works, his truth and will: if by any means, in their preſent ſtate of error, and ignorance they might grope after him as men in the dark, and find him; without which all other ſcience would be of no real value. Yet the difficulty of knowing the true God did not ariſe from his diſtance, or his unconcern about human affairs, as the Epicureans vainly ſuppoſed; but from other cauſes not proper to be then inſiſted upon: for in fact he was not far from every one of them; as in him all lived, moved, and exiſted, and muſt periſh without his upholding power. This even ſome of their own poets had allowed, being in this matter far wiſer than the philoſophers: for one of them, (called Aretus,) had ſaid, "We are alſo his offspring," and others of them had expreſſed nearly the ſame ſentiment. If then men are the offspring of God, they could not but ſee the abſurdity of repreſenting the *Deity* himſelf by gold, or ſilver, or ſtone, however exquiſitely faſhioned and carved; as nothing of this kind can do more than form an imperfect reſemblance of man's exterior; without at all

31 Becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by *that* man whom he hath ordained, *whereof* he hath given aſſurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

32 And when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, ſome mocked: and others ſaid, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionyſius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

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repreſenting the functions of animal life, or the operations of his mind. Indeed God had long borne with men's apoſtacy, ignorance, and idolatry; he had acted, as if he would not look upon their provocation of him, in giving his glory to worthleſs idols: and whilſt he continued his providential kindneſs to them, he ſent no prophets to call them off from their idolatry to the worſhip of his name. But the times of this ignorance were now expiring, and by his ſervants, he now ſent to command all men every where to repent of their idolatry, and other ſins; and not to pretend to excuſe, or vindicate their conduct. This was a bold demand upon the ſelf-wiſe, and ſelf-admiring ſtoics; and as oppoſite to their notions of virtue, and of fatality, as to the epicurean ſentiments of chance and pleaſure. The apoſtle further added, that though they ſhould at preſent eſcape with impunity; yet God had appointed a day, when he would ſummon all the inhabitants of the earth to his tribunal, and judge them in perfect righteouſneſs, rendering to every man according to his works. This he would do, by that extraordinary Perſon, the Man Chriſt Jeſus, whom He came eſpecially to preach to them; and who was conſtituted the univerſal Lord and Judge of the whole human race. Of this God had given the fulleſt aſſurance to all men, by raiſing him from the dead, which was proved by moſt unexceptionable teſtimony. Thus far the apoſtle was permitted to proceed in introducing his ſubject; but more he certainly intended to have ſaid, had not the levity, and petulance of his conceited audience conſtrained him to terminate his diſcourſe.

V. 32—34.] The Epicureans probably led the ridicule, by deriding the reſurrection of the dead as an impoſſibility: the reſt of the company found his doctrine too ſerious and practical for their vain, and curious minds: and therefore they declined hearing any more of ſuch ſubjects, till another time. The apoſtle was indeed treated with more exterior civility, than in ſome other places; but none deſpiſed, or neglected his doctrine with more ſupercilious indifference, than theſe ſpeculating philoſophers; and Athens proved the worſt ſoil, in which he ever attempted to ſow the good ſeed of the kingdom. Yet even here grace triumphed over the prejudices of one ſenator, and a woman of conſiderable note, with a few others; who believed the goſpel, and further attended on the apoſtles for inſtruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Moſt evidently doth it appear from this hiſtory, that the zealous ſervants of Chriſt muſt be deſpiſed, and hated by all kinds of perſons for his ſake. However, nothing ſhall in any wiſe hurt, and nothing ſhould diſmay them, or deter them from publiſhing the glad tidings of ſalvation to ſinners. We ought to reaſon with our hearers, and to prove our doctrines with concluſive arguments; and not merely to addreſs their imaginations and affections: but our reaſonings ſhould be deduced from, and grounded on, the word of God; otherwiſe we ſhall loſe ourſelves in empty ſpeculations, or go beyond our depth, by attempting diſcuſſions, for which we are totally incompetent. But when we clearly open, and explain the ſcriptures, and ſupport our inferences from them by other teſtimonies of holy writ: when we thus evidently lay before men thoſe truths, that relate to the perſon, ſufferings, reſurrection, and kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt; and then apply ſuch ſubjects to men's hearts and conſciences, by pathetic addreſſes; we uſe the proper means of bringing them to the obedience of faith, and may expect to ſee our labours bleſſed to many ſouls. But how ſtrange is it, that men ſhould grudge and envy others thoſe privileges, of which they will not themſelves accept! Or that zeal for religious creeds, or ſyſtems ſhould induce men "to take to themſelves lewd fellows of the baſer "ſort," to ſet cities in an uproar, to aſſault, and deſtroy men's houſes, and to lay wait for their lives! Such proceedings diſgrace and betray the cauſe, which they are brought to ſupport; and the friends of truth and piety muſt mourn and lament, if ever any of their pretended aſſociates, take away ſuch weapons from the enemies of God, and his people, to uſe them to their annoyance. Such mobs are ſtrange judges of liberty, and privileges! And very ſingular it is to hear them and their leaders exclaim againſt others, as diſturbers of the peace and order of the community! Indeed the goſpel is intended, in a certain ſenſe, "to turn the world upſide down:" for ſin and ſatan have inverted the right order of things; and when the kingdom of God is eſtabliſhed in the hearts of men, an entire revolution will take place in their judgment, maxims, affections, conduct, and converſation. In this reſpect we ſhould all deſire, and endeavour to turn the world upſide down; and ſhould pray that ſuch miniſters may be ſent to every part of the earth, as the Lord will employ in this bleſſed work of effecting a revolution amongſt men. But as the kingdom of Chriſt is not of this world: ſo his moſt faithful ſervants will be the moſt peaceable ſubjects to that authority, which providence places over them: they will be ready to obey the decrees of Ceſar; unleſs he command them to break the laws of their other, and more exalted King, even Jeſus the Prince of the kings of the earth; and then they will meekly endure perſecution for conſcience ſake. In general they will leave it to the children of this world to contend about civil liberties, and immunities: except when they are called upon to perform a conſtitutional duty, as members of the community; or as they are required to act in a public ſtation. So that neither rulers

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains 1ſt. Paul going to Corinth, meeting with Aquila and Priſcilla, working with them as a tent-maker, preaching to the Jews, warning them of the conſequences of their unbelief, turning to the Gentiles, preaching with ſucceſs; and encouraged by the Lord in a viſion, 1---11. *2d. The Jews bringing him before Gallio the proconſul, who refuſed to take cognizance of ſuch matters,* 12---17. *3d. Paul returning by Epheſus to Jeruſalem, going thence to Antioch, and ſo proceeding to reviſit the churches he had planted,* 18---23. *4th. Apollos preaching at Epheſus; more fully inſtructed by Aquila and Priſcilla; going thence to Achaia with their recommendation, and made very uſeful there.* 24---28.

nor people need to be troubled, at the increaſe of real chriſtians: though many turbulent ſpirits, making religion the pretext, will ambitiouſly join in faction and rebellion, and thus bring a diſgrace upon the goſpel. Of ſuch we ſhould beware; from ſuch we ſhould withdraw; that we may give all reaſonable ſecurity for our good behaviour in civil ſociety, whilſt we claim our undoubted right of worſhipping God, according to our conſciences.

True dignity, and nobleneſs of ſpirit conſiſt much in an enlarged, and unprejudiced mind, open to conviction, willing to inveſtigate the truth, to examine the evidence adduced in ſupport of men's opinions, and to treat religious enquiries with candour, ſeriouſneſs, and diligence. Such an ingenuous, and teachable diſpoſition comes from above: they who poſſeſs it, will cautiouſly avoid a blind credulity, an obſtinate bigotry, and a heedleſs conceited infidelity: they will receive the word of ſober teachers with all readineſs of mind; and feeling their need of divine inſtruction, they will daily ſearch the ſcriptures to ſee, whether things are ſo, or not; impartiality, humility, and induſtry will combine in their reſearches; and the truth requires no more. Such men will gradually rectify their miſtakes, obtain ſolutions of their difficulties, find anſwers to their objections, and be led into a ſolid underſtanding and firm belief of the goſpel. And when this noble diſpoſition is found in thoſe, who are alſo honourable in ſociety, it forms a diſtinction peculiarly valuable, and uſeful. But nothing can be more ignoble, and baſe, than bigotry, and perſecution: and many, who appeared devout in their way, have been moſt inveterate againſt the truth, and moſt active in ſtirring up others to oppoſe it.

The ſpiritual mind, (how ingenious, or cultivated ſoever it may be,) can take little delight in contemplating the moſt admired productions of ſcience, and genius: whilſt it obſerves that the perſons concerned about them are wholly enſlaved to ſin, or given up to impiety and infidelity. Not only do unlettered ſavages ſit in darkneſs, and the region and ſhadow of death: but even thoſe cities, and perſons, who are moſt renowned for civilization and ſcience, are often enveloped with the deepeſt ignorance in the things of God and eternity. Nay, none are more childiſh in their ſuperſtitions, more impious in their ſpeculations, or more credulous of abſurd impoſtures; than ſome of the moſt eminent perſons for genius and learning have been! Thus God hath made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world: he hath taken the wiſe in their own craftineſs; and hath made way for the diſplay of his glory, in ſaving ſinners "by the fooliſhneſs of preaching." The conſideration of the ſtate of the world, both wiſe and unwiſe, may well put an edge upon our ſpirits, whilſt we avow our belief of, and contend for, the ſacred ſcriptures, and the doctrines revealed in them. Yet, if in the meekneſs of wiſdom, we ſhould venture to ſtart ſuch topics "as Jeſus and the reſurrection," either in the buſy reſorts of commerce, in the courts of juſtice, in the ſchools of the philoſophers, or even in polite company; numbers would frown, deride, or exclaim: whilſt Epicureans, and Stoics, and ſpeculators of jarring tenets would unite in encountering us with their arguments, or ſhewing their contempt of us, as vain babblers, or as innovators in religion. And ſhould any ſeem to pay a more reſpectful, and civil attention to our diſcourſe; it would probably be only in order to gratify a vain curioſity, and to hear the new doctrine, as they would call it. For though the truths of the goſpel, are in ſome reſpects as old as the fall of man: yet they are often ſtrange things in the ears of the learned; and they, whoſe lives have been almoſt entirely ſpent in ſtudying, hearing, or telling ſome new thing, are often totally unacquainted with "the good old way" to heaven; and talk about it, in the moſt obſcure and dubious manner. But modern ſpeculators ſeldom ſhew ſo much reſpect to the preachers of the goſpel, as the Athenians did to St. Paul: for they are aware that their doctrine will afford little gratification to their curioſity, and vain-glory; and that inferences may be drawn from it, very inimical to their carnal purſuits, and ſinful lives.

In addreſſing mankind about their ſouls, we ſhould ſtudy their peculiar diſpoſitions, and opinions; and we ſhould enquire what truths they admit, and what errors they are fallen into: thus we may be able to combat them from their own principles, and gradually point out the abſurdity of their tenets, and the inconſiſtency of their conduct: and we may often graft the truth upon, or deduce it from ſuch ſentiments as they allow. Alas, how many are there to this day, who have their devotions and ſuperſtitions, and are vaſtly zealous for them; yet the great object of all worſhip is to them "An unknown God:" as they are not acquainted with the myſterious manner of his ſubſiſtence, the glory and harmony of his perfections, or the way, in which he will be approached and ſerved! If ſuch men allow the truth of the ſcriptures, we may reaſon with them from thoſe ſacred oracles: otherwiſe, we ſhould lead them, from ſelf-evident principles, or ſuch as admit of the moſt obvious proof, to ſee their need of a revelation, to attend to the evidences of its divine original, and to the beneficial tendency of the things contained in it. Thus we may declare unto them that God, whom they ignorantly worſhip; and gradually lead them from the works of creation to the great Creator; and from his providential care and bounty to our obligations to love and worſhip

AFTER theſe things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2 And found a certain Jew, named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priſcilla, (becauſe that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) and came unto them.

3 And becauſe he was of the ſame craft, he abode with them, and wrought: (for by their occupation they were tent makers.)

4 And he reaſoned in the ſynagogue every ſabbath, and perſuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was preſſed in the ſpirit, and teſtified to the Jews *that* Jeſus *was* Chriſt.

6 And when they oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed, he ſhook *his* raiment, and ſaid unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own head, I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

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him, and our criminality in ungratefully neglecting him. So from a view of his perfections, and authority, as the great Proprietor, and Lord of all; we may expoſe the vanity of ſuperſtition and idolatry; and of all mere outward forms, oblations, and ſervices, by which men have ſought to recommend themſelves to God: as if they could benefit him, who giveth to all life, and breath and all things: thus we may infer, that the end of our creation, and of all the Lord's appointments towards us, and our ſpecial advantages, is, to lead us to ſeek and ſerve him in ſpirit and truth, that we may find him, and true happineſs in his favour. Hence we may ſhew how men grope in the dark, and proceed amidſt bewildering doubts, and uncertainties, in this moſt important matter; though the Lord be near unto us, and, we live, move and exiſt in him; and we may thence evince their need of his word, and Spirit to lead them into a ſpiritual acquaintance with Him. From the rational nature of man, who is in this reſpect the offſpring, and bears the image of God, we may infer the abſurdity of many eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, and ſentiments, which degrade the infinite God unto, or almoſt beneath, the level of his creatures. Some times we may produce the teſtimony of poets, and prophets of their own, in confirmation of our ſentiments: and if a man have acquired claſſical learning, and general knowledge, he may thus make a good uſe of them: yet it is ſcarce adviſable for thoſe who are intended for the miniſtry, to ſpend much time about thoſe indecent fables, and corrupt principles, and practices, which muſt be reviewed, in acquiring this kind of learning.

Notwithſtanding all the renown of Athens, and of ancient Greece, God deemed thoſe the times, and places of ignorance: and though he connived at the diſhonour there put upon him; yet he did not excuſe their impiety, and iniquity. He commanded them, yea he commands us, and all men every where to repent: nor will any proud pretenſions to virtue, or any vain reaſonings about neceſſity, or contingence, or any philoſophical, or theological ſyſtem, excuſe men in neglecting this call. All men need repentance, and muſt periſh without it: all, who repent, and believe the goſpel will be ſaved; and this is every man's duty, though no man will be diſpoſed to perform it, but by the grace of God. But the ſins, committed in the time of a man's ignorance, will be far leſs ſeverely puniſhed, than thoſe which are perpetrated in defiance, and contempt of the light of the goſpel.

In calling men to repentance, we ſhould always direct their attention to that appointed day, when God will judge the world in righteouſneſs; and to Jeſus, and his authority, ſalvation, death, and reſurrection: and whatever introduction we uſe, all our diſcourſes muſt lead to, and centre in him.

But even the moſt conſummate wiſdom and addreſs, united with the pureſt zeal and ſimplicity in the teacher, will often leave the hearers under the deeper condemnation. Some reject the word with ſupercilious contempt, and mockery: and others from indolence, levity, and procraſtination. Of all ſubjects, *that* gains the leaſt attention, which deſerves the moſt: men profeſs an intention ſome time to hear it again; but this time never arrives to numbers, till at the great tribunal it be repeated to ſeal their condemnation. Nor are any perſons more likely to fall into this ſnare of ſatan, than ſelf-conceited ſcholars, and ſneering ſceptics and infidels. But if they ſcorn, they alone muſt bear it. The miniſter muſt be ſatisfied with faithfully delivering his meſſage; nay even if he be interrupted by the petulance of deſpiſers, before he can conclude his ſubject. However, the word will never be abſolutely uſeleſs: ſome Athenians, and ſome ſenators, as well as others, will cleave to the Lord and his faithful ſervants, and theſe may be uſeful to more in due time. So that we ſhould go on with our work, in patience and hope, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.

N O T E S.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1—6.] The apoſtle ſeems to have had ſo little proſpect of ſucceſs at Athens, that he left it as ſoon as he could. Timothy came thither to him, and from thence was ſent to Theſſalonica. (1 *Theſ.* c. iii. v. 1, 2.) In the mean time Paul went to Corinth, in Achaia, within the Peninſula called Peloponneſſus, a city remarkable for opulence, elegance, luxury, and licentiouſneſs. Here he met with Aquila, a Jew, who was a native of Pontius in Aſia, but had reſided for ſome time at Rome, where he ſeems to have been converted to chriſtianity, with his wife Priſcilla; but they had lately been expelled from that city, as Jews, by the edict of the Roman emperor, who was led to treat all of that nation as ſeditious and dangerous perſons. Some think that the preaching of Jeſus about this time at Rome, as the promiſed Meſſiah, and the king of Iſrael, gave occaſion to this ſeverity. However, Paul, being acquainted with the character of theſe two excellent

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* houſe, named Juſtus, *one* that worſhipped God, whoſe houſe joined hard to the ſynagogue.

8 And Criſpus, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his houſe: and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

9 Then ſpake the Lord to Paul in the night by a viſion, Be not afraid, but ſpeak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued *there* a year and ſix months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made inſurrection with one accord againſt Paul, and brought him to the judgment ſeat,

13 Saying, This *fellow* perſuadeth men to worſhip God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio ſaid unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdneſs, O *ye* Jews, reaſon would that I ſhould bear with you:

15 But if it be a queſtion of words, and names, and *of* your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of ſuch *matters*.

16 And he drave them from the judgment ſeat.

17 Then all the Greeks took Soſthenes the

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perſons, went to lodge with them; and having in his youth learned the trade, that they carried on, even that of making tents, which were much uſed in thoſe warm climates; he wrought at it for his livelihood. It was an excellent cuſtom in thoſe days, for ſuch perſons as received a liberal education, to be alſo inſtructed in ſome mechanical trade: this ſerved them as an amuſement in proſperity, and was a certain reſource, in caſe all their other proſpects failed. Whatever aſſiſtance Paul received from the churches at Antioch or Philippi, &c; he was often reduced to great neceſſity by the expences of his journeys: and we find that he frequently wrought with his own hands for his ſubſiſtence, that he might not be chargeable to his converts, where nothing is ſpoken of it in the hiſtory. (1 *Theſ.* c. ii. v. 9. 2. c. iii. v. 8.) But on the ſabbath-days, he, as uſual, reaſoned with the Jews in the ſynagogue concerning the kingdom and ſalvation of Chriſt; and endeavoured to perſuade both the Jews, and the Gentiles, who joined in their worſhip, to believe in Jeſus as the promiſed Meſſiah. However when Silas, (who perhaps had ſtaid ſome time at Berea,) and Timothy were come to him, to confirm his teſtimony; he was inwardly excited by the Holy Spirit to ſtill greater vehemency of mind, in bearing teſtimony to his Lord; (*Jer.* c. xx. v. 9. *Mic.* c. iii. v. 8:) and when they oppoſed his doctrine, and even blaſphemed the name of Jeſus; "he ſhook his raiment," as renouncing all fellowſhip with them; and to add emphaſis to his warnings, whilſt he declared, that they were like to periſh in their ſins by their own default, as murderers of their own ſouls; but that he, having faithfully delivered his meſſage, was pure from the guilt of their ruin; and would therefore go among, and preach the goſpel to, the Gentiles. (c. xx. v. 26, 27. *Ezek.* c. xxxiii. v. 1—9.)

V. 7—11.] The apoſtle probably continued to lodge, and work with Aquila, and Priſcilla; though he no more preached in the ſynagogue, but uſed the houſe of a Gentile, who had renounced idolatry before his converſion to chriſtianity. This circumſtance, as well as the nearneſs of the houſe to the ſynagogue, might tend to give the Jews, who deſired it, an opportunity of ſtill attending his preaching. Indeed ſeveral of them had already embraced the goſpel; eſpecially the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, with all his family: and many afterwards were converted, both of the Jews and Gentiles. Yet Paul ſeems to have been greatly diſcouraged in his work, either on account of the virulent enmity of the Jews; or becauſe of the politeneſs, and diſſolute character of the Gentiles; and his conſciouſneſs of his own inſufficiency and manifold infirmities; (1 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 3.) The Lord Jeſus therefore condeſcended to appear to him in a viſion, to obviate his fear, to embolden him in his work, to aſſure him of his protecting preſence, and to inform him, that he had much people in that city. In this He evidently ſpake of thoſe, who were *his* by election, the gift of the Father, and his own purchaſe, though at that time in an unconverted ſtate: and what ſort of perſons they then were, the apoſtle hath in another place informed us. (1 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 9—11.) Thus encouraged, he fixed his abode at Corinth for a year and an half, during which time he planted a very numerous and flouriſhing church.

V. 12—17.] Gallio the proconſul of Achaia is ſuppoſed to have been brother to Seneca, the renowned Pagan moraliſt; and he bears a fair character in hiſtory. As the Jews were allowed the free exerciſe of their religion at Corinth, they ſuppoſed that he would have exerted his authority againſt thoſe, who innovated on their ancient cuſtoms: they therefore tumultuouſly ſeized on Paul, and dragged him to the Roman tribunal, and with much contempt accuſed him of inducing men to worſhip God, in a manner, that was contrary to their law. But when Paul was about to plead his own cauſe, and to embrace the opportunity of declaring the goſpel before Gallio; that magiſtrate refuſed to take any cognizance of ſuch matters. He declared, that if any perſon had been defrauded or oppreſſed, or any miſchievous licentiouſneſs had been committed; it would have been rea chief ruler of the ſynagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment ſeat: and Gallio cared for none of thoſe things.

18 And Paul, *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and ſailed thence into Syria, and with him Priſcilla and Aquila, having ſhorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Epheſus, and left them there: but he himſelf entered into the ſynagogue, and reaſoned with the Jews.

20 When they deſired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he conſented not;

21 But bade them farewell, ſaying, I muſt by all means keep this feaſt that cometh in Jeruſalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he ſailed from Epheſus.

22 And when he had landed at Ceſarea, and gone up and ſaluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

23 And after he had ſpent ſome time *there* he departed, and went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, ſtrengthening all the diſciples.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the ſcriptures, came to Epheſus.

25 This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the ſpirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptiſm of John.

26 And he began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue: whom when Aquila and Priſcilla had heard, they took him unto *them*,

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ſonable for him to attend to them, notwithſtanding the irregularity, and clamour of their application to him: but if their diſpute related only to the way of wording their religious peculiarities, the names of Jeſus and the Meſſiah, or the obligations of the Moſaic law on all that worſhipped the God of the Jews; they ſhould decide it for themſelves, for he would not trouble himſelf about ſuch ſubjects. With this anſwer he ſternly diſmiſſed them, and ordered them away from the judgment ſeat: and when the Greeks abuſed and beat Soſthenes, even within ſight of him; he took no cognizance of this breach of the peace, "for he cared for none of theſe "things." It is not agreed who Soſthenes was: ſome think that he was the ſame perſon as Criſpus, beforementioned; (v. 8:) others that he ſucceeded him as chief ruler of the ſynagogue, when he embraced chriſtianity: ſome think that he was the leading perſon in the proſecution of Paul, and that he was abuſed by thoſe Greeks who favoured him, for that malicious procedure: others conjecture that he was a chriſtian, and that the Jews excited the Greeks to abuſe him, when they could not prevail to wreak their malice upon Paul. We afterwards read of Soſthenes among Paul's chief friends at Corinth, (1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 1:) if this were the ſame perſon, as is probable, from the manner, in which Luke mentions him; the latter opinion is favoured by it, as the converſion of a leading perſecutor, would ſcarce have been paſſed over in ſilence. Gallio's conduct in this tranſaction hath been conſidered in different lights: doubtleſs he acted properly, in refuſing, as a magiſtrate, to give any aſſiſtance to perſecutors, or to interfere with his authority to determine religious controverſies: but there ſeems to have been a contemptuous diſregard of all ſuch topics, as beneath his notice: he probably deemed both Jews and chriſtians to be ignorant and deluded fanatics; and that it was of no conſequence who was right, or wrong, in ſuch diſputes. A mixture of philoſophical ſcepticiſm, and of political contempt of religious matters, compared with the affairs of the ſtate, ſeem to have influenced his conduct: as he would not uſe his authority againſt Paul; ſo he would not protect, or puniſh the injury done to Soſthenes; and the hiſtorian appears to blame him, becauſe, "he cared for none of theſe "things."

V. 18—23.] Notwithſtanding the tumultuous enmity of the Jews, the Lord Jeſus continued to protect his ſervant, whilſt he continued ſtill longer at Corinth. At length, he took a pious and affectionate farewell of the new converts, and ſet ſail for Syria; being accompanied by Aquila and Priſcilla, who intended to ſettle for a time at Epheſus. But before he embarked, he cut off his hair at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, on account of a vow, which he had taken, reſpecting ſome of his multiplied deliverances. Probably this was of the nature of the Nazarite's vow: but when the diſtance prevented a perſon from going to Jeruſalem, at the expiration of the term; he ſeems to have been cuſtomarily diſpenſed with, in cutting off his hair in another place, than at the ſanctuary. (Notes, &c. *Num.* c. vi.) When he came to Epheſus, where he left his friends, Aquila and Priſcilla; he took the opportunity of ſetting before the Jews there, the ſubſtance, and evidences of his doctrine: yet he would not be prevailed upon to ſtay longer with them, as he purpoſed, for reaſons which are not here ſpecified, to be at Jeruſalem at the enſuing paſſover: but he promiſed to return to them, if the Lord would permit him. The reſt of his long voyage and journey are very briefly related. Having landed at Ceſarea, he went up to Jeruſalem; and having ſhewn his affection and reſpect to the chriſtians there, and finiſhed the buſineſs that he had in view; he travelled from thence to Antioch in Syria. And after a while he ſet out a third time from that city, to preach the goſpel in the Leſſer Aſia; and ſo he paſſed again through the ſeveral cities and regions, where churches had before been planted.

V. 24—28.] Whilſt Paul was thus employed, A-

and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the diſciples to receive him: who then he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, ſhewing by the ſcriptures that Jeſus was Chriſt.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains 1ſt. Paul arriving at Epheſus, and meeting with certain diſciples, who only knew John's Baptiſm, with an account of his conduct reſpecting them, 1---7. *2d. His preaching firſt to the Jews, and then for a long time to the Gentiles with great ſucceſs; and confirming his doctrine with many miracles,* 8---12. *3d. Certain Jewiſh exorciſts attempting to caſt out devils in the name of Jeſus; and overcome and wounded by them: with the converſion of many, who had uſed unlawful arts, and*

pollos, a native of Alexandria in Egypt, a perſon of a ready and graceful elocution, and of great acquaintance with the ſcriptures, arrived at Epheſus. He had got ſome knowledge of the way of ſalvation by faith in the Meſſiah, as far as it could be learned by John's miniſtry, baptiſm, and teſtimony to Jeſus: and being very zealous for the honour of God, and the intereſts of true religion; he went from place to place, diligently teaching the Jews what he knew of the neceſſity of repentance, &c, as a preparation for the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom. Of theſe ſubjects he boldly preached in the ſynagogue at Epheſus, in the hearing of Aquila and Priſcilla: and perceiving his ability, zeal, and piety, they ſaid nothing to his diſadvantage, though they found that he had very imperfect views of thoſe ſubjects, on which he ſpake. On the contrary they formed an acquaintance with him, and ſo ſhewed him more completely the doctrine of the goſpel, and the things, which had taken place, in reſpect of Jeſus Chriſt: and he, with the moſt amiable humility, received their inſtructions, and ſo obtained more adequate qualifications for his important work. At length, he determined to go into Achaia, and to Corinth: and by their recommendatory letters he was introduced to the chriſtians there; and proved very uſeful *to them*; and ſucceſsful in convincing the Jews, in the moſt public manner, that Jeſus was indeed their promiſed Meſſiah.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt the zealous miniſters of Chriſt carefully ſhun whatever may entangle them in the affairs of this life, they will ſubmit to any hardſhip or labour, that may ſubſerve their uſefulneſs, or prevent obſtacles from being thrown in their way: and to work at a trade for daily bread, in order to preach the goſpel without charge, differs exceedingly from carrying on lucrative buſineſs, in order to grow rich, and to live in abundance. The knowledge of any thing, by which an honeſt living can be earned, is a very valuable acquiſition; it never can be injurious to a man, it cannot be taken from him, and it may on one occaſion or other be peculiarly uſeful to him. Even among affluent perſons, the miniſters of Chriſt will be more likely to do good, by ſhewing an entire indifference to all, that wealth can purchaſe; than by affecting a ſtyle of living like that of thoſe, at whoſe expence it muſt be ſupported. The love of Chriſt is the beſt bond of friendſhip, and the reciprocal communion of the ſaints will ſweeten labour, contempt, and even perſecution to them. Cogent arguments, and affectionate perſuaſions ſhould concur, in our endeavours to lead ſinners to faith in the Saviour: but when great neglect is manifeſted, we ſhould be preſſed in ſpirit to teſtify to the truth with greater vehemence, even though it may excite more virulent oppoſition: and we muſt warn thoſe, who contradict, and blaſpheme, that they will periſh, and their blood will be upon their own head, if they reject that faithful teſtimony, by which we keep ourſelves pure from the guilt of their deſtruction. When ſome oppoſe the goſpel, we muſt turn to others; and our grief, that ſo many perſiſt in their unbelief, ſhould not prevent our gratitude for the converſion of ſome to Chriſt.

The moſt eminent, uſeful, and courageous miniſters have their ſeaſons of dejection, and anxiety; both through their conſciouſneſs of their own unworthineſs, and defects, the proſpect of perils and difficulties in their work, and the determined enmity, and oppoſition of many, among whom they labour. But the Lord Jeſus knows, and will obviate all their fears; he will encourage them to ſpeak, and not hold their peace; and he will teach them to truſt in his protection amidſt all dangers, whilſt he gathers in his choſen flock, from thoſe places, in which they are ſcattered before their converſion to him. Even the irreligion, and infidelity of rulers, though exceeding criminal in itſelf, hath often been over-ruled for the protection of the diſciples of Chriſt. Whatever be their motives, ſuch magiſtrates as take care to prevent, or impartially to puniſh thoſe crimes, that are injurious to the welfare of the community; and as refuſe to uſe their authority in perſecuting one religious ſect at the inſtance of another, or in impoſing doctrines, forms, and modes of worſhip on men's conſciences; certainly beſt underſtand, and perform the duties of their office. Yet indifference to all matters of religion, and to the intereſts of eternity is no neceſſary concomitant of toleration, but rather a diſgrace to it; as it ſhews that ſuch rulers are actuated merely by indolence and worldly policy, and not by a regard to the rights of conſcience, or by a ſenſe of their duty to God: and their toleration, or protection of God's worſhippers, will often be partial, and contemptuous, and attended by improper connivance at thoſe, who on ſuch pretences violate the peace of ſociety. However, we ſhould be thankful for ſecurity thus continued to us in the providence of God; and we ought not to forget to pray for ſuch, as ſeem more to regard the liberties of mankind, than the ſalvation of their own ſouls. We ought ſimply to *the burning of their books, 13---20. 4th. Paul purpoſing to go into Macedonia, &c, thence to Jeruſalem, and afterwards to Rome, and ſending his helpers before him, 21, 22. 5th. Demetrius a ſilverſmith exciting a tumult at Epheſus, in oppoſition to Paul, to ſupport his own gain, and the worſhip of Diana; the riot and confuſion that enſued; and the appeaſing of the tumult by the town-clerk, 23---41.*

AND it came to paſs, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having paſſed through the upper coaſts, came to Epheſus; and finding certain diſciples,

2 He ſaid unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed? And they ſaid unto him, We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt.

3 And he ſaid unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm.

4 Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, That they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus.

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.

6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghoſt came on them; and they ſpake with tongues, and propheſied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

promote, in our ſeveral placcs, the cauſe of Chriſt; forming ſuch plans as ſeem to us moſt proper for that end, and relying on the Lord to enable us to accompliſh them, if he ſee good. But alas, how far ſhort do we come in active zeal, diligence, and patience, to the indefatigable apoſtle of the Gentiles! And with what earneſtneſs and alacrity did he proceed from city to city, and nation to nation, to ſtrengthen the diſciples, and make known the ſalvation of Chriſt!

When natural talents for argument and elocution unite with great diligence in ſtudying the ſcriptures; and both are attended with fervent zeal, piety, and humility, they qualify a man for doing much good by "teaching "diligently the things of the Lord." And even, if ſuch perſons are yet in many things miſtaken or ignorant; the Lord will provide them teachers, as well as hearers, and lead them forward in the knowledge of his truth, and will. When experienced chriſtians hear younger miniſters, who ſeem earneſt, and pious, though not fully acquainted with the goſpel; they ſhould by no means deſpiſe them, or teach others to undervalue them: but they ſhould endeavour privately, and meekly to point out this, and the other, truth to their attention, and ſo to lead them on to a greater competency of knowledge, and exactneſs of judgment. When ſuch counſel and inſtruction are taken in good part, and duly improved; when popular young men are thus open to conviction, and willing to learn from thoſe, who *in ſome reſpects* might be deemed their inferiors; they will make a rapid progreſs in knowledge and maturity for uſefulneſs; and may ſoon be recommended as uſeful helpers to thoſe, "who have believed *through grace*;" as well as able defenders of the great truths of the goſpel, againſt thoſe who ſet themſelves to oppoſe them.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1—7.] After Apollos was gone to Corinth, Paul having gone over the inland parts of the Leſſer Aſia, eſtabliſhing the believers, and promoting the goſpel, arrived at Epheſus, a rich and famous city, on the coaſt of the Egean Sea; where Aquila and Priſcilla had privately been making way for his preaching. There he found ſome religious perſons, who expreſſed a regard to Jeſus, as the Meſſiah: and he enquired of them, whether the Holy Spirit, in reſpect of his miraculous gifts, had been communicated to them, ſince they believed the goſpel? To this they replied, that they had not been taught, "whether there were any Holy Ghoſt "or not:" by which they muſt at leaſt have meant, that they had never been led to expect his miraculous powers, or informed of any thing reſpecting the communication of them to believers at that time, or about the goſpel being eſpecially the miniſtration of the Spirit. This cauſed the apoſtle to enquire, unto what they had been baptized? And their anſwer introduced his inſtructions concerning the miniſtry and baptiſm of John, as the fore-runner, and witneſs to the Meſſiah, even to Jeſus, whom he pointed out to them. The next verſe, (v. 5,) has occaſioned many diſputations. Several learned critics, of different ſentiments concerning baptiſm, have argued that they are the words of Paul, ſhewing theſe diſciples, that when John baptized thoſe, who heard his doctrine, he virtually baptized them in the name of Jeſus: and not the words of the hiſtorian relating the baptiſm of theſe perſons, ſubſequent to the apoſtle's inſtruction of them. I apprehend, that ſome of thoſe who firſt contended for this interpretation, did it out of zeal againſt ſuch, as they called, Re-baptizers, leſt they ſhould adduce this example in ſupport of their practice. But by concluding the baptiſm of John, and that of Chriſt to be *entirely* the ſame, they have furniſhed their opponents with a far more plauſible argument, than that which they wanted to wreſt from them. However, after all the critics have ſaid, I cannot think that any impartial man, who never heard of theſe controverſies, would, either from reading the original, or our tranſlation, put this conſtruction upon the words: which depends upon a niceneſs, and exactneſs of language, from which the ſacred writers frequently deviate. If John could in any ſenſe be ſaid to baptize his diſciples in the name of the Lord Jeſus; Jeſus himſelf muſt have been baptized virtually in his own name. Even Paul's queſtion, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" implies

8 And he went into the ſynagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months, diſputing and perſuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but ſpake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and ſeparated the diſciples, diſputing daily in the ſchool of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the ſpace of two years; ſo that all they which dwelt in Aſia heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the ſick handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diſeaſes departed from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorciſts, took upon them to call over them which had evil ſpirits the name of the Lord Jeſus, ſaying, We adjure you by Jeſus, whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were ſeven ſons of *one* Sceva a Jew, *and* chief of the prieſts, which did ſo.

15 And the evil ſpirit anſwered and ſaid, Jeſus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil ſpirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed againſt them, ſo that they fled out of that houſe naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews,

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a diſtinction between different kinds of baptiſm, and ſhews that he thought they could not have received chriſtian baptiſm, having never heard of the Holy Ghoſt, in whoſe name chriſtians were baptized. After Chriſt's aſcenſion no enquiry was made, that we read of, whether the converts had been baptized by John or no: and if but one of the 3000, who were baptized on the day of Pentecoſt, had been John's diſciple, (and probably numbers were ſuch,) the baptiſm of John, and that of Jeſus muſt have been diſtinct ordinances. The difference between that introductory inſtitution to the chriſtian diſpenſation, and the initiatory external ſeal of that diſpenſation, hath been already conſidered, (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iii.) Some have indeed ſaid, that if John's baptiſm, and Chriſt's were different, our Lord had no communion with the New Teſtament in baptiſm, as he had with the Old Teſtament church in circumciſion. But he was made *under the law* to fulfil its righteouſneſs, as our Surety; and muſt therefore, both on that account, and as our example, obey every command, and attend on every inſtitution of God then in force: but there was not the ſame reaſon for his joining in the goſpel ordinances, which he appointed merely as our Lord, and King. It ſeems evident, that though he ate the paſſover with his diſciples; yet he did not partake of the euchariſt, (*Luke*, c. xxii. v. 17—20;) nor is it probable that he ſhould: neither can it be ſuppoſed, that he was baptized unto the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, which ſeems eſſential to chriſtian baptiſm. I apprehend therefore that theſe perſons, being further inſtructed by Paul, were admitted into the church by baptiſm; previous to the communication of the Holy Ghoſt to them, by the impoſition of the apoſtle's hands.

V. 8—12.] The apoſtle proceeded after the ſame method, and met with the ſame oppoſition from the Jews, at Epheſus, as he had done in other places. Many obdurately rejected the goſpel, and openly vilified *the way* of ſeeking acceptance with God by faith in Jeſus: ſo that Paul deemed it proper to ſeparate the diſciples from among them, leſt they ſhould perplex or ſubvert them. And leaving them he preached the goſpel, and argued in behalf of his doctrine without intermiſſion *daily* in a public ſchool, before all, both Jews and Gentiles, who would attend him. It is not known whether Jewiſh divinity, or heathen learning had before been taught in this place: but Tyrannus was probably converted to Chriſt, and his ſchool afforded the apoſtle a commodious place, in which to publiſh his doctrine: and this he did with ſuch ſucceſs, for two years together; that men of all places, and deſcriptions within the proconſular Aſia, had heard the word of the Lord. At the ſame time he was enabled to work moſt extraordinary miracles, in confirmation of his doctrine. The handkerchiefs, and aprons, (what parts of their clothing were meant by the original words, does not much concern us to enquire;) could not convey any virtue from the apoſtle, but were mere tokens of the Lord's omnipotent operation, as the waving of the rod of Moſes was. Probably the apoſtle was enabled to confirm his doctrine by miracles, in other places, even when we have no information about it.

V. 13—20.] It was common in thoſe days for perſons to profeſs, or attempt, to exorciſe ſuch, as were poſſeſſed with evil ſpirits, eſpecially among the Jews; and whatever methods they employed, they ſeem to have in ſome meaſure expreſſed a dependance on God to perform the work, and at ſome times at leaſt to have ſucceeded. (*Matt.* c. xii. v. 27.) The perſons here mentioned made a trade of ſuch exorciſms, and ſtrolled from place to place to carry it on. When they were at Epheſus, the ſuperior efficacy of the name of Jeſus, in the mouth of Paul, above all their adjurations, determined them to adopt this manner, in hopes of increaſing their gain: and ſo without any regard to the authority, ſalvation, or honour of Jeſus, they attempted to caſt out evil ſpirits, by adjuring them in his name to depart. Seven ſons of one man, the chief of the prieſts, who reſided in thoſe parts, combined together in ſuch an attempt. But and Greeks alſo, dwelling at Epheſus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came and confeſſed, and ſhewed their deeds.

19 Many of them alſo which uſed curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men:* and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thouſand *pieces* of ſilver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed!

21 After theſe things were ended, Paul purpoſed in the ſpirit, when he had paſſed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jeruſalem, ſaying, After I have been there, I muſt alſo ſee Rome.

22 So he ſent into Macedonia two of them that miniſtered unto him, Timotheus and Eraſtus; but he himſelf ſtayed in Aſia for a ſeaſon.

23 And the ſame time there aroſe no ſmall ſtir about that way.

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius,

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the evil ſpirit by the mouth of the demoniac, anſwered, that he knew Jeſus, and Paul; but who were they? The words are ambiguous; and might be meant to imply a confederacy with Jeſus and Paul, in conſequence of which the evil ſpirit would have gone out, had Paul deſired him in the name of Jeſus: and ſatan might mean to bring the goſpel into ſuſpicion by ſuch an inſinuation. (*Matt.* c, xii. v. 21—30.) Yet they may ſignify that the evil ſpirit knew the power and authority of Jeſus, and the efficacy of Paul's faith to engage that power by his word; ſo that if Paul had commanded, he muſt have yielded: but who were they? He knew them not, and would not obey their command. On the contrary the poſſeſſed man, inſtigated by the evil ſpirit, aſſaulted them with ſupernatural force and fury, overcame them all, tore off their clothes, and drove them out of the houſe naked and wounded. A man muſt himſelf be poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit of infidelity, that can doubt of this being a real poſſeſſion, and think that it was the effect of mere inſanity. This extraordinary tranſaction was ſoon known all over Epheſus, both to Jews, and Gentiles: men became thereby afraid to vilify or abuſe the name of Jeſus, which was in conſequence had in honour; whatever the evil ſpirit meant by this reſiſtance. Many, who had embraced the goſpel before, or who were then led to believe it, came and confeſſed the ſins, that they had committed, eſpecially in practiſing magic, and ſorcery; and ſhewing the arts, which they had employed. Many alſo of thoſe, who had been more eminent for ſuch impious and wicked arts, brought the books, which treated on ſuch ſubjects, and which were highly eſteemed at Epheſus; and being determined no more to uſe them, or to make any gain of them; but rather deſirous of expreſſing their abhorrence of them, they publicly burned them. The ſum, at which they were valued, upon the loweſt computation amounted to above 1500£; ſome reckon it to have been above 7000£. This was a mighty triumph of the goſpel over men's prejudices, favourite purſuits, and love of money; when they were thus at once induced to commit to the flames, what might have been ſold for ſo large a ſum, leſt they ſhould do further miſchief to mankind. I think it evident that theſe books did not merely contain an account of the tricks, by which jugglers of any deſcription impoſed upon men's ſenſes; for they might have uſed the books to have detected the artifices of ſuch impoſtors: but they doubtleſs contained the rules, and forms of thoſe abominable incantations by which an intercourſe with evil ſpirits has continually been attempted, or conducted; and which being ſatan's ordinances, the deviſed means of worſhipping him, and ſeeking help and information from him, ought by all means to be deſtroyed, and forgotten, if poſſible. Though the attempt to revive, and publiſh books on ſuch ſubjects, forms one of the bad effects which attend on the manifold advantages of the liberty of the preſs, in this *Chriſtian* nation and age.

V. 21, 22.] At the end of three years from the apoſtle's firſt arrival at Epheſus, (c. xx. v. 31.) He purpoſed to go into Macedonia: this was "in the ſpirit:" either, under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, or in the zeal and fervency of his own ſpiritual mind: but as he did not exactly accompliſh his plan, according to the manner that he intended, perhaps the latter meaning may be preferable. He purpoſed to ſail weſtward into Macedonia; and having viſited the churches there, and in Achaia, he meant to go ſouth-eaſt as far as Jeruſalem: and afterwards to return to the north-weſt, further than he had ever before been, that he might preach the goſpel at Rome. Thus he had laid the plan of voyages and journeys, backward, and forward, to the extent of ſeveral thouſands of miles, as if it had been no more than a progreſs through a ſingle province! One part of his purpoſe was to collect money in the different churches, that he had planted, and to carry it to Jeruſalem, for the relief of the poor chriſtians there; (*Rom.* c. xv. v. 25, 26. 2 *Cor.* c. viii. ix.) For this purpoſe he ſent before him Timothy, and Eraſtus who had been the chamberlain of Corinth, (*Rom.* c. xvi. v. 23;) to prepare the minds of the Theſſalonians, Philippians, Bereans, and Corinthians; but he ſtaid a conſiderable time longer at Epheſus, before he went thither.

V. 23—30.] In this interim a terrible diſturbance was excited about the preaching of the goſpel. Demetruis, a principal ſilverſmith, carried on a large trade for ſilver models of the renowned temple of Diana at Epheſus, with a little image in each of them; which were in great requeſt, both as curious and beautiful ornaments to their houſes, and for ſuperſtitious purpoſes: and in this manufacture he employed a great number of workmen, greatly to their advantage, as well as his own. Having therefore convened them, and all others, whoſe occupations were connected with the ſupport of the fa-a ſilverſmith, which made ſilver ſhrines for Diana, brought no ſmall gain unto the craftſmen;

25 Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and ſaid, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth:

26 Moreover ye ſee and hear, that not alone at Epheſus, but almoſt throughout all Aſia, this Paul hath perſuaded and turned away much people, ſaying, That they be no gods which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be ſet at nought; but alſo that the temple of the great goddeſs Diana ſhould be deſpiſed, and her magnificence ſhould be deſtroyed, whom all Aſia and the world worſhippeth.

28 And when they heard *theſe ſayings* they were full of wrath, and cried out, ſaying, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians.

29 And the whole city was filled with confuſion: and having caught Gaius, and Ariſtarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they ruſhed with one accord into the theatre.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the diſciples ſuffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Aſia which were his friends, ſent unto him, deſiring *him* that he would not adventure himſelf into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and ſome another; for the aſſembly was confuſed: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice, about the ſpace of two hours, cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians.

ſhionable idolatry; he reminded them, that they got their wealth by making theſe ſilver ſhrines, and ſuch like articles of commerce: and he then ſhewed them, that Paul's preaching was likely to ruin their trade, by perſuading the Epheſians, and all the Aſiatics, "that "they were no gods, that were made with hands:" (a moſt heretical tenet in the judgment of thoſe, who grew rich by manufacturing ſuch deities!) So that not only were they likely to be impoveriſhed, and the workmen to ſtarve for want of employment: but alſo their very religion was at ſtake, (about which, in ſubſerviency to his lucre, he would be thought very zealous;) and the ſplendid temple, and magnificent apparatus, with which their great goddeſs Diana was worſhipped by perſons from all parts of the world, were likely to ſink into contempt, and neglect, to the great injury of their renowned city. This addreſs to the intereſt, ſuperſtition, pride, and reſentment of the company, was calculated to inflame their paſſions: accordingly, in moſt furious indignation againſt Paul, and the chriſtians, and with immenſe zeal for their lucrative idolatry, they began to exclaim as with one voice, "great is Diana of the Epheſians:" this ſoon brought a mob together, and threw the whole city into an uproar: and as Paul was not met with, the ringleaders of the riot ſeized upon two of his companions; (c. xx. v. 4. *Col.* c. iv. v. 10,) and ruſhed with them into the theatre, where the public games are ſuppoſed to have been then celebrating; probably intending to throw them to the wild beaſts, with whom ſlaves, and condemned malefactors uſed to fight, for the cruel diverſion of the ſpectators. When Paul underſtood this, he was deſirous of entering into the theatre, to ſpeak to the people; being willing to venture himſelf in hopes of preſerving his friends: but the diſciples, knowing that the enraged mob would not ſcruple to tear him in pieces, interpoſed to hinder him; yea ſome of the Aſiarchs, or officers appointed from the different cities of Aſia, to ſuperintend the public games, being friendly to him, ſent to intreat that he would not thus expoſe himſelf, as they could not enſure him any protection.

V., 32—41.] As Paul did not appear amongſt the people, and the ringleaders of the tumult could not make them generally acquainted with their intentions; ſome cried one thing, and ſome another: and as is uſual on ſuch occaſions, the greater number of them knew not the cauſe, for which the tumult was excited. At length one Alexander was ſingled out from among the multitude, who made ſigns with his hand, that he wanted to ſpeak in his own behalf before them. Many think that this was Alexander the copperſmith, who became an apoſtate from chriſtianity; (2 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 14, 15;) but this is very uncertain. It is not agreed whether he were a convert to chriſtianity, or an unbelieving Jew: ſome think that he wiſhed to declaim againſt the goſpel, and thus to avert the odium from the Jews; and that they alſo put him forward for this purpoſe; thus joining with the idolaters, though it tended to undermine their own cauſe: others conclude, that, being ſeized on, he meant to plead for chriſtianity, and againſt idolatry, and that the Jews were deſirous of his being heard, from an apprehenſion that this tumult was excited againſt them, as well as againſt the chriſtians. However, the multitude would not hear him, becauſe they knew him to be a Jew, and an enemy to their idolatry; whether he were

35 And when the town-clerk had appeaſed the people, he ſaid, *Ye* men of Epheſus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Epheſians is a worſhipper of the great goddeſs Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

36 Seeing then that theſe things cannot be ſpoken againſt, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing raſhly.

37 For ye have brought hither theſe men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blaſphemers of your goddeſs.

38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftſmen which are with him, have a matter againſt any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another.

39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it ſhall be determined in a lawful aſſembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in queſtion for this day's uproar, there being no cauſe whereby we may give an account of this concourſe.

41 And when he had thus ſpoken, he diſmiſſed the aſſembly.

a profeſſor of the goſpel or no: but in contempt of all the worſhippers of God, and in order to magnify their idol, they with one conſent moſt vociferouſly cried out for two hours together, "great is the Epheſian Diana." Having ſpent their rage, and wearied themſelves, in this ridiculous manner, they were thereby kept from greater outrages: at length the Town-clerk, or Scribe, a magiſtrate of great authority among them, was enabled to appeaſe the tumult; after which he ſpake to the people with great addreſs, and ingenuity. He ſeemed to allow the truth, and importance of their abſurd traditions and idolatries; though it may be doubted, whether he really believed any thing of the matter: he obſerved, that it was univerſally allowed that their city deemed it her chief honour, to ſupport the temple and worſhip of Diana, and of her image, which immemorial tradition declared to have fallen down from Jupiter. As theſe things were undeniable, they ought to behave more quietly, and cautiouſly: they had indeed apprehended two men, and were about to wreak their vengeance upon them; yet they had neither ſacrilegiouſly robbed the temple of Diana, nor thoſe of any other of their deities; nor had they uttered any blaſphemies againſt their goddeſs. (Paul was not preſent; yet he too was meant: but though his doctrine undermined the foundations of all idolatry, we may ſuppoſe, that he never went out of his way to rail at any particular idol.) The town-clerk proceeded to ſhew them, that if any perſons were injured in their property, or buſineſs; they might bring the matter before the proconſuls in a regular courſe of law, and thus obtain ſatisfaction. (It appears from hiſtory, that the office of proconſul of Aſia was at that time divided between two perſons, called procurators, but who might not improperly be called proconſuls.) But if the complaint related to matters of religion, or other public intereſts; they ought to be decided in a regular meeting of the people, and not before the tumultuous populace. So that in fact, the law had been violated that day, by theſe riotous proceedings, and the city, and magiſtrates were liable to be called into queſtion by the Romans for it; as they could aſſign no ſufficient cauſe for the inſurrection. By this politic harangue the multitude were prevailed with to diſperſe; and thus Paul, and his friends were preſerved from the moſt imminent danger.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though we do not now expect miraculous powers: yet all, who profeſs themſelves to be the diſciples of Chriſt, ſhould be called upon to examine, whether they have received the ſeal of the Holy Ghoſt in his ſanctifying influences, to the ſincerity of their faith. Alas, many ſuch ſeem not to have heard, that there is a Holy Ghoſt! And many deem all, that is ſpoken, concerning his graces, and comforts, to be enthuſiaſm and deluſion! Of ſuch it may properly be enquired, "Unto what then "were ye baptized?" For they evidently know not the meaning of that external ſign, on which they place ſo great a dependence! However, where men are conſcientious, and teachable, they will receive increaſing light: repentance, and its genuine fruits prepare the heart for the comforts and bleſſings of faith in Chriſt, and for the witneſs, and earneſt of the Holy Spirit; and we ſhould not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things. When convincing arguments, and affectionate perſuaſions only harden men in unbelief, and excite them to blaſphemy; we muſt ſeparate ourſelves, and ſuch, as we can influence, from their contagious company; and we ſhould endeavour to find out more teachable perſons. The power, which attends the word of the Lord Jeſus, will eventually diſtinguiſh it from other doctrines: He uſes divers inſtruments and means, in exerting his power; but the work of healing our ſouls, or pulling down the kingdom of ſatan, is wholly his own. That enemy does not much regard thoſe, who uſe the name of Jeſus, without faith in, or love to him, for the ſake of their temporal intereſt, or reputation. He, and his aſſociates know the power of the divine Saviour, and the efficacy of his word in the mouth of his faithful ſervants: but they deſpiſe hireling preachers, and hypocritical profeſſors of the goſpel; whom they will overcome to their deſtruction. Yet all the efforts of ſatan to diſgrace or oppoſe the cauſe of Chriſt, will eventually redound to its honour, and to the credit of faithful miniſters. The name of Jeſus is magnified, when falſe profeſſors are detected, and diſgraced; when ſinners are brought to confeſs, and forſake their evil deeds; when they renounce their curious arts, and ungodly gains, in obedience to the goſpel; and when they make ſuch expenſive ſacrifices to the truth, in the preſence of all men. We would by no

CHAP. XX.

Contains Paul and his friends 1*ſt. Paſſing through Macedonia, and Achaia, and returning to Troas: Paul preaching there, and joining in the Lord's ſupper; and reſtoring Eutychus, who had fallen down, and been taken up dead, during his diſcourſe.* 1--12. 2*d. Their ſailing from thence to Miletus; Paul ſending for the elders of Epheſus, and ſtating to them his miniſtry and conduct; exhorting, warning, and inſtructing them with great fervency; praying with, and taking a moſt affectionate final farewel of them; and their ſorrow, at the aſſurance, that they would ſee his face no more,* 13---38.

means have all books deſtroyed, which have no relation to matters of religion: but ſurely ſuch, as are indecent and licentious, infidel, or heretical in eſſential matters, would be condemned to the flames, if the word of God grew mightily, and prevailed amongſt us; not indeed by the ſentence of the inquiſitor, but by the voluntary choice of the poſſeſſors. Men would in that caſe neither read ſuch books themſelves, nor keep them in their houſes, to poiſon the principles and morals of their children, or dependents; nor ſell them to contaminate the minds, and murder the ſouls of others. And were all ſuch books deſtroyed in this city or kingdom; their price would be found immenſely more, than 50,000 pieces of ſilver. Will not then theſe Epheſian converts riſe up in judgment againſt and condemn ſuch profeſſors of the goſpel, as trade in pernicious books and pamphlets; and who encourage ſuch publications for lucre's ſake, as they muſt know are likely to do great miſchief in the world? And is it not a proof, that the word of God declines in its influence and authority in this land; when books pretending to teach, and perſons profeſſing to exerciſe, theſe forbidden, and curious arts, are publicly advertiſed amongſt us? But let no profeſſor of the goſpel countenance ſuch pretenſions; whether they be human impoſitions, or diabolical deluſions.

The enterpriſing ſpirit, and unwearied diligence of conquerors, navigators, &c, are generally admired: but the ſame endowments, when directed by love to Chriſt, and to the ſouls of men, commonly meet with ridicule and contempt! Yet ſurely our apoſtle laboured more abundantly than all the admired heroes of the world, as well as more, than any other preacher of the goſpel: and happy, and honourable have all they been, who have been influenced by the ſame motives, to tread in his ſteps, in ſome good meaſure. But when they are moſt active and ſucceſsful; they may aſſure themſelves of moſt oppoſition from the worſhippers of mammon, and the bigots of ſuperſtition. Indeed theſe principles naturally coaleſce: nor would idolatry, deluſion, or vice, though congenial to the human heart, meet with ſuch firm ſupport; did they not conduce to the temporal advantage of ſuch numbers, who grow rich by them. Abuſes in eccleſiaſtical ſyſtems, abſurdities in creeds, and ſuperſtitions in religious worſhip, will be ſure to engage many zealous ſupporters; whilſt they encourage arts, and trade, and bring no ſmall gain to the craftſmen, and other parties concerned. "Sirs; ye know, "that by this craft we have our wealth," will be the private argument of ſuch men, one among another: but the honour of the great Diana, or of the ſyſtem, the church, or ſect, will be the oſtenſible pretence. Nay ſuch devotees of mammon, and ſuperſtition not only impoſe on others, but on themſelves, and imagine that they really love their religion; whilſt they only value the affluence derived from it. Their ſelfiſhneſs increaſes their bigotry; and their intereſted oppoſition to the goſpel clokes its malignity, under zeal for ſome abſurd forms, or obſervances: their wrath vents itſelf in furious zeal for the honour of their idol; and the ſervants of God are hated, and perſecuted, becauſe they draw men off from thoſe ſins, by which lucrative trades are ſupported: they would eat up the ſin of the people, and ſet their hearts upon their iniquities; whilſt they vehemently contend for the vain converſation delivered by tradition from their fathers. Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory continually furniſhes the ſtudent with ſuch inſtances: and we can ſcarce look around us in the world, but we ſee the part of Demetrius and the workmen, acted over and over again; even to the filling of cities with tumult and confuſion. It is as ſafe to contend with wild beaſts, as with men, who are thus enraged by bigotry, and diſappointed avarice; or who think that all arguments are anſwered, when they have ſhewn that they grow rich by ſuch meaſures as are oppoſed: and whatever ſide, in religious controverſies, or whatever name, this ſpirit aſſumes; it is antichriſtian, and ſhould be ſtrenuouſly diſcountenanced by all the friends of truth and piety.

Zeal for the honour of Chriſt, and love to the brethren, will induce zealous believers to venture into any danger, where theſe are concerned: but they, who value the lives of ſuch uſeful perſons, may ſometimes interpoſe to moderate their zeal: and friends will often be raiſed up to them, from thoſe, who are ſtrangers to vital religion, but have obſerved their integrity, and conſiſtent behaviour. A confuſed mob can never effect any thing, but miſchief, and madneſs; and like a wild beaſt, it ſometimes turns upon, and deſtroys thoſe, who meant to govern it's operations, or to derive benefit from them: and generally the greater part of ſuch riotous multitudes know not for what purpoſes they are come together. It is well, when their fury evaporates in ſenſeleſs clamour; for it is commonly more cruel and deſtructive. Yet he that ruleth the waves of the ſea, can alſo ſtill the madneſs of the people: and in him we ſhould truſt ourſelves, and all belonging to us, when ſuch perils alarm us. Worldly policy and ſagacity often abound, where piety is utterly wanting: and ſuch men, by cajoling the deluded multitudes, in their follies, and abſurdities, will prevail more with them, than others poſſibly could by truth, and argument. What ſenſeleſs fables have *they* implicitly credited, who would not believe the report of the goſpel! And how ridiculous have *they* often been, in their religious opinions, and worſhip; who have diſcovered the moſt good ſenſe upon every

AND after the uproar was ceaſed, Paul called unto *him* the diſciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over thoſe parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And *there* abode three months: and when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to ſail into Syria, he purpoſed to return through Macedonia,

4 And there accompanied him into Aſia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Theſſalonians, Ariſtarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Aſia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

5 Theſe going before, tarried for us at Troas.

6 And we ſailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode ſeven days.

7 And upon the firſt *day* of the week when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow: and continued his ſpeech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together.

9 And there ſat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep ſleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he ſunk down with ſleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him*, ſaid, Trouble not yourſelves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again,

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other ſubject! For the god of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers. Let us be thankful for prudent magiſtrates, who can by any means keep the peace, and afford us protection, whilſt we quietly worſhip God according to our conſciences, and endeavour to promote the knowledge of his great ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1—6.] The apoſtle probably concluded, that it would be imprudent for him to continue longer at Epheſus, leſt ſome other inſurrection ſhould be excited on his account: he therefore affectionately took leave of the diſciples, and ſet forwards for Macedonia. He went through Troas, and had then a favourable opportunity of preaching the goſpel: but not meeting Titus, whom he expected from Corinth, he was ſo deſirous of viſiting that city, that he journeyed on, without further delay. (2 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 12, 13. c. vii. v. 5.) The firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians ſeems to have been written before he left Epheſus; and the ſecond, when he was in Macedonia, on his progreſs to Achaia, which probably took up more time than he expected. In the ſeveral churches of Philippi, Theſſalonica, Berea, &c; he exhorted, inſtructed, and encouraged the diſciples very copiouſly, concerning all things relating to their faith, and practice, and the management of their common concerns. He was eſpecially employed alſo in making collections for the poor Jewiſh converts at Jeruſalem. When he had thus paſſed through Macedonia, he came into Greece, where he ſpent three months, at Corinth, and the adjacent places: and being then about to ſail into Syria, he underſtood, that ſome Jews had laid a plan to meet him by the way, either to rob him of the money he had collected, or to murder him: he therefore returned back through Macedonia, and reviſited thoſe churches. The perſons here mentioned ſeem to have been the meſſengers, appointed by the ſeveral churches to accompany him, with their contributions to Jeruſalem: ſome of them we ſhall read of elſewhere. Timothy had gone before the apoſtle into Macedonia, and we here find him attending on him, and he was with him when he wrote the ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians: yet elſewhere he ſays, that he deſired him to tarry at Epheſus, when he went into Macedonia. (1 *Tim.* c. i. v. 3.) It is probable, that the firſt epiſtle to Timothy was written, when the apoſtle was in Macedonia, ſoon after he left Epheſus: ſo that we muſt conclude that Timothy returned thither, before Paul came away; and that he ſtaid there but a ſhort time, before he, on ſome account, came to Paul in Macedonia. But this does not prove, that he did not return thither, and take up his ſtated reſidence there afterwards for ſome time, according to the report of eccleſiaſtical writers. The hiſtorian here again begins to ſpeak in the firſt perſon plural: whence we may conclude, that he had now rejoined the apoſtle's company: and he coutinued with him, whilſt ſome of the others went before to Troas, where a chriſtian church had before this been founded: and thither, after a ſhort time, the apoſtle followed them.

V. 7—12.] The chriſtians evidently were accuſtomed to aſſemble for religious worſhip on the *firſt* day of the week: but the change ſeems to have been gradually, and ſilently introduced, by example rather than by expreſs precept. The *principal* time of their aſſembling appears to have been in the evening; either for fear of their enemies, or becauſe many ſervants in heathen families, and other poor perſons, could not obtain liberty of meeting with them at an earlier hour. "Breaking of bread," or commemorating the death of Chriſt, in the euchariſt, was one chief end of their aſſembling: this ordinance ſeems to have been conſtantly adminiſtered every Lord's day; and probably no profeſſed chriſtians abſented themſelves from it, after they had been admitted into the church; unleſs they lay under ſome cenſure, or had ſome real hindrance. The apoſtle ſeems to have ſtaid and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, ſo he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 And we went before to ſhip, and ſailed unto Aſſos, there intending to take in Paul: for ſo had he appointed, minding himſelf to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Aſſos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we ſailed thence, and came the next *day* over againſt Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to ſail by Epheſus, becauſe he would not ſpend the time in Aſia; for he haſted, if it were poſſible for him, to be at Jeruſalem the day of Pentecoſt.

17 And from Miletus he ſent to Epheſus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he

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at Troas, in order to ſpend one Lord's day with them: and preaching to them, on this occaſion, as he had ſeldom ſpoken to them before, and was about to leave them on the morrow, without knowing whether he ſhould ever ſee them again, his fervent affection led him to continue his diſcourſe even till midnight. We may be ſure that his audience in general attended to his exhortations with eagerneſs and delight: but one young man, ſitting in a window, which was open for the admiſſion of the air, as the room was doubtleſs crouded, and as there were many lights in it; (which may be noted, to ſhew how falſe the ſlanders of the heathens were, in reſpect of the nocturnal meetings of the chriſtians;) he was overcome with ſleep, and falling from the third ſtory was taken up dead. He had probably been previouſly wearied with labour: and perhaps was not duly attentive to the important topics, of which the apoſtle was diſcourſing. This circumſtance interrupted their religious exerciſes, and excited in them much ſorrow, and anxiety: however, Paul went down, and embracing the dead body, he exhorted them not to diſquiet themſelves, for his life was in him. Eutychus ſeems to have been really dead: but Paul was inwardly aſſured of his reſtoration to life, which perhaps took place at the moment when he ſpake; and he afterwards was gradually recovered to his health and ſtrength. Accordingly they returned to their religious exerciſes: and after the Lord's ſupper had been celebrated, the apoſtle, *inſtead of apologizing for the length of his diſcourſe*, reſumed the ſubject, and continued to converſe with them till the day dawned, and it was time to ſet out on their journey: when the young man was brought among them alive, and well, to their great comfort. We may eaſily conceive how many things would be ſaid at Troas, about a night ſpent altogether in preaching and devotion. And had Eutychus loſt his life, it would have given the enemies of the goſpel ſome colour for their exclamations againſt *unſeaſonable hours, long ſermons, and ſuch like enthuſiaſtical irregularities.*

V. 13—16.] Aſſos, Trogyllium, and Miletus were cities of the Leſſer Aſia, on the ſea-coaſt: Mitylene was a city in the Iſle of Leſbos, which with Chios and Samos, was ſituated near the coaſt of Aſia, in what is now called the Archipelago. Paul choſe to go on foot from Troas to Aſſos; probably for the ſake of retirement, and private devotion; as his public work left him little time to be alone. But he might alſo intend to call at ſome place, or tranſact ſome buſineſs unknown to us. When he had joined his company, he would not ſtop at Epheſus, as he knew that he ſhould not eaſily get away from his beloved people there; and they therefore ſailed paſt it to Miletus, a city about 30 miles further to the ſouth. For he ſeems to have had the direction of the veſſel, which he could not have had, if he had merely been a paſſenger: and it is therefore probable that it belonged to ſome of his friends. His purpoſe was to make what haſte he could to Jeruſalem, that he might ſpend the feaſt of Pentecoſt there: probably he hoped for ſome opportunity of uſefulneſs among the Jews and proſelytes, who came to the feaſt; or of ſoftening their prejudices againſt him: eſpecially he might deem this the beſt time for diſpenſing the contributions that he carried, ſo as to promote the friendly communion between the Jewiſh, and Gentile converts.

V. 17. *And*, &c.] The apoſtle could not with propriety viſit Epheſus: but he deſired to give ſome further inſtructions, and admonitions to the elders of the church, which he had there planted; and accordingly he ſent for them to come to him at Miletus. The ſame perſons are in this chapter called *elders* or *preſbyters*, and *overſeers* or *biſhops*; (v. 28:) it muſt therefore be allowed, that theſe were not diſtinct orders of miniſters in the church at that time. Probably, when the apoſtles founded a church, they appointed paſtors over it, according to the numbers to be ſuperintended by them; or the field of uſefulneſs, that was opened in the neighbourhood: theſe were at firſt called either *elders*, or *overſeers*, that is *preſbyters*, or *biſhops*, indifferently; and no one of them had any direct authority over the reſt. By degrees the number of converts would increaſe, and other churches would be planted in the neighbourhood; and more paſtors would be choſen. In the mean time the ſenior miniſters, and ſuch as were moſt eminent for wiſdom, ability, piety, or uſefulneſs, would acquire a meaſure of influence and authority; and their juniors, both in their own church, and in others that had been planted from it, would naturally look up to them: thus they would be expected to take the lead in every buſineſs; eſpecially in the ordination of miniſters, in directing their labours, and in animadverting on ſuch as turned aſide to heretical docſaid unto them, Ye know, from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which beſel me by the lying in wait of the Jews;

20 *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have ſhewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from houſe to houſe;

21 Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jeruſalem, not knowing the things that ſhall beſal me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every city, ſaying, that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God.

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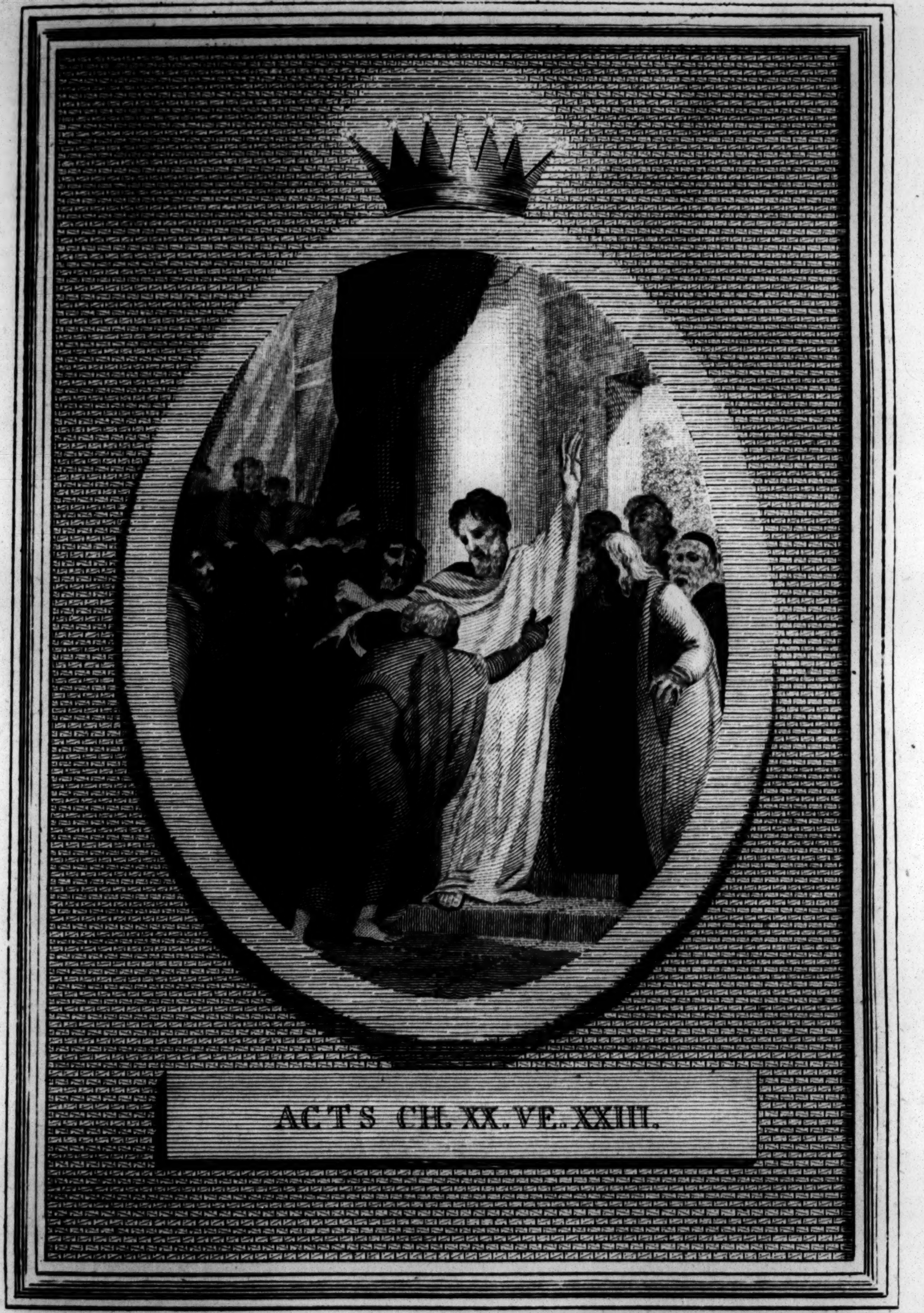
trines, or immoral practices. Hence the name of Biſhop or Inſpector, ſeems gradually to have been appropriated to one principal miniſter, to which a meaſure of authority and diſtinction was inſenſibly annexed; and the title and rank of *Preſbyters* was continued to the reſt. It is evident that epiſcopacy prevailed generally, and early in the primitive church; and it ſeems to have been gradually introduced. There were many elders in the church at Epheſus at this time; yet Chriſt afterwards addreſſed his epiſtle to the *Angel* of the church of Epheſus, (*Rev.* c. ii. v. 1;) which ſeems to mean the ſuperintending paſtor, who was an inſpector over the elders. I apprehend that neither epiſcopacy, nor any other ſpecies of church government, can *excluſively* be proved from ſcripture to be of divine authority. But a moderate epiſcopacy might be ſhewn to have many advantages to recommend it: and the high claims, and exceſſive authority, which ſoon began to be advanced, and exerciſed by that order; and all the abuſes of anti-chriſtian tyranny, ſeem to ſupply the beſt arguments to thoſe, who would entirely exclude it from the church. However in this, as well as other things, much remains to be remedied and rectified, among every deſcription of chriſtians; before matters be reduced to the ſcriptural ſtandard. I think every impartial man muſt allow, that if Timothy had been at this time biſhop of Epheſus, in that ſenſe for which ſome contend; the apoſtle would have given theſe elders ſome exhortation to pay a proper deference to his epiſcopal authority. To imagine, as ſome have done, that theſe elders of Epheſus were indeed the dioceſan biſhops of all the Aſiatic churches, only expoſes the cauſe, which it is meant to ſupport: for beſides the inexcuſable liberty taken with the words of the ſcripture; how could they have been got together from ſuch great diſtances, at ſo ſhort a notice? Unleſs it be ſuppoſed, that they all reſided at Epheſus, and left the charge of their dioceſes to others, according to the too common cuſtom of later times!

V. 18—21.] The apoſtle firſt called the attention of theſe elders to the methods he had purſued, and the conduct he had manifeſted among them, ſince his firſt coming into Aſia; (that is the proconſular Aſia, in which Epheſus was the principal city.) He had, at all ſeaſons, in whatever external circumſtances he had been placed, devoted himſelf to the ſervice, and worſhip of the Lord, in a humble, gentle, unaſſuming, and ſelf-abaſing manner; without aſpiring at the honour that came from man, or being ambitious of diſtinction, or power amongſt them. His ſervices had alſo been attended with many tears of fervent affection, and great ſorrow of heart; on account of the obſtinate unbelief of the Jews, the ſtupid idolatry of the Gentiles, the afflictions, temptations and miſconduct of the chriſtians, and his own manifold infirmities. He had alſo encountered many hardſhips, and been expoſed to many perils, from the inſidious malice of the Jews; which were a great trial to him, and might have tempted him to decline, or to be unfaithful in his work: yet they knew, that he had not with-held from them any inſtructions, warnings, or encouragements, which could conduce to their ſpiritual advantage; this he had ſimply conſulted, without regarding ſo much whether they, or others, were pleaſed or diſpleaſed with him. What he had taught publicly, he had alſo diſcourſed of privately; going from houſe to houſe, among the converts and ſuch as were willing to receive him, to admoniſh, counſel, and inſtruct every one of them in particular, as his caſe required. He had eſpecially, with the utmoſt earneſtneſs inſiſted upon the abſolute neceſſity of repentance towards God, the great Creator and Governor of the world, whoſe holy laws all have broken, and whoſe righteous diſpleaſure they have incurred; before whom they ought therefore to humble themſelves, in ſorrow for, and confeſſion of, ther ſins, ſhewing their ſincerity by works meet for repentance: with this he had connected his unwavering teſtimony to the neceſſity of "faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;" or a belief of thoſe truths, that relate to his Perſon, atonement, and mediation, &c; and a reliance upon Him as the divine Surety, and Saviour of ſinners, for all the bleſſings of ſalvation. This repentance and faith, when conſidered in connection with our need of them, the ſource from which they ſpring, and their invariable effects upon the heart and life of him, who continually exerciſes them, may be conſidered as the ſubſtance of chriſtianity, the religion of a ſinner under a diſpenſation of mercy and grace.

V. 22—24.] The apoſtle next informed them, that under the impulſe of the Holy Spirit, which conſtrained



ACTS CH. XX. VE. XXIII.

Richter del.

Goldar Sc.

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25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*:

27 For I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourſelves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock.

30 Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the ſpace of three years I ceaſed not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an

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him to proceed by the bonds of zeal and love, he was going to Jeruſalem, not knowing what perſecutions or trials there awaited him: ſave that the Holy Spirit teſtified in every city, where the goſpel was planted, by the mouth of ſome of the prophets there raiſed up, that bonds, and afflictions awaited him. However, this did not in the leaſt deter him from the ſervice he had undertaken, or diſcompoſe his mind: for he did not value his life, for his own ſake, having no deſire to live, except the glory of God, and the benefit of the church required it: as his grand object was to finiſh his chriſtian race with joyful aſſurance of meeting the approbation of his Lord, and of receiving the prize of his high calling: and in order to this, to execute faithfully till death the important miniſtry which the Lord Jeſus had committed to him; and to teſtify to ſinners of every nation, the glad tidings of the abundant mercy and grace of God, for the complete ſalvation of their ſouls.

V. 25—27.] An immediate revelation ſeems to have been about this time made to the apoſtle, that he ſhould no more reviſit Epheſus, or ſee any of theſe elders again on earth: (yet he probably afterwards was at ſome places of the Leſſer Aſia, and perhaps at Troas.) (2 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 13. *Philemon*, v. 22.) This made him the more earneſt in his exhortations, and admonitions; and he therefore teſtified to them, and called on them to bear witneſs for him, that he was guiltleſs of the blood of thoſe, who periſhed among them, or their flocks: as he had not declined, either from fear, or deſire of their applauſe or friendſhip, to declare unto them the whole counſel of God, reſpecting the way of ſalvation by Chriſt for all true believers, and the certain deſtruction of all that neglect ſo great ſalvation; and reſpecting all things pertaining to the doctrine, practice, and diſcipline of the church. As he had been wholly preſerved from ignorance in, or miſtake about the truth and will of God, in theſe things: ſo he had been kept from all unfaithfulneſs in reſpect to them.

V. 28—31.] In imitation of his example, and in expectation of that great account, which they muſt give of their miniſtry, the apoſtle next warned the elders "to take heed to themſelves," to their ſtate, ſpirit, conduct, and doctrine; and to all the flock, over which they had been conſtituted Superintendants, or Inſpectors, *by the Holy Ghoſt.* Their qualifications for the miniſtry had been derived from *him*; *He* had diſpoſed them to undertake that ſervice; *He* had directed thoſe who ſelected and ordained them; and *He* had confirmed that appointment by his gifts, and endowments. The great end of their paſtoral office was, that they might feed the church of God, (or the company of believers,) which *He* had purchaſed with *his own blood:* that they might continually diſpenſe among them thoſe pure and wholeſome truths, which are the proper nutriment of the ſoul; and which, when it is regenerated, it deſires, reliſhes, feeds upon, and grows by, in knowledge, faith, hope, and holineſs. The converſion of ſinners, as part of this *choſen flock* is implied in this commiſſion. The moſt able critics have abundantly proved, that this is the undoubted reading of this remarkable teſtimony to the Deity of Chriſt. The atonement and ranſom of our ſouls is the blood of Jeſus, who is as truly God, as man: and thus in his myſterious Perſon, as God-man, he purchaſed the church with his own blood. This gave the infinite value to his ſacrifice; and it ſuggeſts to his miniſters the moſt powerful motives to faithfulneſs, diligence, patience, and fortitude in their work. To enforce theſe things ſtill more, the apoſtle aſſured them, that he certainly knew, by the Spirit of prophecy, that after he was gone from them, grievous, ſtrong, and cruel wolves would break into the fold, and devour the ſheep: theſe may either mean ſeducing teachers, intruding amongſt, and uſurping authority over, them, ſo as to fleece, ſcatter, or oppreſs the flock, for the gratification of their own avarice or ambition; or cruel perſecutors, by whom many chriſtians were butchered, and many profeſſors were tempted to apoſtatize. However, beſides theſe, there would be others ſpring up from amongſt themſelves, ſtarting heretical doctrines, corrupting the purity of the faith, diſturbing the harmony of the church, drawing off the people from their faithful paſtors on various pretences, attaching many to them as their diſciples, and thus forming ſcandalous ſects and ſchiſms. As the enemy ſows ſuch tares in the field, whilſt men ſleep; ſo Paul exhorted the elders on this account to watch, and be vigilant to obſerve, and check the firſt appearance of ſuch evils: remembering that for three years together; (which had intervened between his firſt arrival at Epheſus, and his final departure from it;) he had conſtantly warned them, one by one, by night as well as by day; bereaving himſelf of reſt and refreſhment, that he might ſeize on every opportunity for ſuch admonitions; and that his earneſt inheritance among all them which are ſanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's ſilver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourſelves know, that theſe hands have miniſtered unto my neceſſities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have ſhewed you all things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus ſpoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept ſore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kiſſed him;

38 Sorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ſhip.

affection for their ſouls, joined with his foreſight of theſe perverſions, had cauſed him to mingle his warnings with many tears.

V. 32—35.] Having endeavoured to impreſs them with a deep ſenſe of the arduouſneſs, and importance of their work, the apoſtle concluded by commending them to God; earneſtly calling on them to rely wholly on his guidance, aſſiſtance, protection, and bleſſing; and calling on God to take their ſouls, and thoſe of their flock into his Almighty, and gracious keeping. He alſo commended them to the word of God's grace, as the rule of their conduct, the ground of their hope, and the ſource of their conſolation: as the Lord was able, by, and according to, his word, to build them up in faith and holineſs, amidſt all the temptations, trials, and deluſions, to which they might be expoſed; and at length to give them an inheritance in heaven, among all thoſe, whom he hath ſet apart for himſelf, and made meet by his ſanctifying Spirit for that holy felicity: there he expected again to meet them; being kept through faith in the word of God, by his power to complete ſalvation. He could appeal to them, that he had acted diſintereſtedly among them: though many of the Epheſians were rich; yet he had not coveted, or in any way ſought for any man's wealth, or ſecular advantages: nay he had not accepted of that maintenance, to which he was fairly entitled; but had laboured at a manual employment to maintain himſelf, and his companions. Thus he had ſhewed them by his example the tendency of his doctrine; that from him, they, (even the *preſbyters*, or *biſhops*,) might learn, that it was their duty *thus to labour*, in order to maintain themſelves, and to contribute to the ſupport of their poor brethren, when weak and ſick, or otherwiſe unable to maintain themſelves: and that they ought to remember the words, which the Lord Jeſus had commonly uſed, as an important aphoriſm, that, “it is more bleſſed to give than to receive:” it is more happy to be able to give, than to be obliged to receive; and therefore better to labour and be frugal, than to indulge ſloth, and expence: there is more comfort and pleaſure in giving, than in receiving; there is more of grace, of love, of heaven, and of the divine image in giving, than in receiving. This traditional ſpeech ſo ſuited to the character of Him, “who being rich, for “our ſakes became poor, that we through his poverty “might be rich,” would not have been preſerved for our uſe, if it had not thus been communicated to writing. With this example, inſtruction, and admonition to labour, diſintereſtedneſs, and liberality, the apoſtle cloſed his addreſs to theſe elders; and his words could not but make a deep and durable impreſſion upon their minds.

V. 36—38.] This ſolemn and affectionate addreſs was concluded with humble, and fervent prayer: and the whole company were ſo affected with the mingled paſſions of love, and ſorrow, that they wept exceedingly; eſpecially they grieved to hear, that they were no more to behold the face of ſo faithful, and affectionate a friend. It does not appear that there was a church at Miletus; for none are ſpoken of, but the elders of Epheſus, and Paul's companions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Tumults, and oppoſition may conſtrain a chriſtian to remove from his ſtation, or to alter his purpoſe; but his work, and pleaſure will be the ſame, wherever he goes. Even believers need much exhortation, to render them habitually ſtedfaſt, zealous, prudent, and perſevering in every good work. Chriſtians ſhould delight in commemorating their Lord's death at his table, and his reſurrection, by obſerving his holy day: but the general contempt and profanation of the chriſtian ſabbath, by the profeſſed diſciples of Jeſus; and the withdrawing of ſo great a majority of the congregations, where the goſpel is preached, when the Lord's ſupper is about to be adminiſtered, evince the low ſtate of vital religion among us, and tend to reduce it ſtill lower! It ſhews a carnal ſtate of mind, when people are ſoon wearied in the worſhip of God, and want to cloſe it for the ſake of animal recreation, or vain converſation. Doubtleſs it is inexpedient on ordinary occaſions, to lengthen out religious ordinances too much: yet ſurely Paul would be diſpleaſed, ſurpriſed, or grieved, to hear the profeſſors of his doctrine, complain of an inſtructive ſermon, becauſe it was *an hour long*; or of the length of the ſervice, when it ſcarce exceeded two hours! If we cannot wholly excuſe Eutychus, for yielding to ſleep at midnight, during the apoſtle's copious exhortations; how inexcuſable are they, who in the middle of the day, and during a moderate ſervice, make a practice of ſleeping, as if beſt pleaſed when moſt compoſed to reſt! Infirmity indeed requires tenderneſs: but ſuch an indulged habit of contempt ſhould be treated with decided ſeverity: they, that thus offend, ſhould tremble leſt ſome ſudden judgment ſhould cut them off in their ſin, and leave them to periſh without remedy: and ſuch, as deſire to get the better of this temptation of ſatan, ſhould join earneſt prayers with all their other methods of keeping themſelves awake; other-

CHAP. XXI.

Contains Paul, attended by his friends, 1ſt. Departing from Miletus, and at length arriving at Ceſarea; lodging with Philip; aſſured by Agabus of his approaching impriſonment at Jeruſalem; and ſtedfaſtly rejecting the counſel of thoſe, who would have diſſuaded him from going thither, 1---14. *2d. Arriving at Jeruſalem; reporting the ſucceſs of his miniſtry to James and the elders; and, at their inſtance, attempting to ſoften the prejudices of the Jewiſh converts, by conforming to the Moſaic law, in purifying himſelf with ſome, that were under a vow, &c,* 15---26. *3d. Obſerved at the temple by ſome Jews of Aſia, and ſeized by them; in danger of being ſlain in a violent tumult, but preſerved by the chief captain; and obtaining leave to ſpeak unto the people,* 27---40.

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wiſe they need not wonder that they are unſucceſsful. Should a company of believers among us, on ſome remarkable occaſion, ſpend a whole night in the exerciſes of religion; what exclamations, revilings, and deriſion would it excite! Yet little is ſaid, when the devotees of feſtive indulgence, faſhionable diſſipation, or more vulgar diverſions, employ their nights in ſo irregular a manner: as if time ſpent in devotion broke in upon the order of families, or the peace of ſociety, far more than when dedicated to vain amuſement, or bacchanalian revels! Or as if more earneſtneſs were allowable in any thing, than in the ſervice of God! Nay many of us, who deem religion our chief joy, can remember a time, when we entrenched upon the hours of reſt, for our frolicks, and pleaſures, with far leſs reluctance, than we now ſhould for the purpoſe of ſecret or ſocial worſhip! So hard is it for ſpirituality to flouriſh in the heart of a fallen creature, under any culture! And ſo naturally and ſpontaneouſly doth carnality grow and thrive there! However the Lord will take care of the concerns, and pardon the infirmities of his people: and He will comfort them under all their tribulations, even when called to ſeparate from thoſe, whom they have moſt loved.

The chriſtian cannot be comfortable, or proſperous without retirement. Popular miniſters may preach, converſe, or pray in company, to the edifying of others; and yet decline in their own ſouls, for want of ſelf-examination, humiliation, and ſecret prayer ſuited immediately *to their own caſe:* nay the moſt able preachers will generally ceaſe to be very uſeful; if their perſonal religion be neglected, or hurried over in a formal, and general manner. This the fervent chriſtian knows, and he will therefore redeem time for retirement, at the expence of many inconveniences: and the friends of popular miniſters ſhould conſider this, and not too much intrude upon their ſolitude, in whoſe company they moſt delight. In proſecuting the Lord's work, our own inclinations, and thoſe of our beloved friends muſt often be croſſed: we muſt not ſpend our time with them, when duty calls us another way, or when a proſpect is before us of doing more eſſential good. As the office of miniſters is of ſo great importance and difficulty; to inſtruct, encourage, animate or admoniſh thoſe, who now are, or hereafter may be, employed in it, is a ſervice of the greateſt moment. To do real good to a paſtor of the flock, is eventually to profit numbers: and they who have a talent for this work, and a proper call to it, ſhould deem themſelves highly honoured, and be ſatisfied at ſome times to omit more public ſervices for the ſake of it. But they, who are thus employed in inſtructing ſuch, as are to inſtruct others, ſhould themſelves be moſt unexceptionable characters, and be able to appeal to them reſpecting their own conduct at all ſeaſons. All, who preach the goſpel, (whether bleſſed with living monitors, in ſome degree reſembling Paul, or not;) ſhould conſider this charge as addreſſed to them, even as to the Epheſian elders; and as ſetting before them the proper conduct, diſpoſition, and principles of a true miniſter of Chriſt. A proud, ambitious, ſelfiſh, and unfeeling heart is peculiarly oppoſite to the ſervice of God in the paſtoral office, or to the proper filling of eminent ſtations in the church. Unleſs a man be clothed with humility, and ſoftened into love, and compaſſion; even his abilities, zeal and diligence will be diſguſting and odious. And except we are ourſelves affected with our ſubjects, how can we expect to affect others? And how can we convince them, that we mean any thing by our exhortations, unleſs we perſevere in our work amidſt temptations and oppoſition? We muſt not be men-pleaſers; nor may we keep back any thing, that is profitable, whatever offence may be taken, or however well ſome perſons would pay us, for conniving at their errors, and conformity to the world. What we preach publicly we ſhould alſo be ready to inculcate privately, from houſe to houſe, as far as we have acceſs to our hearers, or any proſpect of doing them good: and ordinary viſits ſhould be thus improved, as well as opportunities of this kind purpoſely ſought for. Thus we ſhall get acquainted with the ſtate of our people's ſouls: and whilſt a perſonal addreſs will often ſet a man right, extricate him from ſome perplexity, remove ſome difficulty, or ſtir him up to ſome duty, about which he had long heſitated; we ourſelves ſhall learn to exerciſe our public miniſtry to better effect.

Every part of divine truth ought, at one time or other, to be ſet before our congregations; and every duty inculcated: but the great eſſentials, without which there can be no ſalvation, ſhould be teſtified moſt earneſtly and frequently: nor can we have a better ſummary of them, than this of the apoſtle, even "repentance towards God, "and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," with their genuine fruits and effects: without theſe no ſinner can eſcape deſtruction, and with theſe none will come ſhort of eternal life. The powerful influences of the Holy Spirit bind the zealous chriſtian to his duty, in a manner perfectly conſiſtent with the greateſt conceivable liberty: even, when he expects perſecution, and affliction, the love of Chriſt conſtraineth him to proceed. When he is ſatisfied reſpecting his ſtate, and duty; he is not moved with the proſpect of difficulties, or ſufferings:

AND it came to paſs, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a ſtraight courſe unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

2 And finding a ſhip ſailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and ſet forth.

3 Now when we had diſcovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and ſailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ſhip was to unlade her burden.

4 And finding diſciples, we tarried there ſeven days; who ſaid to Paul through the Spirit, that he ſhould not go up to Jeruſalem.

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he values his life chiefly that he may glorify the Lord with it; nor is it dear to him, for the ſake of any of thoſe things, which carnal men purſue. His great deſire is to finiſh his courſe with joy, and to be welcomed by his Lord with “well done good, and faithful ſervant.” and if he have received from the Lord Jeſus the office of the miniſtry, to teſtify to ſinners the glad tidings of the grace of God; he will deſire to live no longer, than he can execute it honourably and uſefully: that when the time ſhall come, when all thoſe, among whom he hath gone, preaching the kingdom of God, ſhall ſee his face no more; he may be able to take them to record, that he is pure from the blood of all men, having never ſhunned to declare to them all the counſel of God, according to the meaſure in which he was enabled to become acquainted with it. When ſuch affectionate and faithful paſtors, are called away from thoſe, to whom they have been uſeful; they will be doubly earneſt, that they may be ſucceeded by ſuch perſons, as will take heed to themſelves, and to all their flock; ſuch, as have indeed been made Overſeers by the Holy Ghoſt; and who will feed them with the wholeſome doctrine of divine truth. And what ought we to ſhrink from, when the benefit of that beloved company, “the church of God, whom he hath purchaſed with his blood,” requires it at our hands! It cannot but lie heavy upon the mind of the faithful miniſter, when about to be removed from his beloved charge, to reflect upon the various perils to which they will be expoſed, from the ſubtlety and malice of ſatan; from cruel perſecutors, and crafty ſeducers; and from ſuch as cauſe diviſions, and ſpeak perverſe things to draw away diſciples after them. However he can only warn them, and their teachers to watch: for if ſatan, and his inſtruments are ſo vigilant, and indefatigable, we ought by no means to be heedleſs and indolent. If a miniſter, in ſuch a caſe, can take the people to witneſs, that he hath been inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, by day, and by night, warning and exhorting them with all earneſtneſs and affection: it will give emphaſis to his parting admonitions; and confidence to his own heart, in commending them to God, and the word of his grace, as able to build them for, and put them in poſſeſſion of their holy inheritance: and the people ought to commend themſelves, and each other, to God, and his word, in the ſame manner; that they may be kept by his power, according to his promiſe, and in obedience to his precept, through faith unto eternal ſalvation. But none will obtain that inheritance, except thoſe, whom the Lord hath ſanctified.

It is peculiarly incumbent on thoſe, who teach others to aſpire after a heavenly treaſure, to be themſelves indifferent about earthly things; and evidently to be free from all coveting of men's gold, or ſilver, or apparel. But alas, few, who claim the honour of being the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles *in office and authority*, are diſpoſed to affect an equality with them *in ſelf-denial, and a willingneſs to labour without any emolument, and in circumſtances of comparative poverty!* Nor would their authority be ſo much diſputed, if this were their conduct, and ſpirit. However the zealous, and prudent miniſter of Chriſt, who is wiſe to win ſouls, will not tenaciouſly demand even his *due maintenance*, when it would interfere with his uſefulneſs; but will ſuffer all things rather than hinder the goſpel of Chriſt. Should peculiar circumſtances require, or admit of it; his own hands would miniſter to his neceſſities, and thoſe of his family, or friends: that he might ſhew the people all his principles reduced to practice; and teach even the poor of the flock, thus to labour, that they may be able to aſſiſt in ſupporting the weak; and that every one may learn to enquire, not, what gain ſhall I make? But what good can I do? According to the words of our gracious Lord, who hath taught us, that “it is more bleſſed to give than to receive:” a ſentence, that ſhould be written on every heart, eſpecially on that of every miniſter of the goſpel. This mind was in Chriſt Jeſus, may it be our's alſo! They, who thus exhort, and pray for one another, may have many weeping ſeaſons, and painful ſeparations; but their ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy, and they will ſoon meet before the throne to part no more. May the Lord ſupply his whole church with biſhops, preſbyters, and paſtors of every deſcription, who drink deep into this ſpirit, and who cloſely follow the ſteps of this bleſſed apoſtle, and theſe Epheſian overſeers of that flock, which he purchaſed with his own blood!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—6.] The words rendered “having gotten from them,” literally ſignify, “having torn ourſelves from them:” and emphatically denote that powerful reciprocal affection, which cemented the hearts of theſe Chriſtian friends, and rendered their final ſeparation at the call of duty ſo painful to them, and the effect of ſo violent an effort. Coos and Rhodes were well-known iſlands in the Egean Sea: Patara was a city of Lycia upon the continent of Aſia. Perhaps the ſhip, in which Paul and his friends had paſſed thus far, was bound to this port: however, they met with another, that was about to ſail directly into Phenicia, in which they embarked; and paſſing between the iſland of Cyprus, and the coaſt of Syria, they landed at Tyre. Here they ſought out the diſciples of their Lord: and as the moſt dangerous part of their voyage

5 And when we had accompliſhed thoſe days, we departed, and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the ſhore and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ſhip; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finiſhed *our* courſe from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and ſaluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Ceſarea; and we entered into the houſe of Philip the evangeliſt, (which was *one* of the ſeven,) and abode with him.

9 And the ſame man had four daughters, virgins, which did propheſy.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and ſaid, Thus ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, So ſhall the Jews at Jeruſalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and ſhall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard theſe things, both we, and they of that place, beſought him not to go up to Jeruſalem.

13 Then Paul anſwered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem, for the name of the Lord Jeſus.

14 And when he would not be perſuaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, The will of the Lord be done.

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was paſt, and they had time enough before them to arrive at Jeruſalem before the Pentecoſt, they tarried a week with them; in order to ſpend one Lord's day among them, as well as to confer together on the intereſting ſubject of their common faith. Some diſciples here alſo cautioned Paul not to go up to Jeruſalem: they were ſhewn by the Spirit of prophecy, that he would meet with great ſufferings and trials, if he went thither; and they ſuppoſed that he might lawfully decline the journey, and avoid the danger: but he judged otherwiſe. When they therefore departed, the whole company of the diſciples, with their families, attended them to the ſea-ſhore, with the greateſt expreſſions of reſpect and affection; and there they all kneeled down, in the moſt ſolemn and humble manner, and united in fervent prayer to the Lord, for each others protection and felicity. Should a company of Believers in this *Chriſtian* country, and in the environs of one of our great commercial cities, imitate this example; they would doubtleſs be derided as a *fanatical*, or an *hypocritical* ſet of people! It ſeems evident from this circumſtance, that kneeling was the more general poſture for public prayer, in the primitive church; otherwiſe they would ſcarce have uſed it, in ſuch an inconvenient ſituation.

V. 7—14. The apoſtle and his companions finiſhed their courſe by ſea, in ſailing from Tyre to Ptolemais, a city on the ſea-coaſt of Galilee. Here too they met with diſciples, with whom they ſpent but one day, and on the next they journeyed by land to Ceſarea. Philip, one of the ſeven firſt deacons, of whoſe uſefulneſs as an evangeliſt we have before read, (c. viii. ix.) now reſided in this city, and probably laboured there, and in the adjacent parts. He had the peculiar honour of having four daughters, all endued with the gift of prophecy; and perhaps they gave intimations to Paul of his approaching trials. However as they tarried at Ceſarea ſome days; Agabus, of whom we read before, (c. xi. v. 28,) came from Judea, properly ſo called, (for Ceſarea was not within that diviſion of the Holy Land;) and with a ſignificant emblem, he certified Paul by the Holy Ghoſt, that if he ſhould proceed to Jeruſalem, he would there be ſeized as a malefactor, by the Jews, who would cauſe him to be fettered, hand and foot, and delivered to the Gentiles, as the Lord Jeſus had been. This prediction cauſed both the apoſtle's companions, and the chriſtians of Ceſarea, earneſtly to diſſuade him from his intended journey; both out of perſonal love to him, and from their value for his uſeful life and labours. However, he conſidered himſelf to be bound in duty, to accompliſh the ſervice, with which he had been entruſted, of conveying the oblations of the Gentile converts to the church at Jeruſalem; and on this, and other accounts, he was ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to proceed, whatever perſecutions might await him. But though the proſpect of bonds, and impriſonment could not move him; yet the affectionate intreaties of his friends exceedingly diſtreſſed his feeling mind: and he expoſtulated with them, for thus weeping, and breaking his heart, with their ill-timed ſorrows, which unfitted him for his duty, when they ought to have encouraged him in it: for by the grace of God he was ready either to be bound, or put to death as a Martyr, for the honour of his beloved Saviour, either now at Jeruſalem, or whenever he ſhould be called to do it. When therefore they ſaw him fixed in his purpoſe, they no more attempted to diſſuade him from it; but ſubmitted to the will of God, as to the event, being ſatisfied that He could, and would over-rule it for good. It was not long after, that the apoſtle was conveyed back to Ceſarea, a priſoner; but as he had liberty to ſee his friends, they would again have the opportunity of converſing with him.

V. 15, 16.] When the time allotted for the apoſtle's

15 And after thoſe days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jeruſalem.

16 There went with us alſo *certain* of the diſciples of Ceſarea, and brought with them one Mnaſon of Cyprus, an old diſciple, with whom we ſhould lodge.

17 And when we were come to Jeruſalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were preſent.

19 And when he had ſaluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his miniſtry.

20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teacheſt all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forſake Moſes, ſaying, That they ought not to circumciſe *their* children, neither to walk after the cuſtoms.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude muſt needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we ſay to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

24 Them take, and purify thyſelf with them, and be at charges with them, that they may ſhave *their* heads: and all may know that thoſe things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyſelf alſo walkeſt orderly, and keepeſt the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they obſerve no ſuch thing, ſave only that they keep themſelves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from ſtrangled, and from fornication.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himſelf with them entered into the temple, to ſignify the accompliſhment of the days of purification, until that an offering ſhould be offered for every one of them.

ſtay at Ceſarea was expired, "*they prepared thoſe things*, "*which were to be taken with them*," and went up to Jeruſalem. It is probable they journeyed on foot: and ſome think that they carried their luggage themſelves, others that they laded ſome beaſts of burden with it. Perhaps it had been conveyed by ſea from Ptolemais to Ceſarea, though they journeyed by land: but as they now were travelling into the interior part of the country, it became neceſſary to make ſome other preparation for the conveyance of it. In this journey they were attended by ſome of the diſciples of Ceſarea, who "*brought with them*," or rather, "*brought them to*," one Mnaſon, who lived at Jeruſalem, with whom they had been acquainted, and at whoſe houſe the apoſtle and his company might be conveniently lodged, during the hurry of the feaſt. He was an old diſciple: perhaps he had been a diſciple of Jeſus; or he had joined the church ſoon after the day of Pentecoſt, about 28 years before; and had all along maintained, as may be ſuppoſed, a conſiſtency of character.

V. 17—26.] The Chriſtians at Jeruſalem, to whom Paul firſt applied, gladly welcomed him; rejoicing in the ſucceſs of his miniſtry, and in the fruits of the faith and love of the Gentile converts. The next day Paul introduced the meſſengers of the churches to the apoſtle James, who ſeems to have been the only one of the twelve then reſiding at Jeruſalem, and who peculiarly ſuperintended the concerns of the church in that city: all the elders were alſo convened on that occaſion. After affectionate ſalutations, Paul proceeded to relate to them particularly, what God had done by his miniſtry, ſince he laſt ſaw them: at which they rejoiced, and glorified God. However they intreated him to obſerve how many *tens of thouſands* of Jewiſh converts to Chriſt were now aſſembled at Jeruſalem, who were all zealous for the Moſaic ceremonies, and greatly prejudiced againſt him for his ſuppoſed oppoſition to them. For they had been informed, and had generally imbibed the opinion, that he every where inſtructed the Jews to *apoſtatize* from Moſes; inculcating it as a matter of bounden duty, that they ſhould not circumciſe their children, or obſerve any of the cuſtoms of their ritual. In this they had been miſinformed: for though Paul had ſhewn that none were bound to obſerve the ceremonial law, and that they muſt by no means place dependance on ſuch obedience, in the matter of juſtification: yet he had never forbidden the Jewiſh converts to obſerve it as a matter of expediency, when their communion with their Gentile brethren would admit of it. The elders therefore enquired of him, what could be done in this caſe? For as his coming would ſoon be known, the multitude could not be prevented from coming together, to enquire into the reaſons, and motives of his conduct: and much diſturbance might ariſe from their prejudices, if nothing were done to ſatisfy them. They therefore adviſed him previouſly to attempt the removal of their prejudices. They had among them four perſons, who were under a Nazarite's vow, which was near expiring. And they propoſed to Paul to join with them as one of the company; (which was commonly done at that time;) that

27 And when the ſeven days were almoſt ended, the Jews which were of Aſia, when they ſaw him in the temple, ſtirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Iſrael, help: this is the man that teacheth all *men* every where againſt the people, and the law, and this place: and further, brought Greeks alſo into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had ſeen before with him in the city, Trophimus an Epheſian, whom they ſuppoſed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were ſhut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jeruſalem was in an uproar;

32 Who immediately took ſoldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they ſaw the chief captain and the ſoldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done:

34 And ſome cried one thing, ſome ano-

he might purify himſelf, and bear a part in the expences of the cuſtomary ſacrifices, until the time came, when they ſhould ſhave their heads upon the completion of their vow. As this would be a public tranſaction, his concurrence in it would ſoon be known: and thus the whole multitude would at once be convinced, that they had been miſinformed; and that the apoſtle himſelf walked orderly according to the preſcriptions of the law. This inference ſeems to have been beyond the exact truth: Paul doubtleſs paid ſome regard to the Moſaic law, as a matter of expediency; and he had before performed a vow of a ſimilar nature, (c. xviii. v. 18:) but he does not ſeem habitually to have obſerved it, as may be inferred from his own words, (*Gal.* c. ii. v. 12. 14.) They probably meant, that he attended to the legal ceremonies, as far as conſiſted with his conſtant, and intimate communion with uncircumciſed perſons: but it may be queried, whether this, if it had been fully explained, would have ſatisfied the multitude. However they avowed, that they meant nothing contrary to their former determination concerning the Gentile converts. The apoſtle therefore complied with their counſel, and took the neceſſary ſteps, for joining with the Nazarites in their purifications and oblations. It hath been queſtioned whether on this occaſion the apoſtle, or his adviſers, acted conſiſtent with exact chriſtian ſimplicity? In this enquiry we ſhould remember, that, though the apoſtles were infallibly preſerved from miſtaking, corrupting, or mutilating the doctrine, which they were entruſted to communicate to the church; yet they were not rendered infallible in their perſonal conduct: in many things, they acknowledged, and it is evident, they all offended and were to be blamed. Perhaps it would be found very difficult wholly to defend the apoſtle from the charge of temporizing, accommodating, or refining too much in this matter. His deference to the judgment of his brethren; his deſire of becoming all things to all men, and his willingneſs to conciliate the Jewiſh believers, ſeem to have carried him too far: and he was led to hold out a greater degree of regard to the Moſaic law, than he ſhewed in his general conduct; which was more ſuited to increaſe and rivet their prejudices, than to obviate or moderate them. However, it did not anſwer the intended purpoſe, but was the immediate occaſion of his predicted ſufferings.

V. 27—30.] As the apoſtle could not enter on his purification, till the third day after his arrival at Jeruſalem; and as he made his defence before Felix, (which ſeems to have been ſeven or eight days after he was apprehended in the temple,) only twelve days after he came to Jeruſalem, (c. xxiv. v. 11:) ſo we muſt render the words here, "whilſt the ſeven days were accompliſhing." Some Jews from Aſia, who had known and hated Paul, when he preached in thoſe parts, ſaw him in the court of the temple, whither he went to the prieſts about the ſacrifices that were to be offered: and, being actuated by a furious and bigotted zeal, they excited a tumult, and ſeized upon him as a profaner of that ſacred place; calling earneſtly on all true Iſraelites to give their aſſiſtance in a caſe, wherein their religion and national honour were at ſtake: for that was the man, who had every where taught men to diſregard their title to be the peculiar people of God, to violate the law of Moſes as abrogated; and to deſpiſe the temple as about to be deſtroyed: and to ſhew his contempt and enmity the more, they averred, that he had brought uncircumciſed Gentiles into the holy place, to profane it. In this they were miſtaken; for having ſeen Paul walking in the city with Trophimus a Gentile convert, they took it for granted, that he had alſo brought him into the temple. This out-cry ſoon brought the multitudes from every part of the city: and Paul was dragged as a criminal to be put to death *without the ſanctuary*, leſt it ſhould be defiled with his blood: at the ſame time the doors were ſhut, that he might not eſcape to the horns of the altar for refuge, and that no more Gentiles might enter there.

V. 31—36.] It is ſaid, that the Jews claimed the liberty of putting to death, without any legal proceſs, ſuch uncircumciſed perſons, as entered the inner courts of the temple: but this was not applicable to Paul. However, in the fury of their zeal, they were about to kill him: but Lyſias, the commanding officer of the Roman forces at Jeruſalem; being alſo the tribune, or captain over 1000 men, hearing of the riot, immediately took ther, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the caſtle.

35 And when he came upon the ſtairs, ſo it was, that he was borne of the ſoldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the caſtle, he ſaid unto the chief captain, May I ſpeak unto thee? Who ſaid, Canſt thou ſpeak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before theſe days madeſt an uproar, and leddeſt out into the wilderneſs four thouſand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul ſaid, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarſus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beſeech thee, ſuffer me to ſpeak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul ſtood on the ſtairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great ſilence, he ſpake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, ſaying,

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the officers and ſoldiers, that were immediately under his own command, or part of them, and haſted to quell it. His preſence cauſed thoſe to ceaſe, who were beating Paul, intending to put him to death by blows with ſtones, or ſtaves, &c: and Lyſias, from their rage concluding that he muſt be ſome deſperate malefactor, ordered him to be bound with two chains, and demanded who he was, and of what crime he had been guilty? But not being able to learn any thing from the incoherent clamours of the mob, he ordered him to be conveyed to the caſtle; which ſtood on an eminence near the temple, being the ſtation of the Roman ſoldiers, that kept guard there. When the ſoldiers had brought Paul to the ſtairs, that led to the entrance of the caſtle, they were obliged to carry him, to prevent the people from violently ruſhing upon, and killing him: for they all furiouſly followed after, exclaiming, "away with him, or "kill him," "kill him."

V. 37—40.] When Paul was conveyed into the caſtle, out of the reach of the multitude, he deſired leave of the tribune to ſpeak to him, who was ſurpriſed to hear him readily uſe the Greek language; as he ſuppoſed him to have been an Egyptian, who ſome time before had made an inſurrection in the city, and leading forth thence a numerous banditti, had done great miſchief: and when his followers were deſtroyed or diſperſed, he had eſcaped; ſo that it was natural for Lyſias to ſuppoſe Paul to be the ſame perſon, attempting to excite new diſturbances. However, the apoſtle aſſured him, that he was a Jew, and a native of Tarſus, and ſo a citizen of a very eminent city: he therefore begged of him, that he might be permitted to addreſs the multitude, in order to ſilence their clamours, and rectify their miſapprehenſions; by which too he would learn who he was, and what he had done. Accordingly having got permiſſion, he placed himſelf on the top of the ſtairs, and made a ſignal with his hand to the multitude, that he wanted to ſpeak to them: and curioſity concurring with other motives, they obſerved a profound ſilence, whilſt he addreſſed them in the Hebrew tongue, at leaſt in that dialect of it, which was generally uſed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Wherever lively chriſtians travel, they will enquire after, and get acquainted with, their brethren in the Lord: for they delight in ſuch company, and deſire to do good to, and get benefit from them. But even this ſweet and endeared communion of the ſaints muſt not induce them to prolong their ſtay together, beyond what their other duties admit of. Fervent ſocial prayer will abate the poignancy of our ſorrow, when conſtrained to ſeparate from thoſe, whom we love: and this is peculiarly ſeaſonable, when ſharp afflictions, or important ſervices are in proſpect. Our children too ſhould be admitted to ſuch ſcenes of earneſt devotion; that their tender minds may be early impreſſed with a ſenſe of the excellency and importance of religion: thus we may hope, that when they grow up, they will be evidently partakers of the bleſſing, and endued with ſpiritual gifts, for the edification of others alſo: which ſhould be conſidered, as the greateſt favour, the Lord can beſtow on us, with reſpect to our offspring. The path of duty will eventually be that of ſafety: yet it often leads into many apparent, or temporary dangers and difficulties; the proſpect of which may induce thoſe, who value the uſeful lives of eminent perſons, to diſſuade them from ſuch ſervices, as are allotted to them: but if they be ſatisfied of their call in providence; they ſhould not turn aſide from their duty, out of concern or affection for their friends, any more than from fear of their enemies. But it is an extraordinary attainment, for the ſame man to be ſo firm, and inflexible, in following the dictates of his own conſcience, as to be habitually ready to endure bonds, or face death for the Lord's ſake; and yet ſo full of tenderneſs, and ſympathy, as to be more affected by the ſorrows of his friends, than by the proſpect of his own ſufferings! When we have given the beſt counſel that we can to thoſe, who conſcientiouſly deſire to know the will of God, and yet find that they are not convinced, or perſuaded by what we have urged; we ſhould deſiſt, and acquieſce in the will of the Lord, who can educe good from thoſe meaſures and events, which ſeem to us undeſirable, or inexpedient. In our endeavours to do good to our brethren, we ſhould introduce them to the acquaintance of thoſe, who have been a comfort or benefit to us: and "old diſciples" ſhould be *acceſſible*, as well as careful to give their younger brethren an example of humility, ſpirituality, ſtedfaſtneſs, zeal, prudence, candour, and enlarged love; which may evince that their

CHAP. XXII.

Contains 1ſt. Paul's defence before the people; in which he gave an account of his birth, education, zeal againſt the goſpel, converſion, and commiſſion from Jeſus to preach to the Gentiles, 1---21. 2d. The rage of the Jews on hearing this: the chief captain about to examine him by ſcourging, but deterred by learning that he was a Roman; and bringing him before the Jewiſh council, 22---30.

MEN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he ſpake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more ſilence: and he ſaith,)

3 I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarſus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I perſecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering into priſons both men and women.

5 As alſo the high prieſt doth bear me witneſs, and all the eſtate of the elders: from whom alſo I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damaſcus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jeruſalem, for to be puniſhed.

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dependence on, and devotedneſs to the Lord have increaſed, according to the years, during which they have known him.

The infirmity and depravity of the human heart are illuſtrated, and evinced to us, by conſidering how large a proportion of the diſciples of Chriſt, even in the days of the Apoſtles, were exceedingly diſaffected to the moſt eminent miniſter, that perhaps ever lived! Neither his extraordinary converſion, his blameleſs character, his peculiar endowments, his extenſive labours and uſefulneſs, or his patient ſufferings in the cauſe of Chriſt; nor yet the oblations, that he beſtowed ſo much pains to collect and bring from the Gentile converts to their Jewiſh brethren, could conciliate their eſteem and affection; ſeeing that he would not render that bigotted reſpect to the antiquated Moſaic ceremonial, with which they had been uſed to regard it! Nor could even the authority of James, and their pious elders pacify their minds, or prevent their tumultuous aſſembling together, when they heard that he was come to Jeruſalem! How watchful then ſhould we be againſt ſuch prejudices, and againſt thoſe miſrepreſentations of men's principles and conduct, from which they commonly originate! And how patient ſhould we be, if called to have fellowſhip with this great apoſtle in this affliction; and to endure the ſuſpicions and coldneſs of thoſe, whom we moſt eſteem and love! We ought indeed to uſe all proper methods of rectifying the judgments, and conciliating the affections of our brethren; as far as their prejudices can interfere with our uſefulneſs: yet we ſhould watch againſt the temptation of conniving at thoſe errors, or evils, which are the general ſource of ſuch prejudices, and which cannot properly be countenanced. When accommodation is allowed to infringe upon our ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, it will ſeldom produce any good effect. Our prejudiced brethren will not be ſatisfied, unleſs we go the full length of their ſentiments and ſuperſtitions: others will begin to ſuſpect our integrity, and to heſitate concerning us: and it is in vain to attempt conciliating the favour of graceleſs bigots, and furious zealots of a party; from whom we ſhall commonly do well to keep at a diſtance. However much wiſdom, integrity, and humility are requiſite, to guide us in the middle way between an uncomplying inflexibility in things of ſmall conſequence, and a temporizing ſpirit, in reſpect of important truth. But the Lord will preſerve his upright ſervants from fatal miſtakes; though he may ſee good to leave them to err in leſſer matters, and in ſome particular inſtances. They, who idolize notions, or the form of godlineſs, and hate the power of it, will miſrepreſent or condemn that conduct, which God moſt approves and bleſſes: and if partial truth cannot be ſo perverted as to appear ſufficiently odious, to exaſperate a ſect, or a mob, againſt the objects of their deteſtation; they will deviſe ſome falſe accuſation, to effect their purpoſe: and as the cauſe of God is ſuppoſed to be at ſtake; all means are ſanctified, by which the help, and concurrence of multitudes can be enſured. On theſe occaſions the profeſſed worſhippers of God often copy the example of the moſt infuriated idolaters, (Notes, &c. c. xix. v. 23—41;) and innocency, or excellency are no ſecurity to a man's life: for in ſuch tumults all diſcrimination of character, and diſtinction between truth, and error are confounded. However, the Lord is at all times a refuge for his people; and he ſometimes employs the fury of their enemies to raiſe them up friends amongſt ſuch as are ſtrangers to him; who become favourable to them, becauſe they find that they are not thoſe vile characters, that they have been repreſented or ſuſpected to be. And if he give us an opportunity of pleading our own cauſe before thoſe, that are prejudiced againſt us: we ſhould always prepare to ſpeak in behalf of the truth, and to recommend the goſpel of Chriſt to their ſerious attention.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1—5.] The apoſtle addreſſed the enraged multitude, in the cuſtomary ſtile of reſpect and good-will, as "men and brethren;" and as many principal perſons were preſent, he alſo added "fathers," to denote, that he was ready to render them all due honour and obedience, conſiſtent with the will of God, notwithſtanding their indignation againſt him. When therefore they found, that he ſpake thus compoſedly to them in the Hebrew dialect, they obſerved the more ſtrict ſilence; and he proceeded to declare unto them, that he was a Jew, and not a Gentile or a proſelyte: and that, though born at Tarſus, yet he had been edu-

6 And it came to paſs, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damaſcus, about noon, ſuddenly there ſhone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice ſaying unto me, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?

8 And I anſwered, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid unto me, I am Jeſus of Nazareth, whom thou perſecuteſt.

9 And they that were with me ſaw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that ſpake to me.

10 And I ſaid, What ſhall I do, Lord? And the Lord ſaid unto me, Ariſe, and go into Damaſcus; and there it ſhall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not ſee for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damaſcus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,

13 Came unto me, and ſtood, and ſaid unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy ſight. And the ſame hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he ſaid, The God of our fathers hath choſen thee, that thou ſhouldeſt know his will, and ſee that Juſt One, and ſhouldeſt hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou ſhalt be his witneſs unto all men of what thou haſt ſeen and heard.

16 And now, why tarrieſt thou? ariſe, and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.

17 And it came to paſs, that when I was come again to Jeruſalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And ſaw him ſaying unto me, Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem: for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning me.

19 And I ſaid, Lord, they know that I impriſoned and beat in every ſynagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was ſhed, I alſo was ſtanding by, and

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cated in Jeruſalem by Gamaliel, the moſt eminent of their Rabbies, At his feet he had been uſed to ſit; according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, when the ſcholars ſat on the ground, or on low ſeats near the teacher, who was raiſed above them on a ſort of throne. He had therefore been inſtructed in the moſt accurate manner in the law of Moſes, and in the traditions of the elders; and was very zealous for their mode of worſhipping God, as he knew them to be at that time. Of this he had given abundant proof, by perſecuting thoſe, who ſought God's favour *in the way* of the goſpel; doing all in his power to get them put to death, or laid up in priſon, without diſtinction whether they were men or women. To this the high prieſt, who was then in power, could bear witneſs, as well as the other members of the Sanhedrim; as he had received letters from them to the brethren, or the Jews at Damaſcus, againſt the chriſtians in that city. But he would now relate to them the manner, whereby he had been induced to embrace and preach that doctrine, which he then ſo furiouſly perſecuted.

V. 6—13.] (Notes &c. c. ix. v. 1—18.)

V. 14—16.] The God of Abraham had choſen Saul the perſecutor, as the object of his ſpecial love: in conſequence of this he had determined to make known to him his will, and that he ſhould ſee that Juſt and Holy One, who came to ſave ſinners, and alſo hear, believe, and obey his voice, as ſpeaking immediately to him: this he had done by the way, and he would have further viſions of Him, and revelations of his will; that he might be fully qualified to be his apoſtle, a witneſs of his reſurrection, and of what he had ſeen and heard, to men of all nations. As therefore he had ſuch full proof of the Lord's free love to him, notwithſtanding his aggravated crimes, and of his purpoſe to employ him as his miniſter; why ſhould he doubt any longer, or heſitate to profeſs his faith by receiving baptiſm, the emblem of the waſhing away of his ſins, and the ſeal to him and all true believers of that bleſſing, and of the righteouſneſs of faith; as circumciſion had been to Abraham? In doing this, he muſt call upon the name of the Lord, even upon the Lord Jeſus, as the expreſſion generally means: for this invocation of him as the Son of God ſeems to have been one part of their profeſſion of faith in his name.

V. 17—21.] The apoſtle having ſhewn his audience how he became a chriſtian, and a preacher of the goſpel, proceeded to declare to them the manner, in which he had been led to exerciſe his miniſtry among the Gentiles; which was the great cauſe of their peculiar rage againſt him. A conſiderable time after his converſion, (c. ix. v. 19—30,) he came up to Jeruſalem; and being worſhipping in the court of the temple, he was thrown into a trance, or extacy, in which He, the Lord Jeſus perſonally appeared to him, and bade him ſpeedily leave that city, for the Jews would not receive his teſtimony to him. To this he ventured to object, that as they were generally acquainted with the ſeverities he had exerciſed againſt the chriſtians, and eſpecially his concurrence in the martyrdom of Stephen; he was in hopes, that they would regard his teſtimony to the man-conſenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that ſlew him.

21 And he ſaid unto me, Depart: for I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and ſaid, Away with ſuch *a fellow* from the earth; for it is not fit that he ſhould live.

23 And as they cried out, and caſt off *their* clothes, and threw duſt into the air.

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the caſtle, and bade that he ſhould be examined by ſcourging; that he might know wherefore they cried ſo againſt him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul ſaid unto the centurion that ſtood by, Is it lawful for you to ſcourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, ſaying, Take heed what thou doeſt: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and ſaid unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He ſaid, Yea.

28 And the chief captain anſwered, With a great ſum obtained I this freedom. And Paul ſaid, But I was *free* born.

29 Then ſtraightway they departed from him which ſhould have examined him: and the chief captain alſo was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and becauſe he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, becauſe he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accuſed of the Jews, he looſed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief prieſts and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and ſet him before them.

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ner of his converſion, and to the goſpel as preached by him. But the Lord ſilenced this plea, and bade him depart without delay, as he had purpoſed to employ him at a great diſtance amongſt the Gentiles. Doubtleſs many that heard Paul on this occaſion, could well remember the facts, to which he referred, and atteſt them to others. He therefore meant to convince them, that his miſſion to the Gentiles was not the reſult of his own choice, who earneſtly deſired to have been uſeful to his country men: but at the ſame time it intimated the approaching rejection of the Jewiſh nation, as well as the calling of the Gentiles into the church.

V. 22—30.] The Jews patiently heard Paul's account of his converſion: but the mention of his being ſent to preach to the Gentiles, was ſo contrary to their proud and bigotted ſelf-preference, their contempt of other nations, and all their religious prejudices, that they would hear no more; but in the moſt furious rage, they cried out, that ſuch a fellow ought to be dragged away to immediate death, for it was not fit for him to live upon the earth; ſeeing he thus openly preferred uncircumciſed idolaters to the covenant people of God. Moreover amidſt their exclamations they pulled off their clothes, either as preparing to ſtone him to death if they could have got hold of him, or to expreſs their abhorrence of his ſuppoſed blaſphemy; and they threw duſt into the air, as frantic with rage, or that it might fall and cover them, to denote the greatneſs of their horror at what had been ſaid. This conduct might well aſtoniſh the tribune, who could not underſtand what had wrought them up to ſuch an exceſs of fury: but though he ſuppoſed, that Paul had committed ſome atrocious crime, he would not give him up to their reſentment. Yet, according to the barbarous, and irrational practice in uſe even among the Romans, (as it is in many nations to this day,) he ordered him to be examined by ſcourging, till the anguiſh of the ſtripes inflicted on him ſhould extort from him a confeſſion of his guilt. As the ſoldiers were binding him with thongs for that purpoſe, he demanded of the centurion, whom the tribune had charged with this ſervice, whether it were lawful for them thus to ſcourge a Roman citizen, who had not been condemned for any crime? As a Roman might not be puniſhed before he was legally condemned, nor ſcourged in this manner at all; and as it was even unlawful to bind him with thongs, though not to put fetters upon him; ſo the centurion was led by this queſtion to caution the tribune to take care what he did. And he came to the apoſtle to enquire whether he really were entitled to the privilege of a Roman? He had himſelf purchaſed it for a great ſum of money: and as Paul was a Jew, apparently in lower circumſtances, he queſtioned him how he acquired ſo valuable a diſtinction: but the apoſtle informed him, that he was free born. He had before mentioned his being a citizen of Tarſus, yet the tribune had not thence inferred, that he was entitled to the privilege of a Roman citizen; ſo that it is probable, that all the citizens of the Roman colonies had not this privilege: but it does not greatly concern us to determine, in what manner the diſtinction was made. However, Paul ſatisfied the tribune, that he was a Roman; and ſo the deſign of ſcourging him was given up, and the tribune feared being called to account for having bound him. And inſtead of this method of diſcovering his crime, he, on the morrow, ſummoned the council, and brought Paul, freed from his fetters, before them to be examined. Hence we may infer, that many of the principal perſons in the nation had joined with the multitude, in their vehement, and outrageous zeal againſt the apoſtle.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains 1*ſt. Paul before the council profeſſing his continued conſcientiouſneſs; ſmitten by the high prieſt's command; reproving his hypocriſy, and predicting his ruin; and excuſing the ſharpneſs of his language, &c,* 1---5. 2*d. His declaration that he was a Phariſee, reſpecting the doctrine of the reſurrection; and thus dividing his perſecutors, by drawing over ſome of them to eſpouſe his cauſe: and the chief captain ordering him to be carried away, leſt he ſhould be torn in pieces by their violence,* 6---10. 3*d. The Lord Jeſus encouraging him in a viſion,* 11. 4*th. Certain Jews conſpiring to aſſaſſinate him; the diſcovery of their plot to the chief captain; his ſending Paul under a ſtrong guard to Ceſarea, and the letter he wrote about him to Felix the governor,* 12---35.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The honour of the goſpel requires it's advocates to ſpeak with temper, benevolence, and reſpect to their civil ſuperiors, as well as with boldneſs and conſtancy; in the midſt of all the abuſe, that may be caſt upon them. A ſimple narration of the Lord's dealings with us, in bringing us from oppoſing, to profeſs and promote his goſpel, when it is delivered with modeſty and caution, will ſometimes make more impreſſion on men's minds, than laboured arguments, or rhetorical flouriſhes. Indeed the experience, and converſion of ſome perſons have been ſo remarkable, that the recital of them hath great force of argument in it: though it amount not to that compleat demonſtration of the truth, which the change wrought in the caſe of the apoſtle contained in it. Natural abilities, the advantages of education, proficiency in learning, exactneſs in a ſyſtem, and a glowing zeal for God according to it, may be either valuable, or miſchievous; according as they are directed under the influence of divine grace in ſupport of the truth, or employed by men's ſelfiſh paſſions, in defence of error. Zeal eſpecially is an ambiguous attainment: it may be a fierce, cruel, and dreadful flame, kindled from beneath, and deſtroying all around it with fatal vehemence: or it may be a gentle, active, kind, and heavenly principle, powerfully influencing the poſſeſſor to every thing excellent, and beneficial, in the perſevering uſe of the moſt unexceptionable means.

But many, who for a time have devoted their talents to the ſervice of deluſion, and error, have afterwards been induced to conſecrate them to the cauſe of Chriſt. The Lord having choſen the ſinner, "that he ſhould know "his will," he is awakened, humbled, illuminated, and brought acquainted with Jeſus, and his bleſſed goſpel: being acknowledged as a brother, by thoſe who were diſciples before him, he makes profeſſion of his faith, calls upon the Redeemer's name, receives the comfort of being waſhed from his ſins, and teſtifies to others what he hath heard, and learned of the Saviour's glory and grace. Thus he paſſes from ſatan's kingdom to that of Chriſt, and begins to ſeek its peace, and proſperity; whilſt his former aſſociates are ſurpriſed, offended, or enraged at the revolution that hath taken place. When a man is thus admitted among the ſervants of Chriſt, he is often employed in ſuch ſervices, as he thought not of, and as diſconcert all his own ſchemes. Not being wholly weaned from leaning to his own underſtanding; he is ſometimes reluctant to renounce his favourite plan, even after he hath been praying for direction reſpecting the will of the Lord. A man, in ſuch circumſtances, often imagines, that his former friends, having known his contempt and enmity againſt the truth, will pay the more attention to his teſtimony; and that his former known zeal for ſome form, or party, and againſt ſuch tenets as he deemed enthuſiaſtical and erroneous, will induce them to enquire into the grounds of the change, that hath taken place. Perhaps he will think, that their oppoſition ariſes mainly from miſinformation; and that if the truth were fairly ſet before them, they could not reſiſt the evidence of it. Thus he may practically forget, that nothing can reconcile man's heart to the goſpel, except the ſpecial grace of God; that a prophet is not without honour ſave in his own country: and that a man may expect a more favourable hearing from entire ſtrangers, than from prejudiced neighbours, relatives, and acquaintance; who commonly treat his attempts to convince them, as an uſurpation of authority, to which he is not entitled.

But the Lord Jeſus will inſiſt upon the obedience of his ſervants: and often they, who would not receive their teſtimony, will be diſpleaſed at their leaving them, to addreſs ſuch as are willing to attend to their words. Bigotry and ſpiritual pride commonly connect with furious wrath, and intolerant malice. It is well for mankind, that the power of ſuch men is often inadequate to their rage: otherwiſe they would drive all the ſervants of Chriſt out of the earth, as unfit to live upon it. But the Lord mercifully reſtrains their madneſs, by ſubjecting them to more moderate men. For though many iniquities have been practiſed by magiſtrates, even in civilized nations; yet their ſeverity is commonly tender mercy, compared with the cruelty of enraged bigots, when advanced to authority: and their haſte in puniſhing is deliberation and caution, compared with the fury of a licentious mob, when excited by frantic perſecutors. But how great a privilege is it to be governed according to a written law! That if a magiſtrate be about to act unjuſtly, it may be demanded of him, whether this be lawful? And ſuggeſted to him, to take heed what he doeth, leſt he ſhould expoſe himſelf to a judicial rebuke. Chriſtians are allowed to avail themſelves of theſe privileges: our birth-right as Britons, (who are far more favoured in providence, than even the Roman citizens were,) is not forfeited by our becoming the ſubjects of Chriſt: though we ſhould inſiſt upon them with great modeſty, prudence and quietneſs. But we ſhould moſt of all value that freedom, to which all the children of God are born; and which no ſum of money, however large, can purchaſe for ſuch, as remain unregenerate.

AND

CHAP. XXIII.

AND Paul, earneſtly beholding the council, ſaid, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conſcience before God until this day.

2 And the high prieſt Ananias commanded them that ſtood by him, to ſmite him on the mouth.

3 Then ſaid Paul unto him, God ſhall ſmite thee, *thou* whited wall: for ſitteſt thou to judge me after the law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that ſtood by ſaid, Revileſt thou God's high prieſt?

5 Then ſaid Paul, I wiſt not, brethren, that he was the high prieſt: for it is written, Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee: of the hope and reſurrection of the dead I am called in queſtion.

7 And when he had ſo ſaid, there aroſe a diſſenſion between the Phariſees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees ſay that there is no reſurrection, neither angel, nor ſpirit; but the Phariſees confeſs both.

9 And there aroſe a great cry: and the

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1—5.] When the apoſtle was placed before the Sanhedrim, he ſtedfaſtly viewed it, to obſerve of what perſons it now conſiſted; and as confidently looking at thoſe who formerly employed him in perſecuting the chriſtians: and he then ſolemnly proteſted, that he had "to that day lived in all good "conſcience towards God." They were ready to condemn him as a moſt atrocious criminal for embracing the goſpel, and preaching it to the Gentiles: but he declared, that in theſe things he had not acted from ſiniſter motives, but out of a conſcientious regard to his duty in the ſight of God, in which he had perſevered amidſt many trials, to that very time; notwithſtanding the out-cry that had been made againſt him. He had indeed acted according to his conſcience, when he perſecuted the chriſtians: but this was the reſult of pride, ignorance, inattention, and obſtinate ſelf-will; and it can hardly be ſuppoſed, that he would call this "a good "conſcience before God." But the council would have given him credit for this part of his life: his object therefore evidently was to ſhew, that he had acted conſcientiouſly, and on good grounds, in thoſe things, which they deemed deſerving of death; and he doubtleſs meant more fully to have explained his reaſons, and motives, if they would have heard them. But the high-prieſt, being a leading perſon in this proſecution, and aware that Paul's proteſtation of innocence implied a charge of malice and injuſtice againſt his virulent enemies, ordered him to be ſmitten on the mouth, for pleading "not "guilty," when they were determined to condemn him! This was oppreſſive, iniquitous, and illegal in the extreme: and Paul immediately denounced the judgment of God upon him for it, and for his other crimes; and declared him to be "a whited wall," or a hypocrite, who might be compared to a mud wall, whited over, and made to have a fair outſide. This appeared, in that he ſat in the council to judge him according to the law of God; yet inſtead of enquiring into the merits of his cauſe, he had ordered him to be ſmitten, before he was proved guilty of any fault, or even impropriety in his behaviour. (*Lev.* c. xix. v. 15. *Deut.* c. xvii. v. 4.) "Ananias carried it very plauſibly towards the "citizens, and ſtood high in their favour: yet he im- "piouſly, and cruelly defrauded the inferior prieſts of "their legal ſubſiſtence, ſo that ſome of them even pe- "riſhed for want. And God did remarkably ſmite him: "for after his own houſe had been reduced to aſhes in "a tumult begun by his own ſon; he was beſieged and "taken in the royal palace; where, having in vain at- "tempted to hide himſelf in an old aqueduct, he was "dragged out and ſlain." (Doddridge.) But though the anſwer of Paul contained a juſt rebuke, and an evident prediction; yet in uttering them he ſeems to have been too much carried away by his indignation at the baſe treatment, that he had met with: being therefore cenſured for reviling God's high-prieſt; he anſwered that he was not aware that he was the high-prieſt. It ſeems unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle would, in ſuch circumſtances, queſtion Ananias's title to his office, or refer to the High-Prieſthood of Chriſt as ſuperſeding it: though the ſcripture referred to ſeems rather to point out his office as a ſupreme magiſtrate, than his ſacred function. (Note, *Exod.* c. xxii. v. 28.) The apoſtle probably allowed, that in the warmth of his ſpirit, he had not adverted to the perſon, who had given the orders, or was not aware that he was the high-prieſt. Perhaps the high-prieſt in the Sanhedrim was not always to be known by his ſeat, or his garments; and Ananias did not fill that office, when Paul was more converſant with that aſſembly. But whether the apoſtle meant by this conceſſion to wave the queſtion, concerning his ſpeaking by the ſpirit of prophecy, as not chooſing to inſiſt on it in his vindication of himſelf; or whether he allowed that he had ſpoken too ſharply, and could not juſtify the whole of his anſwer, or propoſe it to the imitation of others, is not ſo clear: yet the latter ſeems moſt probable. (*John*, c. xviii. v. 19—23.)

V. 6—10.] The apoſtle perſonally knew many members of the Sanhedrim; and he was ſenſible that there were two parties among them of oppoſite principles, and very vehement in their conteſts with each other; though ſcribes *that were* of the Phariſees part aroſe, and ſtrove, ſaying, We find no evil in this man: but, if a ſpirit or an angel hath ſpoken to him, let us not fight againſt God.

10 And when there aroſe a great diſſenſion, the chief captain, fearing leſt Paul ſhould have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the ſoldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the caſtle.

11 And the night following the Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themſelves under a curſe, ſaying, That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conſpiracy.

14 And they came to the chief prieſts and elders, and ſaid, We have bound ourſelves under a great curſe, that we will eat nothing until we have ſlain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council ſignify to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

they were now agreed in perſecuting him. As therefore they would pay no impartial attention to reaſon, or facts however authenticated; he determined to attempt diverting their violence from himſelf upon each other. Accordingly he cried aloud, that he was the ſon of a Phariſee, had been educated in the opinions of that ſect, and ſtill maintained the principal doctrines, that were controverted between them and the ſadducees: nay, that in fact he was called in queſtion at that time, for profeſſing the hope, and bearing teſtimony to the reality, of the reſurrection of the dead. The principal fact, which he atteſted, as the apoſtle of Chriſt, was his reſurrection from the dead, to be the firſt-fruits of his people; and all his doctrines were intimately connected with that fundamental principle. The firſt perſecution of the church reſulted from the apoſtles teſtimony to the reſurrection of their crucified Lord; and the Sadducees took the lead in it, becauſe they preached through Jeſus the reſurrection of the dead: and the enmity of many in the council againſt Paul, at that time, was increaſed, by their conſciouſneſs that his doctrine was wholly ſubverſive of their favourite ſcheme: ſo that in every way, he was called to account for preaching Jeſus as riſen, and the hope and doctrine of a future reſurrection. This was therefore an evident truth; he was not obliged to bring forward all the doctrines he profeſſed, in his preſent circumſtances, when not interrogated about them; and it ſeems to have been entirely juſtifiable in him, by this ſeaſonable profeſſion of his opinion on that diſputed point, to draw off the Phariſees from the ſide of his perſecutors, and to induce them to give him ſome protection amidſt all this illegal violence. At the ſame time he therein ſhewed a moſt conſummate ſagacity, and a deep acquaintance with the principles of the human heart, by which mankind are generally actuated. Accordingly this declaration was ſo pleaſing to the Phariſees, that their rage was for the time diſarmed: and the Sadducees being proportionably exaſperated; the two parties began eagerly to diſpute about the reſurrection of the dead, the exiſtence of angels, and of ſeparate ſpirits, &c; the one contending for, and the other arguing againſt theſe doctrines, with the greateſt virulence. At length thoſe of the Scribes, that eſpouſed the party of the Phariſees, (being ſharpened againſt their antagoniſts, and perceiving that Paul's doctrine, and narrative concerning himſelf, tended to eſtabliſh their tenets, and to deſtroy thoſe of the Sadducees,) declared that they did not find him guilty of any crime: and though they did not believe what he ſaid concerning Jeſus of Nazareth; yet if an angel, or the ſpirit of ſome deceaſed perſon had ſpoken to him, (as doubtleſs had often been done;) it did not become them to fight againſt God, by puniſhing him, when perhaps he declared the truth to them. (c. v. ver. 34—40.) There is a great ſimilarity between this ſpeech, and the counſel, that Gamaliel had formerly given them; and perhaps there was a reference to it: though he ſeems to have died before this time. However, the conteſt now became ſo fierce between the parties, that Lyſias began to apprehend they would tear Paul in pieces in their fury; and therefore he ordered him to be taken from them, and conveyed into the caſtle. What muſt this heathen have thought of the worſhippers of God, when he ſaw this aſſembly of prieſts, ſcribes and, rulers of Iſrael, forgetful of what became their rank, profeſſion, and ſacred character; and carried away by ſuch unbridled rage in their religious conteſts, as the Romans would have been aſhamed of, in their competition for authority and preferments!

V. 11. *And*, &c.] The apoſtle had been repeatedly delivered from the moſt imminent danger: but he was confined in priſon; and the deſperate malice of his numerous enemies would leave nothing unattempted, in order to take away his life. He might therefore perhaps be under ſome diſcouragement in reſpect of his ſituation: but his gracious Lord was pleaſed perſonally to appear before him, aſſuring him that he accepted of his teſtimony concerning him in Jeruſalem; and that his deſire of atteſting his truth at Rome alſo would certainly be granted; (c. xix. v. 21:) this enſured his protection againſt all his enemies, who might fight with him, but could not prevail againſt him. (*Iſaiah*, c. liv. v. 17. *Jer*. c. i. v. 19.)

V. 12—22.] The Jews perceiving that Lyſias was

16 And when Paul's ſiſter's ſon heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the caſtle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and ſaid, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and ſaid, Paul the priſoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath ſomething to ſay unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aſide privately, and aſked *him*, What is that thou haſt to tell me?

20 And he ſaid, The Jews have agreed to deſire thee, that thou wouldeſt bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would enquire ſomewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themſelves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promiſe from thee.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou haſt ſhewed theſe things to me.

23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, ſaying, Make ready two hundred ſoldiers to go to Ceſarea, and horſemen threeſcore and ten, and ſpearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide *them* beaſts, that they may ſet Paul on, and bring *him* ſafe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lyſias unto the moſt excellent governor Felix *ſendeth* greeting.

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and ſhould have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and reſcued him, having underſtood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cauſe wherefore they accuſed him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accuſed of queſtions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

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reſolved to protect Paul, unleſs he were legally convicted, began to fear that their malice would be diſappointed. Therefore forty of the moſt zealous of them, probably not members of the council, yet not perſons of the loweſt order, ſuppoſing that they ſhould do God ſervice by murdering his miniſter, (*John*, c. xvi. v. 1, 2,) conſpired together, engaging by a ſolemn oath, and an anathema, or imprecation of divine vengeance upon themſelves, if they taſted either meat or drink, till they had ſlain Paul. Inſtead of being aſhamed of this moſt atrocious deſign of aſſaſſination; they gloried in it as highly meritorious: and knowing that many of the prieſts, and elders of the council would favour the deſign; (for the Sadducees ſeem to have been the more numerous in that aſſembly;) they went and informed them of their whole plan, and aſſigned them the part, which they ſhould perform, in order to accompliſh it; whilſt the guilt, or odium of the meaſure, if there were any, was to reſt wholly on the conſpirators. By what means Paul's nephew diſcovered this diabolical deſign, is not known: but as ſo many perſons were privy to it, and they only wiſhed to conceal it from Lyſias, till it were executed; they might not all be very cautious in ſpeaking of it. However, the providence of God took this method of detecting and diſappointing it: Paul, though aſſured of protection, deemed it his duty to uſe every proper means for that purpoſe: and the conduct of Lyſias towards the young man ſhewed much affability, good ſenſe, generoſity, and regard to truth and equity; which *in an heathen* formed a ſtriking contraſt to the inſidious, violent, cruel, and iniquitous conduct of the Jewiſh prieſts and rulers, who were evidently ripe for vengeance.

V. 23, 24.] Lyſias rightly judged that Paul would never be ſafe at Jeruſalem: and as the atrocious criminality of his enemies ſerved to confirm him in his determination to protect him; he was aware that inſurrections might enſue, unleſs Paul were removed. He therefore reſolved to ſend him to Felix, the Roman governor, who reſided at Ceſarea, (which ſome compute to have been about ſeventy miles from Jeruſalem; others not ſo far.) The body of Roman ſoldiers, appointed to eſcort him, would have ſufficed to repel any tumultuary aſſault of the Jews: but to prevent blood-ſhed, they were ordered to ſet off about three hours after ſun-ſet; that they might be out of the reach of the zealots before morning. This prudent precaution was accompanied by one equally humane: Paul was not required to walk with the ſoldiers; who had been accuſtomed to long, and ſpeedy marches, but they were ordered to provide beaſts, mules, or horſes, changing them when neceſſary; that he might be conducted ſafe, and conveniently to Ceſarea.

V. 27—30.] This epiſtle, which is a good ſpecimen of the Roman method of writing letters, may be conſidered as a model of brevity, ſimplicity, and perſpicuity.

30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I ſent ſtraightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accuſers alſo, to ſay before thee what *they had* againſt him. Farewell.

31 Then the ſoldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night unto Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horſemen to go with him, and returned to the caſtle;

33 Who, when they came to Ceſarea, and delivered the epiſtle to the governor, preſented Paul alſo before him.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he aſked of what province he was. And when he underſtood that *he was* of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, ſaid he, when thine accuſers are alſo come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

The cuſtomary title of reſpect to a ſuperior, and expreſſion of good-will, are *once only* made uſe of: and in this it differs exceedingly from modern epiſtles to perſons of ſuch high rank and authority; which are generally encumbered with multiplied compliments, and aſcriptions of honour, till they loſe all their meaning. However, Lyſias was careful not to intimate to Felix, that he had bound Paul, in order to ſcourge him: and as we ſuppoſe this to have been an exact copy of the letter, it appears, that he was willing Felix ſhould conclude, that the whole of his interpoſition in Paul's favour, aroſe from a previous knowledge, that he was a Roman citizen. In other reſpects the account was fair and candid: and we cannot wonder that a heathen ſhould ſtate his conduct in that light; which was moſt favourable to his own reputation, and advancement.

V. 35. *Herod's*, &c.] This was not the common jail; but part of a palace built by Herod the Great: and Paul was lodged in it as more favoured than priſoners in general were. Thus he eſcaped the fury of the conſpirators; who, would find out ſome evaſion of, or obtain ſome diſpenſation from, their oath: but the curſe of God, which they had imprecated upon themſelves, could not thus be got rid of.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

To be able to rejoice in the teſtimony of a good conſcience before God, amidſt calumnies and perſecutions, is an invaluable bleſſing: but this cannot be habitually poſſeſſed, except by a continued exerciſe of faith in Chriſt, and an upright obedience to his commandments. No rank, learning, authority, religious profeſſion, or ſacred function, can cure the pride and ſelfiſhneſs of the human heart: but iniquity, and oppreſſion are moſt hateful, when committed in courts of juſtice, and maſked with pretenſions to piety. Such criminals are whited walls, and painted ſepulchres, whom God will ſmite with diſtinguiſhed vengeance. The beſt of men are liable, when greatly abuſed, to be put off their guard: and even that zeal and faithfulneſs, which the Holy Spirit dictates, in warning ſinners of their approaching ruin, will often be mingled with the remains of our ſinful paſſions, and prompt us to ſpeak unadviſedly with our lips. But whether in reality, or only in appearance, we ſpeak, or act inconſiſtently with God's precepts; it is better to decline a too ſtrenuous juſtification of ourſelves, and to admit that our conduct was in ſome reſpects unfit for imitation: and in general we ſhould by no means ſpeak evil of our rulers; whatever their characters may be, or however they may have injured us: for a chriſtian's maxim is, "to overcome evil with good."

The wiſdom of the ſerpent is neceſſary for us, as well as the harmleſſneſs of the dove, in our conduct amidſt unreaſonable and wicked men. It is uſeleſs to urge the moſt concluſive arguments, when we know that our cauſe is already pre-judged: and it is lawful on ſome occaſions to ſeek the protection of one party againſt the violence of another, by declaring that we hold with them in many important doctrines: if this can be ſaid conſiſtent with exact truth. Thus we may ſometimes divert the ſtorm, which we could not repreſs; and divide the counſels of the enemies of the goſpel. Among thoſe, who oppoſe ſpiritual religion, ſome come nearer to the truth, than others do: and though formal ſelf-righteous Phariſees are to be warned, and ſhunned; yet Sadducees, who deny all the doctrines of revealed religion, are, at leaſt, to be as ſtrenuouſly oppoſed. In every controverſy, eſpecially relating to religion; an appeal to men's paſſions and prejudices, and an avowed preference of their tenets to thoſe of their opponents, will often go further than either ſound arguments, or exemplary conduct, in ſoftening their reſentment, and ſecuring their eſteem. Allow them to have judgment, and to have truth on their ſide, and they will be diſpoſed to grant you the ſame: for man is a ſelf-conceited, vain-glorious creature, who courts flattery, and wants to have his own opinion conſidered as the ſtandard of truth. An attention to this peculiarity ſeems the grand deviſe for managing mankind; whether among the giddy multitude, in the great councils of nations, or in eccleſiaſtical conventions. But it is a delicate operation, that requires great ſkill, and caution; and there is great danger of deviating from ſtrict ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity into mere carnal policy, if we have much recourſe to it: though we may avail ourſelves of it on ſome great emergency, and when it may evidently be done, without receding from our principles, and to the advantage of the truth. But what a ſcandal is it, when the profeſſors, and miniſters of religion are ſo furious in their conteſts; that ungodly men cry ſhame of their violence, and are conſtrained to interpoſe authority, or military force to quell the riot, and prevent more fatal conſequences! Or when national, or eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies reſemble more a meeting of furious aſſaſſins, than a convention of legiſlators, or of the ſervants of God! Yet this hath too often been the caſe: and the fury of controverſy is not yet extinct.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains 1*ſt. The high-prieſt, and elders going to Ceſarea, and by Tertullus accuſing Paul before Felix,* 1---9. 2*d. Paul making his defence, refuting the charges brought againſt him, and giving an account of his own conduct,* 10---21. 3*d. Felix deferring the matter, and ſhewing favour to Paul.* 22, 23. 4*th. Paul reaſoning before Felix and Druſilla of righteouſneſs, temperance, and a judgment to come; Felix trembling, and poſtponing the ſubject; keeping Paul in priſon from lucrative motives, and at length leaving him bound to pleaſe the Jews,* 24---27.

AND after five days Ananias the high prieſt deſcended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor againſt Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuſe *him*, ſaying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs.

4 Notwithſtanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldeſt hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 For we have found this man *a* peſtilent *fellow*, and a mover of ſedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the ſect of the Nazarenes:

6 Who alſo hath gone about to profane the temple; whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.

7 But the chief captain Lyſias came *upon us*, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands.

8 Commanding his accuſers to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thyſelf mayeſt take knowledge of all theſe things whereof we accuſe him.

9 And the Jews alſo aſſented, ſaying, That theſe things were ſo.

Amidſt perils and troubles, the Lord Jeſus will be the comfort, and refuge of his faithful ſervants; until their teſtimony, and work be finiſhed: and did their enemies know how ſweet their ſecret conſolations are, they would be leſs ſupriſed at their fortitude, and patience in public. The corruption of the beſt things become the worſt; falſe religious principles, zealouſly eſpouſed by carnal men, will dictate ſuch enormities, as other men ſeem ſcarce capable of: and thus the moſt horrid villanies have been perpetrated not only without remorſe, but with exultation. But how careful ſhould we be not to vow what is criminal, or may be impracticable! And not to trifle with oaths and imprecations! Thus men are drawn into wickedneſs, and expoſe themſelves to vengeance, which way ſoever they turn themſelves: nor will evaſions, or diſpenſations extricate them from the ſnare: all that in this caſe can be done, is to repent, and ſeek forgiveneſs of ſo great a wickedneſs. The Lord readily diſappoints the beſt concerted ſchemes of iniquity, and detects the moſt ſecret devices of his enemies. He hath inſtruments for every work; and the natural abilities, and moral virtues of heathens have often been employed, in the protection of his perſecuted ſervants: and they can diſcern between the unaffected conſcientiouſneſs of upright believers, and the zeal of falſe profeſſors: though they diſregard, or underſtand not their doctrinal principles. Nothing *ſpiritually* good can indeed be found in fallen human nature, except as the fruit of renewing grace: yet a regard to truth, equity, and humanity is left in the heart of thoſe, who know not God, which is ſeldom totally overcome, except by falſe principles, or long habits of vice. This helps to keep the world in order: and by means of it the Lord fulfils his word to his perſecuted people: for all hearts are in his hand; and they are bleſſed, who put their truſt in Him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1—9.] The high prieſt and elders conſidered the proſecution of Paul as ſo important a matter, or rather were in ſuch a rage with him and Lyſias; that they loſt no time in following him to Ceſarea: ſo that they arrived there five days after Paul left Jeruſalem. Some think that it was but five days from the time of his being apprehended; and conſequently they ſuppoſe that the more days were ſpent in his purification. (Note. c. xxi. v. 27.) In order to render their cauſe more ſpecious before the governor, they retained a noted orator as their counſel: but his diſingenuity and falſhood are more prominent in his ſpeech, than his oratorical abilities. However, he underſtood the art of flattery; and laviſhed encomiums on Felix, who was a very bad character, and a grievous oppreſſor of the provinces. Yet he panegyrized him, as the author of peace and proſperity to the nation; and as if they had been deeply indebted to his wiſe, and beneficent plans, and prudent adminiſtration: nay, he ſeemed to aſcribe their imagined felicity to *his providence over them*, in a manner derogatory to that of God. Yet we read of no benefit whatever, reſulting from Felix's oppreſſive government, except that he freed the country of ſome daring gangs of robbers. Tertullus however intimated, that he would have enlarged ſtill more in his encomiums, had he not feared being tedious to him, and therefore he intreated him, according to *his known clemency* to hear him ſpeak a few words concerning the priſoner. For they had found him to be *a peſtilence*, a man who infected every one with his pernicious principles, and ſo became a public nuiſance. He had excited

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to ſpeak, anſwered, Foraſmuch as I know that thou haſt been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more chearſully anſwer for myſelf:

11 Becauſe that thou mayeſt underſtand, that there are yet but twelve days ſince I went up to Jeruſalem for to worſhip.

12 And they neither found me in the temple diſputing with any man, neither raiſing up the people, neither in the ſynagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuſe me.

14 But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

15 And have hope toward God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt.

16 And herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a conſcience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Aſia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult:

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought againſt me.

20 Or elſe let theſe ſame *here* ſay, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I ſtood before the council

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried ſtanding among them, Touching the reſurrection of the dead I am called in queſtion by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard theſe things,

the Jews to ſedition all over the world; being a ringleader of a moſt dangerous ſect, who profeſſed allegiance to Jeſus of Nazareth, and who could not therefore be ſuppoſed loyal ſubjects to the Roman emperor. But, waving other particulars, he had juſt before ventured to profane the temple, by bringing Gentiles into it: and when, according to the allowance of the Roman authority, they had apprehended him, and were about to proceed againſt him *in a legal manner*; Lyſias had interpoſed with a military force, taken the matter out of their hands, and required his accuſers to come thither: by whoſe teſtimony Felix might be certified of the truth of all theſe allegations. Though almoſt every ſentence in this ſpeech contained a falſhood; yet the abandoned high-prieſt and elders heſitated not to atteſt the truth of it all together.

V. 10—21.] Felix was aware of the temper of Paul's accuſers; and he ſeems to have paid little regard to their repreſentations. He therefore gave Paul leave to ſpeak in his own defence: and he, without ſeeking to conciliate the governor's favour by any compliment, began with obſerving, that he ſpake the more chearfully before Felix, as he had been ſeveral years a judge of that nation, (about ſeven years, and longer than ſeveral of his predeceſſors;) and was more competent to underſtand ſuch queſtions, than an entire ſtranger would have been. He would then obſerve, that only twelve days before, he had come up to Jeruſalem to keep the feaſt of Pentecoſt, and to worſhip according to the law: that he had neither entered into any diſputation in the temple, nor excited any inſurrection in the ſynagogues, or the city; nor could the leaſt evidence be adduced in proof of their allegations reſpecting the profanation of the ſanctuary. Indeed he was free to confeſs, that he worſhipped the God of Iſrael, in a way, that they branded as hereſy; as if it were grounded on pernicious principles, or implied an unlawful ſeparation: but in fact he believed the doctrines and promiſes both of the law, and the prophets, concerning the Meſſiah; and thus he hoped for God's acceptance, and expected a future reſurrection of both the juſt and the unjuſt, as the whole ſect of the Phariſees allowed. In this faith, and hope, he daily exerciſed himſelf, in the moſt careful, and diligent manner, to keep his conſcience free from all offence, in his whole conduct towards God, and man: even as a painter touches, and retouches his piece continually, in order to bring it to a more exact reſemblance with the objects delineated. Accordingly after many years abſence, he had come to Jeruſalem with a large ſum of money, which he had collected among the Gentiles, to relieve the neceſſities of his poor brethren; as well as to offer oblations at the temple. And ſome Jews from Aſia had found him in the temple, purified according to the law, and neither attended by a multitude, nor making a tumult. Theſe perſons ought to have been produced againſt him; if his proſecutors meant to prove that he had profaned the ſanctuary: but as they had not thought proper to bring them; let the high prieſt and elders declare, whether any crime had been alledged againſt him when he ſtood before the council; except it were criminal to profeſs his belief of the reſurrection, and to aſſert, that he was proſecuted on that account.

V. 22, 23.] The defence of Paul was ſo ſimple and convincing, and the charges of Tertullus had been ſo clearly refuted; that Felix doubtleſs perceived that the proſecution was merely a party matter. Having further acquaintance with the reports, that had been diſperſed having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and ſaid, When Lyſias the chief captain ſhall come down, I will know the uttermoſt of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he ſhould forbid none of his acquaintance to miniſter or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Druſilla, which was a Jeweſs, he ſent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Chriſt.

25 And as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled; and anſwered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon I will call for thee.

26 He hoped alſo that money ſhould have been given him of Paul, that he might looſe him: wherefore he ſent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after two years Portius Feſtus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to ſhew the Jews a pleaſure, left Paul bound.

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concerning Jeſus, and his doctrine, than Lyſias had; he was more aware of the motives and intentions of the Jews: he therefore deferred the further hearing of the cauſe, till Lyſias came down. Though he would not gratify the Jewiſh rulers by condemning a Roman citizen, or delivering him up to their malice; yet he would not affront them by releaſing him. However, he allowed him more liberty, than he had before; and by his permiſſion the chriſtians of Ceſarea, and others, might have acceſs to him; which would be comfortable to him, and profitable to them.

V. 24—27.] Felix ſeems to have been abſent for a time from Ceſarea; and on his return he brought Druſilla with him. She was daughter to that Herod, who beheaded James, the brother of John; and ſhe had left her huſband to cohabit with Felix, being a very profligate woman: Felix had heard many things concerning Jeſus, and the chriſtian religion: but he was curious to learn a more authentic and complete account of theſe matters, from Paul: as Druſilla alſo ſeems to have been. The apoſtle was therefore ſent for, that he might ſpeak before the governor concerning the faith in Chriſt. What he ſaid about his Perſon, miracles, life, death, reſurrection, &c, we know not: but in order to ſhew his *noble* auditors the tendency, and importance of the goſpel *to them*, as well as to others; he reaſoned concerning the nature, and obligations of juſtice, equity, ſobriety, temperance, and a proper government of the appetites and paſſions; and concerning a future judgment, when every man, without diſtinction, muſt give an account of himſelf to God, and if found guilty be puniſhed for his crimes in a moſt tremendous manner. This was a moſt ſuitable, bold, and faithful addreſs of the priſoner to this powerful, oppreſſive, iniquitous, and adulterous judge, and his licentious paramour; and a proper method of ſhewing them their need of the repentance, forgiveneſs, and grace of the goſpel. Whilſt the licentious Jeweſs ſeems to have remained obdurate; Felix was ſo convicted in his own conſcience, that he trembled before his priſoner, from dread of the wrath to come: but inſtead of enquiring what he muſt do to be ſaved? he put the matter off, intimating that he was too much engaged at that time to conſider the ſubject any further; but that when he had leiſure, he would again ſend for him, and hear his doctrine. Thus his terrors and convictions ſoon ſubſided; his avarice and iniquities retained their full dominion over him: as he knew Paul had many and liberal friends, he hoped that they would buy his liberty with a ſum of money; and he therefore kept him in priſon, frequently ſent for him, and talked with him, but not concerning the faith of Chriſt: and at length, when ſucceeded by another governor; he left Paul bound to pleaſe the Jews by an act of injuſtice, in order to prevent them from accuſing him before the emperor. But in this he was diſappointed: for they accuſed him of extortion, and oppreſſion, and he narrowly eſcaped puniſhment on that account. Druſilla, and her daughter are reported to have come to a moſt terrible end. Probably Paul's friends would not concur in Felix's bribery and extortion, even to purchaſe the much valued liberty of the apoſtle: they would not do evil, that good might come.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſelfiſh, and malignant paſſions of mankind are too commonly the ſpring of their prompt, and perſevering activity: and the graces of language and elocution have often been tarniſhed by falſhood, and flattery; and employed rather to miſlead, and prejudice men againſt the truth, than to influence them to favour and embrace it. The perſecutors of God's people have commonly been the panegyriſts of his open enemies: deviations from truth by complimentary addreſſes prepare men for ſlander, and falſe teſtimony, by inuring the mind to diſſimulation and lies. In what a different light will the characters of Paul, and Felix appear at the day of judgment, than they do in Tertullus's harangue? Let us then not value the applauſe, or be troubled at the revilings of ungodly men: as the vileſt of the human race have been almoſt deified by their encomiums; and the excellent of the earth have been treated as *peſtilences*, as movers of ſedition, and deſerving of univerſal execration: and this by profeſſors of religion, by prieſts, elders, and perſons of chief authority in the viſible church!

But the ſervants of God muſt not attempt by flattery to conciliate the favour of thoſe, who ſeem to have moſt power over them: nor ſhould they retort on their accuſers, further than is neceſſary for the refutation of their ſlanders. They ſhould alſo be ready to confeſs their faith, when called upon for it, and the foundation of their hope; though they be deemed heretical by their enemies: and to take occaſion to ſhew the agreement of

CHAP. XXV.

Contains 1ſt. Paul accuſed before Feſtus, anſwering for himſelf, and appealing to the Roman emperor, 1---12. *2d. Feſtus relating the affair to king Agrippa, who deſired to hear Paul; his appearance before Agrippa, Bernice, &c; and Feſtus opening his caſe to the auditory,* 13---27.

NOW when Feſtus was come into the province, after three days he aſcended from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem.

2 Then the high prieſt, and the chief of the Jews, informed him againſt Paul, and beſought him,

3 And deſired favour againſt him, that he would ſend for him to Jeruſalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Feſtus anſwered, that Paul ſhould be kept at Ceſarea, and that he himſelf would depart ſhortly *thither*.

5 Let them therefore, ſaid he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuſe this man, if there be any wickedneſs in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Ceſarea; and the next day, ſitting in the judgment ſeat, commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jeruſalem ſtood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints againſt Paul, which they could not prove;

8 While he anſwered for himſelf, Neither againſt the law of the Jews, neither againſt the temple, nor yet againſt Ceſar, have I offended any thing at all.

9 But Feſtus, willing to do the Jews a pleaſure, anſwered Paul, and ſaid, Wilt thou go up to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe things before me?

10 Then ſaid Paul, I ſtand at Ceſar's judgment ſeat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuſe not to die: but, if there be none of theſe things whereof theſe accuſe me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Ceſar.

12 Then Feſtus, when he had conferred with the council, anſwered, Haſt thou appealed unto Ceſar? unto Ceſar ſhalt thou go.

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their principles with the word of God, and with the doctrines profeſſed in his church; and eſpecially to call men's reflection to the reſurrection of the dead, and the future ſeaſon of righteous retribution. But they underſtand not Paul's doctrines, and are not proper perſons to plead for them; who are not thereby influenced to exerciſe themſelves to have a conſcience void of offence towards God and man. In a continual application of the blood of Jeſus, and an habitual dependence on his grace; we ſhould daily ſeek to have our conduct and temper more and more conformed to his holy precepts as the rule of our duty. Thus our actions will recommend our principles; and our kindneſs even to thoſe who injure us will expoſe the malignity of our accuſers; and a ſober, righteous, and godly life will be the moſt effectual refutation of all their calumnies.

The moſt ungodly men will ſhew more favour to zealous believers; than hypocritical bigots will do: yet their ſelfiſh deſigns will commonly prevent them from doing them impartial juſtice. Many curiouſly enquire after the faith in Chriſt, who are utterly averſe to its holy tendency. We ſhould not amuſe ſuch men with mere ſpeculative tenets; but ſhould reaſon with them concerning righteouſneſs, temperance and a judgment to come. And we ought to level the word of God againſt the peculiar vices of their conduct; without reſpect of their diſpleaſure, how powerful ſoever they may be. This alone can make them ſenſible of their need of faith in Chriſt, and prepare them to underſtand the doctrine of the goſpel: and ſuch opportunities ſhould not be loſt. So great is the power of divine truth, that it can overawe the conſciences of the moſt potent and profligate, and can make a prince tremble before his priſoner! How then will ſuch men be able to ſtand before the judgment ſeat of God? But many, when thus affected, will hear no more: they will in effect ſay to the miniſter, or book that alarms them, and to their own conſciences, "go "thy way at this time:" they will pretend buſineſs, engagements, and impediments, at preſent; and they hope to be ſoon more favourably circumſtanced, or better diſpoſed; and then they will attend to the concerns of their ſouls. Thus through procraſtination the hopeful impreſſion wears off; iniquity retains its dominion in their hearts; the convenient time never arrives; they continue to ſin on to the end againſt their better knowledge; and the faithfulneſs of their reprovers ſerve only to aggravate their future condemnation. Hence alſo it is that wicked profeſſors of religion are the moſt hardened of all ſinners; becauſe they have ſo often done this violence to their conſciences, that they at length become totally callous. *To day* therefore let all that would be ſaved, attend to the voice of God; leſt he ſwear in his wrath, that they ſhall never enter into his reſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1—12.] The implacable malice of the high prieſt, and the rulers againſt Paul, whoſe long confinement could not ſoften them, and their dark deſign of aſſaſſinating him, mark the horrible wicked-

13 And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Ceſarea, to ſalute Feſtus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Feſtus declared Paul's cauſe unto the king, ſaying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix;

15 About whom, when I was at Jeruſalem, the chief prieſts and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, deſiring *to have* judgment againſt him.

16 To whom I anſwered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accuſed have the accuſers face to face, and have licence to anſwer for himſelf concerning the crime laid againſt him.

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I ſat on the judgment ſeat, and commanded the man to be brought forth;

18 Againſt whom, when the accuſers ſtood up, they brought none accuſation of ſuch things as I ſuppoſed:

19 But had certain queſtions againſt him of their own ſuperſtition, and of one Jeſus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And becauſe I doubted of ſuch manner of queſtions, I aſked *him* whether he would go to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reſerved unto the hearing of Auguſtus, I commanded him to be kept till I might ſend him to Ceſar.

22 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Feſtus, I would alſo hear the man myſelf. To-morrow, ſaid he, thou ſhalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at Feſtus, commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Feſtus ſaid, King Agrippa, and all men which are here preſent with us, ye ſee this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jeruſalem, and *alſo* here, crying, that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himſelf hath appealed to Auguſtus, I have determined to ſend him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to

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neſs of the Jews, a ſhort time before their final ruin. It was very wonderful that Feſtus ſhould refuſe to gratify the great men of the nation, which he was appointed to govern, by ſending for Paul to Jeruſalem; as he ſtaid in that city long enough to have heard his cauſe there. But God was pleaſed thus to influence his mind, in order to Paul's preſervation: for even after he had been further ſatisfied of his innocency; he was deſirous to do the Jews a pleaſure, and propoſed to him to go to Jeruſalem to be judged there, &c. But Paul knew that his enemies were determined to deſtroy him by any means; and therefore, availing himſelf of his privilege as a Roman citizen, he appealed to the emperor. Nero then occupied that high dignity, and was a monſter of cruelty.

V. 13. *King*, &c.] Agrippa was ſon to Herod, who beheaded the apoſtle James, and impriſoned Peter, (c. xii:) he had received the title of king, and authority over ſeveral diſtricts; from the Roman emperors. Bernice was his ſiſter, who was ſuſpected of living in inceſt with him: in other reſpects Agrippa bare a good character, being equitable in his adminiſtration, of a generous diſpoſition, and paying a ſtrict attention to the externals of religion.

V. 19. *Superſtition.*] As Feſtus entertained Agrippa with great reſpect; ſo we cannot ſuppoſe, that he would have uſed the word here tranſlated *ſuperſtition*, if it had implied any harſh cenſure of his religion: we muſt therefore conclude that it was of a doubtful ſignification; to be underſtood in a good, or evil ſenſe, according to it's application. Feſtus ſeems to have deemed Paul a credulous viſionary, in affirming that Jeſus was alive: but he thought his opponents ſtill more to blame in perſecuting him ſo virulently on that account; for the matter in his judgment was of no manner of importance!

V. 23. *And*, &c.] We may conclude that this was as magnificent an aſſembly, as almoſt ever was brought together to hear the truths of the goſpel: though they only meant to gratify their curioſity by attending the defence of Paul the priſoner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The malignant enmity of hardened perſecutors cannot be worn out by length of time, or ſatisfied by any ſufferings ſhort of the violent death of thoſe, againſt whom they are enraged. They deem it a peculiar favour to have their malice gratified; and they have no ſcruples about conſpiracies, aſſaſſinations, or maſſacres, when legal forms fail of effecting their purpoſes. We cannot therefore too much watch againſt the feebleſt riſings of that principle, which may be matured into ſuch dire exceſſes.

write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and ſpecially before thee, O king of Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have ſomewhat to write.

27 For it ſeemeth to me unreaſonable to ſend a priſoner, and not withal to ſignify the crimes *laid* againſt him.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains 1ſt. Paul addreſſing Agrippa, and giving an account of his religious profeſſion as a Phariſee, his perſecution of the chriſtians, his wonderful converſion, his commiſſion to preach among the Gentiles, the violence of the Jews againſt him for theſe things, and his continued teſtimony to the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, &c, 1---23. *2d. Feſtus declaring him to be mad: Paul's mild reply: Agrippa almoſt perſuaded to be a Chriſtian; Paul expreſſing his earneſt deſire for the converſion of the whole company; and Agrippa agreeing with Feſtus about Paul's innocence, &c,* 24---32.

THEN Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Thou art permitted to ſpeak for thyſelf. Then Paul ſtretched forth the hand, and anſwered for himſelf:

2 I think myſelf happy, king Agrippa, becauſe I ſhall anſwer for myſelf this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accuſed of the Jews;

3 Eſpecially, *becauſe I know* thee to be expert in all cuſtoms and queſtions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beſeech thee to hear me patiently.

4 My manner of life from my youth, which

But God limits the rage of ſuch men by the intervention of others, not at all more conſcientious in many things than themſelves: and ſometimes He influences them *unaccountably* to act contrary to their own general purpoſes, in ſuch particulars, as form a part of his plan. Happy will it be for us, when “ many and grievous complaints “ are brought againſt us;” if our accuſers can prove none of them; and if we can ſhew that we have conſcientiouſly obeyed the civil magiſtrate, behaved peaceably in the community, and attended on the ordinances and worſhip of God. When theſe things are evident, a man may have great boldneſs before his judges, in appealing to their conſciences with reſpect to his innocence; or in claiming the protection of the law, againſt the iniquity of thoſe, who want to be gratified by his puniſhment. But how ſcandalous is it to the profeſſors, and nominal miniſters of religion; when the ſervants of God are compelled to appeal from their bigotted malice, to the deciſion of idolaters, and even of the moſt cruel tyrants, as more likely to do them juſtice, than the others!

The queſtions that relate to God's worſhip, the way of ſalvation, and the truths of the goſpel, appear dubious and unintereſting to the politicians, and wiſe men of the world. They can ſee and condemn the miſmanagement, into which men are betrayed by an indiſcrete or furious zeal in ſuch matters: and this confirms them in their ſceptical diſregard to, or contempt of them. Yet the day is at hand, when Feſtus and the whole world, will ſee, that all the concerns of the Roman empire were frivolous, as the ſports of children, compared with the ſingle queſtion, whether Jeſus the crucified was indeed riſen from the dead, according to the doctrine of the apoſtle. Then they, who have had the means of inſtruction, and have deſpiſed them, will be moſt awfully convinced of their ſin and folly. But alas, many, who ſeem to deſire information on ſuch queſtions, only want to gratify a vain curioſity, and not to learn the way to heaven; and the great pomp, with which many of the rich and honourable of this world attend at “ the places of hearing” the word of God, ſhew, that they are actuated by the ſame motives, as Paul's ſplendid auditory were: and though miniſters do not commonly now ſtand in fetters, as priſoners, to make their defence before their hearers; yet numbers affect rather to ſit in judgment upon them, as “ offenders for a word,” that to learn from them the truth and will of God, for the ſalvation of their own ſouls.

N O T E S.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1—3.] Agrippa having ſignified to Paul, that he was allowed to plead his own cauſe before him, and all that aſſembly; in order, that a more authentic account of his caſe might be ſent to the emperor: he ſtretched out his hand, with a decent action, to give emphaſis to his words, according to the manner of the moſt celebrated ancient orators; and proceeded to ſtate his ſubject in that manner, which was moſt ſuited to impreſs the audience with a conviction of it's truth, and importance. The whole of the ſubſequent ſpeech has generally been allowed to be peculiarly pertinent, convincing, and ſuited to the circumſtances in which, and the ſplendid company before whom, it was delivered. He addreſſed himſelf immediately to Agrippa, declaring that he deemed it an happy incident, that he was permitted to defend himſelf from the accuſations of the Jews before one, whoſe education, and ſubſequent application had rendered him ſo accurately acquainted with all the cuſtoms, and rites of the Jewiſh religion, and all the queſtions controverted among their different ſects: as he would be far more competent to form a judgment of his cauſe, than any ſtranger could be. He therefore beſought the favour of a candid, and patient hearing, whilſt he went through the ſeveral particulars, which he had to ſtate upon the ſubject.

V. 4—11.] After a brief account of his profeſſion of religion, as a Phariſee, which was the ſtricteſt, and moſt auſtere ſect of their nation; and an appeal to the Jews themſelves, that he had acted in conſiſtency with that profeſſion, from his youth to his converſion to chriſ-was at the firſt among mine own nation at Jeruſalem, know all the Jews;

5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would teſtify,) that after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion I lived a Phariſee.

6 And now I ſtand and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which *promiſe* our twelve tribes, inſtantly ſerving *God* day and night, hope to come: for which hope's ſake, king Agrippa, I am accuſed of the Jews.

8 Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you that God ſhould raiſe the dead?

9 I verily thought with myſelf, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I alſo did in Jeruſalem: and many of the ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, having received authority from the chief prieſts; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice againſt *them*.

11 And I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue, and compelled *them* to blaſpheme: and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted *them* even unto ſtrange cities.

12 Whereupon, as I went to Damaſcus with authority and commiſſion from the chief prieſts,

13 At mid day, O king, I ſaw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice ſpeaking uuto me, and ſaying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks.

15 And I ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid, I am Jeſus, whom thou perſecuteſt,

16 But riſe, and ſtand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs, both of theſe things which thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee;

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tianity; the apoſtle declared that he ſtood as a criminal to be judged, on account of his profeſſed hope in the promiſe made of God to their anceſtors. The chief promiſe to Abraham, &c, related to the Meſſiah; but it implied that of the reſurrection, and heavenly felicity: Paul hoped in Jeſus as the promiſed Redeemer; he teſtified *his* reſurrection, and he avowed his expectation of the reſurrection of the juſt, and of the unjuſt: and for this he was perſecuted. Though the Jews did not believe Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, or that he was riſen from the dead: yet the whole nation expected the coming of a Meſſiah; and, except the Sadducees, (who were rather conſiderable by their rank, and power, than their numbers;) they all expected the reſurrection of the dead. In general, all that remained of the twelve tribes, hoped for the accompliſhment of the promiſe concerning the Meſſiah, and eternal life through him: and their conſtant worſhip at the temple morning and evening, as well as their other frequent, and inceſſant devotions, implied the ſame hope. Yet the Sadducees hated Paul for preaching the reſurrection; and the reſt of the Jews joined in the perſecution, becauſe he teſtified that Jeſus was riſen, and was the promiſed Redeemer of Iſrael: and perhaps many of his hearers deemed the doctrine of the reſurrection, and the fact of Jeſus being raiſed from the dead, to be entirely incredible. But why ſhould they think ſo? Was not the great Creator able to reſtore the dead to life again? And could not ſufficient reaſons be aſſigned for his omnipotent interpoſition, that his truth might be atteſted, his worſhippers encouraged, and his name glorified? Indeed he himſelf had formerly been extremely prejudiced againſt the goſpel, and had blindly thought it his duty to do many things, to oppoſe the name and religion of Jeſus, who was uſually in contempt called the Nazarene. Accordingly he had at Jeruſalem, by the authority of the chief prieſts, impriſoned many of thoſe excellent perſons, whom he now knew to be the ſaints and holy ſervants of God: and when any of them were condemned to death by the council, he had approved of, and applauded the ſentence, and promoted its execution. He had alſo, by means of ſcourgings, and other ſeverities in all the ſynagogues, and by threatening them with death, compelled many profeſſors, and favourers of chriſtianity, to deny, and revile Jeſus as a deceiver, in language, which he now conſidered to be blaſphemy: and in every reſpect he was enraged againſt them to a degree, that might juſtly be deemed the exceſs of madneſs, and inſanity.

V. 16—18.] After the ſame account of his converſion, that hath been conſidered, (Notes &c. c. ix. v. 1.—19. c. xxii. v. 5—16;) the apoſtle here added a more explicit account of his commiſſion to preach to the Gentiles. It ſeems evident, that this was given him by our Lord at the time of his converſion; though it be not mentioned in the foregoing compendious narrative of that event. The Lord Jeſus ordered him to ariſe from the earth, as prepared to receive and execute his mandates. He had appeared to him, not to deſtroy him, but to appoint him a miniſter of his goſpel, and a witneſs to all men, not only of this viſion, but of many other things, to reveal which he would afterwards appear to him from time to time. For executing this miniſtry the Jews would indeed ſeek to kill him: but Jeſus promiſed to deliver him from them, and from the Gentiles, to

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I ſend thee,

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkneſs to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not diſobedient unto the heavenly viſion:

20 But ſhewed firſt unto them of Damaſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the coaſts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For theſe cauſes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying none other things than thoſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come;

23 That Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, *and* that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and ſhould ſhew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus ſpake for himſelf, Feſtus ſaid with a loud voice, Paul thou art beſide thyſelf; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he ſaid, I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus; but ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs.

26 For the king knoweth of theſe things,

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whom he now gave him a commiſſion to preach his ſalvation. The end and effect of his miniſtry among them, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt accompanying his word, would be "the opening of their eyes:" for though their bodily eyes were open, and their intellectual powers in other matters were very penetrating; yet they had hitherto been ſpiritually blind, through the influence of ſatan, and the depravity of their carnal minds; ſo that they could ſee nothing of the glory of God, of his truth and will, or of the way of acceptance and holineſs. But by the change to be wrought in their minds by divine grace, and the inſtructions of his word; they were now to be turned from the darkneſs of ignorance, error, and wickedneſs, to the light of divine knowledge, truth, and holineſs; and from thoſe idolatries and vices, by which they worſhipped and ſerved ſatan as his bondſlaves, to the holy worſhip and ſervice of the living God: that through the goſpel, they might receive a full pardon of all their ſins, and be made heirs of that heavenly inheritance, to which all thoſe will be admitted, who are ſeparated from ſin and the world, and made holy by faith in Him as the Saviour of loſt mankind. Though Paul received this commiſſion to the Gentiles, when he was converted; yet he ſeems not to have preached to any but the Jews and the proſelytes, till after Cornelius had been converted by the miniſtry of Peter: for he waited for a farther intimation of the Lord's will, as to the time and manner, in which he was to ſet about that important ſervice. To confine the language of this paſſage, as if it were only applicable to idolaters, implies an opinion that nominal chriſtians are of a better nature, than other men: or that pride, covetouſneſs, and other vices, whereby men are enſlaved to ſatan, are not ſo heinous in nominal chriſtians, as they were in heathens: for if they are, ſuch men need as much to have their eyes opened, which the god of this world hath blinded, and to be converted from his ſervice to that of Jehovah, as any Pagans could do: and it is evident that all are by nature as prone to ſin, and as much at enmity againſt God, as they were; though impiety, hypocriſy, or infidelity may have ſucceeded to groſs idolatry in men's actual conduct.

V. 19—23,] The apoſtle next intimated to king Agrippa, that he could not ſuppoſe he would refuſe obedience to a viſion, which was ſo evidently from heaven: accordingly he began to preach to the Jews firſt, and at length to the Gentiles; calling on them to repent of all their ſins, to turn to the worſhip and ſervice of God, and to live holy lives, as became true penitents; and thus to expect the mercy and favour of God through Jeſus Chriſt. For ſuch cauſes as theſe the Jews, being exaſperated with him for declaring that Jeſus, whom they had crucified, was the Meſſiah, and for preaching to the Gentiles, ſeized on him in the temple, and would have diſpatched him, if they had not been prevented: but having obtained help from God, by means of Lyſias, Felix, Feſtus, &c, his life had hitherto been preſerved; and he had employed it in teſtifying to the pooreſt of mankind, as well as to the rich and honourable, the grace of the goſpel: in which he had ſaid nothing, but what accorded to the types and predictions of the law, and of their other ſcriptures. All theſe foretold that the Meſſiah was to ſuffer and die, and yet that he was to reign in a moſt glorious manner, and conſequently that he ſhould riſe from the dead, as the firſt-fruits of the reſurrection; and that he was not only to ſhew the light of ſalvation to the people of Iſrael, but to the Gentiles alſo.

V. 24—29.] Whilſt Paul was confirming his own teſtimony to the reſurrection, and glory of Jeſus, by the predictions of ſcripture; and probably was preparing to adduce more particular proof from the prophets to each part of his doctrine; he was ſuddenly interrupted by Feſtus. He had never heard any thing before upon theſe ſubjects; the reſurrection of Jeſus, and the viſion of Paul appeared to him incredible, or ridiculous: probably he was aſtoniſhed to hear him ſpeak of his doctrine as of univerſal concernment; and aver that one, who aroſe before whom alſo I ſpeak freely: for I am perſuaded that none of theſe things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt.

28 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian.

29 And Paul ſaid, I would to God, that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds.

30 And when he had thus ſpoken, the king roſe up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that ſat with them:

31 And when they were gone aſide, they talked between themſelves, ſaying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then ſaid Agrippa unto Feſtus, This man might have been ſet at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Ceſar.

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from among the deſpiſed Jews, was appointed to be the Light of the Gentiles: he therefore exclaimed to Paul, that he was beſide himſelf, and out of his ſenſes; and as he had ſtudied very cloſely about ſuch abſtract, and viſionary matters, his over-attention had certainly deranged his intellects, and rendered him inſane; ſo that he could neither deem him fit to be blamed, or credited, but to be an object of mere compaſſion. To this rude interruption before ſo large and ſplendid an audience, the apoſtle calmly and gravely replied, (addreſſing the governor by the cuſtomary title of moſt noble, or moſt excellent,) and aſſured him, that he was not mad, and that he declared nothing but what had truth for its baſis, was of the utmoſt importance, and able to ſtand the teſt of the moſt deliberate inveſtigation. Indeed the king was acquainted with ſuch ſubjects: the events reſpecting the miracles, doctrine, death, and reported reſurrection of Jeſus, and the ſubſequent promulgation of chriſtianity, could not have been hid from him, who was ſo well informed in all the affairs of the Jews; as none of theſe things had been tranſacted in an obſcure corner, but in the moſt public manner. He would therefore enquire of Him, whether he did indeed believe that the old prophets ſpake by divine inſpiration, and that their predictions would be certainly fulfilled? Yet indeed he knew that he would anſwer in the affirmative, and he doubted not but he did thus believe them: and he only deſired Agrippa to examine, whether they had not exactly been fulfilled in Jeſus of Nazareth. This appeal to the ſcriptures, joined to Paul's other arguments, had ſo great an effect upon Agrippa's mind, that he could not conceal his convictions, but openly declared, that Paul had almoſt perſuaded him to become a Chriſtian. His underſtanding and judgment were for the time convinced; but his heart was not changed: and he was aware, that the ſacrifices to be made, and the croſs to be ſuſtained, would, in ſuch a caſe, be very great: and though he was more candid, and juſt in his government, than others of his family: yet his conduct and temper were widely diſtant from the ſpirituality and humility of the goſpel. However, Paul, deſirous to fix the impreſſion upon his mind, replied, in the genuine ſpirit of chriſtian love, that he earneſtly wiſhed and prayed, that both he, and every one in the aſſembly, might not only be *almoſt*, but *altogether*, eſtabliſhed in the faith of the goſpel, and partaker of all its ſubſtantial bleſſings and conſolations; and in ſhort, entirely like to him in every thing, except in his bonds and impriſonment, which he would wiſh to bear alone. This moſt benevolent wiſh implied his full conviction of the truth of the goſpel, the abſolute neceſſity of faith in Chriſt in order to ſalvation, his opinion that Agrippa, Feſtus, &c, did not then believe, and his fear that they would reject the goſpel to their final condemnation.

V. 30—32.] Agrippa, (like Felix,) ſeems to have been made very uneaſy by Paul's diſcourſe: he was therefore the firſt to diſmiſs the ſubject, and to retire from the place of hearing. His opinion that Paul was innocent would tend to give Feſtus a more favourable opinion of him: but we do not find, that any of them enquired further after Chriſt, and his ſalvation; and this moſt admirable ſpeech of the apoſtle ſeems to have been peculiarly unſucceſsful, as to the event of it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord will never fail to give thoſe, that for his cauſe are called to appear before rulers and councils, a mouth and wiſdom, which none of their adverſaries ſhall be able to gainſay or reſiſt. When chriſtian love abounds in the heart, it will dictate a *ſincere* language, far ſurpaſſing all compliment, and worldly politeneſs; and it will teach us to render honour to whom honour is due, without flattery or fear of man. That religious knowledge, which unconverted men acquire, and their expertneſs about cuſtoms and queſtions in divinity, lie dormant, as mere learned lumber, in the underſtanding: yet if it be attended with a meaſure of candour, it renders a man more acceſſible to the truth, and more competent to judge of the evidence adduced in ſupport of it. Nor is it any flattery to give ſuch men the credit of their attainments; or improper to intreat a *patient* hearing, when the ſubject might demand the moſt reverent attention. A moral conduct, and a form of godlineſs are often connected with a bigotted averſion to the goſpel, and this leads to many other heinous crimes: yet it is a mercy to be preſerved, during our unconverted years, from ſuch vices, as might afterwards diſgrace our characters among worldly people, and ſo prevent the influence of our teſtimony: and this is greatly corroborated, when they, who knew our manner of life from our youth, could teſtify, that we then acted conſiſtent with our principles, and according to what we thought right: for they may thence infer that our change of ſentiment and conduct alſo originated from a regard to our duty. Men are often cenſured and perſecuted for profeſſing their belief of, and

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Contains 1ſt. Paul, (with his company,) ſetting ſail for Rome; kindly uſed by the Centurion, to whom he was entruſted, and predicting that a ſtorm would overtake them, if they proceeded on their voyage, 1---11. *2d. His counſel neglected; and the ſhip, and crew expoſed to moſt extreme peril, by a long continued and furious tempeſt,* 12---20. *3d. Paul informing them, that an angel had aſſured him, that all their lives would be preſerved,* 21---26. *4th. The manner, in which the ſhip was wrecked upon the iſland of Melita, and the lives of all on board preſerved,* 27---44.

hope in, the expreſs promiſes of God, and for a conſequent expectation of the reſurrection, and future ſtate of righteous retributions: and numbers repeat creeds, ſubſcribe doctrines, and join in forms of worſhip, habitually, and with apparent earneſtneſs; and yet condemn others for explicitly profeſſing the truths contained in them! Many things are deemed incredible, becauſe the infinite nature, and perfection of that God, who hath revealed, performed, or promiſed them, are overlooked; and becauſe men will not ſee how his power and glory are concerned in them. They, who have been moſt ſtrict in their conduct, previous to converſion, will afterwards ſee abundant cauſe for deep humiliation, even on account of ſome things, which they verily thought that they ought to have done: their contempt of, and injuries againſt the ſaints of God, their oppoſition to the goſpel, and their endeavours to ſeduce, reaſon, or terrify others into a neglect of it, will often ſit very heavy on their minds: and they will condemn thoſe words as impious, and blaſphemous, which they once uttered or excited others to utter, without remorſe: and they will allow that conduct to be madneſs, in which they once gloried. The true convert can give a reaſon of his hope, and a good account of the change, that he hath manifeſted; even though there be nothing extraordinary in his experience. Having been convinced of his guilt, and danger, as a tranſgreſſor of God's law, and a deſpiſer of, or a ſtranger to, his grace, he was led to ſeek for mercy, and to believe in the Lord Jeſus; and having been encouraged with the hope of acceptance, of increaſing light, and continued protection, he began to employ himſelf in his ſervice. Thus the Lord reconciles ſinners to himſelf, and commits to them the word of reconciliation: he ſends them to their fellow ſinners to beſeech them in his ſtead to be reconciled to him; and by his power attending their word, he opens their eyes, turns them from darkneſs to light, delivers them from the kingdom and power of ſatan, forms them ſpiritual worſhippers of God, forgives their ſins, adopts them into his family, ſanctifies them by his grace, and brings them to his heavenly inheritance by faith in his name.

When ſinners are thus enlightened and favoured, they will not be diſobedient to the commands of the Redeemer: and all, who underſtand, and preach the goſpel, will perceive, that it contains directions, motives, and encouragements, to ſinners to repent, and turn to God, and to do works meet for repentance: and that it hath had no ſaving efficacy upon the heart, where theſe fruits do not appear in the life. Yet for going about, and calling on men thus to repent and be converted; and for witneſſing none other things, than what are evidently contained in the holy ſcriptures, what numbers have been execrated, perſecuted, and ſlain, even by the profeſſed worſhippers of God! So that it is owing to the peculiar help and protection of God, when zealous and laborious preachers of the goſpel, are preſerved from violence, and have their lives, and the term of their faithful teſtimony, continued to them. Nay, the very inſtruments of ſuch protection commonly have deſpiſed them as viſionaries, or madmen, for being ſo zealous about inviſible objects, for believing ſuch myſterious doctrines, crediting ſuch extraordinary facts, and relating ſuch remarkable experiences; and for atteſting that the ſame faith, and diligence, and a ſimilar experience are indiſpenſably neceſſary to all men, both ſmall and great, in order to their ſalvation. Indeed they ſeldom aſcribe the inſanity of modern teachers to deep ſtudy, or much learning: but they rather impute it to weakneſs of intellect, or contemptible ignorance; whatever evidences they give of good ſenſe, enlarged minds, and extenſive knowledge in other ſubjects. But as apoſtles and prophets, (nay the Son of God himſelf,) were expoſed to this obloquy; let us not be moved, if they, who deemed us ſober and intelligent, when we were *exceeding mad*, ſhould ſet us down for inſane, now divine grace has brought us to ourſelves, and made us wiſe to ſalvation. Yet let us be careful, on ſuch occaſions to ſpeak with temper; that we may diſprove the charge by a diſpaſſionate conduct, as well as by the words of truth and ſoberneſs. Moreover we ſhould cautiouſly avoid all *real enthuſiaſm*, and whatever is ambiguous, or incapable of good proof; whilſt we deny, and attempt to refute the charge of being viſionaries and fanatics. We ſhould alſo lead men's attention by important doctrines, and well authenticated facts, to the ſacred oracles, as the ſtandard of truth; and whilſt we enquire whether our hearers do believe the ſcriptures? We ſhould, as much as may be, take it for granted that they do: for many aſſent to the truth of the Bible, and pay a reſpect to teſtimonies from it; who have not yet underſtood or received the doctrines, or ſalvation therein revealed. Such arguments, and teſtimonies *almoſt perſuade* numbers to be chriſtians, who are never *wholly* induced to leave all for Chriſt. When this is the caſe, they often grow weary of hearing the truth, and ſin away their convictions; and their own confeſſions will eventually increaſe their condemnation, for rejecting the goſpel, out of love to the world, and ſinful pleaſures. Whilſt we beware of this fatal heſitation and irreſolution in our own conduct; and recollect how far being *almoſt perſuaded to be a chriſtian* is, from being altogether ſuch a one as Paul was, or as every true believer is; we ſhould endeavour to impreſs ſtill more deeply the minds of thoſe, who are under ſerious convictions of the truth. In doing this, the language of fervent, diſintereſted affection is peculiarly becoming: and we ſhould ſincerely deſire and pray, that others may

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AND when it was determined that we ſhould ſail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other priſoners, unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Auguſtus' band.

2 And entering into a ſhip of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to ſail by the coaſts of Aſia; *one* Ariſtarchus, a Macedonian of Theſſalonica, being with us.

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteouſly entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refreſh himſelf.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we ſailed under Cyprus, becauſe the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had ſailed over the ſea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ſhip of Alexandria ſailing into Italy; and he put us therein,

7 And when we had ſailed ſlowly many days, and ſcarce were come over againſt Cnidus, the wind not ſuffering us, we ſailed under Crete, over againſt Salmone:

8 And hardly paſſing it, came unto a place which is called The fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city *of* Laſea.

9 Now when much time was ſpent, and when ſailing was now dangerous, becauſe the faſt was now already paſt, Paul admoniſhed *them*;

10 And ſaid unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ſhip, but alſo of our lives.

11 Nevertheleſs the centurion believed the maſter and owner of the ſhip, more than thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul.

12 And becauſe the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part adviſed to depart thence alſo, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the ſouth weſt and north weſt.

13 And when the ſouth wind blew ſoftly,

participate all our hopes and comforts, and be exempted from our croſſes and trials. Yet even this beautiful philanthropy, when expreſſed in the moſt graceful, and conciliatory language, will fail to recommend the holy goſpel to the carnal hearts of worldly men: they will grow weary of ſuch humiliating, and ſerious reflections: and if they deem the preacher a man of integrity, and almoſt think he has truth on his ſide; yet they will not allow his ſaying to be worthy of *all* acceptation, or faith in Chriſt producing prompt obedience to his precepts, to be *abſolutely neceſſary to their ſalvation.* Alas, how many ſuch perſons have been *almoſt* perſuaded to be chriſtians, who at laſt periſhed in their ſins; God grant, that none, who read theſe obſervations may be found in that unhappy number!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1, 2.] Luke was one of Paul's company in this voyage: he and Ariſtarchus voluntarily attended on him to Rome, and during his impriſonment there: (c. xix. v. 29. c. xx. v. 5. *Col.* c. iv. v. 10.) This was a ſingular inſtance of their great affection for him, a great ſolace to the apoſtle under all his trials; and they would be aſſiſtant to him, in all his plans for uſefulneſs, both during his voyage, and after he arrived at Rome. Adramyttium was a city of Myſia, in the Leſſer Aſia: this ſhip therefore could only convey them a ſmall part of their long voyage.

V. 4. *Under,* &c.] They were compelled by the contrary winds to paſs between the iſland, and the continent; inſtead of paſſing on the further ſide of it, by a ſhorter courſe to the coaſt of Aſia.

V. 7. *Crete.*] A large iſland in the Mediterranean, now called Candia.

V. 9. *The faſt,* &c.] The faſt, or great day of atonement, was in the ſeventh month, when ſailing was deemed dangerous: for in that imperfect ſtate of navigation, they commonly kept within a moderate diſtance from the ſhore, and ſeldom put to ſea during the winter ſeaſon.

V. 10. *I perceive,* &c.] Paul had an intimation from God of the approaching ſtorm; and foreſaw that much damage would be ſuſtained by it, and their lives expoſed to great danger; though the particular event of it was not yet declared to him. The centurion, and all on board the ſhip, muſt have had ſome general knowledge of Paul's character and principles; and the religious converſe and worſhip of him and his friends, as well as their whole behaviour, muſt have excited their attention: but they probably deemed them a deluded ſtrange ſort of men; entitled indeed to civil uſage, being very inoffenſive, and well meaning; yet not worthy of notice in reſpect to their religious notions. But it was the Lord's purpoſe to exhibit Paul amongſt them as a moſt extraordinary perſon; that they might learn to enquire after his principles, and receive his inſtructions.

V. 12. *Phenice.*] This harbour ſeems to have been ſituated on the weſt ſide of the iſland; and to have been defended from the fury of the winds by two ſmall promontaries, one to the ſouth-weſt, the other to the north-weſt.

V. 14. *Euroclydon.*] This tempeſt probably came from the eaſt, but violently and frequently ſhifted it's ſuppoſing that they had obtained *their* purpoſe, looſing *thence* they ſailed cloſe by Crete.

14 But not long after there aroſe againſt it a tempeſtuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ſhip was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain iſland, which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they uſed helps, undergirding the ſhip; and fearing leſt they ſhould fall into the quickſands, ſtrake ſail, and ſo were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly toſſed with a tempeſt, the next *day* they lightened the ſhip;

19 And the third *day* we caſt out with our own hands the tackling of the ſhip.

20 And when neither ſun nor ſtars in many days appeared, and no ſmall tempeſt lay on *us*, all hope that we ſhould be ſaved was then taken away.

21 But after long abſtinence, Paul ſtood forth in the midſt of them, and ſaid, Sirs, ye ſhould have hearkened unto me, and not have looſed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loſs.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there ſhall be no loſs of *any man's* life among you, but of the ſhip.

23 For there ſtood by me this night the angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou muſt be brought before Ceſar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee.

25 Wherefore, ſirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit, we muſt be caſt upon a certain iſland.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the ſhipmen deemed that they drew near to ſome country;

28 And ſounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they ſounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms:

29 Then fearing leſt they ſhould have fallen

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direction, and thus excited ſuch tremendous agitation of the waves, that the ſhip could not be made to face the ſtorm: but the mariners were obliged to let her drive before it, though at the hazard of being daſhed upon the rocks.

V. 16. *Boat*, &c.] They wanted to ſecure the boat, as a reſource in caſe the ſhip were wrecked: but it pleaſed God not to make uſe of it in their deliverance. (v 32.)

V. 17. *Quickſands*, &c.] Theſe are ſuppoſed to have been the greater, and leſſer Syrtes, towards the coaſt of Africa; which were extremely formidable to the ancient navigators.

V. 20—26.] As the mariners could not make the neceſſary obſervations, becauſe the ſun and ſtars were totally hidden by clouds; ſo they could not diſcover to what part of the ſea they had been driven: and as the tempeſt ſtill lay hard upon them, and allowed them no reſpite to repair their ſhattered veſſel; they gave up all for loſt, and expected every moment to go to the bottom, or to be daſhed upon the rocks. This prepared them to regard Paul's words, which in more proſperous circumſtances they might have deſpiſed. As he had before been aſſured of bearing teſtimony to Jeſus, at Rome: we may ſuppoſe, that he was compoſed during the whole tempeſt: but the Lord was pleaſed to ſend him further aſſurances, reſpecting his own preſervation, and that of all the company. After they had all neglected for ſome time to take proper ſuſtenance, through the terror of immediate death; and after he and his friends had perhaps ſpent ſome time in faſting and prayer; Paul ſtood forth before the mariners, &c, and reminded them of the divine monition, that he had before given them, by neglecting of which they had *gained* nothing of what they had expected, but only expoſed themſelves to a great deal of loſs: and this might be conſidered as a fine, levied on them for their diſobedience. However, he exhorted them to be of good courage, as he was authorized to aſſure them of the preſervation of all their lives. For that God, whoſe he was in an eſpecial manner, whom he worſhipped continually, and whom he ſerved with all his powers by preaching the goſpel of his Son; (for which he had been ſo furiouſly perſecuted;) had ſent his angel, (who knew where to find him, though they knew not where they were;) and by him he had aſſured him of being preſerved to ſtand before the Roman emperor; and alſo had informed him, that he had granted his prayers and fervent deſires, and for his ſake would ſave the lives of all thoſe, who ſailed with him. He therefore exhorted them to be chearful, and hope amidſt their perils; for he believed aſſuredly that God would fulfil his word to him, as he knew him to be always faithful to his promiſes. However, the ſhip would certainly be wrecked, and they would be caſt upon an iſland, and not upon any part of the continent, either of Europe, or of Africa: by which circumſtance it would be manifeſted that he ſpake by revelation from God.

V. 27. *Adria*, &c.] This name was not then confined to what is now called the Adriatic Sea, but was extended to a much larger part of the mediterranean.

V. 29—32.] The mariners, afraid of being driupon rocks, they caſt four anchors out of the ſtern, and wiſhed for the day.

30 And as the ſhipmen were about to flee out of the ſhip, when they had let down the boat into the ſea, under colour as though they would have caſt anchors out of the foreſhip,

31 Paul ſaid to the centurion and to the ſoldiers, Except theſe abide in the ſhip ye cannot be ſaved.

32 Then the ſoldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul beſought *them* all to take meat, ſaying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued faſting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *ſome* meat; for this is for your health: for there ſhall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus ſpoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in preſence of them all: and, when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they alſo took *ſome* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ſhip two hundred threeſcore and ſixteen ſouls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ſhip, and caſt out the wheat into the ſea.

39 And when it was day they knew not the land: but they diſcovered a certain creek with a ſhore, into the which they were minded, if it were poſſible, to thruſt in the ſhip.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors they committed *themſelves* unto the ſea, and looſed the rudder bands, and hoiſed up the main ſail to the wind, and made toward ſhore.

41 And falling into a place where two ſeas met, they ran the ſhip aground: and the fore part ſtuck faſt, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the ſoldiers counſel was to kill the priſoners, leſt any of them ſhould ſwim out, and eſcape.

43 But the centurion, willing to ſave Paul, kept them from *their* purpoſe, and commanded that they which could ſwim ſhould caſt *themſelves* firſt *into the ſea,* and get to land;

44 And the reſt, ſome on boards, and ſome on *broken pieces* of the ſhip. And ſo it came to paſs, that they eſcaped all ſafe to land.

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ven in the dark upon the rocks, or ſands, which are found near the ſhore, uſed their utmoſt endeavour to ſtation the ſhip; and waited with earneſt longings for the day-light, that they might ſee where they were, and what means they could uſe for their own preſervation. And being fully ſenſible of the danger, to which the ſhip was expoſed; they hoped to ſave themſelves in the boat: in attempting which, they meant to leave all their companions to periſh; though they concealed their intentions. But Paul, aware of their deſign, aſſured the ſoldiers, that they could not be preſerved, unleſs the mariners remained amongſt them. This was the method, in which the Lord meant to effect their deliverance; and they muſt not tempt him by neglecting to uſe the proper means of preſervation. It is obſervable, that the ſoldiers did not charge Paul with inconſiſtency, for this declaration: but they directly took the proper meaſure to prevent the mariners from leaving them.

V. 33—38.] During a whole fortnight, the tremendous violence of the tempeſt had kept all the company from making any regular meal, or even taking proper ſuſtenance; ſo that they were greatly weakened by abſtinence, as well as by fatigue and terror: but Paul, whoſe influence with them muſt have increaſed continually, exhorted them to take ſome refreſhment; that they might be ſtrengthened to ſtruggle with the remainder of their difficulties, and that their health might not be injured; ſeeing God would certainly take care of all their lives. Having therefore publicly returned thanks to God, for the promiſe given, and the food afforded them; he, by his example excited them all to make a more regular and chearful meal, than they had before done: and as a few hours muſt now determine their doom; they caſt the remainder of their proviſions into the ſea, to lighten the ſhip, in order to promote their preſervation.

V. 39. *Creek,* &c.] The iſland, on which they were caſt, is known to be almoſt ſurrounded with rocks. But the mariners diſcovered a *bay* of the ſea, running up a little way within land; where was a *beach,* or convenient landing place: and thither they endeavoured to ſteer the ſhip. Had theſe matters been left to the landmen; the veſſel would probably have been daſhed on the rocks, where their lives could not have been preſerved without an evident miracle.

V. 41. *Two,* &c.] A point of land, or a ſand-bank, from the ſhore divided the channel into two parts: on this the ſhip was forcibly driven, and immoveably fixed; and ſo was ſoon daſhed in pieces by the fury of the waves.

V. 42—44.] The ſoldiers perceiving that all muſt now ſhift for themſelves; and ſuppoſing that if any of the priſoners eſcaped from them, they ſhould be called to account for it, they adviſed the immediate execution

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains 1*ſt. The Iſlanders humane entertainment of Paul, and the ſhip's company,* 1, 2. 2*d. Paul wonderfully preſerved from a viper; and healing the father of Publius, and many others,* 3---9. 3*d. The kindneſs ſhewn them at their departure; their voyage and journey to Rome; and the chriſtians from that city meeting Paul at a great diſtance,* 10---15. 4*th. Paul entruſted to the cuſtody of a ſoldier; ſtating his caſe to the chief of the Jews; preaching to a number of them; warning the unbelievers of their danger; ſhewing that the Gentiles would receive his word; and teaching for two years in his own hired houſe all that came to him,* 16---31.

AND when they were eſcaped, then they knew that the iſland was called Melita.

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of them all. Such a meaſure could not have been thought of, had not their laws allowed of it, and had it not ſometimes been done: and thus the moſt horrid cruelty was united with the policy of that renowned people. The centurion ſeems not to have been ſhocked at the propoſal, though made in ſuch alarming circumſtances; and he was rather induced by a regard to Paul, than humanity to the other priſoners, to negative their counſel. Thus the apoſtle was in this reſpect alſo the means of preſervation to his companions; and by the ſpecial care of providence the whole company got ſafe to ſhore. Probably theſe extraordinary incidents were over-ruled for the ſalvation of many of their ſouls.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord will provide companions and conſolations to his ſervants, in all their multiplied and varied trials: and even they, who might have been expected to be inimical to them, will often be induced courteouſly to entreat them, and to miniſter to their refreſhment; nor ſhall they fail of receiving a ſuitable reward. His zealous miniſters cannot, in any ſituation, be wholly excluded from uſefulneſs: and he often permits them to paſs through troubles, to illuſtrate the power of his conſolations, and the excellency of their principles and piety; in order to excite the attention of the ignorant and careleſs, to their example and inſtructions. Their admonitions will commonly at firſt be ſlighted even by thoſe, who are friendly to them: for though they may give them credit for their good intentions, they ſeldom are impreſſed with favourable ſentiments of their ſagacity. They therefore diſregard their counſel, to avoid difficulty, or to obtain advantage, or conveniency: and when providence at firſt favours them, they ſuppoſe that they have gained their purpoſe. But diſobedience to the admonitions of faithful miniſters, however men may deſpiſe them, will ſurely induce troubles, and dangers; and, the event will convince them of the vanity of their hopes, and the folly of their conduct. What labour will men employ, and what ſacrifices will they readily make, in order to preſerve their lives, when in imminent danger! Yet how few will labour, or renounce temporal intereſt or pleaſure, to eſcape impending, and eternal deſtruction! Groundleſs hopes are often ſucceeded by deſponding fears: but when ſinners give up all hope of ſaving themſelves, they are prepared to underſtand God's word, and to truſt in his mercy through Jeſus Chriſt. It is an unſpeakable favour, when thoſe in diſtreſs have ſome with them, to direct them to the true foundation of hope, and ſource of comfort. It may be proper to remind them, that they have brought their troubles on themſelves by neglecting good counſel, and breaking God's commandments: but we muſt not fail alſo to encourage their hope in his mercy, and his gracious promiſes.

The Lord knoweth them that are his, and where they are: his angels are ready to miniſter to, and watch over them. If we can truly ſay, "His I am, and him I "ſerve," the whole ſcripture ſays to us "fear not:" and he often ſpares the lives, and ſaves the ſouls of others, for the ſake, and in anſwer to the prayers, of his redeemed, and devoted ſervants: ſo that they are a bleſſing to every family, and place, in which they reſide, or to which they travel. The comfort of God's promiſes can only be appropriated by a believing dependence on him to fulfil his word to us: and the ſalvation he reveals muſt be waited for, in attendance on the means, which he appoints. If he have choſen us to ſalvation; he hath alſo appointed that we ſhould obtain it, by repentance, faith, prayer, and perſevering obedience: and it is the moſt fatal preſumption to expect it in any other way. So ſelfiſh are men in general, that they are diſpoſed to ſhift for their own ſafety, by ſuch means, as enſure the deſtruction of thoſe, with whom they are moſt intimately connected! Nor will any perils or ſufferings overcome human depravity: ſo that mariners, and ſoldiers, who experience the moſt hardſhips, dangers, and deliverances; and who ſhould be peculiarly careful to be always ready for death, and attentive to the providence, promiſe and command of God, are too commonly leſs obſervant of truth, equity, humanity, ſobriety, or piety than moſt other men! (*Pſ.* cvii. v. 23—31.) However, we muſt endeavour to accommodate ourſelves to thoſe, with whom we are placed; and to direct, encourage, and inſtruct them, by our example, and converſation, to truſt in, and be grateful to the Lord, and to uſe the proper means of ſecuring their own intereſt and happineſs. The promiſes of God cannot be fruſtrated by any formidable dangers, nor his purpoſes altered by any human endeavours: our part therefore is to do our duty, and leave events to him: and all believers will obtain eternal ſalvation, in the ſame manner, that this company obtained temporal deliverance. Their difficulties, perils, temptations, and hair-breadth eſcapes will be many, and various; and their victories, and protection will be effected by different methods. They will often wait for ſome token of the Lord's favour, under their dark, and gloomy diſtreſſes, (when they ſee no light or comfort for many days together,) with more earneſtneſs than theſe mariners wiſhed for the day, (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* cxxx:) however, it will ſo come to paſs, that by one means or other, they will all eſcape ſafe to heaven.

2 And

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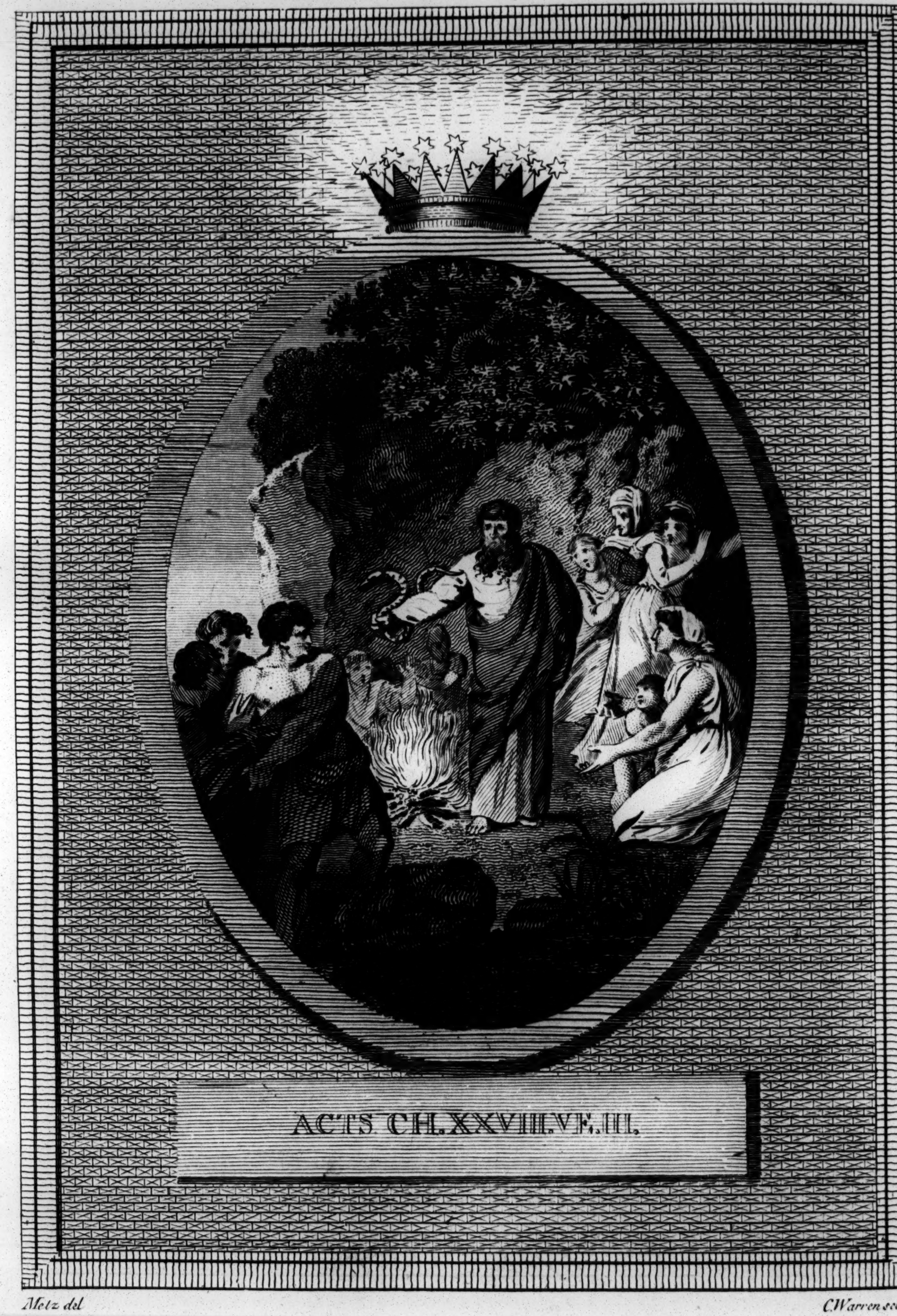

ACTS CH.XXVIII.VE.III.

Metz del. C.Warren sculp.

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2 And the barbarous people ſhewed us no little kindneſs: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, becauſe of the preſent rain, and becauſe of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of ſticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and faſtened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians ſaw the *venomous* beaſt hang on his hand, they ſaid among themſelves, no doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath eſcaped the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffereth not to live.

5 And he ſhook off the beaſt into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he ſhould have ſwollen, or fallen down dead ſuddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and ſaw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and ſaid that he was a god.

7 In the ſame quarters were poſſeſſions of the chief man of the iſland, whoſe name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteouſly.

8 And it came to paſs, that the father of Publius lay ſick of a fever, and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others alſo which had diſeaſes in the iſland came and were healed;

10 Who alſo honoured us with many honours: and when we departed, they laded *us* with ſuch things as were neceſſary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ſhip of Alexandria, which had wintered in the iſle, whoſe ſign was Caſtor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuſe, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compaſs,

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1, 2.] The iſland of Melita, (now Malta,) ſo called from the quantity of honey, (*mel*) found in it, lies to the ſouth of Sicily. It was planted by a colony of the Phenicians: the inhabitants were called Barbarians, becauſe neither of Greek nor Roman extraction, and perhaps with reference to their want of learning and politeneſs: but they were noted for humanity and kindneſs to ſtrangers; and their reception of this diſtreſſed company correſponded with that character. As they were all wet and cold, they kindled a large fire, in ſome place ſheltered from the rain, and there received, and refreſhed them.

V. 3—6.] The apoſtle could accommodate himſelf to any circumſtances: according therefore to the requirement of the preſent emergency, he readily aſſiſted in making the fire. But in doing this he was expoſed to a greater peril, than that of the ſea, which he had juſt eſcaped. The poiſon of the viper has generally been found fatal: and this, being irritated by the heat, might have been expected to have immediately bitten him. When therefore the rude iſlanders ſaw this *fierce, and deſtructive animal* faſten on his hand, underſtanding that he was a priſoner; they concluded him to be a murderer, and on that account expoſed to the ſpecial vengeance of heaven: and they ſuppoſed that he had eſcaped being ſwallowed up by the waves, only that he might be puniſhed in a more exemplary manner; for they looked on him as a dead man. But when they ſaw no harm follow; they ignorantly concluded him to be one of their deities appearing amongſt them; inſtead of acknowledging the inviſible power of God, that had thus wonderfully preſerved the life of his ſervant. However, this impreſſion would tend to render them more obſervant of his diſcourſe, and conduct.

V. 7—10.) It had been providentially ordered that the ſhip ſhould be driven on ſhore near the houſe, and eſtate, of the chief perſon, or governor of the iſland; who humanely entertained the whole company for three days, till they could be conveniently accommodated elſewhere. This introduced Paul to an acquaintance with the ſickneſs of Publius's father, and gave him the opportunity of miraculouſly healing him; which would not only be an acceptable return for his courteſy, but alſo tend to draw the general attention to him, and his doctrine. Accordingly ſick perſons, from every part of this ſmall iſland, came to him, and were healed. Doutleſs Paul and his friends diligently improved theſe opportunities of preaching the goſpel to the inhabitants, and probably they had conſiderable ſucceſs before their departure. So that they at length were had in great honour, as highly favoured of God, and as having abundantly requited the kindneſs they had received. The whole company was reſpected on Paul's account; and all their wants were liberally ſupplied when they departed. From this compendious narrative we are led to conclude, that the conduct and diſcourſes of Paul, and the events of the ſhipwreck and deliverance, had made a deep impreſſion on the minds of thoſe, who ſailed with him; and that their behaviour at Melita had procured *them alſo* a ſhare in the favour, and eſteem of the inhabitants.

V. 11—16.] When the winter months were over, the centurion, and his priſoners, &c, embarked as paſſengers on board an Alexandrian veſſel. Caſtor and Pollux were two Pagan deities, who were fabled to be twin-brothers, the ſons of Jupiter by Leda; and they were ſuppoſed to be peculiarly concerned in the protection of mariners: their images were therefore placed at the head, or ſtern of the ſhip, which was called by their names. Syracuſe was the capital city of Sicily: Rhegium a town and came to Rhegium: and after one day the ſouth wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli;

14 Where we found brethren, and were deſired to tarry with them ſeven days: and ſo we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and The three Taverns; whom when Paul ſaw, he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the priſoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was ſuffered to dwell by himſelf with a ſoldier that kept him.

17 And it came to paſs that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he ſaid unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing againſt the people or cuſtoms of our fathers, yet was I delivered priſoner from Jeruſalem into the hands of the Romans:

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, becauſe there was no cauſe of death in me:

19 But when the Jews ſpake againſt *it*, I was conſtrained to appeal unto Ceſar; not that I had ought to accuſe my nation of.

20 For this cauſe therefore have I called for you, to ſee *you*, and to ſpeak with *you*; becauſe that for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with this chain.

21 And they ſaid unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came ſhewed, or ſpake any harm of thee.

22 But we deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt: for as concerning this ſect, we know that every where it is ſpoken againſt.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodg-

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on the ſouthern extremity of Italy: and Puteoli a ſea-port on the ſouth-weſt ſide of it. Here they landed; and finding ſome chriſtians, they were deſired by them, and allowed by the centurion, to ſpend a week there. We are not informed whether he was converted to Chriſt or not: but his regard to Paul ſeems to have increaſed during the whole voyage. The apoſtle's approach towards Rome being known in that city; ſome of the chriſtians reſiding there came to meet him, and welcome him among them, though in bonds. They knew him to be eſpecially the apoſtle of the Gentiles: and the epiſtle, he had previouſly written to them had doubtleſs increaſed their high eſtimation of his character. Some of them came to meet him fifty one miles, others thirty three: and this teſtimony of reſpect was very ſeaſonable; for the apoſtle ſeems to have been rather diſcouraged by the conſideration of the circumſtances, in which he was firſt to viſit this renowned city; and to have apprehended that he ſhould meet with little countenance, or opportunity of uſefulneſs there: but this promiſing appearance inſpired him with gratitude, and confidence. When they arrived at Rome, the other priſoners were committed to the cuſtody of the captain of the imperial guards, to be lodged in different priſons: but through the account ſent by Feſtus, and the report of Julius, Paul was exempted from this hardſhip, and was allowed to dwell in a lodging apart from other priſoners, and only guarded by a ſoldier, to whom he is ſuppoſed to have been chained.

V. 17—22.] When Paul and his friends had ſettled their other concerns; he immediately ſent to the principal perſons of his nation, to come to him, as he could not go to them: and he obſerved to them, that though he had not injured any of his people, or committed any offence againſt their laws, and cuſtoms; yet he had been apprehended at Jeruſalem, and given up as a priſoner to the Romans: and had at length been conſtrained in his own defence to appeal to the emperor. In this account he carefully avoided the mention of the violent attempt that had at firſt been made upon his life, and the ſubſequent plots that had been formed to aſſaſſinate him. He wanted to ſatisfy them, that he had no reſentment againſt, or purpoſe of accuſing, any of his nation; and that he had not committed any crime againſt them; but was a priſoner entirely on account of profeſſing that hope in the Meſſiah, which was general to their nation; only he held it with reſpect to Jeſus, who had been crucified, and raiſed from the dead. He ſpake of his chain with great indifference, as well pleaſed to wear it for Chriſt's ſake. To this the Jews replied, that they had received no account of him from Judea; nor had they heard any of thoſe who came to Rome accuſe him of any crime: but they wiſhed to know his ſentiments concerning Jeſus; ſeeing the ſect of the chriſtians was every where ſpoken againſt, as heretical, ſchiſmatical, the ſource of many diſturbances, and injurious to mankind.

V. 23—29.] The apoſtle proceeded in the ſame manner with the Jews in his lodgings, as he had before done in their ſynagogues; explaining the nature, and privileges of the Redeemer's kingdom and ſalvation; teſtifying to the facts connected with its introduction; perſuading them to believe in Jeſus, and reaſoning with them from the ſcriptures, to prove him to be the promiſed Meſſiah. Thus he employed the whole day, in the great earneſtneſs of his ſoul: and though ſome were won over to the faith, yet the moſt of them ſeem to have rejected his teſtimony, and to have diſputed againſt ſuch ing; to whom he expounded and teſtified the kingdom of God, perſuading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the law of Moſes, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And ſome believed the things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themſelves they departed, after that Paul had ſpoken one word, Well ſpake the Holy Ghoſt by Eſaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand: and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed; leſt they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the ſalvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had ſaid theſe words the Jews departed, and had great reaſoning among themſelves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired houſe, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

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as believed. Therefore Paul parted with them, by obſerving, that the Holy Ghoſt had well deſcribed their diſpoſition, and awfully denounced their doom, by the prophet Iſaiah. The paſſage hath already been conſidered; (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah,* c. vi. v. 9—11. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 14, 15. *John,* c. xii. v. 40.) The apoſtle had obſerved, during the whole of his miniſtry, that the nation in general thus cloſed their eyes, and ears to the truth; and he foreſaw with great concern, that God was about to give them up to *judicial* blindneſs and obduracy for their ſins. However he would aſſure them, that the Gentiles, to whom the ſalvation of God was ſent by him, would hear and obey his word. The Jews being thus warned, when departing, had afterwards much reaſoning, and diſputation among themſelves; and probably afterwards ſome of them embraced the goſpel.

V. 30, 31.] The Jewiſh rulers did not chooſe to follow up their proſecution of Paul, upon his appeal to the emperor; and he took no further notice of the matter: thus the apoſtle remained two years longer a priſoner at Rome. However he was allowed to hire a houſe, and there openly to exerciſe his miniſtry, without meeting with any interruption. With this Luke cloſed his hiſtory: probably the apoſtle was at length ſet at liberty: though he is reported to have afterwards ſuffered martyrdom at Rome. Several of his epiſtles were written during this his impriſonment. Doubtleſs Luke, and Ariſtarchus laboured diligently to ſpread the goſpel in the city, and its vicinity, all the time of the apoſtle's confinement.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who are deſpiſed for their homely uncultivated manners, are often more hoſpitable and friendly than their more poliſhed neighbours: and *heathens,* or reputed *barbarians,* will riſe up in judgment againſt, and condemn, many perſons, in this *civilized chriſtian* nation, who ſcruple not to embezzle the property, or injure the perſons of ſuch, as are caſt upon our ſhores. True dignity has no need of affected ſtatelineſs; and only pride or lazineſs deem that beneath them, which the preſent exigency requires for perſonal or ſocial advantage. We are always in danger in ourſelves, and always ſafe when under the Lord's protection: and he leads his ſervants through perils, to illuſtrate their characters, or to ſhew his power in their deliverance. Even uninformed, and barbarous people have an horror of murder, and an apprehenſion of divine vengeance on thoſe, who commit it: but this may give riſe to erroneous judgments; as it is not ſo generally conſidered, that the wicked are often reſerved for future and more terrible puniſhment. And ſuch perſons are peculiarly apt to paſs from one extreme to the other, in their opinion of others; and to decide on men's characters rather by their ſucceſs, than by their actions. The Lord raiſes up friends to his people in every place, whither he leads them; he rewards, or enables them to requite, their benefactors in a ſuitable manner; and he renders them a bleſſing to all, who are connected with them. The cure of diſeaſes, though valuable, is far more ſo when united with the means of grace, and ſalvation; and the friends, that are raiſed up to a man by his good behaviour and uſefulneſs, will be above all others affectionate, and liberal.

The ordinary tranſactions of travelling are ſeldom worth a recital: but the comfort of communion with the ſaints, and the kindneſs ſhewn us by our friends, are deſerving of a more particular mention. The reſpect and love that lively chriſtians bear to faithful miniſters, though they have never ſeen them, will induce them ſometimes to go far to converſe with them; nor ſhould they eſteem them the leſs on account of their ſufferings for the goſpel. This conduct is the more incumbent upon them; as the moſt eminent of them are liable to diſcouragements, and need ſomewhat to refreſh their hopes under long-continued trials and temptations: the Lord moderates the afflictions of his people, as is beſt for them: and he can render them eaſy under the trouble, that is left upon them. They ſhould therefore be prompt to every ſervice in their power; they ought to obviate prejudices that hinder their uſefulneſs, as far as they can; and in refuting the charges brought againſt them, they ſhould be candid and expreſs good-will towards their enemies. Should we be called to wear a chain for Chriſt's ſake, we ought not to be aſhamed of, but to glory in, it: and though real chriſtians be every where, and at all times, ſpoken againſt, as a preciſe, troubleſome, or fanatical ſect; yet we may ſo behave, that none can ſpeak any perſonal harm of us. We ſhould ever be ready to declare our ſentiments of Chriſt and the goſpel to thoſe, that deſire to hear them: and if the audience did not grow weary, there are times when a zealous miniſter could expound, and teſtify the kingdom of God, and perſuade men concerning Jeſus, from morning till evening. Yet at laſt we muſt be thankful, if ſome believe, though ſtill more reject our teſtimony with pertinacious contempt. But we muſt ſhew ſuch perſons what the holy Spirit hath ſpoken concerning them, and how the ſcriptures are fulfilled in them: and warn them not to cloſe their hearts in obſtinate unbelief, leſt God ſhould *judicially* leave them to be blinded, and hardened to their deſtruction. Whilſt we mourn on account of ſuch deſpiſers; we ſhould rejoice that the ſalvation of God is ſent to others, who will receive it; and, if we be of this number, how thankful ſhould we be to him, that hath made us to differ? If under reproach and perſecution, the true miniſter can but obtain leave and liberty to preach the goſpel, and is favoured with ſucceſs in his work; he will deem his ſufferings to be amply compenſated: and he will be reconciled to his own want of liberty, if he finds that the word of God hath free courſe, and is glorified.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the ROMANS.

By the good hand of our God upon us, we have at length arrived at the epiſtolary part of the New Teſtament; in which the peculiar doctrines of the goſpel are more explicitly ſtated, and explained, and their practical tendency more argumentatively *ſhewn, than in the hiſtorical books. The diſtinguiſhing truths therein laid down have been kept in view through the whole of the preceding expoſition: and it will therefore be unneceſſary formally to anſwer thoſe, who have endeavoured to reconcile this part of the ſcripture with ſyſtems of a contrary nature and tendency. If the obvious meaning of the text, the connexion of the diſcourſe, and the force of the arguments be ſhewn, as coincident with the general tenor of ſcripture; the truth will then be eſtabliſhed, and error will fall of itſelf: and it is the deſign of this publication to aſſiſt the ſerious enquiry of thoſe, who want to underſtand the word of God; not to enter the liſts with ſuch, as appear to the author to be employed in perverting, or perplexing it. We begin with the epiſtles of the apoſtle Paul, who wrote, as well as laboured, more abundantly, than all his brethren. Fourteen of his epiſtles are reſerved for our inſtruction: ſome others he is ſuppoſed to have written, of the ſame import, that have not been preſerved. In all his writings we perceive evident proofs of a ſound judgment, a talent for cloſe reaſoning, a lively imagination, and fervent affections: but all theſe abilities, and endowments were directed, and ſuperintended by the Spirit of inſpiration. The epiſtle to the Romans is placed firſt, though ſome others were penned before it: but it was addreſſed to the chriſtians, who reſided in the capital city of that great empire, which then lorded it over the whole known world: and the epiſtle itſelf is one of the longeſt, and moſt comprehenſive of all that were written by the apoſtle. It is not known when, or by whom the goſpel was firſt preached at Rome: but it is conjectured, that it was carried thither by ſome of thoſe Jews, who were converted at the day of Pentecoſt,* (Acts, c. ii. v. 10.) *However Paul had never been there: but as the apoſtle of the Gentiles, he deemed it proper to uſe this method of eſtabliſhing the believers in the faith; and of giving them ſuch a comprehenſive view of the chriſtian religion, as might put them upon their guard againſt falſe teachers of various deſcriptions. This epiſtle is the only part of the ſcripture, in which divine truth is delivered in a ſyſtematical method: and it is a proper model for any one, who intends to compile a body of divinity. After the introduction, the apoſtle opens his ſubject, (as it is reaſonable to begin ſuch ſyſtematical treatiſes,) by ſhewing man's relations, and obligations to God his Creator, and his apoſtacy from his worſhip and ſervice: he proceeds to prove the univerſal ſinfulneſs*

fulneſs of both Gentiles, and Jews, and the impoſſibility of any man's juſtifying himſelf before God, by his own obedience. Having brought in the world guilty, and deſerving of wrath: he proceeds to ſtate the method of our ſalvation by the mercy of God, through the redemption of his Son, and the way of juſtification by faith in his blood. This he proves, illuſtrates, and exemplifies very fully: and he next proceeds to ſhew that this way of juſtification is cloſely connected with ſanctification and evangelical obedience: he then ſtates the believer's experience, and conflicts; and diſplays his character, hopes, and privileges: and at length he leads our reflections back to the ſource of theſe bleſſings, in the eternal election and ſovereign love, and mercy of God. Having thus ſtated, proved, and anſwered objections to his doctrine; and diſcuſſed ſeveral queſtions reſpecting the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, &c; he applies the whole diſcourſe by a variety of practical exhortations, precepts, and inſtructions, enforced by evangelical motives. And having touched upon ſome particulars ſuited to the circumſtances of thoſe times; he concludes with affectionate ſalutations, cautions, and prayers, and with aſcribing glory to God our Saviour. It would be vain to ſpecify the peculiar inſtructions conveyed by this epiſtle; for ſcarce any can be mentioned, that are not contained in it: ſo that ſelection, and brevity are chiefly to be conſulted in our obſervations upon it. It appears to have been written from Corinth, when the apoſtle was there the ſecond time, previous to his journey to Jeruſalem with the contributions of the churches.

Anno Domini 61.

CHAP. I.

Contains Paul 1ſt. Declaring his apoſtleſhip, and the great ſubject of his miniſtry; ſaluting the chriſtians at Rome, ſhewing how he thanked God, and prayed for them; and expreſſing his deſires, and purpoſes of coming and preaching to them, 1---15. *2d. Stating the excellency of the goſpel, and man's need of it, by reaſon of his ungodlineſs, iniquity, and idolatry; and giving an horrid deſcription of the character of the Gentiles,* 16---32.

PAUL, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, called *to be* an apoſtle, ſeparated unto the goſpel of God,

2 (Which he had promiſed afore by his prophets in the holy ſcriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, which was made of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh;

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4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead;

5 By whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name;

6 Among whom are ye alſo the called of Jeſus Chriſt;

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* ſaints: Grace to you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

8 Firſt, I thank my God through Jeſus

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—7.] According to the cuſtom of thoſe times, the apoſtle began this epiſtle, by prefixing his name, and diſtinguiſhing title. The chriſtians at Rome would receive this letter from Paul, who was alſo called Saul, and had been a perſecutor of the church; but who now deemed it his honour and happineſs to be the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, and to be called his apoſtle; having been ſeparated and appointed by the choice, and effectual calling of God, to preach his goſpel to the world, and to ſpend his life in promoting it. This doctrine was no novel invention, but the fulfilment of the promiſes made in the ſacred ſcriptures, by the prophets; and it reſpected the Son of God, even Jeſus the Saviour, the promiſed Meſſiah, the Prophet, Prieſt, and King of the church, whom all believers acknowledged, and obeyed as their Lord. He was deſcended from the poſterity of David, according to the fleſh, or in his human nature; but he had alſo been declared, and determined to be the Son of God by that divine power, which raiſed him from the dead. The expreſſion, "according to the "Spirit of Holineſs," hath been generally interpreted to ſignify, "according to his divine nature:" but it is not uſed elſewhere in ſuch a ſenſe, and does not naturally convey that idea. Others therefore explain it of the conception of Jeſus by the Holy Ghoſt, on which account he was called the Son of God: but this only leads us to what he was "according to the fleſh," or in his human

Chriſt for you all, that your faith is ſpoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve with my ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son, that without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10 Making requeſt, (if by any means now at length I might have a proſperous journey by the will of God,) to come unto you.

11 For I long to ſee you, that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end ye may be eſtabliſhed;

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purpoſed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might

nature; whereas the apoſtle ſeems evidently to intend ſomething more. The expreſſion may indeed mean, that the reſurrection of Jeſus was effected by the power of the Spirit of holineſs; (1 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 18:) yet this ſeems not to be the moſt obvious conſtruction of the words. But may they not mean, that the Holy Ghoſt, or the Spirit of Holineſs, had foretold by the prophets, that the Meſſiah would be the Son of God, as well as the Son of David; and that when Jeſus had been crucified for aſſerting this claim, and "*making himſelf equal with God,*" he was declared to have been ſo, by his reſurrection from the dead through the power of God, according to the prophecies of the Old Teſtament? This ſenſe ſo well agrees with the facts, and with the arguments uſed by the apoſtles in other places, (*Acts*, c. ii. v. 22—36. c. xiii. v. 32—37;) and ſo fully and conciſely proved Jeſus to be the Son of God, as well as the Son of David; that I ſhould have had no heſitation in propoſing it as the apoſtle's undoubted meaning; had it not been different from the interpretations given by all other expoſitors, as far as I know. From this glorious Perſon, (whoſe reſurrection concurred with the teſtimony of the Spirit of Holineſs, ſpeaking by the prophets, to prove him truly and properly the Son of God in human nature,) Paul declared, that he had received pardoning mercy and converting grace; as well as an appointment to the apoſtolical office; that he might be employed as the inſtrument in bringing ſinners of all nations, to "*the obedience of faith,*" by accepting of the Redeemer's mercy, and becoming ſubject to his authority, for the honour of his name by their ſalvation, worſhip and ſervice. Among which happy and favoured company were the perſons, to whom he ſent this epiſtle; for they too had been called by the goſpel to profeſs themſelves his diſciples, to bear his name, and to truſt in and ſerve him. As Paul was the apoſtle of the Gentiles, he conſidered himſelf peculiarly intereſted in their welfare; though they had not been converted by his miniſtry: therefore he had written this epiſtle to them: and he addreſſed it, not to the citizens of Rome in general; but to all thoſe, who had been called to be, and were denominated ſaints, or holy, ſeparate, and ſanctified perſons, partakers of divine grace, and devoted to the ſervice of God: and who were thus evidenced to be beloved of Him, the objects of his electing love, intereſted in his mercy and plenteous redemption, bearing in a meaſure his holy image, in which he delights, and conſtituted heirs of his everlaſting kingdom. Theſe the apoſtle ſaluted, by wiſhing them "grace, and peace:" grace to ſanctify their ſouls, and peace to comfort their hearts and conſciences: of theſe bleſſings, the ſum of all happineſs, he ardently deſired that every profeſſed chriſtian at Rome might participate; and that they all might continually have an acceſſion made to that meaſure of them, which they had already obtained; as ſpringing from the free mercy of God, the reconciled Father of all believers, and coming to them through the Perſon, merits, and mediation of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This is the cuſtomary apoſtolical ſalutation; and we ſhall frequently be called to reconſider it.

V. 8—12.] The apoſtle next aſſured "the ſaints at Rome," that, though he was perſonally a ſtranger to them; yet he heartily thanked his God and Father, through Jeſus Chriſt, for the mercy He had ſhewn to them all; as their faith in Chriſt, and its happy effect upon their conduct, were ſpoken of in every part of the world. Wherever he went, he heard the commendation of the believers at Rome; and their conduct was the more noticed, by reaſon of the renown of their city, and the temptations, with which they muſt be ſurrounded, in ſuch a ſituation: and He could call that God to witneſs, (which was indeed a moſt ſolemn oath;) whom he worſhipped and ſerved, not only with conſtant, and perſevering diligence, but with inward fervency, zeal and devotion, according to the diſcovery of his glory made in the goſpel, and by promoting that doctrine, which reſpects his Son, as the great Author, and Subject of it; that he prayed for them all, on every occaſion, without intermiſſion, or neglect; and that he eſpecially beſought the Lord that he would enable him to go among them; if after ſo long a time, and ſo many diſappointments, he might be favoured with a proſperous journey to them, by the will and appointment of God. For he greatly deſired to ſee, and converſe with them, that he might impart to them ſome of thoſe ſpiritual gifts, which were generally conferred by impoſition of the apoſtle's hands; in order to their eſtabliſhment in the faith. And this he deſired, in order that he might ſhare the comfort beſtowed on them, and rejoice in miniſtering to their joy; as well as in conferring with them concerning the nature, object, and effects of that faith, which was held both by them, and him. He ſeems to have meant to remind them of his apoſtolical character, and authority, as ſanctioning his doctrine, by which he intended to guard them eſpecially againſt the judaizing teachers: yet he aimed to do this in as unaſſuming, and affectionate a manner as he could; that he might give no one any diſguſt, or the falſe teachers any handle againſt him.

have ſome fruit among you alſo, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wiſe and to the unwiſe.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the goſpel to you that are at Rome alſo.

16 For I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt: for it is the power of God unto ſalvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The juſt ſhall live by faith.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.

19 Becauſe that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them: for God hath ſhewed *it* unto them.

20 For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, be-

Probably the chriſtians at Rome had received ſome ſupernatural gifts, though no apoſtle ſeems to have been there: but Paul expected that they would be more abundantly imparted, when he ſhould go among them; and that they would be thus fortified againſt ſuch as attempted to pervert them, as well as againſt the fear of perſecution. We have ſeen how his prayers for a proſperous journey to Rome were anſwered, by his being ſent thither as a priſoner!

V. 13—17.] The apoſtle next informed them, that he had repeatedly purpoſed to come to Rome; but that he had been hindered hitherto by his multiplied engagements, and the oppoſition he had met with. Indeed he was exceedingly deſirous to have ſome fruit to his miniſtry among the Romans, as well as among the other Gentiles: for as he had been ſo marvellouſly converted, and entruſted with a diſpenſation of the goſpel; ſo he deemed himſelf bound to do every thing, that he poſſibly could, to promote the ſalvation of men in general, eſpecially among the Gentiles. This was a debt, which he owed both to the civilized Greeks or Romans, and to the rude barbarians; as well as to the learned, and unlearned of every nation, from the *wiſe* philoſopher, to the untutored labourer. With this view of his obligation, he was ready, according to his ability and opportunity, to preach the goſpel at Rome alſo: though, in that haughty and magnificent capital, he might encounter more contempt and oppoſition, than in other places; and though his talents and addreſs might be deemed leſs ſuitable to the faſtidious taſte of it's refined inhabitants. For however the noble, the learned, or the proud might deſpiſe the doctrines of the goſpel, and eſpecially that of ſalvation by faith in the merits of a Jew, who had been crucified as a deceiver by his own countrymen: yet he was in no wiſe aſhamed of it, but was ready to glory in his belief of it before all men: as he knew, that the power of God attended, and was diſplayed by, that doctrine, for the ſalvation of every believer, from the power of his corrupt paſſions and habit, from the bondage of ſatan, from the love of the world, and the fear of men, and from all ſin and miſery. So that whilſt Jewiſh rabbies, and pagan philoſophers had tried in vain to reform men's lives; the deſpiſed goſpel of Chriſt, wherever it had been preached, had been rendered extenſively ſucceſsful, for that purpoſe. This had firſt been evidenced among the Jews, in the converſion and holy lives of multitudes, who had before been of very bad characters; and afterwards it had produced ſimilar effects among the Gentiles, vaſt numbers of whom had been turned from their immoralities, and idolatries, to the holy worſhip and ſervice of the true God. For He had been pleaſed therein to reveal, not only the righteouſneſs of his perfect character, and government, and the righteouſneſs required by his holy law, but *that* alſo, which he hath appointed, provided, and introduced, for the juſtification of ſinners before him; and which might be called "the righteouſneſs of God," as for other reaſons, ſo eſpecially, becauſe it conſiſted of the perfect obedience unto death of that glorious perſon, who "is God manifeſted in the fleſh" (*Jer.* c. xxiii. v. 6.) This righteouſneſs is revealed "from faith, to faith;" it is altogether of faith, from firſt to laſt, and without any reſpect to other diſtinctions; or it is revealed from the *faithfulneſs* of God in his word, to *the faith* of the believer: according to the doctrine of the prophet, that the real juſt, or righteous man ſhould live, or be accepted and ſaved, by faith, and not by works. (*Hab.* c. ii. v. 4.) This righteouſneſs ſo honours all God's perfections, that it might have been expected, he would put forth his power, to render the preaching of it efficacious: and it furniſhes the ſinner with ſuch motives, encouragements, helps, and proſpects; that it is ſuited, in every reſpect, to render him devoted to God, and holy in all manner of converſation.

V. 18—20.] The apoſtle here opens his main ſubject; and begins to ſhew, that all men need the ſalvation of the goſpel, becauſe none could obtain the favour of God, or eſcape his wrath, by their own works. For, however ignorant perſons might imagine, that men's ſuppoſed virtues would atone for their vices, &c; yet in fact the wrath of God had been revealed from heaven, againſt every kind, and degree of ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs; in reſpect "of all who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs." This revelation had been eſpecially made by the holy law of God, and the Old Teſtament diſpenſation; and had now been more generally publiſhed, and fully explained by the goſpel. And though ſome extenuation might be admitted, in reſpect of thoſe, who had not been favoured with the oracles of God: yet all men were found guilty, and expoſed to this "revealed ing underſtood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe:

21 Becauſe that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened.

22 Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools;

23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God alſo gave them up to

" wrath," for " holding the truth in unrighteouſneſs," or acting in oppoſition to their better knowledge, and the convictions of their own conſciences. All were acquainted with ſome truths concerning their moral duties; but their depravity impriſoned thoſe truths, and reſtrained them from exerting their efficacy upon their conduct. All might have known far more than they did, had they not hated the light, becauſe of their love of ſin. (*John*, c. iii. v. 18—21.) No man, of any ſect, or nation, perfectly lives up to his own principles: all do what they know to be wrong, and omit what they know to be their duty. So that the plea of ignorance cannot be admitted, in its full latitude, in favour of any but idiots: for all rebel againſt that light, not only which they might have obtained, but which they have actually poſſeſſed. This general principle the apoſtle proceeded to illuſtrate by the ſtate of the Gentile world. The Pagans had not the light of revelation; but the works of creation preached to them; and that, which might be known of God, as the Creator, Benefactor, and Governor of the univerſe, was made manifeſt even among them; for God had ſhewed it to them, even by the wonderful formation of their own bodies, and ſouls, as well as by the various objects around them: ſo that being endued with rational powers they could not have failed of knowing Him, in theſe characters, and in reſpect of many of his attributes; had it not been for the depravity of their hearts. Indeed God himſelf dwelleth in light inacceſſible, and his eſſential glory muſt be inviſible to mortal eye: yet his inviſible power, and Godhead are ſo clearly reflected from, and diſcernible in, the works which he hath made; that his eternal and underived exiſtence, his omnipotence, and other perfections muſt be known from the beauty, excellency, variety, immenſity, &c, of his creatures, by all intelligent beings, except as their minds are debaſed, and alienated from Him by ſin. Thus, even idolaters, and wicked Gentiles are left without excuſe; and their conduct is evinced to be the effect of their depraved diſpoſitions, rather than of their want of information. They all might have known more of God, than they did, if they had been properly diſpoſed: and ſome of them, when they had diſcovered the vanity of the popular idolatries, and acquired ſome juſt notions of God, and his worſhip, continued to act in oppoſition to their knowledge from carnal motives. Thus " they impri" ſoned the truth in unrighteouſneſs," it is in vain to attempt an excuſe for them; and the divine verdict brought in againſt them, accords with the plaineſt dictates of juſtice, and equity.

V. 21—23.] Idolatry was firſt introduced, and became general and perpetual in the world, through man's carnal averſion to the holy character, worſhip and ſervice of the true God. The poſterity of Noah had ſome knowledge of Jehovah; but they revolted from his ſervice, and refuſed to glorify him as God, by their adoration, love, and obedience; neither were they thankful for the bounties of providence beſtowed upon them. Thus impiety and iniquity made way for idolatry; which was almoſt become univerſal, when God called Abraham. From that time the ſame cauſes produced the ſame effects, in every part of the world. Some of the philoſophers of Greece and Rome had indeed got a little knowledge of the Being and perfections of the One ſupreme God; and they ſpeculated on ſuch ſubjects with ſome acuteneſs, and truth: yet they " glorified him not " as God," either by their avowed adoration, or in the conduct of their lives; nor were at all thankful for his goodneſs to them. On the contrary, they ſanctioned by their hypocritical conformity the ſtupid idolatries of their countrymen; and growing proud of their ſuperior diſcernment, they amuſed themſelves with vain fancies and reaſonings concerning matters too high, and abſtruſe for them. Thus they were bewildered in their ſpeculations, and moſt of them took refuge in ſcepticiſm, or atheiſm. Their minds, which were deſtitute of *practical* wiſdom and underſtanding, became more and more darkened with error, and deluſion: and whilſt they profeſſed themſelves to be ſages, wiſe men, and philoſophers, they were *infatuated*, or turned into mere fools, or ſtupid idiots, in the great concerns of God and religion. So that moſt of them relapſed into their old idolatries, into which others from ſimilar cauſes had been ſeduced; and men in general concurred in exchanging the glorious Object of all worſhip, for inanimate idols. They generally began by changing the glory of the incorruptible God, into the image of a mortal man, which they fooliſhly ſuppoſed to be a proper reſemblance of Him: at length they made their images like birds, beaſts, fiſhes, ſerpents, reptiles, &c; and thus actually fell down to worſhip the meaneſt, and moſt noxious of the creatures. It is well known that many of the ancients, eſpecially *the learned* Egyptians, worſhipped dogs, ſnakes, reptiles, nay even vegetables. Thus mankind in general, having retained from original tradition, or having acquired by the exerciſe of their reaſon, ſome general notions of a Deity; have invented various ſpecies of idolatry, and have univerſally forſaken the worſhip of the true God, where revelation hath not been actually vouchſafed: and if any nations ſeem to be ſunk into ſuch total ſtupidity, as to have no notions of a God, remaining among them; it ſtill more clearly proves, not man's want of rational powers, but his carnal enmity to God, and religion, through which he is become gradually the beſotted, and blinded ſlave of ſatan.

uncleanneſs, through the luſts of their own hearts, to diſhonour their own bodies between themſelves;

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worſhipped and ſerved the creature more than the Creator, who is bleſſed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cauſe God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural uſe into that which is againſt nature:

27 And likewiſe alſo the men, leaving the natural uſe of the woman, burned in their luſt one toward another; men with men working that which is unſeemly, and receiving in themſelves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient;

29 Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whiſperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters, inventors of evil things, diſobedient to parents,

31 Without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful;

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death,) not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.

V. 24—27.] As man thus diſhonoured God by their wilful apoſtacy and idolatry; ſo he left them, under the influence of ſatan, to debaſe themſelves, by the moſt unnatural, and abominable uncleanneſs. This did not ſo much reſult from the prevalence of their animal inclinations; (for the brutes do not run into ſuch exceſſes;) but from the luſts of their own hearts, which madly ſought ſatisfaction in ſenſuality, when they had loſt the joy of God's favour. Thus they diſgraced their bodies, which had been moſt curiouſly formed by the Creator, to be the inſtruments of the ſoul, in his worſhip and ſervice; by uſing them to perpetrate with each other the moſt deteſtable pollutions. This was permitted *judicially*; becauſe they had exchanged the truth of God, which had been made known to them, reſpecting his nature, perfections, and worſhip; for the baſeſt falſhoods, and deluſions of the devil, and the ſophiſtical concluſions of their own vain reaſonings: and in conſequence, they had rendered divine honours to creatures, in preference to the infinite Creator, who is in himſelf moſt bleſſed for evermore, whom all rational creatures ought to adore and bleſs, and whoſe praiſes are celebrated by all the inhabitants of heaven, whilſt ſaints on earth repeat a cordial Amen to them. They firſt joined creatures with him in their worſhip, or adored them as mediators; they uſed images to repreſent the inviſible Object of their adoration, and at length the vileſt of the creatures engroſſed the whole of it. The Lord being therefore provoked to jealouſy by this baſe apoſtacy, and ingratitude, gave them up to the vileſt affections, and inclinations; ſo that they were left to practiſe ſuch unnatural luſts, as are not fit to be mentioned, except as a ſtigma on human nature, and to enhance the grace of our redemption. And this was a judgment meet for ſuch a crime: as they had ſo diſhonoured God, through their pride, and carnal enmity; it was proper for them to be left to expoſe their own ſhame, in the moſt infamous manner; that the conſequences of their apoſtacy, and the blindneſs of their boaſted reaſon, as well as the filthineſs of their hearts, might be known to the whole intelligent creation. Thoſe unnatural crimes, and vile affections, which are moſt ſcandalous, and carefully concealed at preſent, were openly avowed amongſt the Greeks and Romans, even in their politeſt ages: and their moſt elegant, and celebrated poets have defiled their compoſitions, by the mention of ſuch vile amours without any expreſſions of abhorrence, or even of diſapprobation!

V. 28—32.] As the Gentiles did not *like* to retain, or approve of retaining, God in their knowledge; becauſe his holy character, worſhip, and ſervice did not ſuit their proud and carnal hearts; and as they preferred the baſeſt idols to him, becauſe more congenial to their diſpoſitions, and conſiſtent with their favourite purſuits: ſo He gave them up to a *reprobate* mind, that they ſhould fooliſhly, and perverſely prefer the moſt ſhameful, and pernicious practices to thoſe, which are decent, honourable, and becoming rational creatures. Thus they were left to commit ſuch crimes, as were utterly inconſiſtent with reaſon, nature, and their own, and each others welfare. Nay they proceeded to ſuch lengths in wickedneſs, that their whole hearts, and lives were filled with every kind of fraud, oppreſſion, extortion, and iniquity: they practiſed all fornication, inceſt, and adultery without remorſe: they delighted in miſchief for its own ſake: they rapaciouſly amaſſed wealth by every means in their power, however vile: they revenged every injury with deſperate malice: they envied all, who were more honoured or proſpered than themſelves: they were prompt to murder, or to any kind of bitter conteſts, and to every ſpecies of deceit, and malignity, as delighting in the miſery of others. Secret calumnies, and ſlanders were employed to ruin men's characters: they were haters of God, and of his authority, law, juſtice, ſervice and providence; and deſpiteful to his worſhippers, and to each other. They were proud of their abilities, poſſeſſions,

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. Solemn warnings to ſuch as judged others, and yet tranſgreſſed themſelves; with an account of the Lord's dealings both with Jews and

and exploits; they idolized themſelves, in boaſting of their virtues, or performances, and in wholly ſeeking their own glory in the moſt oſtentatious manner: they invented new ſpecies of cruelty, treachery, luxury, impiety, idolatry, ſenſual gratification, and magnificence. They caſt off all regard to parental authority, and deſpiſed, injured, or even murdered their aged parents, (as the emperor Nero did his mother Agrippina.) They acted in many things, as if they had been deſtitute of common ſenſe, by the indulgence of their headſtrong paſſions: they violated without ſcruple the moſt ſolemn treaties, covenants, and oaths: they ſinned away natural affection, and even expoſed their new-born infants, that they might not have the trouble or expence of bringing them up; and in ſome places they put to death their parents, when they became helpleſs, and burdenſome. They were implacable in their reſentments, and unmerciful in their diſpoſitions: ſo that, beſides the cruel carnage of their ambitious wars, the indiſcriminate ſlaughter, which often attended the taking of cities, and the frequent murder of their vanquiſhed enemies; their public diverſions conſiſted in beholding gladiators fighting together, till hundreds were ſometimes maſſacred before their eyes; or in ſeeing ſlaves and criminals fighting with wild beaſts, and often devoured by them. Nor did the principal perſons, whether men or women, abſent themſelves from theſe horrid ſpectacles! And even thoſe among them, who were moſt convinced, that theſe things were criminal, and deſerving of condemnation and death, according to the judgment of God; not only continued to practiſe them; but they alſo delighted in, honoured, careſſed, flattered, preferred, or even deified ſuch perſons, as were moſt notoriouſly addicted to them. The hiſtory of the Greeks, and Romans, eſpecially of the latter, about the time when the apoſtle wrote, abundantly illuſtrates this horrid deſcription of their general character; from which even their philoſophers, and moraliſts were by no means to be excepted.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

A ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt is the higheſt ſtyle of man; and that of a miniſter, or an apoſtle is only a ſpecification of the particular ſervice, in which a man is employed. They, who are thus privileged, have been called out of their natural ſtate of darkneſs and alienation from God, and ſeparated from their ſinful connexions, by divine grace; and thus they have been taught to believe, love, adorn, and promote the goſpel of God. This goſpel, though often treated as a novel invention, hath compriſed the whole hope of ſinful man from the beginning; and was promiſed by the prophets, before it was publiſhed by the apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt. He is the great Subject of this bleſſed doctrine, being the Son of David, and the Son of God, according to the teſtimony of the Spirit of holineſs by the prophets, and the demonſtration of his reſurrection from the dead by the power of God. From his fulneſs have all his ſervants received; he gives grace to the ſinner, and qualifies the believer, or the miniſter, for the work allotted to him: but in vain do they pretend to have received authority in the church, as ſucceſſors to the apoſtles, whoſe lives evince that they have not received regenerating grace; and who, inſtead of bringing others to the obedience of faith, are themſelves evidently diſobedient and unbelieving. The end of the goſpel miniſtry is to bring ſinners of all nations to obey the command of God, by believing in his Son, and ſubmitting to his authority; that his name may be glorified in their ſalvation; and that they may become a peculiar people to ſhew forth his praiſe. Happy are they, who are thus the called of Jeſus Chriſt, to be his ſaints, beloved of God, and devoted to him! They ſhould often recollect their character and privileges, that they may be excited to act conſiſtently with them; and they ſhould cordially deſire an increaſe of grace and peace, to all their brethren in every place. Without grace there can be no ſubſtantial peace: in proportion as grace is communicated peace may be expected; and when grace ſhall ripen into perfect holineſs, peace will iſſue in complete fruition. Theſe then are the great bleſſings, which we ſhould ſeek for ourſelves, our children, our friends, and all around us, in preference to all earthly poſſeſſions, or proſperity; and they muſt be ſought from the mercy of God our Father, by faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by reliance on his merits, and mediation.

If we are partakers of this precious faith, we ſhall be diſpoſed to thank our God, in behalf of all others, who partake of the ſame bleſſing: and we ſhould cultivate this diſpoſition, that we may preſent our grateful tribute to the Lord, not only for our friends, or ſuch as have been converted by our means; but for ſtrangers alſo, and for all, concerning whom we hear ſuch a good report. For if we ſerve God with our ſpirit, in the goſpel of his Son; we ſhould be ſure to approve our hearts before him, as deeply concerned for the peace, and proſperity of his church; and we ſhould alſo without ceaſing, in our daily prayers, make mention of our fellow chriſtians, and the intereſts of the goſpel all over the world. Yet alas, moſt of us muſt own with ſhame, that we are not ſo earneſt, or particular, about this matter, even within our narrow circles; as Paul was, in reſpect of his moſt extenſive connections, and with all his vaſt, and multiplied engagements! But we ſhould endeavour to follow him, even, as he followed Chriſt: and we ought to long for opportunities of uſefulneſs, as worldly men do for a proſperous trade; and to count that the moſt ſucceſsful journey, or undertaking, in which moſt good hath been done, though it have expoſed us to hardſhip, loſs, or peril. We ſhould earneſtly requeſt the Lord, that by his will, ſuch opportunities may frequently return: though we know not in what manner ſuch prayers may be anſwered: we ſhould readily impart to others, what God hath entruſted to us; whether to ſupply their temporal wants, or to promote their ſpiritual comfort and eſtabliſhment: we ought to rejoice in making others joyful; and ſhould peculiarly take pleaſure, in communing with thoſe, who believe, hope for, and experience, the ſame things with us. But purpoſes, reſulting even from this happy and excellent ſtate of mind, may often be retarded, and diſappointed; nor ought we to be diſcouraged or deſiſt on this account. We ſhould ſtill deſire and expect the opportunity of bringing forth fruit, though we have been hindered hitherto: and whilſt we ought to be thankful for the leaſt uſefulneſs, we ſhould not ſay of any meaſure, let this ſuffice us; ſo long as we have health and ſtrength for labour, and ſo much yet remains to be done, before all nations be brought to the obedience of faith. Being redeemed by the blood, and converted by the grace, of the Lord Jeſus; we are altogether *His*; and for his ſake, we are debtors to all men, to do them all the good we can; to whatever nation they belong, or of whatever complexion, rank, capacity, or education they are. Nor ought we to deem ſuch ſervices any great thing; but merely our bounden duty, our debt of gratitude to Chriſt, and of love to our neighbours, and brethren. We ought not for a moment to allow of that abſurd, and hateful ſhame, which the enmity and contempt of the wicked againſt the goſpel often excite in our minds. On the other hand, we ſhould glory in the doctrine of the croſs, and be ready to profeſs, or preach it, in any place, or before any deſcription of men, according to our ability, and our call in providence; as knowing, that it is the power of God unto the ſalvation of every one that believeth, and that no ſinner can be ſaved in any other way. It is indeed evident to this day, that learned ſpeculations, and *ſuppoſed rational* ſchemes, or the elegancies of admired orators are not attended, in general, with that power, which converts ſinners from impiety, and immorality, to the love and ſervice of God: but this effect is produced in ſome meaſure, wherever the deſpiſed goſpel is preached, even though it be in a very homely manner, and by perſons of inferior abilities, and erudition. For therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed; his way of juſtification and ſanctification is opened; and ſinners are taught to truſt in, and to come before him, by faith in his mercy, through the righteouſneſs, atonement, and interceſſion of his beloved Son. And he will honour this doctrine, becauſe it honours his perfections law and government, and becauſe it is his own appointment: but they, who deviſe other ſchemes, may put forth *their own power* to make them ſucceſsful, if they can do it; for God will not own, or countenance them.

This goſpel, is worthy of univerſal acceptation, as the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men; and as all have been in ſome manner, and degree ungodly and unrighteous. No man can plead, that he hath fulfilled all his obligations to God, and to his neighbour; nor can any one truly ſay, that he hath not "held the truth in unrighteouſneſs," or that he hath acted up to the light afforded him. Whatever may be pretended, atheiſm, infidelity, impiety, and idolatry ſpring from human depravity, not from unavoidable ignorance or miſtake. The heathen nations might have known enough of God from his works, and the benefits conferred on them, to have excited their admiring love, and gratitude, and to have influenced them to adore and obey their Creator and Benefactor; had they not ſhut out the light, or ſinned in oppoſition to it: ſo that even they were without excuſe in their apoſtacy, and idolatry, however ſucceeding rebels againſt God may have vindicated and juſtified them. But inſtead of glorifying him in humble gratitude, according to their meaſure of information; their pride and carnal enmity led them to indulge vain conjectures, and reaſonings; till their profeſſed and boaſted wiſdom iſſued in the moſt palpable, and degrading folly and ſtupidity. Thus idolatry, the ſtigma of man's underſtanding, was introduced, and propagated, through the wickedneſs of his heart; and rational creatures exchanged the worſhip of the glorious Creator for that of brutes, reptiles, or inanimate images: and they continued to wander from God, till all traces of true religion muſt have been loſt, had not the revelation of the goſpel prevented it. For whatever proud ſpeculators may pretend of the ſufficiency of man's reaſon to diſcover divine truth, and moral obligation, or to regulate men's practice: ſtubborn facts confute the flattering hypotheſis; and as far as God hath *in awful diſpleaſure* left men to themſelves, they have diſhonoured him by the moſt abſurd idolatries, and ſuperſtitions, and degraded themſelves by vile affections, and abominable luſts: nor is it generally expedient to mention the enormities, to which *they* have been given up, who, liking not to retain God in their knowledge, have preferred their own inventions to his holy worſhip; and who have been left to a reprobate mind, till their deluded judgments, their perverſe wills, and their depraved affections, have reciprocally helped to corrupt, and have been corrupted by, each other. A moſt horrid view of the moral character of the Greeks, and Romans, even amidſt all their proſperity, politeneſs, and erudition, is here ſet before us by the apoſtle: and the ſtudent, *who judges of characters and actions by the law of God*, will perceive, that their own hiſtorians, orators, and poets, amidſt all their flattery, and falſe colouring, adduce ſuch facts, and make ſuch repreſentations, as fully prove the apoſtle's picture to be a real and ſtriking likeneſs, and no caricature. Nay the moſt illuſtrious, and celebrated perſons among them, may be produced, as moſt exactly anſwering to this horrid deſcription! It muſt indeed be thankfully acknowledged, that chriſtianity has had conſiderable effect upon mankind in general, in giving them more juſt notions of excellence, and in humanizing their manners, eſpecially in reſpect of war: ſo that battles are often *now* ſcarce more fierce and bloody, than the diverſions of the ſavage Romans ſometimes were. Our laws and cuſtoms alſo reſtrain, and drive into dark receſſes, thoſe abominations, which ſtalked abroad with horrid effrontery amongſt the Pagans. There are alſo great numbers of real chriſtians amongſt us. Yet after all, what multitudes, even in this land, ſeem to be the original of the picture before us? They are full of all unrighteouſneſs, and commit all uncleanneſs with greedineſs: or they gratify their enormous avarice by oppreſſions, extortion, and cruelty: or they are full of envy, deceit, contention, ambition, oſtentation, malice, or ma-

THerefore thou art inexcuſable, O man, whoſoever thou art that judgeſt: for wherein thou judgeſt another thou condemneſt thyſelf; for thou that judgeſt doeſt the ſame things.

2 But we are ſure that the judgment of God is according to truth againſt them which commit ſuch things.

3 And thinkeſt thou this, O man, that judgeſt them which do ſuch things, and doeſt the ſame, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?

4 Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering; not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath, againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

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lignity. Some ruſh upon murder from a diabolical pride, and revenge, which they call *honour*; others vent their malice by whiſpering calumnies, and ſlanders, to ruin their neighbour's reputation. Multitudes are ſo ingenious in contriving new ſpecies of fraud, perjury, impiety, or diſhoneſty; that legiſlators can ſcarce keep pace with them, in deviſing new ſtatutes to counteract their villainy. Whilſt diſobedience to parents is alas! ſhamefully common: children are often as ſhamefully turned over to hirelings, and neglected by their parents, as if they were "without natural affection;" and it is too obvious, that numbers are implacable and unmerciful to thoſe, whom they can exult over, or oppreſs with impunity. Thus men ſhew themſelves to be haters of God, and his holy ſervice; not only by doing ſuch things, as he hath forbidden, and adjudged deſerving of his wrath: but by applauding, and taking pleaſure in the company of thoſe, who blaſpheme his name, and trample on his authority; as though they were the moſt worthy, generous, and excellent of the human race: whilſt the pious ſervants of God are proportionably deſpiſed, and ſhunned. Theſe are they, who would diſcard revelation, and deem the preaching of the croſs fooliſhneſs! Whereas their conduct demonſtrates their need of it, and that it is a remedy, which they muſt take or periſh. Finally we may here obſerve, that religion moderates, and regulates natural affections: but exceſs of depravity extinguiſhes them: that it is a proof of more determined impiety, for men to take pleaſure in the company of the enemies of God; than to commit many crimes, whilſt the heart and conſcience riſe up againſt them: and that it is a peculiar cauſe for gratitude, if we have been reſtrained from theſe enormities, to which by nature we are as propenſe, as any others of our apoſtate race.

NOTES

CHAP. II.] V. 1—3.] The apoſtle is generally ſuppoſed, to have here paſſed from the conſideration of the Gentiles, to animadvert on the ſtate of the Jews: though ſome think that the heathen philoſophers and moraliſts were alſo included. However, he ſeems to have expreſſed himſelf in this general manner, that he might take in all thoſe, of every nation, ſentiment, or deſcription "who "hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs," and yet object to "the righteouſneſs of God by faith," (c. i. v. 17, 18;) and who are ready to judge and condemn others, though guilty themſelves. Of theſe, the Jews were the moſt notorious: for they diſdained, and abhorred the Gentiles as profane, abominable, and utterly undeſerving of God's favour; whilſt they deemed themſelves a holy people, and entitled to all their privileges, by an unalienable right. Yet, whilſt they would join with the apoſtle, in ſhewing the inexcuſable wickedneſs of the Gentiles; they were equally, or more inexcuſable: for they proudly arrogated, and ſeverely exerciſed, the office of a judge; and yet the ſentence, they denounced on others, actually condemned themſelves; as they might be proved guilty of the very ſame crimes, or of ſuch as were of ſimilar malignity. They copied the vices of the very heathens whom they condemned; like them they acted in oppoſition to the Light afforded them, and they were unthankful, rebellious, and unrighteous, even as the Gentiles were. But they, and all other perſons in the world, whoſoever they be, that act in this manner, muſt be reminded, that moſt aſſuredly, the judgment of God, according to the truth of his word, and the real character, and conduct of men, will be paſſed againſt, and executed upon them: and inſtead of meeting with any favour on account of their external advantages, or their condemnation of ſin in others, their puniſhment will be enhanced thereby. For could any man be ſo fooliſh, as to ſuppoſe, that when he had committed the ſame crimes, which he judged deſerving of puniſhment in others, he ſhould himſelf eſcape the judgment of God? This intimated to the unbelieving Jews, that perſonal and national judgments awaited them, unleſs they fled for refuge to the grace of the goſpel.

V. 4—6.] The Gentiles were without excuſe, becauſe they were unthankful to their Creator, and Benefactor. Did then the Jews deſpiſe the exuberant riches of his kindneſs to them, whom he had ſo peculiarly favoured? He had diſtinguiſhed them, both by temporal and ſpiritual benefits, in every age: and though they had always proved rebellious; yet he had ſtill exerciſed immenſe goodneſs, forbearance and long-ſuffering towards them; and he had at length ſent his Son among them; and even after they had crucified him, he had in infinite mercy ordered the firſt propoſals of his goſpel to be made to them; and he ſtill beſought them by his apoſtles and miniſters to accept of this ſalvation! And did they deſpiſe all this, as a ſmall favour? Did it embolden them to continue in ſin? Or did the Lord's ſpecial mercy, and patience towards them, lead them to conclude, that he would always favour them, however ungratefully they rebelled againſt him? If they thus deſpiſed his rich goodneſs, they ſtrangely miſtook it's ten-

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds ;

7 To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life ;

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath ;

9 Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile :

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good ; to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile :

11 For there is no reſpect of perſons with God.

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dency, and meaning : as it ought to lead, and induce them to repentance. The more kindneſs God exerciſes, the greater aggravation is there in the ſinner's diſobedience, and the more ſhould he be aſhamed of, and humbled for, his baſe ingratitude. The patience of God gives the ſinner time, and opportunity for repentance ; and the diſcoveries of his mercy furniſhes him with motives, and encouragements ; and were it not for man's total depravity, the propoſals of the goſpel muſt prevail with every one to repent of his departure from God, and to return to his worſhip and ſervice. If the Jews then preſumed upon the ſpecial kindneſs of God to them ; and in this vain-confidence continued to reject the goſpel, and to diſobey his commandments, according to the obduracy of their impenitent hearts ; their condemnation would be proportionably ſevere ; and the longer God had patience with them, the heavier vengeance would be executed upon them. And all others, who thus employed the day of mercy in committing ſin, hardening their hearts in impenitence becauſe of God's goodneſs ; would find, that they had accumulated wrath as *their* treaſure, *for themſelves*, which would be ſecured for them, againſt the day of wrath, and final recompence. At which time the Lord will manifeſt the perfect juſtice of his deciſions, before the whole world, to the full ſatisfaction of all his ſervants, and the ſilencing of the bold challenges of his enemies : ſeeing he will then render to every individual according to his works ; whether he were an obſtinate unbeliever, or an humble penitent, that believed in, loved, and obeyed the divine Redeemer.

V. 7—11.] The apoſtle here gradually proceeds to a more explicit mention of the Jews, whom he eſpecially intended to "*conclude under ſin.*" As no man can be juſtified by a law, which he tranſgreſſes : ſo they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes, who did not enter into the ſpirit of that diſpenſation, or render an upright, habitual obedience to it. According to the whole tenor of ſcripture, as well as the dictates of common ſenſe, no ſinner can *do well*, till he begin to repent, to ſubmit to God, and to ſeek mercy from him. The Jew, who did this, muſt have reſpect to the types, and promiſes of a Saviour, with which the law of Moſes was replete ; as well as to the preceptive part of it ; and he alone, who did this, would perform any *ſpiritual* obedience to it. If then there was a man, any where, who embraced by faith the revelation of glory, honour, and immortality, through the promiſed Meſſiah, made in the word of God, and was earneſtly bent upon obtaining this bleſſing ; if he ſought this inheritance, by repenting of his ſins, ceaſing to do evil, learning to do well, attending on God's ordinances, obeying his commandments, and thus waiting patiently for the completion of his promiſes ; and if he proved his ſincerity in this matter, by patience under trials, and perſeverance in well doing, amidſt temptations, and difficulties : this man would ſurely be made partaker of eternal life, according to the conſtitution of God's gracious covenant in Jeſus Chriſt ; whatever meaſure of explicit knowledge he might be favoured with, or under whatever diſpenſation he might live. But as all tranſgreſſors of the law are under condemnation : ſo thoſe Jews, or others, who contentiouſly diſputed againſt God's method of ſaving ſinners, and his ſovereignty in diſpenſing his unmerited favours ; whoſe eye was evil, becauſe the Lord was good ; and who were angry at the kindneſs ſhewn to returning prodigals ; and, who thus refuſed to obey the truth, by embracing the goſpel, and ſubmitting to the promiſed Saviour ; chooſing rather to obey unrighteouſneſs, and continue the ſlaves of ſin, and ſatan : all ſuch perſons will ſurely meet with, and ſink under the indignation and wrath of their offended Judge. For tribulation, and anguiſh of ſpirit will be the inevitable portion of every ſoul of man, who *thus worketh evil* ; and the Jew will have the *firſt*, and moſt ſevere lot in this condemnation ; though the unbelieving and diſobedient Gentile will not be exempted from puniſhment On the other hand, that glory, honour, and peace, which God confers on the objects of his ſpecial love, will certainly be given to every man, that *worketh good*, as a ſinner that *obeyeth the truth* : of this mercy the Jew indeed had the firſt propoſal : but the Gentile was by no means to be excluded from the full participation of it, ſeeing "God is no reſpecter of "perſons," (Notes, &c. *Acts*. c. x. v 1—8. 34, 35.) It is evident that the apoſtle did not here mean, that either Jew, or Gentile could be ſaved by their own works, without faith in Chriſt ; but that, "by obeying "the truth," and that patient continuance in well doing, which ſprings from faith, the Gentile would obtain eternal life ; and the Jew muſt fall under wrath and condemnation without it. The other ſuppoſition would abſurdly make the apoſtle advance principles in this chapter ſubverſive of his own grand argument throughout the whole epiſtle ; and of his doctrine in all his epiſtles. He had many reaſons, for firſt propoſing his doctrine in this covert, and practical manner. He thus avoided giving immediate diſguſt to the Jewiſh reader, previous to his more explicit declaration of his doctrine, for which he was here, only making way : he intimated, that they, who really beſt underſtood, and obeyed the law, would moſt readily embrace the goſpel ; and that the Jews did not refuſe to "*obey the truth,*" from love to the holineſs of the law ; but from their

12 For as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law;

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* juſt before God, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe, having not the law, are a law unto themſelves:

15 Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and *their* thoughts the mean while accuſing or elſe excuſing one another;)

16 In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt according to my goſpel.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reſteſt in the law and makeſt thy boaſt of God,

18 And knoweſt *his* will, and approveſt the things that are more excellent, being inſtructed out of the law;

19 And art confident that thou thyſelf art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkneſs;

20 An inſtructor of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes, which haſt the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf? thou that preacheſt a man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal?

22 Thou that ſayeſt a man ſhould not commit adultery, doſt thou commit adultery? thou that abhorreſt idols, doſt thou commit ſacrilege?

23 Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the law,

" obedience to unrighteouſneſs." As no man *ſpiritually doeth good*, except by the ſpecial grace of God; and as that grace will alſo lead him to truſt in his mercy according to the goſpel; and as all ſuch patiently continue in well doing, &c; whilſt all others obey unrighteouſneſs, and work evil, however ſpeciouſly they may conceal, or varniſh it over: ſo the apoſtle's argument was perfectly conſiſtent with the grace of the goſpel, and was peculiarly ſuited to ſhew the wicked Jews their need of it.

V. 12—16.] No Gentiles could be found, who had not acted contrary to the light of their own diſpenſation; and none of them could be juſtified by their own obedience: yet, as they had ſinned without law, or without the advantages of a written authenticated rule for their conduct; they would periſh without law, and be conſigned to a milder puniſhment, than the wicked Jews would be; who having ſinned *in*, or *under* the law, would be judged by it, and fall under the awful curſes therein denounced againſt the diſobedient. Indeed the Jews were apt to imagine, that the reading, and hearing of the law, together with ſome attention to the legal ceremonies would juſtify them before God, and atone for all their violations of the moral precepts: juſt as many profeſſed chriſtians expect to be juſtified by ſome general attendance on outward ordinances, and a decency of moral conduct; though they are habitually guilty of many known ſins. In this preſumption the Jews rejected the goſpel. But the apoſtle declared, that the mere hearers of the law could not be juſtified by it: but if they would ſeek acceptance in this way, they muſt be doers of the law: and if any thus *perfectly* performed its righteous demands, he might then indeed claim the reward of righteouſneſs; but not otherwiſe. (Note, &c. *Luke*, c. x. v. 25—29.) For even the Gentiles, who had not the written law, when from natural principles they performed any of thoſe duties, that the law required, were in this reſpect a law to themſelves: and by obeying thus far their own rule, were nearer to righteouſneſs, than the Jews who brake their rule. The fragments of the law, which had originally been written in their hearts, exerting themſelves by their natural ſenſe of right and wrong, thus ſhewed themſelves by their works. Their conſciences alſo teſtified to the propriety of this part of their conduct, and produced an inward ſatisfaction: whilſt, at the ſame time, their thoughts within themſelves, or their reaſonings one with another, ſerved to accuſe, or excuſe themſelves, or each other, according to the conformity of their conduct, to their own ſentiments of right and wrong, or the contrary. If then the very Gentiles could not but condemn themſelves, when they acted againſt their own conſciences; how abſurd, and preſumptuous was it for a Jew to expect juſtification before God by a law, which he was continually tranſgreſſing! This ſeems to be the apoſtle's argument: but it by no means is implied in what he advances, that the Gentiles performed any *ſpiritual* obedience; or that any of them could be juſtified on account of their partial, and ſcanty compliance with the dictates of their own underſtandings. As rational creatures, in a fallen ſtate, yet not deſperate, they ſometimes acted more morally, than at other times; and accordingly their conſciences approved, or diſapproved of their conduct. This was an earneſt, and evidence of a future judgment, when God will judge the ſecret actions, thoughts, motives, and affections of all men, in, and by, his Son Jeſus Chriſt; which was a principal doctrine of that goſpel, that Paul preached both to Jews and Gentiles. This connects with the twelfth verſe; and the others are properly included in a parentheſis.

V. 17—24.] In order to underſtand this chapter, we ſhould remember, that the apoſtle therein combats the prejudices, and preſumption of the Jews; to whom he expected the epiſtle would be ſhewn, and whoſe in-through breaking the law diſhonoureſt thou God?

24 For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

25 For circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion.

26 Therefore, if the uncircumciſion keep the righteouſneſs of the law, ſhall not his uncircumciſion be counted for circumciſion?

27 And ſhall not uncircumciſion which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumciſion doſt tranſgreſs the law?

28 For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh:

29 But he *is* a Jew which is one inwardly: and circumciſion *is that* of the heart, in the ſpirit, *and* not in the letter; whoſe praiſe *is* not of men, but of God.

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fluence he knew would be employed to unſettle the minds of the believers at Rome. The Gentiles are therefore only introduced by way of illuſtrating the argument, and not in order to ſhew in what way they may be juſtified. The apoſtle here immediately addreſſed himſelf to any Jew, that was willing to take up the argument. He ſuppoſed him to reſt his hope of acceptance on the law, and to boaſt of God, as ſtanding in a covenant relation to him. He thought himſelf well acquainted with the will of God; and, as an expert Caſuiſt, "*he could diſtinguiſh* "*things, which differed,*" and give the preference to ſuch, as were more excellent, having from his youth been inſtructed from the law. In this confidence he deemed himſelf qualified to guide, and enlighten the blind and benighted pagans; and to inſtruct ſuch as became proſelytes, and whom he deemed fooliſh, and mere children compared with himſelf: as he had got a complete knowledge of the whole law; having an epitome, or abſtract of it in his memory: yet this was but a mere *form, ſemblance,* and *outſide appearance of* the ſpiritual knowledge, and true meaning of the law; which rightly underſtood would lead a man to truſt in the promiſed, and typified Redeemer, and not in the law itſelf. In this *form*, the man *called* a Jew, (v. 17,) reſted; without even obeying the precepts of the law, according to his own expoſition of them; as if his work had been to inſtruct others, and not himſelf! Or as if he meant to inſult the great Lawgiver, by ſtudying his commandments in order to break them! Did ſuch a man explain, and enforce the law againſt theft, and then practiſe diſhoneſty? Did he commit adultery, after quoting, and explaining the ſeventh commandment? Did he ſacrilegiouſly embezzle the ſacred treaſures, or defraud the Lord of his dues, through an idolatrous love of money; after having expreſſed his abhorrence of idolatry? It was notorious, that many of the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders, who appeared moſt zealous for the law, were guilty of theſe, and ſuch like crimes: and the reſt, who rejected the goſpel, and made their boaſt in the law, would be found to diſhonour God, by evidently breaking it. For in fact God's name was blaſphemed among the Gentiles, and they were ſet againſt true religion, by the wickedneſs of the Jews; as it was written in their ſcriptures, and was a charge brought frequently by the prophets againſt their fathers. (2 *Sam.* c. xii. v. 14. *Iſaiah*, c. lii. v. 5. *Ezek.* c. xxxvi. v. 23.)

V. 25—29.] Amidſt theſe groſs violations of the moral law, the Jews confided in circumciſion, as if it had ſecured their covenant relation to God. But the apoſtle ſhewed them that though circumciſion, and the opportunities connected with it, would be very advantageous to the conſcientious Jew, who copied the example of Abraham: eſpecially in bringing him acquainted with the oracles of God, and preparing him to receive the goſpel; (c. iii. v. 2:) yet they could not profit the preſumptuous tranſgreſſor, who reſted in them, to the neglect of that righteouſneſs by faith, of which it was the ſeal. If a man cleaved to the law, he muſt perfectly obey it, in order to juſtification; circumciſion made ſuch a man a debtor to fulfil the whole law; and his tranſgreſſions caſt him out of God's covenant, as if he had never been circumciſed. On the other hand, if an uncircumciſed Gentile ſhould regulate his conduct, according to the righteouſneſs preſcribed by the law; ought he not to be deemed to be one of God's true worſhippers, notwithſtanding his uncircumciſion. Such Gentiles, as were taught by divine grace, thus to love, and ſerve God, would, like Cornelius, embrace the goſpel when propoſed to them: and thus in uncircumciſion, the *external* natural ſtate of man, they being made partakers of an *inward* ſpiritual change, would judge and condemn the Jew, who having the letter of the law, and the outward circumciſion, had no inward diſpoſition to obedience. For, in fact, he was not to be deemed a Jew, or one of God's choſen people, who was ſo only in his outward profeſſion or deſcent; nor was that the true circumciſion, the true ſeal of God's covenant, which was outward in the fleſh. But he was the real Jew, or child of Abraham, &c, who had the inward diſpoſition of his believing, and obedient progenitors; and that was the true circumciſion, which was wrought in the heart by regeneration; according to the ſpiritual meaning, and not the mere letter of the law; producing an inward conformity of the judgment and affections to its holy precepts. This, men could not ſee, or would not approve and commend, but rather deſpiſe and hate, but God would approve, commend, and value it. So that, though the outward ſeal was, for the time, neceſſary, yet the inward grace, or the thing ſignified, was always far more excellent: and the former was now ſuperſeded by the chriſtian diſpenſation, and could be of no uſe to thoſe, who tenaciouſly adhered to it.

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. An anſwer to ſome objections, brought againſt the apoſtle's doctrine, 1---8. *2d. Teſtimonies from the Old Teſtament of the ſinfulneſs of the Jews, as well as the Gentiles,* 9---19. *3d. Juſtification ſhewn to be, not by the works of the law, but by faith in Chriſt, and through his redemption, for both Jews and Gentiles; that being wholly of grace, boaſting might be excluded, and the law eſtabliſhed,* 20---31.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The cenſures, which men paſs on others, who perhaps juſtly deſerve them, may yet render themſelves more inexcuſable, whilſt they do the ſame things. Indeed the branches of man's diſobedience are exceedingly variegated; yet they all ſpring from the ſame root: nor can any man judge another to be deſerving of God's wrath, without at the ſame time, condemning himſelf: for though he may not have committed the ſame crimes; yet he hath been guilty of the ſame apoſtacy from, and rebellion againſt, God, and is equally chargeable with ſinning againſt his better judgment, in many particulars. Frequently the ſuperior advantages, that a man enjoys, renders his apparently leſſer offences more aggravated in God's ſight, than thoſe more ſcandalous ſins of his worſe educated neighbour, againſt which he ſo vehemently declaims. We are very incompetent judges of the comparative heinouſneſs of men's conduct: but it is certain that the judgment of God is, and will be according to truth, againſt all, who break his law, and reject his grace. To him we ought to leave others; and to be chiefly concerned to judge ourſelves, and to accept of the mercy of his bleſſed goſpel. If our fellow ſinners cannot ſtand before us in judgment: how ſhall we, who are guilty of the ſame things, eſcape the righteous condemnation of a heart-ſearching God? In deciding againſt them, we paſs ſentence upon ourſelves; and if our own hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Frequently men's excuſes may be turned againſt them: nor would the world be ſo wicked, were it not for men's experience of God's long-ſuffering, and their general notions of his mercy. But they, who thus deſpiſe the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and grow more wicked by that kindneſs, which ſhould lead them to repentance; will find at laſt, that they have been ſinning againſt their own ſouls; and that their hard and impenitent hearts have led them to treaſure up wrath, againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Indeed this is the daily employment of every unbeliever; and he adds to his ſtore with a rapidity of increaſe, proportioned to his crimes, and abuſed advantages: he himſelf will certainly reap the harveſt that he now ſows, and the longer he is ſpared in the long ſuffering of God, the more terrible will be the day of righteous retribution; in caſe he proceed in this deſtructive courſe.

The queſtions concerning juſtification, election, or efficacious grace, ſhould be kept diſtinct from thoſe, that relate to the character, and conduct of ſuch as are in the way of life, or in that of deſtruction. If a man cannot be ſatisfied with an earthly portion, but aſpires after glory, honour, and immortality; and if he ſeek this inheritance, by faith in God's promiſes, and patient continuance in well doing; he doubtleſs is in the way to eternal life. But if men quarrel with the precepts and ſanction of God's holy law, with his decrees and diſpenſations, and with his truths and ordinances; or with any thing rather than their ſins; if they do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, and live in allowed tranſgreſſion of God's commandments: no doubt they are in the broad road to deſtruction; and, if they proceed in that path, indignation and wrath will overtake them, to whatever church or ſect they may belong. Indeed tribulation and anguiſh muſt come upon all impenitent evil-doers: but glory, honour and peace will be awarded to all, who are taught by the grace of God to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, (*Iſaiah*, c. iii. v. 10, 11;) "for there is no "reſpect of perſons with God." Whatever may now be objected to this from ſome divine truths ill underſtood, or appearances in providence, which are miſconſtrued; it will be made manifeſt to all the world, in the day, when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt; as he hath aſſured us he will, in his holy goſpel. Then they, who, not having the written word, have ſinned againſt the dictates of their own conſciences, will be proved guilty and condemned, by that rule. They, that have ſinned againſt the law of God, which was made known to them, will be judged and puniſhed according to that law: and the profeſſors of the goſpel ſhall be evinced to have been either true believers, or hypocrites, according to the effects, produced by the truth, upon their diſpoſitions, and actions. For if the very Gentiles were a law unto themſelves and each other, when they were negligent of "the work of the "law, written in their hearts:" how abſurd muſt it be for any man to expect acceptance with God by a written law, which he hears and diſobeys; or by the goſpel, when he does not *practically* believe it! No man can indeed be juſtified by his own obedience; becauſe all men deviate from their rule: yet the nearer men act in conformity to their principles, and convictions, the lighter will be their condemnation; and the greater diſtance there is between their *known rule*, and their *allowed practice*, the more aggravated muſt be their guilt: when the ſecrets of men ſhall be brought to light, and all theſe matters ſhall be adjuſted by the omniſcient, and righteous Judge. As therefore the Jew, who reſted in the law, and made his boaſt of God, and was proud of his ſuperior knowledge, and attainments, will then be more deeply condemned, than the blind Gentile, whom he ſo greatly diſdained: ſo numbers, who call themſelves chriſtians, and have got many right notions of the goſpel, as a ſyſtem, and ſo deem themſelves the children of God, though they obey not the truth; will periſh more dreadfully than their more ignorant neighbours, who ſinned againſt leſs light, and inferior advantages. Indeed the ſermons which many preach, and the books they publiſh, will teſtify againſt them: and it behoves miniſters eſpecially, to be very jealous over themſelves in

WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumciſion?

2 Much every way: chiefly, becauſe that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

3 For what if ſome did not believe: ſhall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome when thou art judged.

5 But if our unrighteouſneſs commend the

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this matter: for it is far more congenial to the ſelf-flattery of our hearts to inſtruct others, than to bear the yoke ourſelves. Many teach others the truth and will of God, who never teach themſelves: they lay down good rules, but never practiſe them: and the diſcoveries of the great day will ſhew, that many, who appeared to be the guides of the blind, and the light of ſuch as ſat in darkneſs, were indeed diſhoneſt men, adulterers, or ſacrilegious mercenaries. Numbers deſpiſe their ignorant neighbours for reſting in a dead form of godlineſs; and yet truſt in a form of knowledge, which is equally lifeleſs, and inefficacious: and many glory in the goſpel, whoſe unholy lives diſhonour God, and cauſe his name and truth to be blaſphemed among his enemies. In ſhort no forms, ordinances, or notions can profit us, without regenerating grace, which will always eventually lead us to ſeek an intereſt in the righteouſneſs of God by faith. The diſtinction between truth and error, and between divine ordinances and human inventions, is indeed immutable, and moſt important: yet a man may be alive to God, who maintains ſome errors, cleaves to ſome ſuperſtitions, and forms improper concluſions in reſpect of ſome divine inſtitutions; whilſt another, who is very clear in his notions, and exact in externals, may be dead in ſin, uncircumciſed in heart; and through the letter and the outward form, may deceive himſelf, and be a ſcandal to the goſpel. For he is no more a chriſtian now, than he was really a Jew of old, who is one outwardly; neither is that baptiſm, which is outward in the fleſh: but he is the real chriſtian, who is inwardly a true believer, with an obedient faith; and the true baptiſm is that of the heart, by the waſhing of regeneration, and the renewal of the Holy Ghoſt, producing a ſpiritual frame of mind, and a vital ſubjection to truth, in its holy import and tendency. This man will not in general meet with much approbation from the zealots of any party, any more than from the world: but he will be accepted of God, and at length welcomed with "well "done, good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the "joy of thy Lord. In the mean time, as an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no guile, he will embrace the truth, attend on the ordinances, and walk in the commandments of God, according to his views of them: though he will be neither infallible, nor impeccable.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—4.] If diſobedient Jews could not be accepted, though they were of the circumciſion; and if pious Gentiles might be ſaved, notwithſtanding their uncircumciſion: it might be enquired what advantage the Jew had above the Gentile, or what good circumciſion did him? The whole Old Teſtament implied, that God had peculiarly favoured the poſterity of Abraham; and the law, together with the ſeal of circumciſion, had been ſuppoſed to be the medium of conveying to them theſe ſpecial privileges: and did Paul now mean to level all theſe diſtinctions, and to prove, that the Jews had no advantage from their national covenant? To this he replied, that they had doubtleſs much benefit from it, in every way. The law and circumciſion could not indeed ſave them *in*, or *from*, their ſins; yet they gave them great advantages for obtaining God's ſalvation. The ſtated miniſtry of the prieſts, the occaſional meſſages of the prophets; the ordinances of the temple, the ſynagogue ſervice, their education in an acquaintance with the true God, and his ſervice, and at a diſtance from idolatry; the many good examples that were ſet before them, and the very diſpenſations of providence reſpecting them, were *means of grace*; which were probably made effectual to the converſion of more perſons in that one nation, than were converted amongſt all the reſt of the world. But eſpecially the oracles of God, the ſacred writings of Moſes, and the prophets were committed to them; and the written word of God had been continued among them through their ſeveral generations, to direct them how to ſeek acceptance with God, and to walk before him. In them the Meſſiah was promiſed, and the various particulars of his character, miracles, redemption, and kingdom, &c, were typified, and predicted: among the Jews he made his appearance, in the appointed time, and in him the ſcriptures were fulfilled before their eyes: and numbers of them had believed in, and found ſalvation by him. And what if ſome, if the greater part of the nation, from carnal and ambitious motives, had obſtinately, and wickedly rejected this divine Saviour? Did their unbelief render *the faithfulneſs* of God ineffectual? He had fulfilled his promiſes to their fathers; and if they would not receive, and ſubmit to the Seed of Abraham, and of David; could they pretend that God had failed of his word, becauſe he would not continue his ſpecial favour to them, notwithſtanding their diſobedience and atrocious wickedneſs? *God forbid*, that ſuch a thought ſhould be allowed in any one's mind! *Let it not be*, (for that is the literal tranſlation of the words;) let every man rather humbly acknowledge the veracity and faithfulneſs of God; though it required him to ſuppoſe, that all men were liars, hypocrites, and deceivers; as every man in ſome degree muſt be allowed to be. (*Pſ.* lxii. v. 9.) Let the blame of the rejection of the Meſſiah reſt upon *them* and their hypocriſy; and not be ſuppoſed to reflect upon God's faithfulneſs: even as David, when he had committed grievous offences, acknowledged that God was thereby juſtified in his declarations concerning the deſperate wickedneſs of the human heart; and that this humiliating event was permitted, that his truth, juſtice, and mercy might more evidently appear; and that God might be fully righteouſneſs of God, what ſhall we ſay? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I ſpeak as a man,)

6 God forbid: for then how ſhall God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I alſo judged as a ſinner?

8 And not *rather*, (as we be ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm that we ſay,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whoſe damnation is juſt.

9 What then? are we better *than they?* No, in no wiſe: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat *is* an open ſepulchre; with their tongues they have uſed deceit; the poiſon of aſps *is* under their lips:

14 Whoſe mouth *is* full of curſing and bitterneſs;

15 Their feet *are* ſwift to ſhed blood:

16 Deſtruction and miſery *are* in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know that what things ſoever

vindicated from all thoſe preſumptuous charges, whereby men venture to arraign the teſtimonies of his word, the threatenings of his law, or the diſpenſations of his providence. (*Pſ.* li. v. 4.)

V. 5—8.] To this concluſion of the apoſtle, a cavilling Jew might perhaps reply; that if their unrighteouſneſs proved the occaſion of the more illuſtrious manifeſtation of God's juſtice; or rather of ſhewing more evidently the neceſſity, and excellency of his "righ-"teouſneſs," for man's juſtification; would he not be unrighteous, if he took vengeance on them for thoſe actions, which eventually iſſued in his glory? This the apoſtle objected, as a man, as repreſenting an impenitent unbeliever, who was determined to juſtify himſelf, and find fault with the ſentence of God againſt him. In fact the wickedneſs, and obſtinate unbelief of the Jews did prove man's need of "the righteouſneſs of God "by faith," and alſo his juſtice, both in puniſhing them for their ſins, and in the ſentence of the law againſt all tranſgreſſors; and thus in every ſenſe it "commended "his righteouſneſs." Yet the thought, that it would be unjuſt in him to take vengeance on them, ought to be rejected with abhorrence: for, if he could not *juſtly* puniſh any crimes, which were over-ruled to the diſplay of his glory; how could he act, as the Judge of the world? In that caſe he never could inflict vengeance on any criminal; for he will take occaſion from the rebellion of all fallen creatures, to diſplay his own glorious perfections to the greater advantage. But this is neither the intention of tranſgreſſors, nor the natural tendency of their conduct; but diametrically contrary thereto. So that it proves ſtill more the malignity of ſin, as committed againſt a Being of ſuch infinite wiſdom, power, and perfection, that he educes good to his creation, and glory to himſelf, from thoſe very actions, that naturally tend to the deſtruction of his creatures; and the diſhonour of his name. This objection might be put in another caſe: ſuppoſe the truth of God, in his predictions, promiſes, or denunciations, ſhould be more abundantly manifeſted to his glory, by any man's telling a wilful lie: why ſhould the liar be puniſhed for occaſioning the diſplay of God's glory? Yet every one muſt ſee that the man's lie was directly contrary to God's truth, and merely the occaſion of diſplaying it: nor could this event alter the nature, or deduct from the malignity of the lie. If it were in any caſe admitted, that a violation of God's law ceaſed to be criminal, becauſe his glory was eventually promoted by it; then the ſlanderous report ſpread concerning the chriſtians, by thoſe, who, miſtaking the doctrine of free grace, affirmed that they ſaid, "let us do "evil, that good might come," would indeed be eſtabliſhed as a general principle, and man's rule of conduct, inſtead of the law of God. But in fact, the condemnation of ſuch, as thus abuſed the goſpel, or who committed ſin that good might come from it, was moſt righteous. The blame of their ſins belonged only to themſelves, the honour of the good educed from them, to God alone. Thus the hypocriſy and unbelief of the Jews were the occaſion of God's diſplaying his truth, in the judgments inflicted on them, and in the calling of the Gentiles into the church: but this was not their intention, and did not excuſe their crime.

V. 9—18.] The apoſtle here reſumes his ſubject from the ſecond verſe. The advantages of the Jews were many: but what were they to conclude from that? Were they better than the Gentiles, or more able to juſtify themſelves before God by their own works, or without, "the righteouſneſs of faith?" This could by no means be admitted: for it had been *proved* of, or rather *charged upon* both Jews and Gentiles, "that they were "all under ſin." They had all, in manifold inſtances, violated the known rule of their conduct, and were under condemnation as tranſgreſſors, unleſs, or until they were delivered by the mercy, and grace of God. To this indictment, upon which the Gentiles had been converted, the Jews pleaded *not guilty:* and therefore, to the evidence already brought againſt them from notorious facts, and the nature of the caſe: the apoſtle next prothe law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of ſin.

21 But now the righteouſneſs of God with-

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duced ſeveral paſſages of their ſcriptures againſt them. In theſe it was not intimated that circumciſion, the written law, their ceremonial obſervances, or their national covenant, would excuſe their crimes, or entitle them to God's favour; as the unbelieving Jews, in Paul's time, vainly imagined. And if theſe things were true of the greater part of the nation in former times: could it be ſuppoſed, that they were better *by nature*, or merely *as circumciſed*, or as *having the law*, than their fore-fathers had been? It was expreſſly written of them, that in themſelves, and by their works, there was not one of them righteous: that there were none of them, who underſtood the character, truth, and will of God, or their own intereſt and duty; or who ſought to know him, and find happineſs in his favour: they had all forſaken the way of holy obedience, they were all become unprofitable, in reſpect of the end of their creation, and peculiar advantages; ſo that none of them employed themſelves in glorifying God, and doing good to man. Their throats, by their inſatiable luxury, or by their filthy communications, reſembled the ſepulchre when opened to receive the dead, or when emitting its nauſeous, and infectious vapours. Deceit and diſſimulation ſeemed the main uſe of their tongues; their ſlanders, ſeductions and flatteries, were under their lips as the fatal poiſon of aſps: inſtead of pious, and kind words, their mouths were filled with imprecations, perjuries, and bitter revilings: they were eager to ſhed blood, in revenge, ambition, or avarice: they knew not the ways, in which godly men walk at peace with God and their neighbours; and therefore they went on in thoſe paths, which lead to miſery and ruin, both to themſelves, and each other. In ſhort, they had caſt the fear of God behind their backs, and habitually diſregarded his authority, his threatenings, his precepts, and his judgments. (Notes, &c, *Pſ.* v. ver. 9. x. v. 7. xiv. v. 1—3. xxxvi. v. 1. liii. v. 1—3. cxl. v. 3. *Iſaiah*, c. lix. v. 7, 8.) A few exceptions, *by the mercy and grace of God*, there doubtleſs were to theſe general rules; and the apoſtle intended very ſoon to ſhew how they were made to differ: but theſe quotations were full to the point, to ſhew the Jews, that *as ſuch*, they were as unable to juſtify themſelves before God, as the Gentiles. For if, in the days of David, and Iſaiah, this had been the general character of the people: the acceptance and holineſs, of any among them muſt ariſe from ſome other cauſe, than their national covenant, and external privileges.

V. 19, 20.] It was well known, that the things, which were written in the law, or in the Old Teſtament, were immediately addreſſed to thoſe, who were under the law, or the nation of Iſrael, who were under that diſpenſation, and not to the Gentiles. This was intended to ſilence the cavils, and objections of the Jews, who brake the law, in which they reſted; and indeed in this manner, "every mouth muſt be ſtopped," and all the world muſt *become*, or *be proved* guilty before God: as it could not be expected that the Gentiles would be of a better character, than the peculiar people of God. So that in fact every ſinner's plea muſt be ſilenced, either now, as an humble penitent before the mercy-ſeat, or as a condemned criminal before the judgment ſeat of God. It muſt therefore be evident, that no one of the whole fallen race of men could be juſtified before God, by his own obedience to the law, (*Pſ.* cxliii. v. 2:) for by the law ſin is diſcovered, expoſed, and condemned. The ſtraitneſs of that perfect rule makes known the crookedneſs of men's diſpoſitions and actions; and it muſt therefore convict the tranſgreſſor as guilty, inſtead of pronouncing him not guilty, but a righteous perſon. Every attentive reader muſt obſerve, that the apoſtle uſed the word *law* in a variety of meanings: which is rather to be conſidered as the defect of human language, than the reſult of any ambiguity in his ſtyle. But the context will generally ſhew how the word is to be underſtood: and common ſenſe, united with a teachable ſpirit, will generally determine this matter better than critical learning: which is too often employed rather to perplex what is plain, than to clear up what was before obſcure. The nature of the argument requires us to ſuppoſe the apoſtle to mean the ſacred ſcriptures in general, when he ſaith "whatſoever the law ſaith:" for the quotations were not from the law of Moſes, and it is evident the whole Old Teſtament was ſometimes thus ſpoken of. When he ſpake of the Jews, as "under the law," he evidently meant the whole legal diſpenſation, by which they were diſtinguiſhed from the Gentiles. But when he ſays "by the law is the knowledge of ſin," he muſt be underſtood of the moral law eſpecially, whoſe extent, ſpirituality and excellency, ſhews what things are ſinful, and how evil ſin is: whereas the ceremonial law rather exhibited the knowledge of ſalvation, by prefiguring the ſhedding of that atoning blood, and the communication of that ſanctifying grace, whereby ſin is taken away. But indeed after all the diſputes, which this ſubject has occaſioned, it ſeems capable of an eaſy ſolution: if there be any law, which a man hath perfectly kept; he may doubtleſs be juſtified by it: and ſurely no man can be juſtified by a law, which condemns him for breaking it! But there is no law of God, which any man hath kept; therefore none, by the deeds of which a man can be juſtified. The Gentile hath broken the law of his reaſon, and conſcience: the Jew brake the moral law: and even the attempt to juſtify himſelf by obſerving the ceremonial law, contradicted the very nature and intent of it. And as to that *new law*, which requires ſincere obedience, as the condition of juſtification, according to the meaſure of a ſinner's ability; they who dream of it, ſhould ſhew us when it was promulgated, where it may be found, what it requires, whom it can condemn, or whom it can juſtify? When this is done, it may be worth while out the law is manifeſted, being witneſſed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteouſneſs of God *which is* by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference:

23 For all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God;

24 Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus:

25 Whom God hath ſet forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, *I ſay*, at this time his righ-

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to ſhew, that it makes void both the law, and the goſpel; that it introduces a new, vague, and unintelligible rule of duty, which every man may interpret according to his own inclinations; and that it introduces boaſting, and unites together phariſaical pride, and antinomian licentiouſneſs. Yet this vague, unſcriptural notion, which is replete with ſuch complicated abſurdities, ſo well ſuits men's natural indolence of thought in matters of religion; and ſerves ſo conveniently to reconcile a quiet conſcience with a worldly life; and ſo coincides with their enmity to the holineſs of the law, and the humiliating doctrine of the goſpel; that perhaps it deceives more ſouls, than all other falſe ſyſtems of religion put together, in this ſuperficial, diſſipated age. But then, they are ſuch perſons as will neither read an argumentative book, nor hear an argumentative diſcourſe: and therefore it anſwers little purpoſe either to write or preach about it: for if a man indeed begin to think and enquire ſeriouſly upon the ſubject, he will ſeldom be long ſatisfied with ſuch an irrational ſcheme.

V. 21—26.] The apoſtle having concluded all men under ſin, proceeds more explicitly to exhibit "the "righteouſneſs of God by faith;" (c. i. v. 17:) this had been, in that age, manifeſtly declared by the preaching of the goſpel. It was the righteouſneſs, which God had appointed, provided and introduced, in the Perſon of his Son. It was "*without the law*;" having no manner of dependence on a man's perſonal obedience to the law; being entirely a diſtinct thing. No paſt obedience being ſuppoſed as having any influence in the ſinner's juſtification: and his ſubſequent obedience being intended for other purpoſes. It had nothing to do with the ceremonial law, (except as it was the ſubſtance of ſome of thoſe ſhadows;) for the Jew, who accepted of this righteouſneſs, would place no dependence on ſuch externals; and the Gentile was not required to be circumciſed, or to keep that law at all. Yet it had been witneſſed by the law, and the prophets: the ceremonies typified it; the very ſtrictneſs of the moral law, and it's awful curſes, being compared with the promiſes of mercy to ſinners, implied it. The promiſes, and predictions of the Meſſiah bare witneſs to it: the faith and hope of ancient believers teſtified it: and the whole Old Teſtament, rightly underſtood, taught men to expect and depend upon it. This righteouſneſs of God was by faith in Jeſus accounted to all believers without exception; yea it was put on them as a robe. Chriſt being indeed made righteouſneſs to the believer, as faith receives, and unites a man to him for that purpoſe. Nor is there *in this reſpect* any difference between one man, and another; however they may otherwiſe be diſtinguiſhed, as all have ſinned, and come ſhort of rendering to God the glory due unto him; all have loſt his glorious Image; and all have forfeited that glorious felicity, which was annexed to perfect obedience, as its reward: and therefore, whatever the nature or degree of their crimes may have been, or whatever their nation, rank, or capacities are; there is no difference in the way in which they muſt be juſtified before God. Every believer is, not only pardoned, but honourably acquitted, as one, againſt whom no charge can be ſupported, and accounted righteous, or entitled to the reward of righteouſneſs. All this is by the free gift of God, which he was diſpoſed to beſtow on him, merely from the infinite grace and mercy of his own nature, and not out of reſpect to any merit, or qualification in the perſon juſtified; as he is in himſelf a ſinner deſerving wrath. This grace is honourably exerciſed, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt, or through the ranſom and meritorious obedience unto death of the incarnate Son of God, as our Surety: for God the Father, had ſet him forth to be a propitiatory ſacrifice for ſin; he had appointed him to be Mediator, as God manifeſt in the fleſh, for that purpoſe; he had openly laid upon him the iniquities of his people, and exacted the puniſhment of them from him; and he had exhibited this tranſaction to the world, in the preached goſpel; that through him, ſinners of every nation might approach God on a propitiatory, or mercy ſeat, and find acceptance by faith in the Saviour's atoning blood. This method was taken by the Lord, in order to declare, and manifeſt the perfect righteouſneſs of his character and government; even in the very act of pardoning the innumerable ſins of believers, remitting the puniſhment due to them, and accounting them righteous, who in themſelves were not ſo. And whatever the Jews might ſuppoſe, this was as neceſſary, in reſpect of their believing progenitors, as any other ſinners. For in remitting the puniſhment juſtly merited by the ſins committed in times paſt, through his forbearance; God had neither reſpect to the repentance, or ſubſequent good works of his ſervants, which could not ſatisfy his juſtice for their ſins, or even claim acceptance for themſelves; nor did he ultimately reſpect the legal ſacrifices, which could not take away ſin: but he had reſpect to the engagements of the divine Surety of the new covenant, and the atonement which he was at length to make for ſin. Therefore in the fulneſs of time this ſacrifice was offered, this righteouſneſs introduced, and this method of juſtification publiſhed to mankind; that God might be clearly known to be a juſt and righteous Governor; and yet the Juſtifier of every ſinner, who believed in Jeſus, which he could not otherwiſe have been, (*Prov.* c. xvii. v. 15:)

teouſneſs; that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus.

27 Where *is* boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is juſtified by faith, without the deeds of the law.

29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not alſo of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo:

30 Seeing *it is* one God which ſhall juſtify the circumciſion by faith, and uncircumciſion through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we eſtabliſh the law.

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for juſtice in a governor requires, that every man be dealt with, according to his real character and actions; except ſome expedient can be adopted for maintaining the authority of the law, and the credit of the adminiſtration, and to indemnify individuals; whilſt mercy is exerciſed to thoſe, who deſerve puniſhment. So that ancient believers had been admitted to the reward of righteouſneſs, as well as exempted from the puniſhment deſerved by their ſins, for the ſake of that promiſed Redeemer, who had engaged to pay their ranſom, and bring in an infinitely valuable, and everlaſting righteouſneſs for their juſtification: nor would it otherwiſe have conſiſted with the infinite juſtice of God, to have dealt with them in a manner ſo very different to their real deſervings: and therefore it muſt follow that both Jews and Gentiles muſt be juſtified in the ſame gracious method; now that the righteouſneſs was introduced, by which every one of the fallen race of Adam had been juſtified, or elſe had periſhed in their ſins.

V. 27, 28.] The Jews were diſpoſed to boaſt of themſelves, as if they had been ſuperior, in nature and excellency, to the Gentiles; inſtead of conſidering themſelves more highly and undeſervedly favoured of God. But the apoſtle here enquires what reaſon they had for ſuch boaſting; ſeeing even their pious anceſtors had been juſtified by grace, through faith, and for the ſake of the promiſed Redeemer? And he determines, that all boaſting of any of the human race is excluded, and can have no admiſſion, conſiſtent with truth and juſtice. It was indeed God's expreſs promiſe that it ſhould be thus ſhut out, as the rival of his glory: but by what law, or rule of judgment, could this be effected? Was it to be done by "the law of works," or the method of juſtifying men on the ground of their having obeyed the law of God? This would never anſwer the end, if in other reſpects it were practicable, for men to be thus juſtified; nay this would introduce the boaſting of one ſinner over another, in the things of God. It muſt therefore be done, "by the law of faith;" not by *a remedial law*, as ſome call it, which in fact is a law of works, and introduces boaſting; but by God's method of juſtifying believers, merely of his grace, through the merits of Chriſt, without any reſpect to their works, by faith alone of his own gift and operation; and not conſidered *in this matter* as an act of obedience, or good work, but as forming the relation between Chriſt and the ſinner, which renders it proper, that he ſhould be pardoned and juſtified for the ſake of His righteouſneſs and ranſom, rather than the man who is not thus united or related to him. This is "the law of faith," or God's method of juſtifying or condemning ſinners, according as they have faith in Chriſt, or not: and as God hath determined, that no fleſh ſhall glory in his preſence; ſo on this ground alſo, the apoſtle concluded, that a man is juſtified by faith, and not by the deeds of the law.

V. 29—31.] It might alſo in this connection be enquired, whether the great Creator of all men, were the God of the Jews only? Or whether he were not alſo the God of the Gentiles? Being the Proprietor, Governor and Benefactor of the whole earth; when all men had alike apoſtatized from him, it was meet, that in revealing a way for their recovery and reconciliation, he ſhould ſuit it to the general caſe of all the nations; though ſpecial reaſons might require a temporary reſtriction of it: for it was to be ſuppoſed, that his object would be to receive worſhip from, and become the Portion of his creatures, in different parts of the world. And in fact he was the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, nor were even external privileges to be reſtricted to the latter people any longer: ſeeing the ſame One, living, and true God, who had formerly, and did at that time, juſtify thoſe of the circumciſion, who believed, by their faith, and not by their legal ſervices, and left unbelievers under condemnation; was ready, with equal regard, to juſtify uncircumciſed Gentiles, through faith in Chriſt, when they were brought thus to receive him. And if any ſhould object, that this doctrine of faith made void the law, as if it had been given in vain; the apoſtle abſolutely denied the charge, and would by no means have ſuch a thought be allowed of: on the contrary, this fully eſtabliſhed the law, in all its honour and authority; neither abrogating, diſgracing, nor altering it to a nearer level with man's preſent ſtate, and abilities. Indeed the doctrine of faith in the merits and atonement of Chriſt, honoured, fulfilled, and ſhewed the proper intent of the ceremonial law, and of the legal diſpenſation: but then, this was only in order to their final abrogation. But the moral law was fully eſtabliſhed in honour, and authority, both in reſpect of it's precepts, and it's ſanction, by the perfect obedience, and ſatisfactory ſufferings of the incarnate Son of God: ſo that its immutable obligation, excellency, and equity could not have been ſo fully ſhewn, either by the perfect obedience of the whole human ſpecies, or by the deſtruction of every tranſgreſſor. Nor is any man juſtified by faith in Chriſt, who does not condemn himſelf as juſtly deſerving of God's wrath for breaking his holy law. Moreover it is given into the hands of every believer, as his rule of grateful obedience, by which he is to regulate his temper, and conduct, and examine all his actions;

CHAP. IV.

The apoſtle ſhewing, 1ſt. That Abraham and David were juſtified by faith, and confirmed his doctrine, 1---8. 2d. That Abraham was juſtified previous to his circumciſion, which was the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, through which the promiſes were ſecured to him and his ſeed; with ſome account of the ſtrength of his faith, &c, 9---22. 3d. That others muſt be juſtified in like manner by faith in Chriſt, 23---25.

that in every thing, wherein he deviates, from this perfect ſtandard, he may repent, and ſeek renewed forgiveneſs through the blood of Chriſt. Yea it is written in his heart, by the regeneration of the Holy Ghoſt, and his love to it, and delight in obeying it are the evidences of his juſtification. So that the doctrine of faith, in every way magnifies, and eſtabliſhes the juſt, holy, good, and ſpiritual law of God, in all its honour and authority; whilſt all other ſchemes of juſtification diſgrace it, or weaken its authority, and obligation; as if its precepts were unreaſonably ſtrict, and its penalty unrighteouſly ſevere. We therefore *know* what the apoſtle's doctrine was: becauſe we know what doctrine is objected to, as making void the law; is abuſed by hypocrites as looſening man's obligation to holy practice; and yet, when duly underſtood, eſtabliſhes the law in the completeſt manner, and gives the moſt efficacious motives to all holy obedience.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought always to diſtinguiſh between our peculiar advantages, and our deſervings; and between the means of becoming accepted and holy, and that grace, which teaches to profit by thoſe means. It is a moſt valuable favour to have the oracles of God committed to us: yet numbers, who are thus diſtinguiſhed, continue in unbelief, to their deeper condemnation. As the promiſes of God are only made to believers: ſo the unbelief of ſome, or many profeſſors, cannot make the faithfulneſs of God, of none effect: for he will fulfil his promiſes to his people, and execute his threatened vengeance upon hypocrites and apoſtates. But whilſt pride and enmity charge God fooliſhly: humble faith ſays, "God forbid, "let God be true and every man a liar:" and the believer will give him credit for his truth and juſtice, even where his diſpenſations are inveloped in clouds: and he will be ready to decide againſt every man's pretenſions or hypotheſis, which reflect upon the veracity, or militate againſt the word of God: as knowing that every man is fallible, deceitful, and unholy; but that the Lord can neither miſtake, deceive, or be deceived; and that he will be juſtified from every charge, and overcome in every conteſt, or controverſy, which his rebellious creatures may preſume to enter into with him. It doth not alter the nature of men's crimes, that God is able to over-rule them for the purpoſes of his own glory; and therefore this will never interfere with the righteouſneſs of his vengeance againſt them. It hath often been ſlanderouſly reported of chriſtians, that they ſay, "let us do evil, that good may come, and commit ſin "that grace may be glorified:" but they ſay no ſuch thing; they know that duty belongs to us, and events to God; and that we muſt not commit any ſin, or ſpeak one falſhood, upon the hope, or even the aſſurance, that God would take occaſion thereby to glorify himſelf. And if any profeſſors ſpeak and act in another manner, without all doubt, their damnation will be juſt.

Let us remember, that great as our advantages are, we are no better than the benighted heathens, if not worſe, except as grace have made us to differ; and then to grace the whole praiſe is due: for it is proved, beyond all contradiction, that we are all, in ourſelves, under ſin. The texts here adduced, too exactly deſcribe the multitude of chriſtians: their want of conformity to the law of God, of underſtanding in the great concerns of religion, and their indiſpoſition to ſeek after his favour, and image; their unprofitableneſs, and working of miſchief, inſtead of doing good. Their filthy, profane, diſſembling, ſlanderous, boaſting, and flattering words: their oaths, perjuries, curſes, and bitter revilings; their revenge, murders, duels, fightings, and delight in war; their miſchievous, and deſtructive courſes, and their ignorance of the way of peace and holineſs, too evidently prove, that there is no fear of God before their eyes. So that he, who examines the ſtate of ſociety, even in this *chriſtian* country; nay he, who enquires ſeriouſly into the diſpoſition of his own heart, and the tenor of his paſt and preſent life, comparing them with the holy law of God, will eaſily perceive, that his mouth, and every mouth muſt be ſtopped, and all the world muſt be brought in guilty before God. How plain then is it to common ſenſe, that by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified before God! He therefore is wiſeſt, who now pleads guilty at his mercy-ſeat; and ſeeks that righteouſneſs of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, which is unto, and upon all them that believe without any difference. Proud men will be offended at this, and ſtrive to eſtabliſh ſome diſtinction between themſelves, and more ſcandalous, or vulgar ſinners: but they labour in vain; for all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God; and the meaneſt and vileſt of the human ſpecies, who comes in God's appointed and manifeſted way, ſhall be juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption of his Son; whilſt all, who perſiſt in the attempt of juſtifying themſelves, will aſſuredly periſh under the wrath of God. This is a plan equally ſuited to glorify the juſtice, holineſs, and mercy of our God, and to give encouragement to the broken-hearted, ſelf-condemned criminal. Thus all they, who of old obtained a good report, have found righteouſneſs and ſalvation: thus the believer's felicity is ſecured, boaſting is excluded, deſpair obviated, and the Lord ſhewn to be the God of all nations, with equal regards; making no other diſtinction in his final deciſion, than that which ſubſiſts between believers, and unbelievers. And whatever Phariſees, Sadducees, or infidels may object, whatever Antinomians, or Enthuſiaſts may pretend; the doctrine of faith alone eſtabliſhes the law in its real honour, and lays the true foundation for all holy obedience.

WHAT ſhall we then ſay that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the fleſh, hath found?

2 For if Abraham were juſtified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory, but not before God.

3 For what ſaith the ſcripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteouſneſs.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs.

6 Even as David alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works.

7 *Saying*, Bleſſed *are* they whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered.

8 Bleſſed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute ſin.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—5.] The apoſtle had before intimated that the favours, ſhewn to the pious Iſraelites of old, had a reference to the righteouſneſs, and redemption of Chriſt, (c. iii. v. 26, 27;) and he here proceeds to ſhew this more eſpecially in reſpect of Abraham, their moſt renowned progenitor. He enquires what they were to ſay concerning him, and what he had found, or obtained? He was their father, as a nation, *according to the fleſh:* though but few of his deſcendants were his children, as Believers. No Jew would deny, that Abraham was as eminent a ſervant of God, as any of whom the ſcripture gave an account: if any therefore had been juſtified by works, it might be ſuppoſed, that he was one of the number. And if this had indeed been the caſe, he would have had ſome ground of glorying above others, which was contrary to the doctrine of the apoſtle, (c. iii. v. 27:) but in fact, however diſtinguiſhed he had been in various reſpects, he had really nothing to boaſt of, in the preſence of God, being a ſinner ſaved by grace, through faith, even as other men. For, not to argue from the years, which had preceded his calling of God; from the original ſource of his being made to differ from his former neighbours; or from the failures in his ſubſequent obedience, and even in his faith; it was evident from expreſs ſcripture, that "he believed God, "and it was counted to him for righteouſneſs," (Note, *Gen.* c. xv. v. 6.) The promiſe of God, his perfections as engaged to perform it, and the promiſed Seed through whom the bleſſings were beſtowed, formed the object of his faith: this, being evidenced to be genuine and living by its fruits, ſhewed his relation to the Meſſiah, and intereſted him in the righteouſneſs, that he had engaged to perform: and therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs, as if he had perſonally ſatisfied divine juſtice, and perfectly anſwered all the demands of God's holy law. From this example, the apoſtle obſerved, that to a man, (if there had been any ſuch,) who had worked the full meaſure required by the law, the reward muſt be adjudged as a debt due to him by the terms of that covenant; whereas it was obvious, that it was adjudged to Abraham as a favour, ſeeing faith was imputed to him for righteouſneſs: and this was the general caſe of believers. For to the man, who *worketh not*, but conſcious that he cannot thus obtain the deſired reward, comes as a ſinner, to believe in Him, who juſtifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted to him as a perfect righteouſneſs; not on account of its own excellency or worthineſs, as a good work; but as it refers the ſovereign Judge for payment to the accepted righteouſneſs, and atonement of his Son: even as the receipt of a ſcrap of paper, intrinſically not worth a farthing, in the form of a draft upon a creditable banker, is entered in the merchant's book, for a conſiderable ſum of money, as if it had been paid in caſh. This man, *who worketh not*, will diligently uſe appointed means of grace, repent of, and forſake ſin with earneſtneſs, conſcientiouſly perform his ſeveral duties, and even become "zealous of good "works:" but he worketh not at all, with an aim, or expectation of obtaining righteouſneſs in this way, which he knows to be abſolutely impoſſible. But he comes to God, as the Juſtifier of the ungodly, that he may obtain the gift of righteouſneſs by faith, and of mere grace, through the merits of the divine Surety. He is not indeed abſolutely *ungodly*, at the time of his juſtification; for his humiliation, and faith are effects of regeneration. Yet he is juſtified, as ungodly in himſelf, in ſtrict juſtice, and according to the law: he comes for the bleſſing as ungodly; God makes no account of any thing in juſtifying him, except his faith, as forming his relation to Chriſt; and the man has no reſpect to any thing elſe himſelf, in his expectation of that bleſſing. Notwithſtanding what divine grace may have begun in his ſoul, he is ſtill a ſinner deſerving wrath, from which he cannot be delivered, except by an intereſt in Chriſt, and his merits. Nay the juſtified believer, whatever his holineſs, or diligence may be, never works *for this purpoſe*; and he ſtill comes before God as *ungodly in this reſpect*; but expecting "the righteouſneſs of God by "faith in Chriſt," as his only hope; though his good works may be regarded as evidences of the ſincerity of his faith.

V. 6—8.] This inſtance of David is introduced, in a kind of parentheſis. That patriarch does not mention the man, whoſe works juſtified him, as happy: but he deſcribed the bleſſedneſs of the man, to whom God imputed righteouſneſs without works, when he declared that man happy, whoſe ſins were forgiven, &c. Not that forgiveneſs of ſins is equivalent to juſtification: for this evidently implies alſo, the treating of a man, as it were in open court, as a righteous man, and entitled to the reward of eternal life. But God always imputes righteouſneſs, where he does not impute ſin: for none are pardoned, except in virtue of their relation to Chriſt by faith; and if his atoning blood cover their ſins, his righteouſneſs alſo juſtifies their perſons. As their Surety

9 *Cometh* this bleſſedneſs then upon the circumciſion *only*, or upon the uncircumciſion alſo? for we ſay that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumciſion, or in uncircumciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion.

11 And he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumciſed; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed; that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo;

12 And the father of circumciſion to them, who are not of the circumciſion only, but who alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumciſed.

13 For the promiſe that he ſhould be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his ſeed, through the law, but through the righteouſneſs of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect.

15 Becauſe the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no tranſgreſſion.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed: not to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the

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he ſuffered for their ſins, which were imputed to him; and they are rewarded, becauſe his righteouſneſs is imputed to them. This muſt be the meaning of the apoſtle, or we ſhall not be able to underſtand his words in any natural, and obvious ſenſe; or to account for his *thus* expounding the words of David in this argument. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* xxxii. v. 1, 2.)

V. 9—13.] The Jews not only ſuppoſed that righteouſneſs was by works, but that the privileges of God's people were inſeparably connected with circumciſion: the apoſtle therefore next enquired at what time Abraham's "faith was reckoned to him for righteouſneſs?" And the anſwer was undeniable: for it appeared from the ſcripture before cited, that he was juſtified *at leaſt* fourteen years before his circumciſion: the former having been ſome time before Iſhmael's birth, the other when he was thirteen years of age. It was therefore manifeſt, that circumciſion was not neceſſary in order to juſtification: and indeed Abraham had received from God this inſtituted ordinance, to be an outward ſign of the grace given him, and a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith imputed to him, when in uncircumciſion. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xvii.) This is a demonſtration that circumciſion ſealed ſpiritual bleſſings to Abraham perſonally, as the outward ſeal of the covenant of grace, and the emblem of ſanctification; however it might otherwiſe be applied, or miſunderſtood: which obſervation is of great importance in the argument concerning infant baptiſm. This ſeal was alſo a pledge to Abraham of the performance of the promiſe, reſpecting his ſeed; eſpecially his ſpiritual ſeed of true belivers. He was therefore juſtified before he was circumciſed, that he might be the Father of all thoſe true believers, who ſhould have the circumciſion of the heart, but not the circumciſion of the fleſh; that they might inherit all his bleſſings: and he was afterwards circumciſed, that he might be the Father of the circumciſion alſo; not merely the natural progenitor of the nation of Iſrael, but the ſpiritual Father of all true believers among them, who walked after the example of his obedient faith, which he had previous to circumciſion, but many *of them* ſubſequent to it; that it might be *to them* the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, though not *to thoſe*, who had only the outward ſign, and not the inward grace ſignified by it. For "the "promiſe of being the heir of the world, was not given "to Abraham, or his ſeed, through the law, but "through the righteouſneſs of faith." *The world* cannot here mean the land of Canaan, which is never ſo called: but in Abraham and his ſeed all the nations of the earth were bleſſed. Abraham was the root, and ſpecimen of all that multitude all over the earth, to whom the moſt valuable bleſſings were to be confined, and who may be ſaid to be heirs of the world. He was, as it were the repoſitory, in whom all theſe bleſſings were firſt laid up for their advantage. This diſtinction was not given to him, through the law, (for that was not given till long after;) nor to his poſterity as under the law; for many of them would be excluded from it, for their ſins: but it was given to him, through the righteouſneſs of faith, and they were the true ſeed, who were partakers of that ſame diſtinction.

V. 14—17.] The apoſtle further argues, that if all they, and they only, who were under the legal diſpenſation, were heirs; their faith, which the ſcripture aſſigned as the immediate cauſe of Abraham's juſtification, would be made ineffectual; for even Abraham was not *of the law*, and he therefore could not on that ground plead the promiſe. Indeed whether the law of reaſon, or tradition, (under which Abraham was,) or the law of Moſes, be conſidered: inſtead of giving any man an intereſt in God's promiſes, it muſt neceſſarily expoſe him to condemnation. For the law worketh wrath, by ſhewing every tranſgreſſor to be expoſed to, and deſerving of the righteous indignation of God: and the clearer, the more copious, and expreſs the law is, the more numerous, evident, and aggravated muſt our tranſgreſſions appear. If a man could be without any law, he would not be arraigned and condemned as a criminal: for as ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law, ſo no tranſgreſſion could be charged upon him, who is under no law. But as faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth thoſe things which be not as though they were:

18 Who againſt hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was ſpoken, So ſhall thy ſeed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sara's womb:

20 He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God:

21 And being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed he was able alſo to perform.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs.

23 Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification.

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this cannot be the caſe of any man; ſo all men are liable to condemnation: for every man's rule worketh wrath againſt him for acting contrary to it; until he flee for refuge to Chriſt, who delivers believers from the condemnation of the law, though not from their obligation to obey it. As therefore God intended to give ſinners a title to the promiſed bleſſings; ſo he appointed it to be by faith, that it might be wholly of grace; in order to enſure to all the ſeed of Abraham, even to all who were made partakers of like precious faith with him; not only to thoſe, who lived under the legal diſpenſation, but to all others throughout the earth, and in every age of the world. This accorded to the promiſe, that Abraham ſhould be the Father of many nations: for though ſeveral nations naturally deſcended from him; yet this promiſe had a far nobler and more ſublime accompliſhment in the immenſe multitude from ſo many nations, who have been, are, and hereafter ſhall be, intereſted in the bleſſings firſt conferred on him, in behalf of himſelf, and all that ſhould reſemble him by a living faith, which his natural offſpring ſeldom did. This was the ſtate of the caſe, (before that God, in whom he believed,) as to the relation of the whole church to Abraham: for He not only quickeneth the dead in ſin, and ſo could raiſe up children to Abraham from the nations, that were dead in their idolatry and iniquity; but "He calleth thoſe "things, which be not, as though they were; and ſo had all the unnumbered millions of future believers as preſent before him, in reſpect of his fore-knowledge, and pre-determination, when he made the promiſe to Abraham; and conſidered him as the Father, and them as the family, to whom the inheritance of the bleſſing was enſured through faith.

V. 18—22.] The nature, and power of Abraham's faith are next ſhewn. He believed God's teſtimony, and expected the performance of his promiſe, when the caſe ſeemed *hopeleſs*, and when there was nothing to oppoſe to the moſt formidable objections, and apparent impoſſibilities, but the bare word of God. He hoped to become the Father of many nations, naturally in his poſterity, ſpiritually through Chriſt who was to deſcend from him; becauſe God had ſaid, that his ſeed ſhould be as innumerable as the ſtars of heaven. Yet many years had elapſed, ſince the ſame promiſe, for ſubſtance, was given: and he ſtill continued without any child by Sarah, to whoſe offſpring the promiſe was reſtricted. She had been barren all her younger years, and was then become incapable of bearing children, according to the common courſe of nature; and he was now grown old, and unlikely to have any: yet, though he had been tried by ſuch long delays, and was diſcouraged by ſuch immenſe difficulties; yet he did not *weakly* ſtagger at God's promiſe through unbelief, he heſitated not moſt confidently to expect that He would be as good as his word: being marvellouſly ſtrengthened in his faith, he gave glory to God, and honoured his perfections, by a full aſſurance, that he was able to perform what he had promiſed: and therefore his faith was imputed to him for righteouſneſs. That is, his faith was thus approved to be of the genuine ſort, and evidenced to be meet to form a relation between him, and the predicted Redeemer; and therefore evinced that he was a proper perſon to be juſtified by the everlaſting righteouſneſs, that he would introduce. It is evident from the whole context, that Abraham's faith did not juſtify him, by its own merit, or value, but as intereſting him in Chriſt: for though the ſincerity of his faith was manifeſted on this occaſion, he had actually been juſtified long before; and his example could not have been a proper illuſtration of the chriſtian's juſtification by the merits of Chriſt, and not by thoſe of his own faith: if we do not thus underſtand it. That is a miſerable perverſion of the inſtance before us of Abraham, "who againſt hope believed in hope," which is very frequent amongſt many profeſſors. They ſpeak of "hoping, and believing againſt hope," not that God will fulfil his promiſes to believers, notwithſtanding all difficulties, and improbabilities, but that they are believers, and ſhall be ſaved, contrary to the evidence of their tempers, and lives: which is often the groſſeſt preſumption, and fanaticiſm imaginable; though the expreſſion be thus ſometimes uſed by thoſe, who are not aware of its tendency.

V. 23—25.] The hiſtory of Abraham, and of his juſtification was not penned, for his ſake only, as he had

CHAP. V.

Contains 1ſt. A commendation of the juſtification of the goſpel, by a ſurvey of the believer's privileges, and an enquiry into the ſource of them, 1---11. *2d. The doctrine elucidated by a view of the entrance, and prevalence of ſin, and death; and by contraſting our fall in Adam, with our recovery in Chriſt,* 12---21.

THerefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

2 By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only *ſo*, but we glory in tri-

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been dead for a long time before Moſes recorded it: but it was intended for the inſtruction of after ages; and of thoſe eſpecially, to whom the goſpel was then afforded. For in caſe they believed in that God, who had raiſed Chriſt from the dead, and who was able to fulfil his hardeſt, largeſt promiſes; their faith would be imputed to them for righteouſneſs, even as that of Abraham had been: as this faith, if genuine, would form a relation between them, and the Lord Jeſus, and give them an intereſt in his mediatorial work. For, as he had been delivered up to death, by man as a criminal, but by the Father as a ſacrifice for the offences of his people; ſo he had been raiſed again for their juſtification: He was thereby perfectly juſtified from the charges brought againſt him, and the acceptance of his righteouſneſs and redemption was thereby demonſtrated: and in this his people were intereſted; for the juſtification of the Surety was eventually effectual for the juſtification of all thoſe, who were repreſented by him, to which privilege every one is actually admitted, when he truly believes the goſpel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No mere man, ſince the fall, could ever find any thing but death by his own works; and the ſcripture hiſtory, as well as the confeſſions of the beſt of men, evince, that all, who have been ſaved, have eſcaped condemnation, and obtained heaven by "their faith being "imputed to them for righteouſneſs." In all controverſies we ſhould enquire, "What ſaith the ſcripture?" This uniformly teaches, that the reward is not aſſigned to a man, for working, as a debt; but through belief, as of grace. None can properly apply for this privilege, till he ceaſe from working, in order to juſtify himſelf; nor indeed doth any man perform good works from the pureſt principles, till he learn to believe in Him, who juſtifieth the ungodly. Yet at the ſame time none of theſe will neglect working, in order to glorify God, to do good, and to make their own calling and election ſure. Man's felicity conſiſts in God's favour; that can only belong to the pardoned ſinner; and the forgiveneſs of ſin, and the imputation of righteouſneſs without works, are entirely through the obedience unto death of our gracious Redeemer. They, who obtain this bleſſedneſs, are happy, though poor, deſpiſed, and afflicted; all who come ſhort of it are moſt miſerable, however wealthy, honoured, and proſpered. This diſtinction extends to all nations, ſects, or forms of worſhip, where the great truths of the goſpel are known, ſome of each are juſtified, and ſome are not: and this method of juſtifying the ungodly is equally ſuited to preclude the moſt eminent ſaints from glorying, and the moſt atrocious ſinners from deſpairing.

The ſeal of the Holy Spirit in our ſanctification is the inward evidence "of the righteouſneſs of faith:" when the old nature is crucified, and the heart is circumciſed to love God; it is evident that we are the children of Abraham, and walk in his ſteps: and ſacraments will be really external ſeals and pledges of the ſame bleſſing. Bleſſed be God, that we are not left under the covenant of works! For the more holy and perfect the law, the greater wrath would have come upon us: but as all is of grace, it is through faith, and the promiſed bleſſing is enſured to all the choſen ſeed, wherever diſperſed, or however diſtinguiſhed. May we then copy the example of Abraham; and in the midſt of perils and difficulties "in hope believe againſt hope," aſſured that God is both able and willing to perform his promiſes, to all who truſt in him, and wait their accompliſhment in patient obedience. Thus our faith will be imputed to us for righteouſneſs, through him, who died for our offences, and roſe again for our juſtification.

NOTES

CHAP. V.] V. 1, 2.] The apoſtle, having ſtated, and proved his doctrine, here proceeds to conſider the bleſſed effects of it. The ſinner, being enabled to believe, and having his faith imputed to him for righteouſneſs, as hath been explained; is juſtified before, and has peace with God, through the merits of Chriſt, to whom he now ſtands moſt intimately related. Thus the controverſy, or hoſtility, which ſin had excited, is terminated by a bleſſed pacification, through the great Mediator; and a covenant of amity is ratified between that holy God, who had ſo juſt cauſe to treat his rebellious creature as an enemy, and that rebel who before was ſo unreaſonably alienated from, and ſet againſt his beneficent Creator. The ſinner ſubmits, pleads guilty, applies for mercy, and learns to love and ſerve God; and his offended ſovereign receives the ſinner to full favour, and thenceforth behaves to him as his Friend, and Ally The ſinner, being thus reconciled, conſiders the cauſe, and people of God as his own, and ſeparates from his enemies, that he may be united to his friends; he makes the glory of his God the ultimate end of his habitual conduct: and God protects, countenances, provides for, and communes with the believer as his friend; and requites the injuries, or favours done to him, as if done to himſelf. All this centers in the Perſon, mediation, and grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath made, and will preſerve this bleſſed peace. Thus every true believer has a free admiſſion into a ſtate of full favour with God, even as if he had never ſinned: in this he *ſtands* accepted before him, and is ſecured by his promiſe, and grace from being caſt down from it; and he learns to rejoice in the prevailing, abiding, and realizing hope of being glorified with, and glorifying, God, of combulations alſo: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not aſhamed; becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, which is given unto us.

6 For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly.

7 For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us.

9 Much more then, being now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him.

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;

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pletely bearing his glorious image, and of enjoying his unſpeakable love, to all eternity. The expreſſions may alſo allude to the free acceſs of ſinners from different nations, into the full enjoyment of the privileges of God's people, without any reſpect to the legal ceremonies and reſtrictions upon their approach towards his mercy-ſeat.

V. 3—5.] Thoſe chriſtians, who lived up to their privileges, not only rejoiced, or exulted, in the glory of God, *notwithſtanding* preſent afflictions; but they gloried in the tribulations themſelves, as the ſure pledges of the divine favour, and means of good to their ſouls. For they were aſſured from the word of God, and from the evidence of facts, that their trials and perſecutions; produced in their minds a ſubmiſſion to, and acquieſcence in, the will of God; a meekneſs amidſt injuries, and provocations; and a patient continuance in well-doing, and in quietly waiting for the Lord, amidſt all difficulties, perils, and ſufferings. This, would be effected by exciting their natural impatience, teaching them to watch and pray againſt it, and thus producing the mortification of it; by which they would be wrought into a patience of ſpirit, through trials, as the rough block is wrought into a beautiful ſtatue, by the chiſel and labour of the workman. At the ſame time this patience produced an enlarged experience; both an experimental acquaintance with their own weakneſs, and ſinfulneſs in order to their humiliation; of the reality and power of grace in their hearts, after repeated trials in the furnace; of God's faithfulneſs to his promiſes, and of his readineſs to anſwer their prayers. So that theſe painful diſpenſations tended ſtill further to eſtabliſh their hope: and to aſſure them, that it would never make them aſhamed, by iſſuing in a diſappointment; as the baſeleſs confidence of a worldly man, of a Phariſee, an unbelieving Jew, a hypocrite, or a licentious profeſſor, will do at length. For this hope, of the tried and experienced believer, is not only warranted by the word of God, but ſealed upon his heart by the gift of the Holy Ghoſt; whoſe ſacred influence had made ſuch diſcoveries to him of the excellency, and loving kindneſs of God, eſpecially in the work of redemption, as being diffuſed or poured out, through all the faculties of his ſoul, had produced a ſimilarity of diſpoſition, a reciprocal love of the divine perfections, a longing deſire of his favour, a delight in communing with, and ſerving him, a lively gratitude for his benefits, and a zeal for his glory: theſe being both full proofs of regeneration; the inward ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith; and earneſts of heavenly felicity, enſure the chriſtian's hope from the ſhame of diſappointment. This ſhould be conſidered rather as a mark for believers to aſpire at, than as the attainment of all, who are truly juſtified. The full enjoyment of ſuch conſolation is commonly confined to certain ſeaſons; but it is diſtinguiſhed from enthuſiaſtical deluſions, and falſe affections, by its abiding holy effect upon a man's judgment, diſpoſition, choice, and conduct.

V. 6—10.] It might be objected, that after all this experience, the chriſtian's hope might probably at length make him aſhamed; through the power of temptation, and the prevailing of ſin in his own heart; and that thus ſatan might, in ſome time of perſecution, or proſperity, bring him to apoſtatize, and ſo to periſh: ſome conſtitutional, or habitual iniquity, which in more favourable circumſtances had hardly been kept under, might at length obtain the aſcendancy, through his unwatchfulneſs, and ſo deſtroy him: or he might fall away in the hour of death, or ſome other critical ſeaſon. The apoſtle therefore obviates this objection, at the ſame time that he ſhews the believer's cauſe to love his God, and Saviour. For when they, who were now at peace with God, lay in the ruins of the fall, under deſerved wrath, and the power of ſin and ſatan; without any *ſtrength* to reſiſt, or to deliver themſelves: when they had neither natural power for ſo vaſt a work, if they had been ever ſo inclinable to it; nor any moral ability, or inclination to attempt it: when thus impotent and helpleſs, they could have no refuge but in the mere compaſſion of God; and yet were ungodly, and without any fear of, or proper diſpoſition of heart towards him, nay every way contrary to his nature, will and worſhip; when they were too proud and impious even to aſk for mercy, or to allow their need of it, and too averſe to religion to be at all willing to become ſpiritual worſhippers: even then Chriſt died for them, in their ſtead, a ſacrifice for their ſins, and to make way for their ſalvation! For though ſome of thoſe, for whom Chriſt died, were previouſly gone to heaven, others were godly perſons then living on earth, and others had not come into exiſtence: yet they were all conſidered as ungodly, and without ſtrength, in reſpect of Chriſt's dying for them. They all ſtood, as it were, preſent before God, in his omniſcience, foreknowledge, and pre-determination, in their natural ſtate of impenitent ungodlineſs: and Chriſt, as their divine, and righteous Surety took their ſins upon himſelf, and died for them, even previous to their ſenſe of their need of ſuch grace, and without any ſolicitation from them.

much more, being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life.

11 And not only *ſo,* but we alſo joy in God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12 Wherefore, as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned;

13 For until the law ſin was in the world: but ſin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion,

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And in whatever age of the world they have lived, or ſhall live; their repentance, faith, piety, &c, are conſidered as ſubſequent *in the order of nature,* to his death for them: though in many inſtances they were prior in *the order of time.* To illuſtrate the immenſity of this love of God; the apoſtle obſerves, that if *a righteous man,* one of ſtrict probity, and integrity, who had committed no crime againſt the welfare of the community, were about to be unjuſtly put to death; there would ſcarce be found a man, any where, who would conſent to die in his ſtead: though perhaps for *a good man,* one of extenſive philanthropy, whoſe life had been, and was like to be, a public bleſſing, ſome perſons might even venture to lay down their lives. This, hath ſometimes been done in the field of battle, and perhaps it would be poſſible to find a man, who would in ſuch a cauſe ſuffer for his friend or benefactor, upon a ſcaffold. Yet this moſt rare inſtance, the very ſummit of human affection, is immenſely beneath the love of God to us. A man, who ſhould give up his life in ſuch circumſtances, would do it for one of ſuperior excellency, or who had greatly befriended him; and his death would enſure honour and applauſe to his memory. But the infinitely glorious God, had commended, or ſet off to the utmoſt advantage, his love to us; in that his incarnate, and co-equal Son gave himſelf to endure the moſt agonizing and ignominious death for thoſe, who were infinitely beneath him, his creatures that had rebelled againſt him, and perſiſted in that ungrateful rebellion; yea impenitent *ſinners,* who had perpetrated the moſt atrocious, and multiplied crimes to provoke his vengeance, and whoſe diſpoſitions rendered them the meet objects of his abhorrence. In this condition he had loved them, and purpoſed their ſalvation; and when his juſtice, holineſs, and the honour of his law obſtructed that gracious deſign, he *ſo* loved them, that he gave his own Son to die a ſacrifice for their ſins! (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxii. *John,* c. xv. v. 13—15) Now if this were ſo: and they by divine grace had been brought to repent, and to believe in Chriſt; and thus had been juſtified at the price of his blood-ſhedding, and by faith in that great atonement: much more then would they be kept from falling again under the wrath of God, and periſhing in ſin, through him, who died for them and roſe again. For could it be imagined that he, who ſo loved them when enemies, as to die for them, would not ſave and uphold them, by the exertion of his power, now they were made friends? For if, when they were not only deſtitute of godlineſs, and impenitent tranſgreſſors, but deſperate enemies to God's holy character, law, ſovereignty, grace, providence, cauſe, &c, they were brought into a ſtate of reconciliation, and cordial peace with God, by the death of his Son upon the croſs, as the ſacrifice for their ſins; *much more* would they, being thus reconciled, be preſerved from falling under the power of ſin and ſatan, or finally apoſtatizing "by his life," his interceſſion, authority, and omnipotent grace. (Note, *John,* c. x. v. 27—30.) He, that did the greater for his enemies, will ſurely do the leſſer for his friends and children; and the *living* Lord of all will complete the purpoſe of his dying love, by ſaving all true believers to the uttermoſt, till his *finiſhed ranſom* on the croſs ſhall iſſue in their *finiſhed ſalvation,* as preſented faultleſs before his preſence with exceeding joy.

V. 11. *And,* &c.] Having ſuch a pledge of future and complete ſalvation in the love of God through Chriſt, and in paſt mercies experienced; the apoſtle declared that he, and other eſtabliſhed believers, not only rejoiced, and exulted in the hope of heaven, and in their tribulations for Chriſt's ſake; but they gloried in God alſo, as their unchangeable Friend, and all-ſufficient Portion: but this was not by the works of the law, as the Jew made his boaſt in God; but "through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." For according to the law they were all ſinners, and enemies, but by Chriſt they had now "*received the reconciliation.*" This is the proper tranſlation of the ſentence, which refers to the whole of the pacification between God, and the believing ſinner, through the mediation of Chriſt; and not merely to the atonement, which is the ground of it. As they were confident that the great Peace-maker, who had effected this reconciliation by the blood of his croſs, and the power of his grace, would certainly preſerve it; they gloried in God through him, as their God and everlaſting Portion.

V. 12—14.] In order more fully to illuſtrate his important ſubject, the apoſtle calls the reader's attention to the ſtate of man, from the fall of Adam. He was the federal head, ſurety, and repreſentative of all his poſterity; nor was ſin entered, ſave to the perſonal condemnation of Eve, till he alſo had eaten the forbidden fruit. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. iii.) By that one man ſin entered into the world, to pollute and ruin the whole human ſpecies; and ſo death, ſpiritual and temporal, followed, and paſſed upon all men, "*for that,* or, "in "whom, all had ſinned." In Adam, as being in his loins when he thus apoſtatized, we all ſinned and fell under condemnation: his blood was attainted for rebellion; and thence that evil nature originated, whence all our perſonal tranſgreſſions proceed. In proof of this our union with, and relation to Adam, and our concern in his firſt tranſgreſſion, which our proud hearts are prone to deny, or object to with blaſphemous enmity; it ſhould be obſerved that for 2500 years before the giving of the law ſin prevailed in the world, and was puniſhed with who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offences ſo alſo *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jeſus Chriſt, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as *it was* by one that ſinned, *ſo is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto juſtification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt:

18 Therefore, as by the offence of one, *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto juſtification of life.

19 For as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.

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death: but ſin cannot be imputed, where no law is, of which it is a tranſgreſſion. None of the immenſe multitudes, who died between the fall of Adam, and the promulgation of the law, could perſonally violate the prohibition, to which the penalty of death had been annexed: yet were they included in the ſentence denounced againſt Adam, and after much toil and ſuffering returned to the duſt, whence they were taken. And though adults might be thought to die for their perſonal violation of the law of tradition, or of their own reaſon: yet during this long interval, an innumerable multitude had been ſubjected to death, who had never broken any law, after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion, that is, wilfully and deliberately. For the number of infants, that had been cut off, with great pain and agony, previous to their commiſſion of actual ſin, had been immenſely great. They had been involved in the deſtruction of the old world, and of Sodom &c: and in the ordinary courſe of things death reigned over them, before they were capable of wilful, deliberate tranſgreſſion: and this fact cannot be otherwiſe accounted for, conſiſtently with the divine perfections, that by allowing them, as one with Adam, to have fallen in him under condemnation, through his violation of that covenant, in which he acted as ſurety for all his offspring. Though we may comfortably hope, that as infants die in Adam, without their own perſonal tranſgreſſion, ſo they will be ſaved in Chriſt, without their own perſonal exerciſe of faith in him; as never living to be capable of it: though that change muſt be wrought in them by the regenerating Spirit, which would have iſſued in faith, had they lived longer. Indeed the ſufferings and death of infants, in every age, forms an irrefragable proof of original ſin: but it was more peculiarly ſo, from Adam to Moſes; as that law was not then in being, which in ſome inſtances entailed the guilt of the parents on their children, to the third and fourth generation. Yet theſe laws were deduced from the ſame principle of the oneneſs between the root and the branches; though only applied in ſome ſpecial caſes: whilſt that of Adam reached in general to all his poſterity. For he was a figure, or type, of Him, who was to come, as the Surety of a new covenant, in behalf of all related to him. In many reſpects Adam might be conſidered as the contraſt of Chriſt: but he reſembled him, and was his type in the divine preſcience, by acting as the ſurety of all related, and united to him: for thus Chriſt acted as the Surety of all his people, who are deemed his ſpiritual progeny, and they are intereſted in all his obedience, ſufferings, victories, and exaltation.

V. 15—19] The chief difficulty, which hath prevented many expoſitors from underſtanding clearly this paſſage, hath ariſen from an evident miſconception of the apoſtle's reaſoning; in ſuppoſing that Adam and Chriſt repreſented all the ſame perſons. Whereas Adam was the ſurety of the whole human ſpecies; Chriſt only of that choſen remnant, which hath been, or ſhall be, one with him by faith. Indeed all men in conſequence of Chriſt's undertaking, are under a diſpenſation of mercy, and are endured with much long-ſuffering; they are not left deſperate, have many temporal mercies, and ſhall all ariſe to judgment. There is alſo ſuch an infinite ſufficiency in the atonement of Chriſt, and it is ſo propoſed to ſinners as a common ſalvation for all, who will accept of it; that a foundation is laid for the moſt unreſerved invitations, exhortations, and expoſtulations; and no ſinner will be rejected, who ſincerely deſires this ſalvation. Yet theſe general truths perfectly harmonize with the ſecret purpoſes and foreknowledge of God, in reſpect of the perſons, who actually would embrace, and obtain the proffered bleſſings. If then we omit the conſideration of the numbers, that periſh in the firſt Adam, or are ſaved in the ſecond Adam: if we wholly leave this matter to the wiſe, righteous and merciful Creator, and Judge of all men, as one of thoſe ſecret things, which belong not to us: and ſo only conſider the benefit *believers* derive from Chriſt, as compared with the loſs ſuſtained in Adam by *the human race*, we ſhall then ſee the paſſage open moſt perſpicuouſly and glorioufly to our view. For the thoughts of the *ſuppoſed* vaſt majority of thoſe, who ſhall eventually periſh, is apt to encumber our minds, in ſuch contemplations. I ſay *ſuppoſed*; for *probably* we ſhall find our conjectures on this ſubject erroneous, when the doom of men, through all ages and nations ſhall be finally determined. Let us then advert to the apoſtle's words. The offence of Adam, and its conſequences do not in all things coincide with the free gift or the grace of redemption. Through that one man's ſingle offence, the many, or the multitude of mankind are *dead*, under condemnation, and expoſed to death temporal and eternal. But the in-

20 Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound: but where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound;

21 That as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

finite grace, and mercy of God, and the free gift of righteouſneſs and ſalvation, through that one man Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, who is alſo the Lord from heaven, had much more abounded to many, even to all the multitude of believers; by bringing them into a far ſafer, happier, and more exalted ſtate, than that from which they fell in Adam. For this gift did not merely anſwer to the loſs ſuſtained by Adam's ſin, but far exceeded it, in this reſpect; that the judgment of God came through Adam's ſingle offence, upon mankind to their condemnation; but the free gift not only delivered believers from that condemnation, but from the puniſhment due to their own numerous tranſgreſſions: nor did it place them anew in a ſtate of probation, like that of Adam before he ſinned; but it fixed them in a ſtate of complete juſtification, even as he would have been, if he had ſtood his time of trial. For if by one offence of one man, death acquired a complete dominion over all the whole human race, ſo that none were admitted to a perſonal trial *in that reſpect*, whether they would be obedient or not: much more would they, who *by faith* receive the abundance of God's grace, and mercy, and are intereſted in the gift of righteouſneſs, be aſſuredly preſerved in that ſtate of acceptance, and ſo reign in life, by the perfect obedience of their One Surety, Jeſus Chriſt; without the infinite peril, or fatal conſequences of being put upon a perſonal trial of their obedience, like that in which Adam had failed, and Chriſt had perſevered. Man is indeed in ſome ſenſe in a probationary ſtate on earth: but no man is put upon the trial, whether he can obtain exemption from the general condemnation of Adam and his ſeed, by his own perſonal obedience. A trial is made of him, tending to diſcover the wickedneſs of his heart, by manifold experiments: the trial is made by the goſpel, whether the ſinner will repent and believe: profeſſors are tried whether they are ſincere or not: and believers are proved in reſpect of the ſtrength of their faith and grace: but they are not put upon any probation, with reference to their juſtification, and eternal life; but are accounted righteous, and appointed heirs by faith alone, through the righteouſneſs of their One divine Surety; which conſiſted not, like Adam's offence, in one action, but in a continued and perfect conformity to the whole divine law, through life, and unto his death upon the croſs. Yet, notwithſtanding theſe differences, the ſimilarity is ſtriking and inſtructive: for as by the offence of one man, ſin entered and prevailed to the condemnation of all men; ſo by the righteouſneſs of One, even Chriſt, grace entered and prevailed to the complete juſtification of all men, throughout the earth, and during all ages, who are related to Chriſt by faith, as all were to Adam by nature. For as by the diſobedience of one ſingle perſon, being a public character, or repreſentative of his poſterity, many were made or conſtituted ſinners, and dealt with as ſuch, previous to the conſideration of their perſonal tranſgreſſions: ſo by the obedience of One, who alſo was a public character, and the repreſentative of his people, many, even the whole multitude of believers, are conſtituted righteous before God, and dealt with as ſuch, even previous to the conſideration of their perſonal holineſs and obedience; which ſpring from their ſpiritual union with Chriſt, as depravity does from man's natural union with Adam. Thus in many things the type and Antitype coincide; though diſobedience and condemnation be oppoſite to obedience and juſtification. But the believer, being juſtified in Chriſt, has his title to life in Him, who preſerves it for him; ſo that he is not left to peradventures, or to the hazards ariſing from the mutability of creatures, as Adam was; but he is ſafe by his union with Him, who is "God manifeſted in the "fleſh;" and his future felicity will be proportionably more exalted, in conſequence of his endeared relation to the Godhead in Chriſt his Brother and Friend.

V. 20, 21.] All this was fixed, and engaged for, long before the law was given by Moſes. This diſpenſation *entered a little*, or among a few perſons, compared with the whole poſterity of Adam: but ſo far from being intended for the juſtification of ſinners, "it entered that "the offence might abound." The moral law, by its perfection, ſhewed that many thoughts, affections, tempers, words, and actions were ſinful, which otherwiſe would not have been known to be ſo; it evinced the malignity and deſert of every ſin; and it irritated man's natural corruption both to hanker after forbidden objects, and to riſe in oppoſition and enmity againſt its ſpiritual precepts, and its righteous ſanction. Thus it occaſioned tranſgreſſions to be multiplied; for it had no efficacy to cure human depravity: and at the ſame time it aggravated the enormity of ſin, by its being committed againſt ſo expreſs a declaration of the divine will. Even the ceremonial law, as conſidered apart from Chriſt, multiplied duties, and conſequently tranſgreſſions. So that the law in every ſenſe entered, in order to ſhew and condemn man's abounding wickedneſs, as by an experiment tried with a ſpecimen of the human race; that the free grace of redemption might be more glorioufly diſplayed, by its ſuper-abounding moſt, where ſin had moſt abounded; and like the waters of the deluge, flowing far above the ſummits of the higheſt mountains of man's guilt, and depravity. So that, as ſin, like ſome terrific victor and tyrant, had reigned with uncontrouled ſway, unto the death and ruin of all men, under Adam's covenant: even ſo grace, or the infinitely free and rich mercy of God, might aſcend a more exalted throne, and there reign with benign authority, through the righteouſneſs of the Surety of the new covenant, unto the eternal life of every one, who believed; in virtue of the power, grace, merits, and exaltation of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Grace, as reigning in the believer's heart, may be included: but this is more explicitly treated on in the enſuing chapter; and Grace as reigning upon the throne of

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Contains 1ſt. Objections againſt the preceding doctrine anſwered, by ſhewing that believers are dead to ſin, and conformed to Chriſt, in his death and reſurrection, 1---10. *2d. Exhortations to chriſtians, to walk conſiſtently with their privileges and profeſſion,* 11---15. *3d. The ſervice of ſin, and that of righteouſneſs contraſted, in their nature, tendency and effects; believers ſhewn to be freed from ſin, and made ſervants of righteouſneſs; and eternal life declared to be "the gift of God through Chriſt,"* 16---23.

God, to juſtify every believing ſinner, and to complete the ſalvation of every juſtified believer, are principally intended.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

A moſt bleſſed change takes place in the ſinner's ſtate, however vile he hath been, when he becomes a true believer: being juſtified by faith he hath peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; which will in due time be communicated to his conſcience, and dwell in his heart: he has free acceſs to the mercy-ſeat; he is eſtabliſhed in the grace and favour of God: and he may now rejoice in the hope of everlaſting glory, though he juſt before trembled from apprehenſions of deſerved vengeance. How vaſt then are our obligations to him, who hath made "all things ready:" by his agonizing death; and hath made our hearts willing by his converting grace! May we act as the covenanted friends of our reconciled God; may we adorn the doctrine of his ſalvation; may we ſtudy to recommend it to our fellow ſinners; and to make grateful returns for his love, by our kindneſs to our poor fellow chriſtians, who are the brethren, and receivers of this our rich and bountiful Benefactor! Then we need not be diſmayed by temptations, or afflictions, or deſpond and murmur under them; nay we may glory and rejoice in them: for though nature feels that tribulation worketh impatience; yet grace finds that at length it produces patience, experience, and ſuch hope, as can never make the poſſeſſor aſhamed; "becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in his heart by "the Holy Ghoſt!" This ſeal of God cannot be broken; and ſatan bungles miſerably, in his attempts to counterfeit it: as all falſe affections, and enthuſiaſtic confidences, are liable to be conſumed in the furnace of long-continued afflictions; and they never can communicate that reciprocal, ſteady, pre-eminent, and abiding love of God in Chriſt, which no fire can burn, no waters can quench, and which in ten thouſands of inſtances has proved ſtronger than the fear of death, in its moſt tremendous forms; and hath enabled a feeble believer to diſregard the cruelties of a ſavage executioner, in compariſon of the anguiſh of wilfully denying or diſobeying his beloved Lord. Surely he is worthy of all this from every one of us! When we conſider how helpleſs, ungodly, rebellious, and full of enmity againſt God we were, when his compaſſionate eye was firſt fixed upon us: when we reflect on the ſalvation purpoſed for us, the price paid for it, the dignity of our Redeemer, the work wrought in us before we would accept of the free gift, and the privileges moſt graciouſly beſtowed upon us; we muſt ſurely allow, that the love of God our Saviour paſſeth knowledge, and is infinitely beyond example, or illuſtration. It is inconceivable, that even God himſelf could more have commended his love to us, or have given us more powerful motives and encouragements to humble ſubmiſſion, and grateful obedience. In proportion as we feel the force of theſe motives, we may be aſſured that we are juſtified by the blood, and reconciled to God by the death of his Son: and that we ſhall be ſaved from wrath by him, "who was dead, and is alive "for evermore, and hath the keys of death and hell." Though conſcious of our ſinfulneſs in ourſelves, we may thus glory in God through Jeſus Chriſt; as having by him received the reconciliation. At the ſame time we ſhall learn not to diſdain or deſpair of any other poor ſinners; as we ſhall feel, that they are not worſe in themſelves, or further from God, than we once were; and that they are equally capable of being reconciled in the ſame way, whatever their character and crimes may heretofore have been.

Let us then learn to look upon ourſelves, and the whole human race, as in the ruins of the fall; ſinners by nature, and practice, expoſed to condemnation, and no more able to ſave our own ſouls from hell, than to reſcue our bodies from the grave. Inſtead of puzzling ourſelves about, or objecting to, the deep, but righteous diſpenſation of God, in permitting the entrance of ſin and death: let us learn to adore his Grace for providing ſo adequate a remedy for that cataſtrophe, which we are ſure conſiſted with all his glorious perfections. As our children have evidently through us received a ſinful, ſuffering, and dying nature from the firſt Adam: we ſhould be ſtirred up even by their pains and ſorrows in helpleſs infancy, to ſeek for them the bleſſing of the ſecond Adam's righteouſneſs and ſalvation. Though the grace of God, and the gift by grace have much more abounded *to many* through Chriſt, than juſtice and wrath did through Adam: yet multitudes chooſe to remain under the horrid dominion of ſin, and death, rather than apply for the bleſſings of the reign of grace! But there is the fulleſt encouragement to every ſinner, who is willing to come to Chriſt for his free, and holy ſalvation; and he will in no wiſe caſt out one ſuch humble ſupplicant. Let all then flee without delay, to this righteouſneſs by faith in Chriſt, whilſt grace fills the throne of God, and before the Judge aſcend his dread tribunal: let the entrance of the law into the conſcience, that ſin may be known to abound, impel the ſinner to the greater diligence in applying for a free ſalvation: let none be diſcouraged by the view of their enormous crimes, ſeeing there is in Chriſt much more abounding grace: let the uneſtabliſhed enquirer give diligence to make ſure his intereſt in the Redeemer: and let the thankful, and confirmed believer frequently meditate on his obligations, privileges, ſecurities, and proſpects: let him contraſt his ſtate in Adam, with his felicity in Chriſt; that whilſt he gives all the glory to ſovereign grace, through that obedience by which he is made righteous; he may look at all enemies, and remaining obſtacles, and at the king of terrors with a victorious hope, aſſured that

WHAT ſhall we ſay then? ſhall we continue in ſin that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How ſhall we that are dead to ſin live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that ſo many of us, as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death; that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo *in the likeneſs* of *his* reſurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.

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grace ſhall ſtill reign through righteouſneſs, unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1, 2.] The apoſtle's doctrine lay open to the objection, which is now continually made to that of a free ſalvation. It might be ſaid, that if we are juſtified of entire mercy, by the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and the virtue of his ſacrifice, through faith alone, without works of any kind, or in any degree: will not this ſet men free from all moral obligation, and open the flood-gates of licentiouſneſs? And if God takes occaſion from man's exceſs in wickedneſs, the more to diſplay his abounding grace; may we not ſafely, and even upon principle, commit more and greater enormities, and continue in ſinful practices, without remorſe, or amendment; on purpoſe, that the riches of divine grace may be more glorioufly diſplayed by our being juſtified notwithſtanding, by faith alone? This ſounds ſpecious: and ſelf deceived hypocrites through ſatan's inſtruction, comment in this manner upon the goſpel; and ſo give ſome colour to the cavils of infidels and Phariſees: but the apoſtle has taught us how to anſwer all ſuch objections, and guard againſt ſuch abuſes. He does not ſet us an example of keeping out of ſight, explaining away, or *cautiouſly* propoſing the free grace of the goſpel: but whilſt he ſtates his doctrine in the moſt explicit and deciſive language; he ſhews alſo the inſeparable connexion between juſtification, and ſanctification. Let "the thought be abhorred," ſays he, "of continuing in ſin, that grace may abound." The unbeliever is not profited by that grace; the believer is dead to ſin, and how then ſhould he live any longer in the practice of it? That view of the glory of God, of the holineſs and goodneſs of the law, and of his own guilt and danger, which, as the effect of regenerating grace, made him feel his need, and perceive the preciouſneſs, of Chriſt's ſalvation, led him alſo to abhor, repent of, and renounce the practice of ſin. This change, thus begun in gracious convictions, was more completely effected, by further diſcoveries of the grace, and experience of the comforts of redemption: ſo that love and gratitude to the divine Saviour, and other evangelical principles, concurred with hatred of ſin, to mortify his affections to its pleaſures and intereſts, and to cauſe him to ſeparate from iniquity, as a dead man ceaſes from the actions of life. Not only *ought this* to be the juſtified believer's character, but in a meaſure *it actually* is ſo; and thus it forms the proper evidence, being the inſeparable concomitant, of his juſtification: and where no change *of this kind* has taken place, a man's profeſſion of faith muſt be hypocriſy, and his hope deluſion and preſumption. This effectually ſecures the believer from abuſing the doctrines of grace: he may be ſeduced into ſin, but he cannot live any longer in the allowed, habitual practice of known tranſgreſſion: he cannot take occaſion from abounding grace, to continue in ſin, that it may ſtill more abound; but on the contrary, in proportion to his admiring views of the riches of God's mercy, in his ſalvation, he will be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord; and will only be remiſs in duty, when ſuch hopes and affections grow languid, and low.

V. 3—7.] It is here ſhewn, that a chriſtian's profeſſion implied this death to ſin, that he may live to God. The apoſtle enquires of the Romans, whether they did not underſtand, that all, who had been baptized into the name, and religion of Jeſus, had received the ſign, and made the profeſſion of communion with, and conformity to, him in his death; that in virtue of his dying for their ſins, they ſhould die to, and ceaſe from, the love, and practice of all ſin, and have done with their former unholy ſatisfactions, purſuits, habits, and connexions. This profeſſion was equivalent to "being buried with Chriſt," as dead with him: for as his burial was a manifeſtation that he was really dead, and an introduction to his immediate reſurrection, by the glorious power of the Father, or for the diſplay of his glory; ſo the baptiſm of a converted Jew or Gentile, was a profeſſed manifeſtation of his death to ſin, and to all his carnal expectations, affections, and purſuits, from which he meant to be entirely ſecluded, as one buried is from the affairs of life; and it was a profeſſed introduction to his entrance upon "a walk with God in newneſs of life," not only, as to his outward actions, but with reſpect to his inward principles. The ſpiritual meaning of the external ſign would be the ſame, when baptiſm was adminiſtered to the infant offſpring of believers: even as the meaning of circumciſion was the ſame, when it was performed on Abraham the aged believer; on Iſhmael, who perhaps never believed, and ſo belied his profeſſion; and on Iſaac, an infant of eight days old, long before he believed: it was the outward ſign of regeneration, or a death unto ſin, and a new birth unto righteouſneſs; and it ſealed juſtification by faith to all, who ever poſſeſſed the thing ſignified, but to none elſe. Thus Simon Magus, though baptized

7 For he that is dead is freed from ſin.
8 Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe
that we ſhall alſo live with him:
9 Knowing that Chriſt, being raiſed from
the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more
dominion over him.
10 For in that he died, he died unto ſin
once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
11 Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to
be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God

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adult, derived no more benefit from the outward ſign, than thoſe multitudes do, who, having been baptized in infancy, when grown up deſpiſe, inſtead of deſiring, the inward and ſpiritual grace of it: yet this alters not the nature, and inſtruction of that ordinance. Much ſtreſs hath been laid upon the expreſſion, "buried with "him by baptiſm into death," &c, as proving that baptiſm ought to be performed by immerſion, to which the apoſtle is ſuppoſed to allude: but we are ſaid alſo to be *crucified* with Chriſt, and *circumciſed* with him, without any alluſion to the outward manner, in which crucifixion, and circumciſion were performed: and as baptiſm is far more frequently mentioned with reference to the *pouring out* of the Holy Ghoſt; and as the apoſtle is evidently treating on the inward meaning, not the outward form of that ordinance; ſo it may even be doubted, whether he meant to allude to that mode of baptizing, and ſtill more whether any argument at all can thence be drawn, to prove that baptiſm ought always to be thus adminiſtered. However, the inſtruction, and profeſſion of that ordinance were evidently ſuch, that if the chriſtian acted conſiſtently with them, he could not continue to live in any known ſin, but muſt walk in newneſs of life, by the power, and to the glory of the Father. For that union with Chriſt by faith, which intereſts a ſinner in his righteouſneſs, is produced by the communication of the Spirit of Chriſt; whoſe work it is to mortify ſin, and to renew the ſoul to holineſs, in conformity to the death and reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus. If then a man had been planted together with Chriſt in the likeneſs of his death, (as ſeed is planted in the earth, in order to it's vegetation and increaſe;) he would moſt certainly be conformed to him in the likeneſs of his reſurrection, and by motives and grace derived from him, would thenceforth habitually live a holy life, according to a new rule, and for new ends and purpoſes. For he would know, that Chriſt was crucified to atone for ſin, in order that he might mortify and deſtroy it. So that the corrupt nature, (called *a man*, becauſe it compriſes a complete ſyſtem of unholy diſpoſitions, and affections of every kind; and imparts it's baleful influence through all the powers of the ſoul, and members of the body; and *the old man*, becauſe derived from the firſt Adam, and ſo in every one of us prior to grace, or the image of the ſecond Adam;) is in every true believer, crucified with Chriſt, and by the grace derived from his croſs. For it is thus deprived of dominion, and proſcribed as an enemy and condemned criminal; its death is abſolutely determined, and actually begun, it is weakened, confined, and in a diſgraced, ſuffering and dying ſtate, in every part; though it yet lives, and ſtruggles for life, and even for liberty, and victory. Nor is there the leaſt intention, either in the believer or his gracious Lord, to releaſe the crucified rebel: die he muſt, though he die hard, and in a very lingering manner: the whole body of ſin, every kind and degree of inconformity to the holy law of God, in the faculties of the believer's ſoul, muſt be aboliſhed, and deſtroyed; that from this time, he may no more be the ſlave of any ſin, and that at length he may be delivered entirely from it's harraſſing emotions. For he that is dead to the love and practice of ſin, is freed for ever from it's yoke; he hath paſſed into the ſervice of another maſter; ſin hath no further claim upon him, and ſhall never recover it's loſt authority. Thus the ſeventh verſe is commonly explained: but it is moſt exactly tranſlated: "he that is dead, is juſtified from "ſin;" and the literal meaning ſeems ſtill more aptly to coincide with the apoſtle's argument: he, and he only, who is dead to the love, and practice of ſin, is juſtified from the guilt of it, "having received the free gift of "many offences unto juſtification," (c. v. ver. 16.) His death to ſin is the requiſite atteſtation of his being accounted righteous; ſo that the doctrine, properly underſtood, is incapable of the abuſe objected againſt it.

V. 8—10.] Thus our death with Chriſt is the experimental ground of our believing hope, that we ſhall for ever live with him in heaven, as partakers of the gift of God, even eternal life through him. If a profeſſed chriſtian be not thus dead with Chriſt to the love and practice of ſin, it is preſumption to expect to live with him in heavenly glory; except this inward change take place in him. But when this hath been experienced, and a man is by faith in a crucified Saviour become dead to his once moſt beloved ſinful pleaſures; his proſpect is clear, and his intereſt in the righteouſneſs of his Surety is demonſtrated. And we know that Chriſt roſe from the dead, no more to be ſubjected to the dominion of death; ſeeing the end for which he died was fully anſwered; He could never have been liable to death, had it not been on account of our ſins imputed to him, as our Surety, to expiate which, he died once: but having accompliſhed that grand, and gracious deſign, he aroſe again; and now in our nature, as one with God the Father, he liveth a heavenly life in unſpeakable exaltation and felicity, to the glory of the divine character and government, by the conducting, and perfecting of his mediatorial work, "as head over all things to his "church." As Chriſt was perſonally ſinleſs; ſo it ſeems impoſſible to aſſign any tolerable meaning to the expreſſion of his "dying unto ſin, once"; unleſs we allow, that he died as a vicarious ſacrifice for our ſins imputed to him. In like manner therefore, in virtue of, and conformity to his death and reſurrection, we die unto ſin, are delivered from its dominion, and riſe to a new life, to fall no more under the bondage of ſin; but henceforth for ever to live unto God, and to find our happineſs in his holy ſervice, and in glorifying his name.

V. 11—13.] The preceding verſes declare the chathrough Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

12 Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof:

13 Neither yield ye your members *as* inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin: but yield yourſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God.

14 For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law but under grace.

15 What then? ſhall we ſin, becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the

racter, and experience of *real* chriſtians, according to their meaſure of grace: but the apoſtle here proceeds to exhort *profeſſed* chriſtians to evince their ſincerity by a ſuitable conduct, and true believers to live up to their privileges, and in conſiſtency with their profeſſion. For this end, let them account themſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, and be influenced by this to a reſolute rejection of all its allurements, and temptations: and let them conſider themſelves as alive unto God, through the redemption of his Son; that they may feel more powerfully the motives thereby ſuggeſted, to devote their lives, talents, and powers to his ſervice, and to ſeek all their happineſs in glorifying him. Let them therefore not ſuffer ſin to reign in their bodies, which through ſin were already become mortal, and which no attention, or gratification could preſerve from the grave; that they ſhould obey, and comply with it's corrupt luſtings, to the injury of their immortal ſouls. If a profeſſed chriſtian did this habitually, he could have no evidence of his converſion; and it could only be through total unbelief; as proviſion is made in the goſpel for our deliverance from the dominion, as well as from the condemnation of ſin: and if a real chriſtian did this in any particular inſtances, it muſt weaken his evidence and confidence; and would be the effect of partial unbelief, unwatchfulneſs, and forgetfulneſs of his obligations and privileges. Let then no one of them yield, or conſign over the members, ſenſes, or organs of their bodies, to be employed as the inſtruments or weapons of the carnal propenſities of the ſoul, in doing the work, or carrying on the warfare of unrighteouſneſs, in the commiſſion of ſin; by being inlets to ſinful thoughts, or affections into the hearts, by communicating the inward evil, to pollute others with corrupt words, or by gratifying any ſenſual, malevolent, covetous, or ambitious inclination. But rather let them yield, and give up themſelves wholly unto God, as alive from the condemnation, and death of ſin by his abundant grace; that all their powers of body, as well as ſoul, may be conſecrated to his ſervice, as inſtruments of his work, in all righteouſneſs, to his glory, or as weapons with which to fight his battles againſt ſin, the world, and ſatan. Thus our eyes ſhould be employed in contemplating the works, and reading the word of God; our ears, in hearing his voice, and in attending to the cries of the diſtreſſed, &c; our tongues in ſpeaking the praiſes of God, and in profitable converſation; and even our natural inclinations, ſhould be ſo regulated by his law, and ſubordinated to ſuperior conſiderations, that whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we may do it to the glory of God.

V. 14, 15.] Hope of victory gives freſh ardour to the courageous: aſſurance of it would make a coward valiant. The ſlave emancipated from his yoke, or the captive eſcaped from his dungeon, will reſiſt all attempts to reduce them to their former abject ſtate, with a vigour proportioned to their proſpect of preſerving their beloved liberty. Thus the apoſtle aſſures believers, that ſin ſhall not reaſſume its hated dominion over them, in order to animate their oppoſition to its influence in every inſtance. The ground of this aſſurance of final liberty and victory he lays in the nature of their covenant. He could not merely intend to diſtinguiſh between the legal diſpenſation, and that of the goſpel; for all were not ſlaves to ſin, who were under the former, nor are all free from ſin, who live under the latter. But the moral law, as the foundation of the covenant of works, is evidently oppoſed to the covenant of grace. All, who remain under that covenant, muſt be held under the dominion of ſin, and their efforts to emancipate themſelves muſt be unſucceſsful; becauſe no grace is thereby promiſed, or communicated *to a ſinner*, nor can his own arm bring ſalvation to him. But the believer paſſes from under this covenant, to be under that of mercy and grace: and as motives and encouragements are thereby ſupplied; ſo effectual help is enſured to him, to preſerve him from ever again becoming the willing ſlave of any ſin; though he may be ſorely harraſſed, baffled, or even polluted by thoſe temptations, and corruptions, to which he once was wholly ſubjected. But what inference were they to draw from this aſſurance? Were they to conclude, that they might ſafely commit ſin; becauſe delivered from the condemnation of the law, and ſecured from the final dominion of ſin? To this the apoſtle anſwers with his uſual expreſſion of abhorrence. A carnal man taking it for granted that he was not under the law, but under grace, becauſe of ſome change of notions, or flow of affections, might thus abuſe the doctrine of final perſeverance, as well as that of free juſtification: but the true believer could not; his heart would riſe againſt the vile ſuggeſtion, and he muſt reject it with decided deteſtation: or if betrayed to yield to it, in any inſtance, he muſt abhor himſelf, and deeply repent of ſuch horrid ingratitude and perverſeneſs.

V. 16—19.] The apoſtle here argues from the known fact, that believers are the ſervants of God. He demands, whether it might not be known whom any man ſervants of ſin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs.

19 I ſpeak after the manner of men, becauſe of the infirmity of your fleſh: for as ye have yielded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even ſo now yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs.

20 For when ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs.

21 What fruit had ye then in thoſe things whereof ye are now aſhamed? for the end of thoſe things *is* death.

22 But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.

23 For the wages of ſin *is* death: but the gift of God *is* eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

ſerved, by obſerving the conſtant tenor of his conduct? A man may do an occaſional ſervice for one, to whom he is not a ſervant: but he muſt be ſuppoſed to ſerve him, to whom he habitually yields and addicts himſelf, and in whoſe work he ſpends his time, and ſtrength, chearfully, and conſtantly. Thus it was in ſpiritual matters: a man might profeſs chriſtianity, and in ſome things appear to ſerve God, and yet he might habitually addict himſelf to ſinful purſuits and pleaſures. But every one muſt be judged to be the ſervant of that maſter, to execute whoſe commands he willingly yielded himſelf; whether it were the ſinful bias of his own heart, in ſuch actions as lead to death; or whether it were the new ſpiritual diſpoſition to obedience, in habitually performing the righteouſneſs required in the law. Indeed the apoſtle not only congratulated the Romans, but thanked God alſo, on account of the change, that had taken place in them. They had been the willing, devoted ſlaves of ſin, which they uniformly had obeyed by gratifying their various carnal inclinations, without regard to the authority, or glory of God. But they had now cordially obeyed the call of the goſpel to repentance; they had been delivered, or caſt into the very faſhion of it, as melted metal receives and retains the exact impreſſion of the mold, into which it is poured. Being thus renewed into the nature of the humble, holy, and loving goſpel of Chriſt; they were ſet at liberty from the ſlavery of ſin, and became the ſervants of righteouſneſs, obeying the dictates of that new nature, which is, as it were, God's repreſentative in the heart, even as ſin is that of ſatan. Theſe things the apoſtle ſtated to them by ſimilitudes taken from the affairs of men, "becauſe of the infirmity of their fleſh:" either becauſe the remaining carnality of their judgment and affections might render them leſs capable of underſtanding more abſtract reaſonings; or to put them upon their guard againſt thoſe deluſions, to which their weakneſs and remaining ſinfulneſs might otherwiſe expoſe them: as therefore before their converſion, they had yielded their bodies, as well as their ſouls, to be the ſervants of uncleanneſs, and injuſtice; as ſlaves of ſin, and to the continual increaſe of their guilt, and the ſtrength of their evil propenſities: even ſo ought they now to devote themſelves wholly to be the ſervants of righteouſneſs, or to execute conſtantly the commands of God, the dictates of his Spirit, and the motions of the new nature; that by progreſſive ſanctification, they might preſs forward to perfect holineſs.

V. 20—23.] They, who are the willing ſlaves of ſin, though by no means free from obligations to be righteous, are *yet unreſtrained by them* in following their own carnal inclinations: they perform no ſervice to righteouſneſs; they are not influenced by a regard to the glory or authority of God in any of their actions; but uniformly gratify ſome or other of their own unholy paſſions, and ſeek happineſs in ſo doing. But the apoſtle here calls on chriſtians to declare, what advantage they had acquired, when this was their caſe? What was the fruit produced by thoſe evil actions, of which, as penitents, they were at length aſhamed? They could not but know, that vanity, vexation, diſappointment, diſgrace, diſeaſe, remorſe, fear, ſorrow, and ſuch like, always attended on, or followed their ſinful indulgences; beſides their fatal effects on others: and therefore, if this life alone were conſidered, they could have no rational inducement to return to them. But in reality, beſides all preſent bad conſequences, "the end of theſe things is "death;" and it is a mere deluſion to ſuppoſe that any creed or profeſſion can preſerve the habitual tranſgreſſor from this condemnation. As temporal death is the end of the moſt godly, as well as of the moſt ungodly life; ſo it would be abſurd to refer the apoſtle's words to that ſenſe: doubtleſs he meant by *death* in this place, the future ſtate of final miſery, in a total ſeparation of the ſinner from God's preſence and favour, and under his awful wrath and vengeance. From this condemnation the believer is ſet at liberty, at the time, when he is alſo made free from ſin; as the removal of the malefactor's fetters, and the opening of his dungeon, are connected with the free pardon of his crimes. Then, the believer becomes the ſervant of God; thenceforth he has his fruit unto holineſs; or the nature and effects of his conduct are holy, and it tends to increaſing ſanctification, and at length to perfect holineſs: ſo that inſtead of death, at the end of his courſe, he arrives at, and is put in poſſeſſion of, everlaſting life; of which he had many foretaſtes, in the holy conſolations, that were connected with, and the fruit of, his ſerving God in newneſs of life. But this happy event of his conduct is not to be conſidered as the merited reward of it. Indeed death temporal and eternal is the ſtipend, or ſtipulated, and deſerved wages of ſin, even of every violation of God's law: this every

CHAP. VII.

Contains 1ſt. The believer's death to the law, and union with Chriſt, as the ſource of his ſpiritual ſervice of God, 1---6. *2d. The excellency of the law ſhewn conſiſtent with its inability to help the ſinner,* 7---13. *3d. The chriſtian's painful conflict with indwelling ſin, and his hope of victory through Chriſt, &c.* 14---25.

man hath earned; and every unbeliever will receive. But eternal life is by no means the wages of man's righteouſneſs; the beſt of which is ſo defective as to merit condemnation: it is therefore propoſed, and conferred as the free gift of God, through the merits of Chriſt, to the hell-deſerving ſinner, who is enabled to come in humble faith, and accept of it as ſuch: and that holineſs of heart and life, which is the fitneſs for, and beginning of eternal life, is as much the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; as that imputed righteouſneſs, which is the ſinner's only title to it. This ſhould be conſidered as the apoſtle's concluſion from the two laſt chapters, concerning free juſtification, and ſanctification as it's ſeal, and evidence.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Self-righteous pride rejecting, and antinomian licentiouſneſs abuſing, the grace of the goſpel, are two fatal rocks, on which immenſe multitudes are continually wrecked, and between which none but the Holy Spirit can pilot us: and the objections of open enemies to the doctrines of grace derive their greateſt plauſibility from the unholy lives of many profeſſed friends to them. But though God's mercy be glorified in proportion to the abounding ſin, that is freely pardoned to the penitent tranſgreſſor; yet his juſtice will be glorified in the deepeſt condemnation of thoſe, who continue in ſin, that grace may abound. The true believer will abhor the thought of ſuch an inference; and he will feel a ſtrong averſion to his former ſinful purſuits, even if he might perſiſt in them with impunity: for how can he, in whoſe heart thoſe principles are mortified, which gave riſe to his former ſinful courſes, continue in thoſe practices, which he now has no pleaſure in, but lothes and dreads? Even our baptiſm inſtructs us in the neceſſity of thus dying to, and being buried, as it were, from, all our ungodly and unholy purſuits, and of riſing to walk with God in newneſs of life: and unholy profeſſors of chriſtianity, (alas, how many are they!) belie and virtually renounce their baptiſm. They have had only the outward ſign of a death unto ſin, and a new birth unto righteouſneſs; they have never paſſed from the family of ſatan into that of God; for they have never renounced the world, the fleſh and the devil, to believe in Chriſt, and keep his commandments. But if indeed we have been ſo united unto him, as to ſtand accepted in his righteouſneſs; we ſhall certainly have conformity to him in his death, and reſurrection: and the virtue of his croſs will crucify our old man, with his affections and luſts, and excite us to determine, by the grace of God, on the deſtruction of the whole body of ſin; that we may no more ſerve that hated enemy, which crucified our beloved Lord; nor ever reſt ſatisfied, till it hath no place in our ſouls. Thus by looking to our crucified, riſen, and glorified Redeemer, and believing that we ſhall live together with him; we ſhould ſtir up our minds, to reckon ourſelves dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God through Him. And as our *mortal* bodies will be raiſed immortal and incorruptible by his Almighty power; ſo we ſhould never allow ſin to reign in them, or obey it in the luſts thereof; but, praying earneſtly for help from above, we ſhould refuſe to yield any of our ſenſes or members, to be the inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs, and ſeek to have them all devoted to, and employed in the ſervice of God; as thoſe, who have already entered on that divine and happy life, which we hope to lead to all eternity.

To this we may be encouraged by the covenant made with us, if indeed we are chriſtians. We are not under the condemning law, which gives no power to the ſinner, and propoſes no mercy to the penitent: but we are under the covenant of goſpel grace, which enſures to the regenerate that liberty, with which Chriſt hath made him free. And though ſome may here again take encouragement to venture upon ſin; ſuppoſing themſelves not to be under the law but under grace: yet the true chriſtian can no more abuſe the aſſurance of perſeverance, than the grace of his juſtification. He finds that his heart, as well as his ſtate is changed; and he hath moſt cordially changed his maſter, and his work: he remembers that once he was the wretched ſlave of ſin; but he thanks God, that he both heard, underſtood, believed and obeyed the goſpel: thus he found his mind caſt into the form of it: and as *the ſame metal* becomes a *new veſſel*, when melted and caſt into the mold; ſo he became *a new creature*, when he was thus made free from ſin, and became the ſervant of righteouſneſs. Notwithſtanding, therefore, "the infirmity of his fleſh," he deſires, aims and prays to be enabled, to ſpend all his powers, and capacities of body and ſoul in the ſervice of righteouſneſs, unto increaſing holineſs; even as he once yielded them to ſerve his ſinful paſſions, unto abounding iniquity. As then, they, who now are the ſervants of God, once were the ſlaves of ſin; ſo they, who now are the ſlaves of ſin may become the ſervants of God, through the goſpel. When this change is effected, we ſhould thank God for it; and we ſhould uſe every means with thoſe, who are yet unchanged, in dependence on his bleſſing to render them effectual. We may therefore enquire of ſinners, what fruit they gather from their vices? What real good they derive from ungodlineſs and iniquity? We may ſhew them that all muſt either be aſhamed of ſuch things, in deep repentance here, or in everlaſting contempt and miſery hereafter; for that the end of them is death: and every wiſe man will conſider in what future conſequences his preſent conduct is like to terminate. But happy is he, who is covered with ſhame for his paſt offences; who is ſet at liberty by any means from ſin; who has his fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life. It is of God's mercy, that we have not all received, as well as deſerved, the wages of ſin: but thanks be to God for his ineſtimable gift of his own Son to be our ſalvation, and of eternal life through him!

CHAP. VII.

KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I ſpeak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an huſband is bound by the law to *her* huſband ſo long as he liveth; but if the huſband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of *her* huſband.

3 So then, if while *her* huſband liveth ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs: but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is free from that law; ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs, though ſhe be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt; that ye ſhould be married to another, *even* to him who is raiſed from the dead, that ye ſhould bring forth fruit unto God.

May we all forego our boaſts, and be reſcued from our deluſions; may we come as condemned criminals, not to buy, merit, or earn God's favour, but to ſupplicate him, for Chriſt's ſake, to beſtow it upon us as a free gift, and to add to it all other things pertaining to ſalvation; that he may have all the glory, both now and for evermore!

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtle had before intimated that deliverance from the dominion of ſin was the effect of "not being under the law, but under grace:" and he begins this chapter by further diſcuſſing that ſubject. In order to aſcertain his meaning we muſt carefully enquire in what ſenſe he uſes the word "law." No good reaſon I think, ever was, or can be given, why a man's being under the ceremonial law, or the Moſaic diſpenſation, ſhould hold him in bondage to ſin; or why his deliverance from the law *in that ſenſe*, by a profeſſion of the goſpel, ſhould enſure his liberty from ſin: but it hath been ſhewn, that whilſt a man is under the moral law, as the condition of the covenant of works, he muſt be the ſlave of ſin; and that all, who are delivered from the law, *in this ſenſe*, will be ſecured from being the ſlaves of ſin. Upon mature deliberation this interpretation is moſt decidedly preferred; and the whole argument, and the language made uſe of ſanction it: nor could there be any difficulty about it, had not many learned, and ſome evangelical, expoſitors taken a different ground. Indeed the apoſtle ſeems, in the opening of the chapter, to ſpeak of the law in another ſenſe: but he is here only illuſtrating his argument, not ſtating it. There were at Rome many Jewiſh converts; and other chriſtians might have acquired ſome knowledge of the Moſaic law: and as theſe were moſt likely to object to his reaſonings on this ſubject, he addreſſed himſelf to them. They knew that the law retained it's authority over a man, to enforce obedience, or inflict puniſhment, as long as *he* lived, (or as *it* lived, as ſome would render it.) In ordinary caſes death alone diſſolved the relation between the Jew, and the law of Moſes; yet, in particular inſtances, the law became dead, and loſt its authority to command, or condemn a man, through his change of circumſtance: and when the Jew became a chriſtian, his relation to the legal diſpenſation was finally terminated. From this caſe of a Jew, in reſpect of the law of Moſes, as the condition of their national covenant; they might learn how the matter ſtood in reſpect of the moral law, as the condition of the covenant of works. To adduce an inſtance: the married woman was legally her huſband's property; and whilſt the moral law forbad adultery, the judicial law condemned the adultereſs to death: but this law became dead to her, and ſhe to it, by the death of her huſband. If before, ſhe had been married to, or formed a connexion with, another man, ſhe would have been condemned to be ſtoned by the law; but after her huſband's death, ſhe would incur no penalty by marrying another man. The apoſtle does not here ſtate the precepts concerning marriage under the chriſtian diſpenſation; but merely ſhews in one particular how the caſe ſtood under law. He ſays nothing concerning divorces, or polygamy: he does not intimate that the man would be an adulterer, who took another wife, whilſt his former was living, and not *legally* divorced; yet Chriſt hath taught this. It would therefore be foreign to the apoſtle's deſign to interpret his words, as meaning, that a woman, who had been equitably divorced for conſanguinity, (which rendered her former marriage a nullity;) or for any other cauſe, would be guilty of adultery, if ſhe married again, during her former huſband's life: for neither the law of Moſes, nor the precepts of Chriſt inculcate any ſuch thing. A part of the Moſaic law is merely adduced by way of illuſtrating the ſubject under conſideration. Not only were the Jewiſh converts dead to the Moſaic law, by the diſſolution of their relation to it, and by it's virtual abrogation: but the whole number of believers were become dead to the moral law, as a covenant of works, "by the body of Chriſt," by his incarnation, obedience, and ſacrifice on the croſs for their tranſgreſſions. He having thus anſwered it's demands as their Surety, it had no further power to condemn them for former, or preſent tranſgreſſions of it; but they were looked upon to have fully endured it's ſentence, and fulfilled it's righteouſneſs by their repreſentative: thus the relation between them and the law was diſſolved, (as marriage by the natural or legal death of either party;) and this was in order to their being married to Chriſt, united and related to him, according to the covenant of grace, and intereſted in all his unſearchable riches; that by the ſupply of his Spirit they might bring forth ſuch fruit in their lives, as bare the holy ſtamp of God upon it, was meet for his gracious acceptance, and honourable to his name. Moſt of the Roman chriſtians had been Gentiles; the Jewiſh converts were not required to renounce the ceremonial law; it was by no means certain, that all, who renounced the law to embrace the goſpel, would bring forth fruit unto God: but on the other hand all, who become dead to the law, as a covenant of works, that they might be united to Chriſt according to his gracious covenant, would certainly be thus productive of the fruits of the Spirit.

5 For when we were in the fleſh, the motions of ſins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not *in* the oldneſs of the letter.

7 What ſhall we ſay then? *Is* the law ſin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known ſin but by the law: for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.

8 But ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence. For without the law ſin *was* dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

V. 5, 6.] The expreſſion "in the fleſh," evidently means an unregenerate ſtate, which is the neceſſary conſequence of being under the covenant of works, and deſtitute of the grace of the goſpel. Whilſt therefore both Jews and Gentiles were in this ſtate, the motions of thoſe carnal deſires, which the law forbad, and which were ſins according to it, wrought by the members of the body, or rather in all the conſtituent parts of "the old "man," to produce ſuch imaginations, tempers, words and works, as ſubjected them to death, by the ſentence of the law; inſtead of entitling them to life as having fulfilled it's righteouſneſs. But when, by faith in Chriſt they were delivered from that covenant; and their former relation to the law was diſſolved, by their becoming dead to it, or it's being dead to them, then they were brought into a new relation to Chriſt, and God dealt with them by another covenant. Being therefore now regenerate, and having ſure promiſes of grace as well as mercy; they were enabled, and encouraged to worſhip and obey God, in newneſs of Spirit, from new and liberal principles, according to the ſpiritual meaning of the precept, in cordial love, and gratitude: and not merely with external obſervances, moral or ceremonial, according to the letter of the precept, and the corrupt gloſſes of the Scribes, and elders upon it, of which alone the old nature is capable. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v.)

V. 7, 8.] It might then be objected that if they muſt be ſlaves to ſin, who were under the law; and if none could ſerve God in newneſs of ſpirit, till they were dead to it, and it to them: ſurely the law, and ſin were in ſubſtance the ſame; and would not this be a vile aſperſion to caſt upon the law of God? To this objection, the apoſtle anſwered, with abhorrence of ſuch blaſphemy, by obſerving that the law, and ſin were diametrically oppoſite to each other; and the former tended to diſcover and detect the latter, (c. iii. v. 20. c. v. ver. 20:) ſo that, in his own caſe, he ſhould not have known the ſinfulneſs of his affections, and actions, but by the law. That exact balance detected the deficiency of his obedience; and that perfect ſtandard ſhewed the obliquity of his heart and life, as well as proved his ſins to be more aggravated, and numerous, than he had ever before imagined: at the ſame time, that it had in it no proviſion of mercy or grace for him. Thus the wholeſome laws of the community ſhut up the criminal in a dungeon, load him with fetters, and condemn him to death, for his contrariety to them: but the clemency of the prince alone can give him a pardon, and releaſe. In particular, the apoſtle obſerves, that by his natural conſcience without the law, he ſhould not have known, that luſt, or coveting was ſinful: he ſhould not have ſuppoſed, that though he were free from adultery, theft, murder, &c; yet the deſire after a forbidden indulgence, or an object with-held by providence, was criminal, even ſo criminal as to expoſe him to the curſe of the law. Nay, he ſhould not have felt ſo many luſtings, or covetings, if the very ſtrictneſs of the commandment "Thou ſhalt not covet," had not given occaſion to them. So that *ſin*, (his depraved nature, ſpoken of as an agent,) traiterouſly watching the opportunity of deſtroying him, took occaſion from the commandment to excite in his heart all manner of concupiſcence. The imagination began to rove after forbidden objects, the carnal heart hankered for them, and he was led to conceive of ſome greater ſatisfaction in them, than in thoſe, which were not forbidden. He has no deep knowledge of human nature, or with the perverſe wickedneſs of his own heart; who does not perceive this irrational propenſity in man, to fancy that there is ſomething exquiſitely pleaſurable in what is out of our reach, or prohibited. Indeed it ſeems natural to expect that it would be ſo with the poſterity of thoſe, who could be ſatisfied with no fruit in the garden of God, except that which he had forbidden: amidſt the profuſion of Eden perhaps that tree had been diſregarded, if it had not been prohibited. We ſoon ſee this propenſity in others, eſpecially in our children; though perhaps ſelf-love may make us blind to it in ourſelves. "For without the law ſin "was dead:" not only the ſame affections and actions could not have hurt us, if the law had not given ſin it's condemning power: but the ſinful principle lay comparatively in a dead, or dormant ſtate; as a frozen ſerpent is inactive and innoxious, till the warmth enlivens it, and it recovers vigour, and meets provocation, and then its nature becomes apparent. Thus the ſpiritual precepts and awful ſanctions of the law excite the depravity of the heart by their contrariety to it; (as the Alkali produces an efferveſcence by its oppoſition to the Acid;) and ſo the heart riſes in blaſphemous enmity to the law, and ruſhes more impetuouſly into tranſgreſſion. In what ſenſe can this apply to the ceremonial law, whoſe carnal ordinances a carnal mind can readily comply with, provided their relation to the goſpel be not perceived?

V. 9—12.] It ſeems evident, that the apoſtle here ſpake literally of himſelf, and his own experience. If he perſonated ſome other perſon, why did he give us no intimation of his deſign? In another place he fairly brought forward the Jew, (c. ii. v. 17—29:) and am-

11 For ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew *me*.

12 Wherefore the law *is* holy; and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But ſin, that it might appear ſin, working death in me by that which is good; that ſin by the commandment might become exceeding ſinful.

14 For we know that the law is ſpiritual; but I am carnal, ſold under ſin.

15 For that which I do I allow not; for

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biguity is no characteriſtic of his writings; though obſcurity, through long parentheſes, may ſometimes be obſerved. Indeed I apprehend, that the more humble and ſpiritual any chriſtian is, the more clearly will he perceive that the apoſtle deſcribes the experience of the true believer, from his firſt convictions to his greateſt progreſs in grace, during this preſent life. However, we muſt remember, that his object is to ſhew that the law can do nothing for any man, either to juſtify, or ſanctify him, and that the believer feels this daily, as long as he lives. "I was," ſays he, "alive without the law "once:" he was once a Phariſee, ignorant of the ſpirituality of the law, and only attentive to the outward letter, to ceremonies, and traditions: and having ſome general decency of character, without any acquaintance with his inward corruptions, he deemed himſelf entitled to life by that covenant. But when the commandment came to his conſcience, by the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and he perceived its righteous, and extenſive requirements, and its ſevere denunciations: he found the before unobſerved luſts of his heart riſe againſt it, and every endeavour to fulfil its precepts ſhewed him more plainly his inability to do it. Thus his former hopes died away; he found himſelf a helpleſs ſinner, under merited condemnation, and became as a dead man, except as the goſpel revived him from his deſpondency. And the law, whoſe promiſe was, that "the man that "doeth theſe things; ſhall live in them," which was originally ordained to life for holy creatures; and from which he, though a ſinner, had expected heaven, was found to be death unto him: even as the law of the land, which ſecures the lives of honeſt men, is found to be unto death by the murderer, or robber. This again, cannot readily be explained of the ceremonial law, or, the legal diſpenſation; except as it pointed out Chriſt as the ſubſtance of its ſhadows; in which ſenſe it was found unto death to none, but thoſe, who made it an appendix to the covenant of works, and rejected Chriſt for the ſake of it: and this perfectly coincides with the interpretation above given. For ſin, the corruption of fallen nature, being averſe to the holy ſtrictneſs of the law, by its extreme deceitfulneſs, ſeduced Paul into various tranſgreſſions, and thus ſlew all his ſelf-righteous hopes, and actually brought him under deeper condemnation. Not that the law *cauſed* this, or even *gave* any juſt occaſion for it: though ſin *took* occaſion from it, as a wicked man takes occaſion from a pious diſcourſe, or a friendly admonition, to ſcoff, blaſpheme, or rage the more. So that the whole law muſt be allowed to be perfectly holy, the tranſcript of the divine character; and each commandment, (eſpecially that prohibiting concupiſcence,) muſt be acknowledged moſt pure, and at the utmoſt diſtance from moral evil; moſt juſt, as requiring nothing more than what is righteouſly due to God and our neighbours; and moſt good, as tending to the true welfare of ourſelves, our families, the community, and all mankind: ſo that the univerſal obſervance of it would almoſt annihilate the evils of the world, and convert earth into heaven. The apoſtle never paſſes ſuch eulogiums on the ceremonial law, or the moſaic diſpenſation: they had a temporary fitneſs, and goodneſs; but they made nothing perfect, and conſiſted of carnal ordinances, which continued in force till the time of reformation.

V. 13, 14.] The queſtion here recurred, was a good law made death to thoſe, that were under it? Was this its natural tendency and efficacy? This concluſion the apoſtle rejects with deteſtation. A good medicine, when miſapplied, or through the diſeaſed ſtate of the body, may occaſion death, contrary to its general and proper tendency: but poiſon kills as a cauſe by its native efficacy. The law may occaſion death, through man's depravity; but ſin is the poiſon that cauſes it. It was not therefore the law, but ſin that was made death to Paul: it took occaſion from the goodneſs of the law to manifeſt its own deformity, odiouſneſs, and dire malignity, in working death in him by that which was good; as an intemperate man murders himſelf, not by a ſword or by poiſon, but by the wholeſome gifts of God's kind providence. And ſo, through the commandment man's ſinfulneſs was made to appear exceeding ſinful, and deteſtable; in order that his abounding grace might appear the more glorious. For, ſays the apoſtle, we know, and allow, that the law is *ſpiritual* in its requirements, and not like human laws, which only reach the outward actions, and take no cognizance of the motives, affections, and thoughts. Whereas the law of God chiefly reſpects theſe; it requires an entire conformity to the ſpiritual excellency of the divine character, and ſuch a ſtate of the heart, as approves itſelf to him, who is a Spirit; and it allows of nothing but what is done from the moſt pure and ſublime motives, and in perfect love, zeal, gratitude, delight, &c. Compared with this, Paul found that he was carnal, ſold under "ſin." His nature was perfectly oppoſite to this ſpiritual law; and even after all his attainments in grace, he found himſelf ſo much ſhort of this perfection, and in every reſpect ſo unable to attain to it, though he ſo ardently aſpired after it; that he ſeemed comparatively to be carnal, and like a man, who is ſold againſt his will to a hated maſter, from whom he can by no means ſet himſelf at liberty. Many cannot conceive that the apoſtle could mean this of himſelf, as a confirmed believer; and therefore ſeeing it to be inſeparably connected with what follows, they would explain the whole of an awakened Jew, or ſome other convinced ſinner, who is ſeeking for juſtification by the works of the law, or at moſt of an what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the law that *it is* good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me, (that is, in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is preſent with me, but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.

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unconfirmed believer. But it will be found, that ſuch things are ſpoken in it, as are only true of real chriſtians; and that the whole is actually verified in their experience. A Believer cannot willingly ſell himſelf to work wickedneſs: yet when he compares his actual attainments with the ſpirituality of the law, and with his own deſire and aim to obey it, he ſees how greatly he yet is carnal in the ſtate of his mind, and under the power of evil habits and propenſities, from which, (like a man ſold for a ſlave,) he cannot wholly emancipate himſelf. And yet his hatred of this partial ſlavery, and his earneſt pantings after liberty and holineſs, prove him in another ſenſe, to be made free from ſin, and to have become the ſervant of righteouſneſs. As the apoſtle was more enlightened and humble than other chriſtians are; ſo doubtleſs this clog was more uneaſy to him, than it is to us, (though ſome of us find our lives at times embittered by it:) ſo that this energetic language, which many imagine to deſcribe an uneſtabliſhed believer's experience, or even that of an unconverted perſon, ſeems to have reſulted from the extraordinary degree of his ſanctification, and the depth of his ſelf-abaſement; and the reaſon of our not readily underſtanding him ſeems to be, becauſe we are ſo far beneath him in holineſs, humility, acquaintance with the ſpirituality of God's law, and the plague of our own hearts.

V. 15—17.] The apoſtle here more particularly dilates upon the conflict, that as a believer he had daily, with the remainder of his natural ſinfulneſs. He was frequently betrayed into ſuch tempers, words, or actions, as he allowed not in his renewed judgment, and affections. He did not perform that perfect obedience to the good law of God, that he would have done, if he could: he even at times did the very things, which he habitually hated and abhorred. In thus doing what, in his habitual judgment and affections he hated, and deſired above all things to ſhun; he conſented to the law, that it was good: and as the prevailing bias of his ſoul was to holineſs, he was evidenced thereby to be a regenerate man, under the covenant of grace; ſo that it would not be conſidered, that *he* did the evil, which he hated, but it would be charged to the account of ſin, that dwelt in him, as a deteſted inmate, which he could not expel, though he would not willingly obey it. The apoſtle, we may be ſure, did not mean to excuſe his ſinfulneſs, as if he might not *juſtly* have been condemned for it: but his purpoſe was to ſhew that righteouſneſs could in no caſe be by the law; and that *by the grace* of the goſpel, a man's ſtate and character are determinate according to what habitually prevails in his heart, and life; notwithſtanding impediments and reſtraints. A wicked man feels ſome inward oppoſition to his crimes from conſcience, fear, ſhame, &c; and he meets with various obſtacles to the gratification of his deſires; yet all this is accounted for nothing, whilſt ſin habitually prevails in his heart and conduct: and a godly man has ſore hindrances in his holy progreſs from indwelling ſin, and outward temptation; yet this is not imputed to him *for condemnation*, ſeeing the prevailing habitual ſtate of his heart, and tenor of his conduct are holy.

V. 18—21.] The apoſtle knew, that in him as a fallen creature, and apart from regenerating grace, no good thing, but ſin, and only ſin, was found; though it's actings might be more ſpecious at one time, than at another. It is evident from the limitation, "that is, in "my fleſh," that he ſpake as a believer, who had grace as well as ſin, dwelling in him: for a better opportunity will occur to prove that by "fleſh," in this connexion he does not mean the body, as diſtinct from the ſoul, but the old man, or human nature in unregeneracy. He was more deeply acquainted with this humiliating truth by his experience ſubſequent to converſion, than he had been before: He would formerly have been ready to ſuppoſe, that a little good diſpoſition, or moral ability to holineſs might be in man; but this was now experimentally diſproved. As regenerate, he had now indeed an habitual willingneſs to obey God's law, and to accompliſh the good required by it: but his corrupt nature, though dethroned, and crucified, made ſuch conſtant oppoſition to this; that he could by no means perform what he aimed at. So that in fact, after all his attainments, he did not fulfil that meaſure of good, which he was habitually deſirous of doing; but in every thing fell ſhort of his aim: and he was alſo frequently doing the evil, in ſome meaſure or reſpect, which he was moſt bent upon avoiding. Now, as he was thus conſtantly baffled, and obſtructed, in his earneſt perſevering deſires, and endeavours to obey the law; it was evident that it was not properly *He*, as a believer, who did this, but the traitor and enemy that lodged within his heart: he was obliged, ſore againſt his will, to live under this ſort of neceſſity of being a ſinner; and he could only perſiſt in maintaining the conflict with his inward enemies, without being able entirely to extirpate them. For in fact, he found, by painful experience, that there was a law impoſed upon him, in his preſent ſtate of warfare; that when he was moſt deſirous of doing good, evil was preſent with him, to interrupt, intrude, baffle, diſcourage, and defile him. Let any man who knows his own heart, and the ſpirituality of the law of God, compare his actual conduct

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God; through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. So then with the mind I myſelf ſerve the law of God; but with the fleſh the law of ſin.

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compriſing his thoughts, affections, words and works, during any given time, with his purpoſes, prevailing deſires, and earneſt perſevering prayers: let him take that one duty, that he eſpecially aims to perform moſt perfectly; or that temper, or evil propenſity, which he moſt longs to rectify or extinguiſh: let him examine himſelf in theſe reſpects every night; and he will ſurely find, that he cannot but be a ſinner ſtill, and that he is ſubjected to a law, that when he would do good, evil is preſent with him. God has wiſe reaſons for permitting this to be ſo, eſpecially to give us a deeper ſenſe of the malignity of ſin, and our own vileneſs, in order to commend the grace of the goſpel: but they, who are moſt acquainted with the excellency and ſpirituality of the law, and moſt diligently aim in every thing to obey it, will be moſt ſenſible, that the caſe is really thus with them: yet they can never confound this oppoſition to, and mortifying diſappointment reſpecting, their moſt ardent deſires; with the willing ſlavery of ſin, and the comfortable excuſe of indwelling depravity.

V. 22—25.] The apoſtle by the "inward man, and "the law of his mind," ſeems to mean the ſoul, as renewed by divine grace, and ſo becoming ſuperior to the oppoſition made by the ſinful principle, though unable to extirpate it. For the affections, and powers of the ſoul are naturally more oppoſite to the law of God, than the bodily appetites: nay the latter are not ſinful, except as improperly gratified, through the luſts of the heart. (c. viii. v. 7.) But to approve of, and even delight in the law of God, in the habitual judgment and affections of the ſoul, is peculiar to a regenerate man, and implies an high degree of ſanctification. This the apoſtle had attained to; yet he found another law in his members, (not merely the members of his body, but in the conſtituent parts of the old man,) which continually enjoined that conduct, or ſuggeſted thoſe inclinations, that counteracted the law of his mind; and this tended to bring him into captivity to the law of ſin, &c. and in ſome caſes, for a time, it had that effect. This painful conflict was more grievous to him, than all his other trials: ſo that he was led thereby to bemoan himſelf, as a wretched man, who was conſtrained by an invincible neceſſity to be, and to do, what he moſt abhorred. He therefore anxiouſly enquired, who, or what, ſhould deliver him from the body of this death, which clogged his motions, offended his ſenſes, and was a nuiſance to him, as a ſpiritual man; even as if any one ſhould be forced to drag about with him a putrifying corpſe; as by a refinement of cruelty ſome have been ſentenced to do. He found by experience that he could not deliver himſelf; and the law, inſtead of delivering him, *ſeemed* to make matters ſtill worſe with him: but this made him the more fervently to thank God, for the method of ſalvation revealed to him, through Jeſus Chriſt, which gave him earneſts, and ſure hopes of final and complete deliverance from this enemy, and a triumphant victory in this ſpiritual warfare. The ſcope of his argument is to ſhew, that the moſt eſtabliſhed ſervant of God muſt be in a moſt wretched caſe, if he were under the law; and that he can only derive his ſtrength, hope, and conſolation from the goſpel. "So then," ſays he, "I myſelf with "my mind," my prevailing judgment, affections, and purpoſes, "ſerve" and obey "the law of God:" but with the fleſh, the carnal nature, the remains of depravity, "the law of ſin," or that law, which warred againſt the law of his mind. Before converſion the whole man ſerved this law, with a very feeble oppoſition from natural conſcience, &c: but now the uſurper is dethroned, and grace reigns in the heart. (c. viii. v. 2.) Yet ſtill the uſurper lurks in the kingdom, reigns over his own party, makes war, creates immenſe diſturbance, and gains temporary advantages: but he is hated, oppoſed, proſcribed, and ſhall die. It would be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle meant to perſonate another character; when he ſays "I myſelf:" or to explain his words of the ceremonial law, which he was not habitually obſervant of at that time; and which was rather a bodily exerciſe, than a ſpiritual ſervice; and to ſuppoſe that by his fleſh he meant his body, would imply, that notwithſtanding his inward good diſpoſitions, he was actually a ſlave to his bodily appetites! He was indeed brought to believe in Chriſt in an extraordinary and almoſt inſtantaneous manner: but doubtleſs the holy Spirit immediately ſhewed him the ſpirituality of the law, and the ſinfulneſs of his phariſaical righteouſneſs compared with it: and his ſubſequent experience continually inſtructed him more and more in that humiliating leſſon.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſtand in ſuch a relation to the holy law of God, as the rule of our preſent conduct, and future judgment; that none but he, who formed the union, can diſſolve it: and unleſs we become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, renouncing all expectations from it, that we may be united to Him, who died for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification; we muſt abide under the dominion, and curſe of the law for ever. But if we are thus delivered from the law, it is not in order to our being lawleſs; but that the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in us, may write the law in our hearts, and enable us to bring forth the fruits of holy obedience, to the glory of God. Indeed this our death to the law, and deliverance from the covenant of works are abſolutely neceſſary, in order to our ſerving God with that newneſs of ſpirit, which the law itſelf demands: for ſanctifying grace comes only by the new covenant, without which we muſt continue *in the fleſh*, and our natural concupiſcence

CHAP. VIII.

Contains 1ſt. The privileges, liberty, and ſpirituality of believers, through their union with Chriſt, and the guidance and influences of the Spirit of adoption, 1---17. *2d. Their ſupports under the troubles, (which they, as well as other creatures are ſubject to, through man's ſin;) in their hope of final deliverance, the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and the conſequent acceptance of their prayers,* 18---27. *3d. The ſource of their comforts and privileges in God's predeſtination of them; their ſecurity through the death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Chriſt; and their glorious proſpect of aſſured perſeverance, victory, and triumph,* 28---39.

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will work againſt the law to bring forth fruit unto death; and nothing but a formal obedience to the outward letter of any precept can thus be performed. But this is no fault of the law: nay it is the neceſſary effect of its perfection, by which it detects and condemns the leaſt degree of evil, and leaves the tranſgreſſor to *merited* ruin without help or remedy: and the better the law is, the more righteous is the doom of thoſe who break it. We ſhould therefore be very careful, in ſhewing the impoſſibility of ſalvation by the law, to avoid all expreſſions, that ſeem derogatory to it. On the contrary we ſhould be very expreſs in bearing teſtimony to its righteouſneſs, ſpirituality, and excellency; and in ſhewing that it is, on that very account, only ſuited to ſhew the ſinner the danger of his caſe, and to render it ſtill worſe, ſo long as he fooliſhly cleaves to, and depends on it. For no man could expect to be either juſtified, or ſanctified by a broken law, or according to a forfeited covenant; were he not ignorant of the law, and of himſelf as compared with it: ſo that the proudeſt Phariſee in the world, would, from his towering height of vain confidence, ſink into the abyſs of deſpair in a moment; if the commandments were at once diſcovered to his ſoul in all their ſpirituality, reaſonableneſs, and excellency; without a correſpondent view of the ſalvation of Chriſt. Ten thouſand unobſerved tranſgreſſions would ſtand in array againſt him; his former foibles and infirmities would appear deſperate rebellion, ingratitude, and enmity; his admired duties would appear loathſome through pride, ſelfiſhneſs, and hypocriſy; and the dormant luſts of his heart, which ſecular motives, or carnal hopes had reſtrained, would break forth into enmity againſt God, diſdain ſubjection to his law, work in him all manner of concupiſcence, and concur in ſlaying his hope, and his ſoul. Thus the law, that he ſuppoſed would be unto life, would be found to be unto death; through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, and the unſuſpected, and deſperate wickedneſs of his heart; working death in him, by that, which was good, and making manifeſt their exceeding ſinfulneſs. So that a proper knowledge of the holy law of God is the two edged ſword, that gives the death wound both to ſelf-righteouſneſs, and to antinomianiſm: for it appears perfectly fit to be the rule of our duty, to be written in our hearts, and obeyed in our lives; for the ſame reaſon, on account of which it cannot juſtify, or ſanctify the ſinner.

Of this, the believer knows ſomething, when he firſt flees for refuge to the hope of the goſpel: but his after experience gives him ſtill further inſight into it. In a meaſure he is now *ſpiritual*, and he is made free from the willing bondage of ſin: yet in compariſon with the ſpiritual requirements of the law, and the beſt deſires of his heart, he feels himſelf carnal, and ſold under ſin; and groans under that clog, and thoſe fetters, which, as it were, chain him to the earth, and prevent him from mounting heaven-ward, as he longs to do. He conſents to the law, that it is good; yea he delights in it; he would do the good it requires, he allows of no violation of it, he wants no change in it, but longs to have his heart brought into a perfect conformity to it; he abhors all ſin, he would ſerve God as angels do; he watches, prays, ſtrives, and uſes every means for this purpoſe: yet after perſevering in this courſe for many years, he finds that he cannot attain to this perfection. Still he ſins againſt his own allowance; he does what he hates, and longs to be preſerved from: his will often changes, like the weather-cock with the wind: that, which on his knees he moſt ardently prayed againſt, and dreaded more than pain, or death, he conſents to do, in the hour of temptation: his reſolutions melt like the firm ice before the noon-day ſun: and he is counteracted in obeying the dictates of the law of his mind, by the law of ſin, pervading both body and ſoul, ſo that he cannot perform that, which he is now moſt willing to do. His views of the beauty of holineſs, the excellency of the law, his own obligations to obedience, and his pantings after perfect purity increaſe as he grows in grace; ſo that he ſeems further from his mark than ever, when at the height of his attainments in this preſent world. He is more deeply convinced as he proceeds, that in him, as a fallen ſinner, dwelleth no good thing; that from nature evil only can proceed; that the law can only condemn him; and that "only Jeſus, can do ſuch wretched ſin-"ners good." This conflict often renders him weary of liſe, and even impatient of living: he could be content to ſuffer, but he can hardly bear the thought of continuing ſo loathſome a ſinner: he groans out frequently, "O wretched man, that I am," whilſt he drags about with him the deteſted body of ſin and death, from which he can find no deliverance: and did he not firmly truſt in God's mercy and grace, through Jeſus Chriſt, his caſe would be moſt deplorable. But with this hope, proſpect, and ſupport, he manfully ſuſtains the conflict: he rejoices amidſt his humiliations; his groans and tears are mingled with Hallelujah's; and his conſcious vileneſs renders the Redeemer's love, and free ſalvation doubly precious to his ſoul. His very anguiſh *for ſuch a cauſe* is the pledge of his felicity; having wreſtled and prevailed for the bleſſing, and ſeen the face of Emmanuel in peace, he goes on his way *halting*, (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxxii:) his complaints, yea his *unallowed, and deeply repented ſins*, are preparing him for ſinging more loudly, and ſweetly "worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain:" and like the diſſonance attending on the tuning of a muſical inſtrument, prepare the way for the more delightful melody; when patience hath had its perfect work, and he hath

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CHAP. VIII.

THERE *is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh;

4 That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.

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overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his teſtimony; and it ſhall in the mean time be graciouſly pleaded in his behalf, that it was not *he*, but ſin that dwelled in him. But if a man ſpeak on this ſubject with indifference or ſatisfaction: if ſin dwelling in him be the excuſe for crimes committed by him, without remorſe, or godly ſorrow: if he allow the evil, and deſire not the good, preſuming that he hath all things in Chriſt: if inſtead of conſenting to the goodneſs of the law, condemning himſelf, and loathing his ſins; he declaims againſt the law, and extenuates his own guilt: if his utmoſt willingneſs be to eſcape hell at any rate, without longing to be holy, according to the ſpiritual and good law of God: if he do not delight in it after the inward man, nor ſerve it with the prevailing deſire of his mind; but willingly ſerves the law of ſin: then doubtleſs he is without Chriſt, whoſe name he profanes; he is under the law, which he hates; and his preſumptuous confidence, and quietneſs in ſuch a ſtate, only prove, that he is given over to a ſtrong deluſion to believe a lie. Nor does this much diſputed, and abuſed chapter more evidently condemn the hope of the proudeſt Phariſee on earth, than it does that of ſuch a profeſſor of evangelical truth.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1, 2.] The apoſtle had ſhewn, that the believer, being earneſtly deſirous of obeying the good law of God, was graciouſly accepted in Chriſt; and his failures were rather aſcribed to ſin dwelling in him againſt his will, than to himſelf: and he here proceeds further to ſtate this privilege. Whilſt men continue under the law as a covenant, every failure is imputed to them for condemnation: but when they become dead to the law, and are united to Chriſt; they are in him by faith, as in their refuge; and there is no condemnation for them. Their paſt ſins are all blotted out; they are fully juſtified; and in the continual exerciſe of repentance, and faith in his blood, and righteouſneſs, their daily lamented tranſgreſſions, and deficiencies are taken away. Thus they are preſerved from condemnation, and ſhall be, to the end, and for ever. Moreover their character and conduct diſtinguiſh them: for notwithſtanding their painful conflict with in-dwelling ſin; they walk not after the dictates of their corrupt nature, but are habitually influenced by the new principle communicated in regeneration. The former, as the law of ſin and death, (c. vii. v. 23—25;) had once commanded their willing ſervice; but, regenerating grace, by the life-giving Spirit of Chriſt, and by means of the goſpel, had dethroned the uſurper ſin, and made them free from his law, by efficaciouſly commanding a contrary conduct. So that, though the remaining power of ſin, and the party within, that was diſpoſed to obey that law, greatly harraſſed, and obſtructed them, and in ſome inſtances prevailed againſt them: yet upon the whole, they were enabled ſucceſsfully to reſiſt it's authority, and to walk at liberty in obedience to God's commandments. Some explain "the law of the Spirit "of life," of the doctrine of the goſpel, through which the Spirit is communicated, rather than of his commanding influence in the believer's ſoul: but the latter ſeems more exactly to anſwer, to the "law of ſin, and death," from which he is thereby ſet free. Thus the chriſtian has deliverance by the grace of the goſpel; whereas the law would have left him through the power of ſin, under abſolute bondage, and hopeleſs condemnation.

V. 3, 4.] The good and perfect law of God was weak, through the fleſh, or by means of man's depravity: ſo that it was impoſſible for it to bring man to holineſs, or liberty, any more than to juſtify him. Even as the wholeſome laws of the land cannot make men honeſt: they can only declare how men ſhould act, and denounce penalties; but they cannot change their hearts: and therefore men's impetuous paſſions break through the feeble reſtraint, without regard to conſequences; as the vehement torrent of ſome full ſwollen river breaks through, or overflows the mound, that was placed to impede its courſe. As the law was therefore inadequate to man's neceſſity; ſo God was pleaſed in infinite mercy to ſend his own Son, to aſſume our nature, and appear in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh: though free from ſin, he became ſubject to thoſe infirmities, to which through ſin we are expoſed; he was accuſed of many crimes and numbered with tranſgreſſors; and he was puniſhed by the Father as our Surety, as if he had been the greateſt of ſinners. Thus he was appointed "for ſin," or "for "a ſin-offering;" that God having "condemned ſin "in the fleſh," and ſhewn his abhorrence of it, by the ſufferings of his Son, in our fleſh; might pardon and juſtify the believer's perſon, and execute the ſentence of condemnation on his corrupt nature, by its crucifixion, and deſtruction; that ſo, through his mercy and grace, even the very righteouſneſs required by the law, might be fully written in our hearts, and habitually in all it's parts performed in our lives, though too imperfectly to juſtify us; and that hereafter we might be perfectly conformed to the holy law, in it's ſubſtantial requirement of love to God and his creatures, and obey it fully for evermore. Many expoſitors explain this of Chriſt, as One with us, having fulfilled the righteouſneſs of the law in our ſtead, and of its imputation to thoſe, who walk after the Spirit. But the former ſenſe ſeems more obvious, and beſt to anſwer the apoſtle's deſign: who was proving, that deliverance from the law *as a covenant*

5 For they that are after the fleſh do mind the things of the fleſh; but they that are after the ſpirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death: but to be ſpiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7 Becauſe the carnal mind *is* enmity againſt God: for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.

9 But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the ſpirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.

10 And if Chriſt *be* in you, the body *is* dead becauſe of ſin; but the ſpirit *is* life becauſe of righteouſneſs.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

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was neceſſary, in order to our obeying *the law as a rule*.

V. 5—9.] The diſcrimination of character before referred to, is here more fully ſtated. The word *fleſh*, in this connexion, cannot mean the body as oppoſite to the ſoul: for out of man's *heart* proceed even adulteries, &c; and pride, envy, hatred are works of the fleſh, (*Mark*, c. vii. v. 21—23. *Gal.* c. v. ver. 19—21.) The wickedneſs, whoſe ſeat is immediately in the ſoul, is more contrary to the image, and glory of God, than that in which the body ſeems more concerned: but indeed the body is no more than the inſtrument; and the ſoul is the agent in every ſin. The ſoul of an ungodly man is not ſpiritual, but carnal; that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh. (*John*, c. iii. v. 6.) By the fleſh we muſt therefore underſtand corrupt nature, as derived from Adam by carnal generation: and perhaps this term is uſed, becauſe the ſoul is become the caterer to man's fleſhly luſts; and the whole man is, as it were, immerſed, and ſunk in the fleſh. They, therefore, who are born after the fleſh, but not after the Spirit, and who go after the leadings of the fleſh, mind the things of the fleſh: they are ſagacious about them, they chooſe, deſire, purſue, ſavour, and delight in them; they ſeek their happineſs in the riches, pleaſures, honours, and periſhing vanities of this world; or in things of an unholy nature, which muſt be left at death, and bear no relation to heavenly felicity. About theſe, their abilities, imaginations, affections, contrivance, and time are employed; and they give them a decided preference to ſpiritual things, in their habitual judgment and conduct. But they, who are born of the Spirit, and go after the leadings of the new, and ſpiritual nature, underſtand, chooſe, purſue, reliſh, and ſupremely value ſuch things, as pertain to the ſpiritual and divine life, and as will endure for ever. The favour of God, communion with him, renewal to his Image, and a life ſpent to his glory moſt occupy their imaginations, deſires, and attention, and have the pre-eminent place in their choice, and conduct; notwithſtanding all the oppoſition from the law of ſin, in their members. This habitual prevalency ſtamps a man's character, as a carnal, or a ſpiritual man: ſo that, if a man be carnal in the prevailing judgment, temper, and affections of his mind; he is under condemnation, dead in ſin, and meet for deſtruction: but if he be ſpiritual, in the habitual, prevailing temper of his ſoul; he is evidently alive to, and at peace with, God; and the ſpiritual mind is proportionably the very eſſence of life and peace. The importance of this diſtinction is manifeſt: "becauſe the carnal mind is enmity againſt "God:" man's apoſtacy originated in his preferring the ſatisfaction to be found in the creatures, through diſobedience, to the felicity to be enjoyed in God by obedience. This is in fact the *univerſal idolatry:* and men thus preferring ſelf-ſatisfaction, and ſuppoſed, created good, to the favour and ſervice of God, not only rebel againſt him, but become enemies to and haters of him. For his holy law demanding their whole heart, and forbidding them their favourite purſuits; and all his perfections being engaged to execute vengeance on tranſgreſſors: the carnal mind of man, diſdaining controul, being averſe from his holy ſervice, and bent on ſinful indulgence, riſes in rancorous enmity againſt the authority, precepts, threatenings, power, and other attributes of God. Therefore this carnal mind is not ſubject to the divine law, and indeed it cannot be ſo, it is *morally* unable to do any thing but revolt againſt, and refuſe obedience to it. An enemy may be reconciled; a carnal man may become ſpiritual: but enmity in the abſtract cannot be reconciled; and therefore the carnal mind muſt be crucified, and deſtroyed, (c. vi. v. 6:) and as none of God's rational creatures can poſſibly pleaſe him, who refuſe ſubjection to his holy law; ſo it is evident, that unregenerate men cannot pleaſe God by any of their formal ſervices, or by whatſoever name they are called. So that chooſing to be under the law, as a covenant, is abſolutely incompatible with any ſpiritual obedience to its holy precepts; as regenerating grace is communicated only by the new covenant. Thus evangelical religion is equally remote from ſelf-righteouſneſs, which cleaves to the law as a covenant; and antinomianiſm, which rejects as it a rule, in doing which, men cannot pleaſe God. But, ſays the apoſtle, "ye are not in the fleſh, "but in the ſpirit," regenerate, and ſpiritual, and therefore willingly, though not perfectly ſubject to the law; "if ſo be, the Spirit of God dwelleth in you," as in his temple: but if any man, Jew, Gentile, or nominal chriſtian, remain deſtitute of the Spirit, which Chriſt confers on his diſciples, as One with the Father; he certainly does not belong to Chriſt, as one of his converted ſervants, and dying in that ſtate, he muſt periſh, as an enemy of God. It is evidently abſurd to underſtand the body by *the fleſh*, in this paſſage: and many of the Romans had never been under the mee carnal

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh.

13 For if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God.

15 For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt; if ſo be that we ſuffer with *him*, that we may be alſo glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the ſufferings of this

diſpenſation of the Moſaic law; yet that, alone, or with a profeſſion of the goſpel and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, would not prove that they were ſpiritual, and ſo alive to, and at peace with God.

V. 10, 11.] If the Spirit of Chriſt dwell in a man, Chriſt himſelf is in him, by his authority and influence exerted, and by his Image renewed within him. In this caſe, though the body is mortal, and ſoon to die, becauſe of the diſobedience of Adam, and the man's perſonal tranſgreſſions: yet the ſpirit has life abiding in it, the ſoul is alive to God, and has begun its holy felicity, which ſhall endure for ever; through the righteouſneſs of the ſecond Adam, in whom he is intereſted. So that when the body drops into duſt, the ſoul, being perfectly delivered from ſin, will enter heaven: and the Almighty God, who raiſed Jeſus from the dead, will raiſe his mortal body alſo incorruptible and glorious, by the omnipotence of his indwelling Spirit, who will not always leave his temple to lie mouldering in the duſt. Then ſin, and all its effects will be for ever done with.

V. 12, 13.] As death, and all miſery reſult from man's having preferred his own inclinations to a life of obedience to God; and as all felicity is communicated by the renewal of the ſoul to holineſs: ſo chriſtians ſhould not conſider themſelves to be indebted at all to the fleſh, though it ſtill lived, and worked in them. They had already ruined themſelves by complying with its ſuggeſtions: and it could have no further demands on them, now that Chriſt had reſcued them from merited deſtruction. Indeed if any habitually lived according to its corrupt luſtings; they would certainly periſh in their ſins, as unbelievers, notwithſtanding their profeſſion of the goſpel: but on the other hand, if through the influences of the Holy Spirit, and according to the tendency of the new nature, they counteracted, denied, ſubdued, and proceeded to extirpate their ſinful luſts, and ſo to mortify, and lop off, thoſe actions, which thence aroſe, they would prove themſelves alive to God through Chriſt, and their ſpiritual life would proportionably abound. The natural appetites of the body need only to be moderated, regulated, and ſubordinated; but the carnal deſires *of the body* of ſin and death, the old Adam, the fleſh with its affections and luſts, muſt be extirpated, and all its actings terminated. This is to be done in dependence on, and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt; yet we are to do it, through Him.

V. 14—17.] The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit brings us, through Chriſt, into the family of God, and evidences our ſonſhip, according to the choice and purpoſe of the Father. Therefore all they, and they only, who give up themſelves to the leading of the Spirit, are the children of God. The Holy Spirit will lead a man into the knowledge of the Lord, and of his own heart; into humble repentance, faith in Chriſt, holy love, communion with God, and delight in his worſhip, and commandments: and He will lead him away from vanity and iniquity, and from pride and diſcord: and in proportion as we willingly give up ourſelves to be led in ſuch paths, we may know our adoption. The apoſtle further obſerved, that confirmed believers had not received again the Spirit of bondage to ſerve God from ſlaviſh fear. This they muſt do, who continue under the law as a covenant; if they ſerve him at all. The Moſaic diſpenſation had a greater tendency to foſter this temper, than the chriſtian religion has: and the Jews too, generally conſidering the whole as a covenant of works, worſhipped God in this ſlaviſh manner. But the moſt of the Romans had not been under the Moſaic law: yet they are ſpoken of indiſcriminately, as having been formerly influenced, by the Spirit of bondage: we may therefore ſuppoſe that their firſt convictions were intended; under which awakened ſinners act more from fear, and ſelfiſh principles, than they do afterwards; abſtaining from ſin without hating it, from dread of conſequences, and practiſing duties without loving them. Theſe convictions proceed from the moving of the Spirit of God upon their minds, and prepare them for receiving Chriſt by faith: but they are very different from their diſpoſition, after they are brought into the full light and liberty of the goſpel, and have received "the Spirit of "adoption." Then they are taught to ſerve God with filial reverence, confidence, love, gratitude, ſubmiſſion, zeal, and ſatiſfaction: and they are eſpecially taught and encouraged to call upon him as a father, for all things they want, and in all their trials, notwithſtanding their conſcious vileneſs and unworthineſs. The word *Abba* is Syriac for father, and the uſe of different languages in this connexion ſweetly indicates the harmony of Jews and Gentiles, and of different nations, in this filial worſhip of God according to the goſpel. Thus the Holy Spirit, by producing in believers, the temper and affections of children, as deſcribed in the ſcripture, moſt manifeſtly atteſts their adoption into God's family. This is not done by any voice, immediate revelation, impulſe, or text brought to the mind, &c; (which are all equivocal and deluſory;) but by coinciding with the teſtimony of their own conſciences, as to their uprightneſs in embracing the goſpel, and giving themſelves up preſent time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory, which ſhall be revealed in us.

19 For the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God.

20 For the creature was made ſubject to vanity, not willingly, but by reaſon of him who hath ſubjected *the ſame*, in hope;

21 Becauſe the creature itſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only *they*, but ourſelves alſo, which have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourſelves groan within ourſelves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are ſaved by hope: but hope that is ſeen is not hope: for what a man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for?

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to the ſervice of God. So that, whilſt they are examining themſelves concerning the reality of their converſion, and find ſcriptural evidence of it: the Holy Spirit from time to time ſhines upon his own work, excites their holy affections into lively exerciſe, and renders them very efficacious upon their conduct; and thus puts the matter beyond doubt: for whilſt they feel the ſpirit of dutiful children towards God, they become ſatisfied, concerning his parental love to them. This being aſcertained, they may further infer themſelves to be the heirs of the heavenly inheritance, and of God himſelf as their Portion; even joint heirs with Chriſt, the beloved Son of the Father, being accepted in him, and appointed with him, to ſhare the purchaſed inheritance: and of this they may be ſtill more fully aſſured, if they patiently endure ſufferings after his example, and for his ſake, in the hope of being alſo glorified with him.

V. 18—23.] St. Paul had an abundant ſhare of theſe ſufferings: but upon the moſt exact computation of them, he found them not worthy to be compared, or put in competition with, that glorious recompence, which will be beſtowed on Chriſtians, or that glory which will be revealed, and accompliſhed in them. So that it would be the greateſt imaginable folly for him to ſhrink from the purſuit of this promiſed felicity, through the dread of the moſt terrible of theſe tranſient ſufferings. Indeed the whole viſible creation ſeems to wait with earneſt expectation, for that important period, when the children of God ſhall be manifeſted in their intended glory: and in this, it ſeems like a man, who with out-ſtretched neck looks, and waits with impatient longing for the arrival of ſome beloved, and expected friend. For the creation itſelf became ſubject to vanity, and diſorder, through man's apoſtacy: not willingly, as he did, but by a kind of conſtraint, through the guilt and righteous condemnation of Adam and his poſterity. By this awful diſpenſation, the Lord, as it were, ſubjected the creatures of this lower world, and even the viſible creation, to vanity. Every thing ſeems perverted from its intended uſe. The inanimate creatures are preſſed into the ſervice of man's rebellion. The luminaries of heaven are forced to give him light, by which to work wickedneſs: the fruits of the earth are ſacrificed to his luxury, intemperance, and oſtentation: its bowels are ranſacked for metals, from which arms are forged, for public and private murder, and revenge; or to gratify his avarice, and excite him to fraud, oppreſſion, and war. The animal tribes are ſubject to pain and death, through man's ſin: and their ſufferings are exceedingly increaſed by his cruelty; who, inſtead of their kind maſter, is become their inhuman butcher and tyrant. So that every thing is in an unnatural ſtate: the *good* creatures of God *appear evil*, through man's abuſe of them: and even the enjoyment, originally to be found in them, is turned into vexation, bitterneſs, and diſappointment, by man's idolatrous love of, and expectation from it. Yet this is "*in hope*:" God intends to reſcue the creation from this confuſed ſtate; and to deliver it from being thus held in bondage to man's depravity; that it may partake of, and miniſter to the glorious liberty of his children. So that, we are aſſured, the whole creation groans, (as a woman in the pains of travail, not as one in the agonies of death;) expecting, and impatiently longing for, a glorious event of all theſe diſtractions. This it hath done ever ſince the fall, and will do in a meaſure till the end of the world: and the miſeries of the human ſpecies, through their own, and each others wickedneſs, as well as the ſtate of the inferior creatures, declare the world to be in ſuch a ſituation, as is not intended always to continue. Nay, not only do all men, and all creatures here below, as it were, groan under the burdens impoſed on them through ſin; but even the children of God, who have the Spirit of adoption, and his holy conſolations, as the firſt fruits and pledge of their everlaſting felicity, yet groan within themſelves, through manifold pains, conflicts, temptations, and difficulties, and eſpecially through the diſquietude of in-dwelling ſin; and in waiting for their adoption, their public admiſſion into God's family, and to the enjoyment of their inheritance; at that ſeaſon, when their bodies alſo ſhall be redeemed from the grave, incorruptible, immortal, and glorious. Then ſatan, ſin, death, miſery, and all wicked creatures will be confined to hell: and the reſt of God's creation will appear glorious, pure, beautiful, orderly, and happy; in every reſpect anſwering the end, for which it was formed, and in nothing abuſed to contrary purpoſes. The ſufferings of animals, though many, yet being *unfeared*, and *tranſient*, are doubtleſs overbalanced by their enjoyments: and to infer an individual reſurrection of them from this paſſage, is ſurely one of the wildeſt reveries, that ever entered into the mind of any thinking man.

V. 24—27.] Believers are actually brought into a ſtate of ſafety; but their comfort conſiſts *in*, or is ob-

25 But if we hope for that we ſee not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

26 Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that ſearcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, becauſe he maketh interceſſion for the ſaints according to *the will of* God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpoſe.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called: and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

31 What ſhall we then ſay to theſe things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* againſt us?

32 He that ſpared not his own Son, but

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tained *by* hope, rather than fruition. But that, which is the object of ſight, ſenſe, or enjoyment, cannot properly be called hope: for how can a man be ſaid to hope for the viſion of that, which he at preſent beholdeth? Our future felicity will chiefly conſiſt in ſeeing God face to face: ſome glimpſes by faith we here ſee, as in a glaſs darkly; for the full viſion of his glory we hope and wait, in reliance on his promiſe, and in patient continuance in well-doing, amidſt manifold trials, and temptations: and from this hope we cannot be diverted, by the vain expectation of finding ſatisfaction in the things of time and ſenſe. For, though our infirmities are many and great, and we ſhould ſoon be over-powered if left to ourſelves; yet the Spirit of God helpeth us againſt, and ſupporteth us under, them, that we ſhould not be entirely overcome. And as our ſtrength and comfort amidſt our conflicts muſt be obtained by prayer; and as we are ſo ignorant, forgetful, or unbelieving, that we know not what to aſk for; or how to aſk for any thing with proper affections, &c: ſo the ſame Spirit compaſſionately aſſiſts our memories, excites our deſires and hopes, and increaſes our faith; and thus he becomes an inward Interceſſor for us, by ſuggeſting ſuch prayers as are pleaſing to God, and meet to be accepted through our heavenly Advocate. Theſe prayers do not conſiſt in copious and fluent expreſſions, which are often deſtitute of meaning and ſuitable affections; but in earneſt longings for, and believing expectations of, ſpiritual bleſſings, which are ſometimes productive rather of groans, than of words; or they are uttered in broken ſentences, and detached and earneſt ejaculations, rather than a continued prayer; as implying more, than a man can find words to utter. Perhaps the humble, broken-hearted ſupplicant, when thus groaning out his deſires after pardon, and deliverance from ſin; is aſhamed to offer ſuch incoherent requeſts: but the heart-ſearching God underſtandeth, and approveth this energetic language; which expreſſes the mind of the Spirit, when making interceſſion for the ſaints in whom he dwells, according to the will of God, both in his promiſe, commandment, and providence: and ſuch prayers will ſurely be anſwered, when the well-worded addreſſes of formaliſts will be rejected.

V. 28—31.] From all the preceding conſiderations the apoſtle aſſuredly concluded, that all events in life or death, would concur in promoting the eternal good of every true believer, however bitter and painful they may at preſent be. Nothing can ever defeat the great end propoſed in all God's diſpenſations reſpecting them, even their everlaſting ſalvation. Providential appointments are doubtleſs primarily intended: but as theſe may often prove occaſions of ſin, and temptation; we could have no aſſurance that they would all work together for good, if we were entirely to exclude the effects of our own ſin and folly. Indeed all the ſins even of true believers do not eventually promote their increaſe of preſent grace, or of future glory: in this reſpect they ſuffer loſs, and are ſaved as by fire: yet the whole concurs, as one complex plan, to prepare them for, and preſerve them to, the inheritance intended for them; and many of their own miſtakes, and miſcarriages, being *deeply repented of*, work together eminently for their humiliation, and increaſe of grateful love. As far as believers act in character, and live in the habitual exerciſe of "love to "God;" all things will concur in augmenting their final recompence. When they act out of character, corrections, and perhaps terrors will be employed to bring them back again: and if a man allows himſelf in ſin, expecting to derive good from it, he does evil that good may come, he ſins on that grace may abound; he bears the broad mark of a hypocrite, and his damnation will be juſt. So that we need not invalidate this aſſurance to guard it from the abuſe of wicked men, as ſome have done with a very good meaning, but to the great diſcouragement of humble believers; who fear nothing ſo much, even in their ſharpeſt afflictions, as their lamented propenſity to ſin. The perſons, here intended, once did not love God; but they were called into a ſtate of reconciliation with, and love to him, according to his ſovereign purpoſe, and eternal choice of them; which he therefore will never ſuffer to be fruſtrated. Having ſeen good to determine the permiſſion of man's apoſtacy; he looked upon the whole human ſpecies, as deſerving of, and meet for deſtruction: yet purpoſing to provide and reveal a gracious ſalvation to them, for the glory of his name; he knew that they would as certainly reject it, as they would break his holy law. For reaſons therefore taken from himſelf, or not revealed to us, he deter-delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?

33 Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that juſtifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Chriſt that died, yea rather, that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.

35 Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? *ſhall* tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword?

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mined to leave ſome *deſervedly* to periſh in their obſtinate enmity, and *graciouſly* to cure others of it by his regenerating Spirit. Theſe latter "he fore-knew," not merely in reſpect of external privileges, or as a part of favoured nations, but as individually choſen to eternal life: for he in conſequence of this fore-knowledge, "predeſtinated," or before decreed them "to be conformed to the Image "of his Son." Here they are in part renewed to his holy Image, and walk in his ſteps; and having paſſed like Jeſus through many ſufferings, they will hereafter be completely conformed to his holy human nature, both in body and ſoul: that ſo he may appear among them as the firſt-begotten, and Head of the many brethren, of which the family of God ſhall be conſtituted; that being admitted through him, to be the children and heirs of God, they may thus be made meet with him to enjoy their inheritance. As this was the determinate purpoſe, and foreknowledge of God reſpecting all of them: ſo all the intermediate ſteps were equally predetermined, and in due time ſhall be paſſed through by them: ſo that the Lord calls to repentance, faith in Chriſt, and newneſs of life every one, whom he hath thus predeſtinated; he fully juſtifieth, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, every one, whom he thus calleth; and He finally will glorify every one, whom he thus juſtifieth. To explain this of outward privileges, or of collective bodies of profeſſed chriſtians, would involve the groſſeſt abſurdities: ſo that, if this were the only paſſage, in which this deſpiſed and humiliating, but moſt comfortable, doctrine, were expreſſly mentioned; we might confidently declare, that the authority of this apoſtle, as an inſpired writer, and the doctrine of perſonal, unconditional election to eternal life, muſt ſtand or fall together. Sanctification is not mentioned in this golden chain: but predeſtination to be conformed to the Image of Chriſt, effectual calling, and final glory, ſo deſcribe the beginning, the progreſs, and the conſummation of ſanctification; that no omiſſion can in this reſpect be imputed to the apoſtle. In the language of faith, and hope he ſpeaks of the whole work as already done; became enſured by God's purpoſes and promiſes: and he demands what can be ſaid unto, or againſt, ſuch things? For if God be thus freely, and abſolutely our unchangeable Friend, and thus determined to bleſs us with everlaſting felicity; who, or what can be ſo againſt us, as to defeat his gracious purpoſe? Or what need have we to fear the rage, and power of all creatures, if they ſhould combine againſt us? From ſuch language, as the above, ſome perſons have abſurdly talked of our having been *juſtified from eternity*, &c: but the *fixed intention* of doing any thing is perfectly diſtinct from the *actual performance of it*. God as abſolutely determined the final glorification of every believer, as he did the juſtification of every elect perſon: we might then juſt as well ſay they have been glorified in body and ſoul from all eternity; this could not be greater nonſenſe, or more unſcriptural, than to talk of being juſtified from all eternity; and probably it would be leſs capable of abuſe.

V. 32—34.] The omnipotence and omniſcience of God are above oppoſed to the puny efforts of our enemies: here his former benefits are ſhewn to be aſſured pledges of our final felicity. When the holineſs of God and our ſinfulneſs barred the way to our happineſs: his free love of ſuch rebels and enemies induced him to give his own Son to be our Surety and Sacrifice; having willingly aſſumed our nature, in order to bear our ſins: and in this, the Father ſpared him not, but delivered him up to agonies, ignominy, and death; notwithſtanding his perſonal dignity and excellency, the perfection of his obedience in our nature, and his own inconceivable love of him. (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 4.) Thus he bare the curſe inſtead of *us all*, and ſo expiated our guilt when enemies: and having in virtue of that atonement, and his own eternal choice of us, called us into a ſtate of peace with him, and taught us to love and obey him: how can we ſuppoſe that he will now with-hold any thing from us? All things in heaven and earth, the univerſal creation, yea the everlaſting enjoyment of the Creator himſelf as our Portion, are not ſo great a diſplay of his free love to us, as the gift of his co-equal Son to be the atonement on the croſs for our ſins; and the reſt neceſſarily follow upon our union with, and intereſt in him. The emphaſis is evidently here laid, not on *Chriſt as incarnate*, being given up to death for us; but in God's giving his own proper Son, (ἴδιον,) to become incarnate for ſuch a purpoſe. Who then can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, whoſe election is manifeſted by their being called to the fellowſhip of Chriſt? When it is God, againſt whom they have ſinned, who hath, at ſuch a price, completely juſtified them! Satan may accuſe them; the world may revile them; their brethren may ſuſpect and cenſure them; their own conſciences reproach them with many ſins; the law might convict and condemn them for many former and latter tranſgreſſions: but God himſelf pleads their cauſe; he pronounces them righteous, ſilences their accuſers, pacifies their conſciences, clears their characters; and ſhews the law magnified, and juſtice ſatisfied in the obedience and ſufferings of their Surety; and who then can make good any charge againſt them? If we look forward to the day of judgment, who ſhall then condemn them? The Judge himſelf will be the ſame Perſon, who loved them, died for their ſins, and roſe again for their juſtification; and who now at the right-hand of the Father ever liveth to plead in their behalf, and to uſe his Almighty power for their benefit! Even now, he preſents their ſervices for acceptance before his Father's throne; he quaſhes all accuſations

36 As it is written, For thy ſake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter.

37 Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

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brought againſt them; he defeats the machinations of their enemies; he manages all things for their good, and is perfecting his work in them: and will he then forſake the work of his own hands, and at laſt condemn them to hell? It is impoſſible!

V. 35—39.] As infinite and unchangeable power and love are engaged in behalf of all believers; and the mercy already ſhewn them is greater than what is further needful for them; they may even triumph on the field of battle, and exult amidſt their conflicts and groans: for who ſhall ſeparate them from the love of Chriſt, who hath choſen, redeemed, called, and juſtified them? Shall trials, perſecutions, or calamities of any kind, degree, or continuance? Shall the ſword of war, or that of the executioner? Indeed it had been written of old, that God's harmleſs people were, and would be, butchered like ſheep, (*Pſ.* xliv. v. 22:) but inſtead of being thereby ſeparated from his love, they would be brought to the more complete enjoyment of it; and ſo not only eſcape unhurt, or juſt come off victorious, but alſo be made more than conquerors, even immenſe gainers by their ſufferings, through the ſupporting grace of their loving Saviour. Indeed the apoſtle was fully aſſured, that neither the fear, agony, or ſeparating ſtroke of death, in any form; nor the machinations of evil angels, or of all the principalities and powers of darkneſs, or the ungodly perſecuting princes of this world; neither any preſent calamities, or future unknown changes, or undiſcovered ſcenes; neither the height of proſperity, nor the depth of adverſity, or the higheſt created power, or the deepeſt plots of ſubtle enemies; nor any creature, or all creatures ſhall ever prevail to ſeparate true believers from the everlaſting love of God in Chriſt Jeſus towards them: as his purpoſes are unchangeable, his engagements irrevocable, and his power invincible. It is mere trifling to ſay, that ſin, being no creature of God, may ſeparate the believer from his love, notwithſtanding all this. For ſuch a reſtriction wholly invalidates the paſſage: tribulation, perſecution, temptation, &c, have no tendency to ſeparate us from the love of God, except as they may prove occaſions of ſin to us. Profeſſors in ſuch circumſtances often forſake God, and periſh: but all his ſaints are in his hand, and are kept by his power through faith unto ſalvation: and they dread ſuffering chiefly, becauſe they fear leſt it ſhould prove the occaſion of in-dwelling ſin gaining the victory over them. If a man take encouragement to ſin from ſuch aſſurances, he renders it probable that he has no intereſt in them: no man can triumph on this ground, who has not ſcripture evidence of his converſion; and no man can take the warrantable comfort of them; except he is at preſent ſtriving againſt ſin, and harraſſed by fears, leſt ſome future event ſhould give that deteſted, and dreaded foe a fatal advantage over him. We muſt not therefore take the cordials from the weary, and almoſt fainting combatants, becauſe others unwarrantably ſeize upon, and fatally intoxicate themſelves with them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The terrors of the law, and our own conſcious guilt ſhould endear to us the free ſalvation of the goſpel; and urge us to flee for refuge to Chriſt, that we may be ſafe in him, (as Noah in the ark,) when threatened deſtruction ſhall overwhelm all ungodly men. Whilſt we deſire exemption from condemnation, let us ſeek for grace to enable us to walk, not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit: thus it will be evident, that "the law of the Spirit of "life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made us free from the law of "ſin and death," and that the grace of the goſpel hath already done more towards our ſanctification, notwithſtanding all our lamented defilements; than the law could ever do for thoſe, who deſire to be under it. For if we are intereſted in the ſacrifice of the Son of God, in the likeneſs of our ſinful fleſh, for our ſins; we ſhall ſee that our old nature is condemned, and muſt be crucified; we ſhall join in putting this ſentence in execution; and we ſhall long for the righteouſneſs of the law to be fulfilled in us, even as it was by our Surety. Of this, our preſent habitual walk "after the ſpirit," is an earneſt, and ſure pledge; but a carnal mind, and converſation are evidences, that a man is dead in ſin and under the curſe of the law, however he may talk about the grace of the goſpel; for they, who are alive to God, and at peace with him, are ſpiritual in their judgment, affections, and habitual walk, though they grieve that they are not more ſo. But the carnal mind is enmity againſt God: no unregenerate man can delight in, or be ſubject to his holy law, but will in one way or other rebel againſt it; and how can it be expected that God ſhould be pleaſed with ſuch enemies and rebels? We ſhould therefore eſpecially examine ourſelves whether the Spirit of Chriſt dwell in us: for if this be not our caſe, we belong not to him, are not in his kingdom; and, dying in this ſtate, ſhall be found among the ſervants of ſatan. But if the Spirit of Chriſt have taken poſſeſſion of our hearts, and renewed his holy Image there; the death of our mortal bodies will perfect the life of our immortal ſouls, which have now eternal life abiding in them; and through the Redeemer's righteouſneſs our bodies too ſhall be raiſed again to ſhare that glorious felicity. What then can a carnal life preſent to our view worthy to be put in competition with this noble prize of our high calling? All we owe to the fleſh is a holy revenge for the injuries already done, and the hindrances

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Lamenting the unbelief of his countrymen, expreſſing his willingneſs to endure any thing for their ſalvation; and ſhewing the difference between Iſrael as a nation, with all their advantages, and the true Iſrael, 1---8. *2d. Illuſtrating his ſubject by the inſtances of Iſaac, &c, of Jacob and Eſau, and of Pharaoh; and thus ſhewing the freeneſs of God's mercy, and the ſovereignty of his election,* 9---18. *3d. Anſwering objections to his doctrine, and proving it from the prophets,* 19---29. *4th. Evincing, that the Jews came ſhort of the bleſſing, (which the Gentiles obtained by faith,) becauſe they ſought it by the works of the law, and rejected Chriſt,* 30---33.

I Say the truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt,

2 That I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren, my kinſmen according to the fleſh;

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continually given, us: and inſtead of rendering our ſtate doubtful by at all living after it; we ſhould, by the Spirit, continually endeavour more entirely to mortify it, and repreſs all its actings. Thus giving up ourſelves to be led by the Spirit, our adoption will be manifeſt; we ſhall gradually be emancipated from our ſervile fears, and ſhall truſt upon, walk with, and obey God, as our reconciled Father; the holy Spirit will witneſs with our own conſciences that we have the temper of loving, obedient children towards him; and ſupport us with the joyful proſpect of our inheritance, amidſt our ſufferings in the way to glory: while our preſent trials will appear light, compared with the felicity reſerved for us.

Indeed ſin hath filled the world with unſpeakable diſorder and miſery: all creatures ſeem to preach man's fatal apoſtacy, and to recommend Chriſt's precious ſalvation. Whilſt men are evidently at war with their Maker, and with each other, and the earth is become a great ſlaughter houſe, and burying ground to it's inhabitants; the inferior creatures are forced into the ſervice of men's luſts, by the moſt abominable perverſion of them. Thus the creation groans under bondage to human depravity; every creature ſeems to abet his rebellion, or be an inſtrument of his crimes; the very heathens could ſee the ſtrange ſtate of the world, though they ſaw neither the cauſe, nor the cure of it. But the goſpel opens a brighter proſpect; a glorious criſis approaches, of which all things ſeem in anxious expectation. When the children of God ſhall be manifeſted, and ſeparated from his implacable foes, a complete deliverance from this bondage will be given to all, but ſatan and his obſtinate adherents; and ſin, deformity, vanity, and miſery ſhall be ſeen no where but in the bottomleſs pit. May we then give diligence to enſure our intereſt in this redemption, and to poſſeſs the firſt-fruits of the Spirit! Then our groans under our ſhare of this univerſal ruin, whilſt we wait our final adoption, will be in hope: we ſhall learn to diſregard the periſhing things, which are ſeen, and patiently to expect and wait for the good things, that are unſeen and eternal. The Spirit of God will in theſe things help us under our infirmities; and notwithſtanding our own inſufficiency, we ſhall by his influence pray to our heavenly Father, with ſuch large and ſpiritual deſires, and ſuch unutterable pantings after his ſalvation, as ſhall enſure a gracious anſwer, and abundant ſupplies of every needful bleſſing.

If then we can but be aſſured, that we really love God, and deſire to keep his commandments: we may reſt ſatisfied that all things ſhall finally iſſue in our greateſt advantage. For the love of God, in thoſe hearts which were once enmity to him, proves that they have been called according to his eternal purpoſe, in order to be conformed to the Image of his Son, and made meet as his brethren, to be joint heirs with him. But none can have any ground to deem themſelves predeſtinated, called, or juſtified, or to expect to be glorified; except they love God, bear the Image of Chriſt, walk in his ſteps, and aim to obey and honour him: and whatever men may ſay againſt theſe things; they who are thus choſen, called, and juſtified, ſhall without doubt be eternally glorified: nor will a ſingle exception be found to this rule; though many will appear to have deceived themſelves, and others. If God have determined to ſave us, who can deſtroy us? If he ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him to death for us; how ſhould he refuſe any thing to us? If this were not too large a gift for his enemies; what can he with-hold from his friends and children? If He juſtify us, who can condemn us? If our crucified and riſen Jeſus plead and fight for us: who can plead or fight againſt us, with any poſſibility of prevailing? If the Judge himſelf be our Friend, who can pronounce a ſentence againſt us? Or what can ſeparate us from his love, who bled for us, when we were ſo vile, that hell was our deſert, and the doom for which we were meet? Whilſt therefore we rejoice in theſe privileges, and this ſecurity, and chearfully expect to be more than conquerors in every conflict, and immenſe gainers by every loſs, and tribulation, till death be ſwallowed up in victory: let us ſhew the holineſs of the doctrine by ſparing none of our luſts, ſhrinking from no hardſhip or expence in the cauſe of Chriſt; willingly enduring our croſs, and obeying our Lord's commandments; and being ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in his work.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—3.] From the apoſtle's arguing ſo ſtrenuouſly for a free ſalvation by faith alone, without any reſpect to the Moſaic law, or the peculiar privileges of the Jews; it might have been ſuppoſed, that he had no great regard for, or attachment to his countrymen: or even that their perſecutions of him had ſet him againſt them. Being therefore about ſtill further to diſcuſs the ſubject of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, and to reſolve the whole into

4 Who are Iſraelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice *of God*, and the promiſes;

5 Whoſe *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt *came*, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever. Amen.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Iſrael, which are of Iſrael:

7 Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be bleſſed.

8 That is, they which are the children of the fleſh, theſe *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed.

9 For this *is* the word of promiſe, At this time will I come, and Sara ſhall have a ſon.

10 And not only *this*; but when Rebecca alſo had conceived by one, *even* by our father Iſaac;

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the ſovereign electing love of God; he very wiſely introduced theſe topics, by expreſſing in the moſt energetic language his moſt cordial affection for his people. He ſpake the truth, as in the preſence of Chriſt his Judge, and with a ſolemn appeal to him, that he did in no degree deviate from it: his conſcience alſo, being enlightened and directed by the Holy Ghoſt, bare witneſs to his ſincerity, in declaring, that the unbelief and rejection of the Jews excited exceeding great diſquietude, and depreſſion, and conſtant grief, in his heart. Inſomuch, that he might even willingly ſubmit to be treated as an Anathema, or accurſed, *after the manner* of Chriſt; to be excommunicated from his viſible church, loaded with infamy, crucified, or in any way put to the utmoſt pain and diſgrace; or even for a time to be excluded from all the comfort of communion with Chriſt, and ſhut up under the deepeſt horror and diſtreſs of mind, which could be endured without ſin: if by any perſonal ſufferings of his own, that could conſiſt with his final ſalvation, he might reſcue his beloved brethren, and kinſmen, from that national, and perſonal deſtruction, which he ſaw about to come upon them for their obſtinate unbelief. (Note, *Exod.* c. xxxii. v. 32.) This muſt be the utmoſt that the apoſtle could mean in this expreſſion; as it would be utterly unlawful to wiſh to be eternally miſerable, and *an implacable enemy of God*, (as all that periſh will be,) on any conſideration whatſoever.

V. 4, 5.] The apoſtle was peculiarly grieved to think, that all the diſtinguiſhed favours, ſhewn to his people, ſhould iſſue in their miſerable rejection for their oppoſition to Chriſt. They were the deſcendants of Iſrael, who wreſtled with God, and prevailed; they had long been the profeſſed worſhippers of Jehovah, to whom the *typical* adoption pertained. The covenants made with Abraham, Iſaac, Jacob, David, &c; the law given at Mount Sinai, and the national covenant grounded on it, belonged to them; and were ſo many peculiar honours, and advantages towards their becoming the ſpiritual people of God. The worſhip at the temple, which was both typical of Chriſt's ſalvation, and the means of grace and communion with God, had been for ages maintained among them: all the promiſes, concerning Chriſt and his ſalvation were immediately given to, and preſerved among, them: they were honourable by their deſcent from the ancient patriarchs, who walked with God, and were accepted of him: and finally the expected Meſſiah had been born among them, as one of their nation, according to the fleſh; even He, who is alſo "God over all creatures, bleſſed and praiſed throughout all worlds, and to all eternity:" to this the apoſtle affixed his cordial Amen. The expreſſion "*according to the fleſh*," implies that Chriſt had a far higher, and nobler nature: even as when Paul uſed it concerning the Jews his brethren, &c, (v. 3;) he intimated his ſorrow that they were not his brethren, as the children of God, born of the Spirit, and believers in Chriſt. This, with every other conſideration, undeniably proves, that the apoſtle here meant, in the moſt decided manner to atteſt the Deity, and ſovereignty of Chriſt, as One with the Father, and equally the Object of univerſal and everlaſting adoration.

V. 6—9.] Though, after all their advantages the Jews rejected the goſpel, and were caſt off by the Lord: yet they were not to conclude that his word had failed of it's accompliſhment. Their national covenant had been fulfilled to them, till it was finally forfeited; the promiſes reſpecting the Meſſiah had been performed; and the ſpiritual covenant, and promiſes did not belong to them as a nation, but to ſuch of them only as believed; and that in common with other believers: for all were not the true Iſrael of God, who were naturally deſcended from Jacob. Indeed this had been intimated in the caſe of Abraham, and his ſeed: for the ſpecial covenant, made with him in favour of his children, did not include all his poſterity; but it was limited to the line of Iſaac, when the Lord aſſured him, that in Iſaac ſhould his ſeed be called. So that his children in the ordinary courſe of things were not all adopted as the children of God, even in a typical ſenſe: but thoſe only, that ſprang from him, according to the promiſe, and by the extraordinary power of God performing it, when Sarah was naturally paſt childbearing. (*Gen.* c. xvii. v. 16—21. c. xviii. v. 10—13.)

V. 10—14.] As Iſaac was Abraham's only Son by Sarah his wife; it might have been ſuppoſed that the covenant bleſſings were limited to him on that account. Yet not only was Iſhmael, Abraham's ſon by Hagar the bondwoman, and his children by Keturah, excluded; but even Eſau and his poſterity, though the elder ſon of Iſaac and Rebekah, and twin brother to Jacob. Even before they were born, and conſequently before they had done good or evil, it was ſaid to Rebekah that the elder ſhould ſerve the younger. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxv;) which certainly implied the ſpecial favour of God of Ja-

11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was ſaid unto her, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated.

14 What ſhall we ſay then? *Is there* unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid.

15 For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion.

16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.

17 For the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

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cob, above Eſau, and that the covenanted bleſſings would be reſtricted to him. This denoted that the purpoſe of God, in reſpect of the heirs of promiſe, would be eſtabliſhed, according to the ſovereign election of God, who calleth men to partake of the bleſſing as he pleaſeth; and not of any works, which they would perform. Doubtleſs God foreſaw that Eſau's works would be profane and evil; and Jacob's in a meaſure pious and holy: but the latter could only be foreſeen *as the effect* of his election, and conſequent regeneration; and ſo they could not be conſidered *as the cauſe* of them. God foreſaw them both as born in ſin; and he knew, that if they were left to themſelves, they would continue in ſin through life: but, (for reaſons beſt known to himſelf,) he purpoſed to change Jacob's heart, and to leave Eſau to his native perverſeneſs; becauſe he *freely* loved Jacob, and abhorred the temper and character of Eſau. For wickedneſs foreſeen is doubtleſs the cauſe of God's purpoſe to condemn, becauſe it is of a man's ſelf by nature; but holineſs foreſeen in a fallen creature cannot be the cauſe of his election, becauſe it is the effect of ſpecial grace, and never comes from any other ſource. To ſtate reprobation therefore to be abſolute is as unſcriptural, as to ſpeak of election being conditional: for all men muſt be foreknown as ſinners by nature and practice: they, who are appointed to wrath, are foreſeen as deſerving it; they, who are choſen to ſalvation, are ſelected to be freely ſaved from deſerved wrath, and from ſin alſo. This inſtance of Eſau and Jacob was intended as an emblem of God's general conduct in ſuch matters: and though it hath often been urged, and conſiſtent with truth, that Jacob and Eſau were not ſo much perſonally intended, as their poſterity: yet the conduct of the two brothers ſeems to authorize the concluſion, that they were alſo perſonally included. However the apoſtle's argument, who was ſhewing the difference between the nation of Iſrael, and the true people of God, ſufficiently evinces, that he meant to apply the example to individuals, and not to collective bodies. If then God loved Jacob, and hated Eſau, without reference to their works, as comparatively good or bad; (*Mal.* c. i. v. 2, 3;) could any injuſtice be objected to him? By no means: he did Eſau no wrong in leaving him to his own choice, till by committing ſin, he merited condemnation; and both he, and his poſterity received more favours, than they deſerved: nor did the Lord's unmerited love to Jacob and his poſterity in any meaſure injure Eſau, &c. Even in reſpect of holy creatures, we muſt either allow, that God may *juſtly* permit them to ſin, and puniſh them for it; and ſo foreknow, and even decree, both the permiſſion, and the puniſhment: or elſe we muſt deny that he can act as a moral Governor of the univerſe. For if this be not juſt; God would either be bound to prevent all his creatures from ſinning; or if they were left to ſin, He only would be the cauſe of it. So that men are not aware what blaſphemy is involved, in their bold objections on this ſubject. Much more then may God righteouſly leave fallen creatures to themſelves, to proceed in rebellion, and ſink into deſtruction. He might juſtly have thus left us all: it is of infinite mercy, that we any of us are ſaved, and our ſalvation can be no injury to thoſe, who are only puniſhed according to the deſert of their own ſins.

V. 15—18.] (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xxxiii. v. 19.) Moſes, to whom the Jews profeſſed ſo much deference, had written as ſtrong language concerning God's ſovereignty in ſhewing mercy, as the apoſtle uſed. So that his words, as well as the hiſtory, implied, that the difference between one and another, originated from God's election. Indeed Jacob was willing, and deſirous to obtain the bleſſing; and he ran at his mother's word; thus he prevented Eſau, and Iſaac bleſſed him: but the whole tranſaction was diſgraceful to him, and merited the indignation rather than the favour of God; (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxvii.) However the eſtabliſhment of the covenant with him, and his poſterity, did not originate from this, but from God's electing love: his purpoſe reſpecting him had been made known long before; and the treachery of this buſineſs being graciouſly pardoned, it was over-ruled as the means of Iſaac's pronouncing him bleſſed. Thus believers are in due time *willing*, and they beſtow much pains to obtain the ſalvation of Chriſt: yet theſe are only ſtreams from the fountain of God's electing love. His choice of them induces Him to make them willing by regeneration; thus they are diſpoſed to the diligent uſe of means, and through theſe, they are made partakers of ſalvation; the very ſinfulneſs attending their diligence being graci-

19 Thou wilt ſay then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath reſiſted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed *it*, Why haſt thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?

22 *What* if God, willing to ſhew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction?

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy,

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ouſly forgiven them. Whereas they, who are not *thus* willing and diligent, are not made *unwilling* by any poſitive act of God; but it is the conſequence of their own pride, love of ſin, and averſion to holineſs, in which they are *righteouſly* left to perſevere: and every other kind of willingneſs, and diligence, muſt be unavailing. This ſubject was exemplified in the caſe of Pharaoh. God advanced that proud man to great authority, and proſperity, and ſpared his life through the ſeveral plagues of Egypt: but at the ſame time he left him to harden himſelf in enmity and rebellion. This he declared to be intended, that in his deſtruction he might make known his power, and glory throughout the earth. So that, it muſt be allowed, that he hath mercy on ſuch of our apoſtate race, as he ſees good; and that he hardeneth whom he will, by leaving them to themſelves, and under the power of ſatan; by ordering his diſpenſations reſpecting them in ſuch a manner, as he knows will exaſperate their enmity, and embolden their preſumption; and by judicially ſentencing them to final obduracy, that his juſtice in their puniſhment may become the more conſpicuous. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. iii.—xv.)

V. 19—21.] The unhumbled objector would be ſure here to cavil, and to enquire, why the Lord blamed or puniſhed any man for his ſins? Who had reſiſted his ſovereign will, and appointment? Even they, who moſt rebel againſt his precepts, fulfil his decrees: his will is therefore univerſally done, and no creature makes any oppoſition to it. As if God's ſecret purpoſe could be man's rule of duty! Or as if a man could mean to do God's will, by breaking his expreſs commandments, out of carnal enmity to him, and to gratify his own luſts! To this preſumptuous caviller, (and ſuch are very numerous, if the avowed enemies, and the falſe friends of theſe doctrines are both included;) the apoſtle anſwered, by demanding of him, (a man! a ſinner!) who he was, that he ſhould deem himſelf authorized to reply againſt God; and to charge him with injuſtice for thoſe things, which he had expreſſly ſpoken and done? was it proper for the creature to call his Creator to an account for having formed him, as he ſaw good? Would men not allow the infinite God the ſame ſovereign right to manage the affairs of the creation; as the potter exerciſes in diſpoſing of his clay, when of the ſame lump he makes one veſſel to a more honourable, and another to a meaner uſe? (*Iſaiah*, c. lxiv. v. 8. *Jer.* c. xviii.) Would they give the Lord no credit for his juſtice, wiſdom, truth, and goodneſs, when they could not fully comprehend them? Nor infer from his infinite perfection, that he could not do wrong, however it might appear to them? And could there be any danger from the exerciſe of abſolute ſovereignty by infinite excellency? would they dare to dictate to the Lord, to determine what he ought to do, or to call him to an account for what he had done? It is plain from the whole context, that the apoſtle meant not to intimate, that God might juſtly make innocent creatures miſerable by prerogative, as ſome ſeem at leaſt to ſuppoſe: for he goes upon the ſuppoſition that the divine ſovereignty is that of infinite wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and goodneſs. The idea of having mercy, on whom he will have mercy, implies that all deſerved wrath: the lump of clay in the hands of the potter refers to men, already exiſting in God's foreknowledge, as fallen creatures; and what follows is ſtill more deciſive. But he intended to repreſs the arrogance of ignorant preſumptuous worms, who venture to ſpeak about injuſtice, cruelty, tyranny, &c, in their diſcourſes about their offended Creator and Judge! Who conceive in their own imagination how the infinite God ought to act; and then forgetting who He is, and who they are, charge him fooliſhly, upon the ſuppoſition, that their tenets are not true! This common practice is ſuch a compound of pride, impiety, and folly, that it ſeems the moſt glaring proof of human depravity, which even this wicked world exhibits; eſpecially when it is added, that many godly men appear in the violence of controverſy, to have been betrayed into it.

V. 22, 23.] Put the caſe, that God was pleaſed, (as in the caſe of Pharoah,) in order more conſpicuouſly to diſplay his powerful wrath againſt his enemies, to endure their provocations with patience for a long time, till they had acted out the deſperate wickedneſs of their hearts, and filled up the meaſure of their ſins, and ſo became ripe for ſignal vengeance: what injuſtice could there be in this? In alluſion to the potter's veſſels, they were in themſelves veſſels of wrath; and their wicked diſpoſitions and actions rendered them fitted for deſtruction. Nor could they have been preſerved from it, but by an act of omnipotent power, as well as by the exerciſe of unmerited mercy: this God was not bound, and did not ſee good, to beſtow; and they were too proud and wicked to aſk it, to deſire, or even to accept of it. They deſpiſed the riches of that long-ſuffering that ſpared them, they treaſured up wrath in the impenitency of their hearts, and at length receive their due recompence. (c. ii. v. 4—6.) And if, on the other hand, the Lord choſe to diſplay the abundance of his glorious power, truth, and love, in his dealings with ſome of the ſame lump, whom he had ſelected to be veſſels of mercy: what was this to others? They were not any more meet which he had afore prepared unto glory;

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles?

25 As he ſaith alſo in Oſee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* in the place where it was ſaid unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there ſhall they be called the children of the living God.

27 Eſaias alſo crieth concerning Iſrael, Though the number of the children of Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, a remnant ſhall be ſaved:

28 For he will finiſh the work, and cut *it* ſhort in righteouſneſs: becauſe a ſhort work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Eſaias ſaid before, Except the Lord of ſabaoth had left us a ſeed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

30 What ſhall we ſay then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteouſneſs, have attained to righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs, which is of faith.

31 But Iſrael, which followed after the law of righteouſneſs, hath not attained to the law of righteouſneſs.

32 Wherefore? Becauſe *they ſought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a ſtumbling-ſtone, and rock of offence: and whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed.

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for the felicity intended them, than the former; but He was pleaſed to prepare them before for it, by his converting and ſanctifying grace; as well as to make them capable of actively glorifying him here on earth. But did his aſtoniſhing free love to them imply injuſtice to others? Their cauſe for gratitude is immenſe: but have thoſe, who ſuffer no more, than they deſerve, any ground for their complaints: whilſt he with-holds from none their due; he has ſurely a right to do what he will with his own! (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiii. v. 1—16.) The different language uſed concerning the veſſels of wrath, and the veſſels of mercy, is of vaſt importance in ſtating this doctrine ſolidly, and ſcripturally.

V. 24—29.] The veſſels of mercy had evidently been called forth from among both Jews and Gentiles: this gave great offence to the former; yet their own prophets had foretold it. Hoſea had predicted, that they would be beloved of God, as his people, who had not been ſo; and Iſaiah had ſhewn, that but a remnant would be ſaved from the innumerable multitudes of Iſrael; and that God would finiſh his work with that nation, in a righteous but compendious manner; or by taking a ſhort account of the choſen people among them, and conſigning the reſt to juſt deſtruction, throughout *the whole land*. The paſſages referred to have already been conſidered; and though the verſion be ſomewhat different, being from the ſeptuagint, yet the meaning is much the ſame. (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 9. c. x. v. 22, 23. *Hoſ.* c. i. v. 10 c. ii. v. 23.)

V. 30—33.] The apoſtle having ſhewn, that both the purpoſes and predictions of God were fulfilled in the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles; here proceeds to ſhew by what means this had been effected; which tended to prove that the Lord had acted righteouſly, and the Jews wickedly in this matter. The Gentiles, who before lived in the groſſeſt ignorance, idolatry, and wickedneſs, without at all enquiring, or following after, righteouſneſs, had ſuddenly, through the ſurpriſing grace of God, been brought into a ſtate of acceptance with Him, being called to partake of "the "righteouſneſs of God by faith." But Iſrael, who had the law, which contained the rule of righteouſneſs, and ſhadowed forth the way of juſtification; and who had ſedulouſly paid regard to it as "a law of righteouſneſs," had not attained to the righteouſneſs they ſought for. Not living up to their law, they were condemned by it, yet cleaving to it, they rejected Chriſt and his ſalvation; wherefore then had they failed of acceptance? Was it merely through God's decree? Or did he refuſe to receive them, in the ſame way, as the Gentiles were juſtified? No truly: but they refuſed to ſeek the bleſſing by faith, as an unmerited favour; and perſiſted in claiming it by the law, as a matter of right. This they did *as it were* by the works of the law: they did not think that they perfectly kept the law; but they expected to make up their deficiencies in one reſpect, by abounding in others; or by repentance and amendment, and the legal ſacrifices; or by ſuperſtitious additions; or even by endeavouring to join faith in Chriſt, with the works of the law, as a complex legal covenant. Thus they ſought the bleſſing from that, which denounced a curſe upon them; and refuſed to truſt wholly in Him, who was raiſed up to bleſs them. At this ſtumbling ſtone they fell, as had been predicted. (*Iſaiah*. c. viii. v. 13—15. c. xxviii. v. 16, 17.) Their obſtinate pride and unbelief were the immediate cauſe of their ruin, and God had only decreed, in righteouſneſs, to give them up to the luſts of their own hearts.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The command of loving our neighbours as ourſelves, and the example of Chriſt, require us to mourn over obſtinate tranſgreſſors, eſpecially when near to us, according to the fleſh: at the ſame time that we vindicate the juſtice of God in his dealings with them. This ſorrow, and heavineſs, ſpringing from natural affection, will indeed alloy our preſent conſolations: but they are

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Renewing his earneſt deſire of Iſrael's ſalvation, teſtifying to their zeal, ſtating wherein it was erroneous, and diſtinguiſhing between the righteouſneſs of the law, and that of faith, 1---11. 2*d. Shewing that Jews and Gentiles were in this matter upon equal terms; that the prophets had foretold the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles; and that it was proper to preach to all, though many would not believe,* 12---21.

active principles, exciting us to uſe proper means for the converſion of thoſe around us, and to ſubmit to hardſhip, reproach, loſs, or ſuffering in our compaſſionate endeavours for their good: and the ſtronger ſuch affections ariſe in our hearts, the more we reſemble Him, who was made a curſe for us to redeem us from the curſe of the law. We cannot now know whom God may intend to ſave: it will be ſoon enough for us to be "without "natural affection," when perfected in holineſs; and to rejoice in the deſtruction of God's enemies *individually*, when the event makes known to us, who will finally be numbered amongſt them. In the mean time inſenſibility to the eternal condition of others is contrary both to love of the law, and the mercy of the goſpel: and the more, we can appeal to our heart-ſearching Judge, through the teſtimony of his Spirit in our conſciences, that we ſincerely pity, pray for, and would ſuffer any thing to ſave, our moſt virulent deſpiſers, and perſecutors; the greater confidence we may uſe in affectionately warning them of their danger, and of the deluſions, into which they are fallen. For no external forms, notions, means, promiſes, or communion with eminent ſaints, can profit ſuch, as have not the power of godlineſs. Nay, if we ſtood related to Chriſt himſelf, according to the fleſh; we ſhould be no better for it; unleſs we ſubmitted to, truſted in, worſhipped and obeyed him, as God over all bleſſed for ever, Amen. The whole ſcripture ſhews the difference between the profeſſed chriſtian, and the real believer. Outward privileges are beſtowed on many, who are not the children of God: theſe are born of the Spirit, according to the promiſe, and purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will; and not becauſe they were any better by nature, or of themſelves, than others. For "the Lord hath mercy on whom he will have "mercy," "and it is not of him, that willeth, or of him "that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy." Yet is there abundant encouragement to the uſe of means. The promiſes, invitations, and exhortations of ſcripture are perfectly conſiſtent with God's ſecret purpoſes. Where there is a willing mind, and humble diligence in ſeeking Him, the bleſſing will certainly be given: and the happy believer will in due time aſcribe even this willingneſs to the electing love of God. But if men wilfully harden themſelves in diſobedience and impenitence; he will ſhew his power and vengeance in their purpoſed deſtruction, and cauſe all their abuſed proſperity to increaſe their condemnation, and his own glory in it.

And now will any of our rebellious race preſume to ſay that there is unrighteouſneſs with God? Will they quarrel with his judgments, and pretend, that none hath reſiſted his will? Will they cite their offended Sovereign to their blaſphemous tribunal? If they do, let them ſee to it, for evil is before them. He that ſitteth in heaven will deride their folly, and vex them in his hot diſpleaſure: he will go on with his own plan, exerciſing his holy ſovereignty as he ſees good; and, diſtinguiſhing between thoſe who adore, and thoſe who blaſpheme the depths, which they cannot fathom: and he will number with the latter ſuch as pretend to believe theſe doctrines, and then take occaſion from them to ſin more preſumptuouſly. But ſurely all that love and fear God, however theſe truths may dazzle and diſmay them, ſhould reverently keep ſilence before him! And even if they hear them ſtated unſcripturally or licentiouſly; they ſhould take care what words they uſe in diſputing againſt ſuch perſons; that they may not appear to countenance the impieties of infidels, and ungodly men. Modeſty, caution, humility, and profound awe of the holy Majeſty of God, ſhould reſtrain and guide the tongues and pens of all, who ſpeak or write on ſuch ſubjects; however ſatisfied they may be with their own views of them.

Sinners need no further preparing for deſtruction: they are veſſels of wrath, and God's long-ſuffering towards them is very wonderful. But the veſſels of mercy were originally of the ſame lump; and that new creation, by which they are afore prepared unto glory, is as great a diſplay of the riches of God's grace, and mercy, as the inheritance which he freely beſtows upon them. If we have experienced ſomewhat of this change; ſurely, *in our own caſe*, we muſt allow that the Lord alone hath made us to differ: and inſtead of diſputing againſt that free electing love, whence all our happineſs flows; we ſhould be employed in adoring his pardoning mercy, and new-creating grace, or in giving diligence to make our calling and election ſure. And they, who know nothing of this change, have other work to do, than to diſpute either for or againſt this myſterious doctrine. Let them ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, before the door be for ever ſhut; and leave ſuch diſcuſſions to thoſe, who are walking with God in the way to heaven.

As many of us have now obtained mercy, and are the people, and children of the living God, who once were far off from him: ſo we may pray, and uſe means that this may be the caſe with others throughout the earth. For alas, even among the vaſt number of profeſſing chriſtians, it is to be feared, that but a remnant will be ſaved; and that the Lord will be righteous in the deſtruction of a vaſt majority of them. Bleſſed be his name, that he hath left us alſo a ſeed of true believers, to preſerve our land from being as Sodom and Gomorrah; yet this will not prevent many individuals from periſhing with ſtill deeper deſtruction. Whilſt numbers care for none of theſe things, and periſh through open impiety: and whilſt ſome are ſnatched from among them by an unexpected converſion, and paſs from death to

BRETHREN, my heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they might be ſaved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.

4 For Chriſt *is* the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

5 For Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, That the man which doeth thoſe things ſhall live by them.

6 But the righteouſneſs which is of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe, Say not in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down *from above:)*

7 Or, who ſhall deſcend into the deep?

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life, through the righteouſneſs of faith, and the grace of the goſpel: others, who ſeem intent on following after the law of righteouſneſs, attain not to it: becauſe they ſeek it not by faith, but *as it were* by the works of the law; by ſome confuſed obſervance of an imaginary rule; and expecting to atone for ſin by forms, ſacraments, alms, and ſuperſtitions, and by ſome general notion of Chriſt's making up the reſt. At this ſtumbling ſtone how many fall, and loſe the race! Being offended at the humbling, levelling doctrines of free grace, they even make God's own precious foundation for our hope; (on which whoever truſts ſhall never be aſhamed!) a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, and ſo periſh with an aggravated deſtruction. From ſuch a downfall good Lord deliver us. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—4.] Aware of the offence, which his doctrine would give the Jews, and even many of the Jewiſh chriſtians, the apoſtle repeated his proteſtation of his earneſt deſires and fervent prayers for the ſalvation of his people; notwithſtanding their prejudices againſt him, and the perſecutions he had endured from them. He could have wiſhed, that the glory of God had not required their rejection: but he muſt ſtate the fact, and vindicate the divine juſtice in it. Moreover he was ready to bear teſtimony for the Jews, that they were very zealous for the worſhip of God, and ſincerely attached to the law of Moſes; but it was with a miſguided, and ignorant zeal, founded on a miſconſtruction of the law itſelf, and of their national covenant, and ſo leading them fatally to oppoſe the kingdom and ſalvation of their promiſed Meſſiah. For they, not being acquainted with the perfect juſtice of the divine character, law, and government; and not underſtanding the nature of that righteouſneſs which he had provided for the ſinners juſtification conſiſtent with his own glory, had gone about, by various devices, to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, as the meritorious ground of their juſtification: in doing which they had actually refuſed to acknowledge the juſtice of God in their condemnation, and to ſubmit to ſeek righteouſneſs as his free gift by faith alone. The expreſſion "eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs," is taken from a perſon, who allows his houſe to be out of repair, and in ſome danger of falling in; but will not be convinced that the foundation is deſtroyed, and that it muſt come down, and be entirely rebuilt on a new foundation. He therefore endeavours by props, and buttreſſes, and by various repairs, to make the houſe ſtand: but all his expence and labour are thrown away; and if he perſiſt in his vain endeavour, it will be like to fall down, and bury him in its ruins. Thus the Jews, (and immenſe numbers in every age,) when convinced of defects in their moral righteouſneſs, endeavoured to repair them by ceremonial or ſuperſtitious obſervances; nor would they be convinced, that they were building upon a falſe foundation, that they muſt totally give over ſuch vain and perilous endeavours, and come for a free ſalvation to Chriſt, even as the poor Gentiles did. To this they would not ſubmit, becauſe they knew not, that Chriſt was the end, ſcope, and perfection of the law for the juſtification of all Believers. That the ſtrictneſs, and ſanction of the moral law ſhewed men their need of a free ſalvation; and the ceremonies ſhadowed forth Chriſt, and his work, as fulfilling the righteouſneſs, and bearing the curſe of the law: ſo that even under the law, all, who were juſtified before God, obtained that bleſſing by faith, which intereſted them in the perfect righteouſneſs of the promiſed Redeemer.

V. 5—11.] Moſes had repeatedly ſtated the righteouſneſs, which the law demanded of a man in order to his juſtification; (*Lev.* c. xviii. v. 5. *Deut.* c. xxvii. v. 26;) and his deſcription of it ſhewed, that without a ſinleſs obedience to every precept, no man could be accepted, who choſe to continue under the covenant of works: and this effectually cut off all tranſgreſſors from every hope in this way. But the righteouſneſs of faith might be introduced as uſing the words of Moſes, on another occaſion. (Note, *Deut.* c. xxx. v. 11—14.) The ſelf-condemned ſinner need not perplex himſelf with enquiries, how it could be obtained. He need not ſay in his heart, who ſhall aſcend into heaven, to fetch down one, who may introduce ſuch a righteouſneſs? For Chriſt had already come down, and finiſhed that work. Nor need he enquire who ſhould deſcend into the grave, or the place of departed ſpirits, to bring back the crucified Saviour from the dead? For that alſo was done, and he was exalted at the right hand of the Father to confer the bleſſing, on all, who applied for it. Nor was the information reſpecting the means of obtaining an intereſt in it, at a great diſtance, that men ſhould travel into far countries to enquire after it: on the contrary, it was nigh to them, in the word of faith, which the miniſters of Chriſt were ſent to preach; it was in the mouth of all, who profeſſed the goſpel, and in the hearts of all, that believed it. In ſhort, if a man confeſſed his belief in Jeſus, as the Lord, and Saviour of

(that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead.)

8 But what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs; and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.

11 For the ſcripture ſaith, Whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the ſame Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved.

14 How then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how ſhall they preach, except they be ſent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the goſpel: for Eſaias ſaith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I ſay, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their ſound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I ſay, Did not Iſrael know? Firſt Moſes ſaith, I will provoke you to jealouſy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a fooliſh nation I will anger you.

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loſt ſinners; and really believed in his heart, that God had raiſed him again from the dead, in atteſtation of having accepted his atonement, &c: he ſhould certainly be ſaved, by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to him through faith. For that faith, which intereſts a ſinner in the merits of Chriſt, has its ſeat eſpecially in the heart of an humble penitent, and produces cordial deſires after, and love to Chriſt: and the bold confeſſion of his name and truth among enemies, and in the face of danger, evidences that faith to be genuine, and gives a ſure hope of complete ſalvation; according to the prophecy before referred to. (c. ix. v. 33.)

V. 12—17.] In this reſpect there was no difference between Jews, and Gentiles: for as none of them could be juſtified by their works, or ſaved in unbelief; ſo the infinite Creator, and Governor of the world, being rich and plenteous in mercy towards all, who humbly call upon him for ſalvation, (*Pſ.* lxxxvi. v. 5. 9,) would never exclude any of thoſe from juſtification, who believed in his Son. Thus the prophet had ſpoken, concerning the times of the Meſſiah, that "whoſoever "ſhould call on the name of the Lord ſhould be ſaved." (Note, &c. *Joel*, c. ii. v. 28—32. *Acts*; c. ii. v. 16—21.) The Jews in general called upon Jehovah for temporal deliverance, and eternal ſalvation, even whilſt they rejected Chriſt; but they called in vain: this therefore could not be the intent of the prophecy. By calling on the name of the Lord we muſt underſtand either invoking the Lord Jeſus perſonally, as the incarnate Word, the coequal Son of God, God manifeſt in the fleſh; or calling upon the Father, by faith in the Son, and through his interceſſion: but the former ſenſe ſeems beſt to accord to the apoſtle's argument. All believers thus called upon the name of the Lord Jeſus, and none elſe would; that is humbly and ſincerely: therefore all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who thus ſought help from Him, would be ſaved. But how ſhould any call upon the Lord Jeſus, the divine Saviour, who had not believed in him, as ſuch? Or how could any be ſuppoſed to believe in him, who had never heard of him, or his ſalvation? Or how could the Gentiles hear the things pertaining to Chriſt, if none of the Jews, to whom they were immediately revealed, might go and preach to them? Why then ſhould the Jews blame the apoſtle and others, for being employed in this needful, and benevolent work? The neceſſity and importance of preaching the goſpel had been ſtated in ſtrong terms by the prophet, (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. lii. v. 15;) who had poetically deſcribed even the feet of thoſe, who proclaimed the goſpel of peace to be beautiful: and though the Gentiles had not generally welcomed the ſalvation of Chriſt (any more than the Jews,) ſo as to receive it with an obedient faith: yet that too had been intimated by the ſame prophet, when he expreſſed his grief and ſurpriſe at men's general inattention to the glad tidings of ſalvation by a ſuffering Meſſiah. (*Iſaiah*, c. liii. v. 1.) However even the expreſſion he uſed, when he called the goſpel "our report," confirmed the foregoing argument, that faith generally comes by men's hearing a report of Chriſt, which is brought to them by the faithful preaching of the word of God. This is the means, which God hath appointed, and chiefly bleſſes for this purpoſe, and it is therefore man's duty to uſe it, in expectation of his bleſſing.

V. 18—21.] Could it then be ſaid, that either Jews, or Gentiles had not been favoured with the opportunity of hearing the goſpel? Truly that joyful report had been ſo generally, and extenſively diffuſed by the miniſters of Chriſt; that the words of David, reſpecting the inſtructions conveyed to all nations by the luminaries of heaven, (as typical of the Sun of righteouſneſs,) might

20 But Eſaias is very bold, and ſaith, I was found of them that ſought me not; I was made manifeſt unto them that aſked not after me.

22 But to Iſrael he ſaith, All day long I have ſtretched forth my hands unto a diſobedient and gainſaying people.

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be well applied to what had already taken place; though a ſtill more full accompliſhment might be expected. (Note, *Pſ.* xix. v. 4.) And could the Iſraelites pretend, that no intimations had been given them of God's intention to caſt them off for their unbelief, and diſobedience, and to take others in their ſtead? Even Moſes, in that prophetical ſong, which all were commanded to learn throughout their generations, had repreſented Jehovah declaring, that he would excite them to jealouſy by thoſe, who had been no people to him, and raiſe their indignation by his favours ſhewn to a nation, who had been deſpiſed as fooliſh and ignorant; which had been remarkably accompliſhed, in the virulent oppoſition to the goſpel, that the calling of the Gentiles had excited in the Jews; when it ſhould have ſtirred them up to an emulation, not to be ſurpaſſed in faith and holineſs by thoſe, who had before been ſo ignorant, and far from God. (*Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 21.) Iſaiah alſo in very bold language, which muſt have given very great offence to his cotemporaries, had introduced Jehovah, as declaring that he was found as a Saviour, and acceptably worſhipped by thoſe, who juſt before had not ſo much as ſought for him; and that he had freely manifeſted his favour, and conferred his ſpecial grace on thoſe, who had not previouſly made any enquiries after him: but in reſpect of Iſrael, he declared, that he had ſtretched out his hands full of bleſſings, and with moſt earneſt and affectionate invitations, to a diſobedient, and perverſe people, &c. (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. lxv. v. 1—5.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt earneſt, and perſevering deſires, and prayers of faithful miniſters, are offered for the ſalvation of thoſe, from whom they endure the greateſt injuries, and againſt whom they denounce the wrath of God, if they perſiſt in unbelief. Not only are careleſs and ſhameleſs profligates, infidels, and blaſphemers in the broad road to deſtruction, but many alſo, who have a zeal for God, and religion: and whilſt we ſhould allow the propriety of their earneſtneſs in that important concern; we muſt alſo inſiſt upon the abſolute neceſſity of its being regulated by the word of God, well underſtood; without which it can only the more ſpeciouſly deceive, and ruin men's ſouls. Sinners could never perſiſt in their vain endeavours to repair the baſeleſs edifice of their own righteouſneſs; if they knew either the juſtice of God as a Governor, or his righteouſneſs as a Saviour. But being ignorant, through heedleſsneſs, pride, and prejudice, of both the law and the goſpel; they ſtand out againſt their partial convictions, they allow not the juſtice of the ſentence denounced againſt them, as hell-deſerving ſinners, and they will not ſubmit to be ſaved by "the righteouſneſs of faith," in the ſame way, with the vileſt of the human ſpecies. Manifold are their devices, and endeavours to make out a legal righteouſneſs of their own; but all their labour is loſt, and their ſouls continue in the moſt imminent danger: for in oppoſition to all other methods of obtaining the divine favour, whether forged by ignorance, ſuperſtition, philoſophy, or grave morality, we muſt ſtill inſiſt upon it, "that "Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every "believer;" and that every unbeliever remains under the curſe of the law, and the wrath of God. If a man object to this, and begin to diſpute about the difference between moral and ceremonial obedience, and to argue that the former may help to juſtify a man, though the latter cannot: let him hear Moſes deſcribe the righteouſneſs of the law; and then let him enquire whether he can claim eternal life according to it: let him take the law of God, (for rules, that men preſcribe to themſelves and each other are out of the queſtion:) and having produced a ſinleſs obedience to it, through the whole of his continuance here, in thought, word, and deed; let him then demand the reward as a debt. But if this be a deſperate buſineſs; let him ſubmit to the degradation of a condemned criminal, and apply for a pardon to the clemency of his offended Lord, and for eternal life as his free gift through Jeſus Chriſt, and by faith in him.

The humble trembling ſinner hath however no cauſe for diſcouragement. The righteouſneſs of faith, as it were, invites him to accept of it: the Surety hath finiſhed his obedience, and atonement, and is riſen and exalted to be our all-prevailing Advocate. Nor need we croſs the ſeas, or explore far diſtant climes in queſt of divine knowledge: this is brought nigh to us in the goſpel; and if we receive it by living faith in our hearts, and confeſs that faith with our mouths, in this evil world; without doubt the bleſſing is ours. But we ſhould not truſt in a faith, of which we are afraid, or aſhamed to make a confeſſion: much leſs ought we to depend on any confeſſion of, or aſſent to, divine truths, which we have not believed in our hearts. For though faith doth not juſtify, as it is the principle of love and obedience; but as it forms our relation to Chriſt, and our intereſt in his righteouſneſs: yet no faith is juſtifying, which is not alſo efficacious in ſanctifying the heart, and regulating all its affections in ſubſerviency to the love of Chriſt. Of ſuch a faith no ſinner ſhall be aſhamed before God; and he ought therefore to glory in it before man. In this there is no difference: for our rich and gracious Lord moſt willingly regards the deſires of all, who call upon him; and none receive the leſs, becauſe of the numbers, who ſhare the bleſſings with them. As therefore faith, (whence all true prayer proceeds,) comes by hearing the word of God: we ſhould be careful to be found amongſt thoſe, who obey the goſpel; and we ſhould diligently endeavour to communicate the ſame bleſſing to others, even to the ends of the earth, as far as we have any influence; that the Sun of righteouſneſs may diffuſe his healing beams, wherever the ſun in the firmament gives light to mankind. When we hear of the ſucceſs of the goſpel among the ignorant, the barbarous, or the profligate: inſtead of being diſpleaſed, as proud Phariſees are;

CHAP. XI.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Shewing that the rejection of the Jews was not total, but with the reſerve of a choſen remnant, 1---10. *2d. Predicting, that it would not be final; ſeeing the nation would at length be recalled into the church, as the Gentiles had been converted; with cautions to the Gentile converts, and declarations of glorious times, which were at length to arrive,* 11---32. *3d. Adoring the infinite depths of the divine wiſdom, and the glory of his underived all-ſufficiency, and abſolute ſovereignty, &c,* 33---36.

I Say then, Hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. For I alſo am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God hath not caſt away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of Elias? how he maketh interceſſion to God againſt Iſrael, ſaying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they ſeek my life.

4 But what ſaith the anſwer of God unto him? I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thouſand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal.

5 Even ſo then at this preſent time alſo there is a remnant, according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwiſe work is no more work.

7 What then? Iſrael hath not obtained

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we ſhould cordially adore the riches and power of divine grace, in thus being found of them, who ſought him not: and we ſhould excite ourſelves and each other to an holy jealouſy, and increaſing diligence, leſt we ſhould be left behind by thoſe, who once were ſo far below us in ſpiritual advantages. Thus we ſhall be ſure, that we are not of that immenſe number, to whom the Lord ſays, "all day long have I ſtretched out my hands "to a diſobedient and gainſaying people."

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—6.] The apoſtle next ſuppoſes, that it would be enquired, whether God had utterly caſt off his choſen people, and ſo failed of performing his promiſes to their fathers? This inference from his doctrine he decidedly diſavowed. Indeed the Lord could not ſo properly be ſaid to have caſt them off, as they to have caſt him off, by their determined oppoſition to the kingdom and ſalvation of the promiſed Meſſiah; whereby they forfeited their privileges of courſe. This appeared from the ready reception, which all ſuch met with, as were willing to become the diſciples of Chriſt: of this Paul himſelf was a moſt remarkable inſtance; for, notwithſtanding his furious perſecution of the church, yet he was now become the apoſtle of Chriſt to the Gentiles, though he were of the ſeed of Abraham, &c. God had not therefore caſt away his people, whom he had foreknown, as in due time to be called and juſtified, (c. viii. v. 28—30;) to whom eſpecially his promiſes had reſpect: though he had left the reſt to fall by their unbelief. But as a conſiderable remnant was reſerved to the Lord, in the days of Elijah, when that eminent prophet was ready to conclude, that he alone was left to ſerve Him, (Notes, &c. 1 *Kings*, c. xix:) even ſo there was a remnant reſerved of many ten thouſand Jews, yea a far greater proportion than was generally ſuppoſed, at that very period when the nation was caſt off from being God's peculiar people. This remnant was reſerved according to the election of grace: not becauſe they were leſs undeſerving of ſuch favour than others; but becauſe God was pleaſed to have mercy on them, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf: otherwiſe they too, would have periſhed in unbelief, and the apoſtle himſelf in particular. If then this election were of grace, it could no more be pretended to be of works, either performed or foreſeen; as this would imply that ſomething, *naturally* in the objects choſen, determined the Lord's preference, and that it did not originate in his mere grace. For if in any ſenſe or degree it were of works, it would in part at leaſt be of debt, and not of entire free favour; otherwiſe work, as it ſtands related to man's juſtification, would loſe its very nature. For an entire free favour muſt be abſolutely diſtinct from a reward conferred in conſequence of ſome work performed: as the price of one farthing, paid for what is worth a thouſand pounds, muſt in exact propriety of ſpeech eſſentially diſtinguiſh it, from an entire free gift. This text is ſo deciſive on the ſubject, that great pains have been taken to explain it away: but really the arguments of the moſt able and learned men on the other ſide prove nothing ſo much, as the weakneſs of their cauſe; and the moſt illiterate experienced believers may fairly be left to anſwer them for themſelves. I ſhall therefore only obſerve in general, that *in fact*, they are not called, who to our apprehenſion are beſt diſpoſed to perform good works, but often the contrary; as ſcripture examples alone undeniably demonſtrate: that every real good diſpoſition in an apoſtate creature, muſt be the *effect*, and cannot therefore be *the cauſe*, of God's grace being beſtowed on him: that God did not act without reaſons, in chooſing one rather than another, though we are not made acquainted with them: and that the diſplay of the infinite riches of his mercy, the omnipotence of his grace, and the glory of his own abſolute ſovereignty, in converting the moſt unlikely perſons in the world, are commonly far more probable reaſons of his choice; than any foreſeen previous preferableneſs of natural diſpoſition in thoſe, that eventually are ſaved, above thoſe that periſh.

V. 7—10.] What then was the preciſe ſtate of the that which he ſeeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the reſt were blinded;

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the ſpirit of ſlumber, eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear;) unto this day.

9 And David ſaith, Let their table be made a ſnare, and a trap, and a ſtumbling block, and a recompence unto them:

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not ſee, and bow down their back alway.

11 I ſay then, Have they ſtumbled that they ſhould fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall ſalvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealouſy.

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulneſs?

13 For I ſpeak to you Gentiles, in as much as I am the apoſtle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them.

15 For if the caſting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *ſhall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead?

16 For if the firſt-fruit *be* holy, the lump

Jewiſh nation? In general they had not obtained that juſtification unto life, which they ſought for; becauſe they clave to their own devices, and rejected the goſpel of God: but the election, or the choſen remnant among them, had obtained it; whilſt the reſt were blinded: ſo that the rejection of the latter was the puniſhment of their own ſins; but the calling of the former was neither the conſequence, nor reward of their own works. The election here mentioned, as diſtinct from Iſrael God's choſen people; (that is, an election within an election;) clearly marks the difference between a collective choice of a people to ſpecial external privileges, and a perſonal choice of individuals to eternal life: and it fully refutes the ſentiments of thoſe, who would confine all theſe ſcriptures to the former kind of election; becauſe they know not what elſe to do with them. This judicial blindneſs of the enemies of Chriſt, had been clearly foretold, and might therefore have been previouſly expected. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 9—12. c. xxix. v. 9—12. *Pſ.* lxix. v. 22—24.) Theſe ſcriptures have already been explained in this ſenſe: but we may add upon the verſion here given of David's words, that the proviſion made for their ſouls; (as well as their temporal plenty,) were, in righteous judgment, made the occaſion of their being more deeply enſnared in guilt, and ſtumbling into more dreadful condemnation, as the recompence of their unbelief; till at length they were totally blinded, and given up as ſlaves to the oppreſſion of their enemies, to be bowed down continually with the heavy burdens laid upon them; which was an emblem of their baſe, and ruinous bondage to ſin, and ſatan.

V. 11—15.] The apoſtle next enquired whether the nation had ſo ſtumbled, as *finally* to be excluded from all further ſhare in the bleſſings covenanted to their fathers? Or, whether God had no further end in that myſterious diſpenſation, than merely their fall and ruin? As his anſwer is made to both theſe queſtions, it is not obvious to decide which he eſpecially meant to propoſe. However he would not admit of the ſuppoſition by any means: for it actually appeared, that the Lord intended through the fall of the Jews, to communicate his ſalvation to the Gentiles. The perſecution of the chriſtians in Judea drave them into other regions: and the Jews in every place generally rejecting the goſpel, excited the preachers more ſpeedily, and openly to addreſs the Gentiles; by which means vaſt multitudes had been turned from idols to ſerve the living God, &c. Yet even this was ſuited to excite the Jews to an holy jealouſy, and an emulation with the Gentile worſhippers, in zeal for the ſervice of Jehovah, and earneſtneſs in ſeeking the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom; though it too generally had the contrary effect, through their pride, and bigotted prejudices. If then their fall had been over-ruled for the enriching of the world in general with the bleſſings of the preached goſpel; if the diminution of the numbers of that long-favoured people, by the expulſion of ſo large a part of them from the viſible church, and the ſubſequent judgments inflicted on them, was the occaſion of communicating ſuch rich bleſſings to immenſe numbers of the benighted Gentiles: how much more will their converſion, when the whole nation ſhall in one full body acknowledge and ſubmit to their long-deſpiſed Meſſiah. For this they have ever ſince been preſerved a diſtinct people, almoſt by a continued miracle: and as their converſion will probably be effected by means of the fulfilment of other prophecies; ſo it is likely that it will conduce to the converſion of the nations in general. For Paul, addreſſing himſelf to the Gentile converts, (though he was aware that both the Jewiſh chriſtians, and the unconverted Jews would read his argument;) ſpake in the character of their apoſtle, by the ſpecial deſignation of Chriſt, and to commend and magnify that office, as honourable to himſelf, (though he was vilified for it,) and moſt important for the good of mankind. At the ſame time, by a moſt judicious and delicate turn, he repreſented his zeal for the converſion of the Gentiles as animated by the deſire of ſtirring his brethren the Jews, whom he regarded as his own fleſh, to emulate their faith, and aſpire to their privileges; that thus he might be inſtrumental in ſaving ſome of them alſo, though he knew that the ſentence denounced upon the nation was irreverſible. The Engliſh word *provoke*, being now fixed in common uſe to the idea of exciting indignation, is very apt to confuſe the *is* alſo *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, ſo *are* the branches.

17 And if ſome of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive tree;

18 Boaſt not againſt the branches: but if thou boaſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt ſay then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; becauſe of unbelief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:

21 For if God ſpared not the natural bran-

reader's mind, and to prevent his clearly ſeeing, that the apoſtle ſpake of exciting them to holy, and not to unholy paſſions; though the latter was generally the effect of his conduct, but contrary to his intentions. As therefore the righteous rejection of the unbelieving Jews had proved the occaſion of ſuch multitudes of the Gentiles, throughout the world, being reconciled to, and walking at peace with God: what would their future reception into the church introduce, but ſuch a change as would reſemble a general reſurrection of the dead in ſin to a life of righteouſneſs, in every part of the world; and a proportionable increaſe of ſpiritual life to all, who before had believed? This event will accompliſh ſo many prophecies in ſo open, and ſignal a manner, that infidelity in every form muſt be finally confuted and ſilenced; and the attention of the moſt heedleſs muſt be excited to the aſtoniſhing diſplay of God's power in performing his word: and as He delighteth in mercy, he will effectually concur with theſe impreſſions, by pouring out his holy Spirit for the converſion of the nations, and to render genuine chriſtianity univerſally triumphant.

V. 16—21.] The apoſtle had before ſpoken fully of perſonal election, and ſaving grace: but his argument gradually led him to ſpeak of Iſrael, as the viſible church of God, the repoſitory of his oracles and ordinances; the vineyard he had incloſed and planted, but which he was now about to leave deſolate and expoſed. The nature of his arguments will eaſily ſhew the attentive reader, that he is not here ſpeaking of *real*, but of relative holineſs. The firſt fruits of the dough, being preſented to God, as it were ſanctified the whole lump to the uſe of his people: thus the patriarchs, the firſtfruits of Iſrael, being choſen and ſet apart, with their ſeed after them, as an holy people to the Lord, through all their generations; a meaſure of this relative ſanctity attached to their poſterity, notwithſtanding all their rebellions and viſitations: in conſequence of which all their males were circumciſed on the eighth day, as the profeſſed people, and worſhippers of Jehovah. But another ſimilitude ſtill more aptly illuſtrated this ſubject: if the root of the tree were holy, the branches, muſt be ſuppoſed to be the ſame. Now Abraham was, as it were, the root of the viſible church in all ſubſequent ages. After Iſhmael, and the ſons of Keturah had been broken off, the tree grew up in Iſaac: then Eſau being broken off, it ſhot forth abundance of branches in Jacob, and his twelve ſons. When any Gentiles were proſelyted, they were grafted into this tree by circumciſion, as long as the legal diſpenſation laſted; (but by baptiſm after the chriſtian diſpenſation entered:) and they, and their poſterity were thenceforth conſidered as branches of the tree, a part of the viſible church, as ſpringing from Abraham. Notwithſtanding all former rebellions, the Jews were conſidered as the branches of this tree, till their national rejection of the Meſſiah; (though the moſt of the ten tribes had before been broken off:) but after that, their relation to Abraham, and to God, was as it were ſuſpended: they were broken off from the olive tree, in vaſt multitudes: they were caſt out of the church, as the children of the bond-woman, or as profane Eſau: neither they nor their poſterity any longer retained even the outward ſeal of the covenant; for circumciſion loſt it's validity, and baptiſm became the ſign of regeneration; and they were thenceforth deprived of the ordinances of God's worſhip. At the ſame time the Gentiles were grafted into this tree, in their room: by profeſſing faith in Chriſt, and being baptized into his name, they were admitted into the viſible church of God, and attained a relative holineſs; they were favoured with the means of grace, and the ordinances of God for their good, and that of their children after them, as the Jews formerly had been; and multitudes, that had been the branches of the wild unfruitful olive tree, were thus made heirs of Abraham's faith, holineſs, and bleſſedneſs. Yet the Gentile chriſtians ought by no means to copy the Jews, in being proud of their diſtinction; or in boaſting over thoſe, who had been rejected to make room for them. But if any of them were thus diſpoſed, they ſhould recollect, that they were not the root of this well-cultured fruitful tree; nor had they naturally ſprung from it, but of free grace had been grafted into it, to ſhare its advantages. They might indeed ſay that the natural branches had been broken off, to make way for them; and it was indeed true that God had preferred them; yet it was not on account of their works, but of mere grace. Through unbelief, the offspring of pride, the Jews had been broken off; and through faith the Gentiles had been grafted in: they ought therefore to beware of ſelf-confidence, ſelf-preference, and every kind of pride or ambition; leſt having only a dead faith, and an empty profeſſion, they ſhall apoſtatize from God and forfeit their privileges. For if he had not ſpared the natural branches; they ought ſurely to fear leſt they too ſhould be broken off. This doubtleſs refers to the collective body of profeſſing chriſtians, and not to individual believers: the latter are indeed preſerved through humility, and holy fear; yet there is no real danger of their being cut off. Moreover it has a peculiar *prophetic* energy, when we conſider it as addreſſed to the Roman church, which ſo ſoon, attempting to domineer over ches, *take heed* leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.

22 Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity of God: on them which fell, ſeverity; but toward thee, goodneſs, if thou continue in *his* goodneſs: otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off.

23 And they alſo, if they abide not in unbelief, ſhall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more ſhall theſe, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, leſt ye ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits: that blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in.

other churches, to be the metropolis of the chriſtian world, and at length to be infallible, &c, fell through pride and preſumption, till it became the mother of harlots, and of abominations of the earth. It is obvious to obſerve that, though the illuſtration of grafting excellently ſuited the apoſtle's purpoſe, yet the reverſe takes place in the caſe before us, than in natural grafting: for there the good Cion commmunicates its changing efficacy to the wild ſtock; here the good ſtock imparts its efficacy to the corrupt branches, which by divine power are grafted into it. Perhaps the olive tree, rather than the vine, was ſelected by the apoſtle for his illuſtration, becauſe Chriſt had appropriated the latter to himſelf and his diſciples. His reaſoning in this place ſtrongly evinces the oneneſs of the viſible church under every diſpenſation; and the change of the initiatory ordinance ſince the coming of Chriſt is manifeſt: his ſtatement therefore implies more ſolid, and ſubſtantial arguments in favour of infant baptiſm, than has generally been ſuppoſed: and all, who believe perſonal election, and the final perſeverance of true chriſtians, muſt allow, that he ſpake of the collective body of the viſible church, and not of individual believers.

V. 22—24.] Inſtead of boaſting over the rejected Jews, or glorying in themſelves, the Gentile converts ſhould contemplate, with wonder, awe and gratitude, the unmerited goodneſs, and righteous ſeverity of the Lord: on the fallen Jews ſeverity, but to themſelves moſt aſtoniſhing goodneſs. Yet, conſidering them as profeſſors of chriſtianity, concerning whom there was no abſolute demonſtration, that they were all true believers, it was proper to add, "if they continued in that goodneſs;" that is, if in humble faith they received, and lived upon the grace diſplayed in the goſpel. But if any of them, either perſonally, or collectively, were unbelieving, and preſumptuous, and renounced the truth; they too would be cut off. Whereas if the Jews were not obſtinate in their unbelief, they would be grafted in again; which would be eaſily accompliſhed by the divine power. For if he had taken the Gentiles, as branches of the wild olive-tree, the deſcendants of thoſe, who for ſo many ages had been ignorant, and licentious idolaters; and had, by his word and Spirit, grafted them amongſt his own people and worſhippers: doubtleſs he would much more in due time graft the Jews, the natural branches, again into their own Olive Tree. This was ſpoken prophetically, both reſpecting the apoſtacy of the Roman church, and the future converſion of the Jews.

V. 25—32.] Perhaps the apoſtle was aware, that the myſtery of iniquity already wrought in the church at Rome, (2 *Theſ.* c. ii. v. 7;) and therefore he laboured the more to check its fatal progreſs. He would not have them ignorant of the myſterious purpoſes of God reſpecting his ancient people, leſt their preſent diſtinction ſhould feed their ſelf-conceit, and pride, reſpecting their own wiſdom. The Lord, in his righteous ſovereignty had permitted blindneſs *in part* to happen even to Iſrael: not a *partial*, but a *total* blindneſs; but it extended only to a *part* of the nation, for the election was preſerved from it. This would continue to be the caſe, till the happy period arrived, for the converſion of the fulneſs of the Gentiles. In the intermediate ages vaſt numbers of them would be gathered into the church; but about the time of the laſt great harveſt of the nations, the blindneſs will be removed from Iſrael, and the nation will be ſaved from its preſent rejected, diſperſed ſtate, and be brought in a body to embrace the goſpel; probably it will be reſtored to the holy land, and moſt of the Jews *at leaſt* will become true believers. This accorded to a prophecy, which as here quoted, predicts the ſpiritual coming of Chriſt, to turn away from the Jewiſh nation their ungodlineſs, impenitence, unbelief, and enmity to the Meſſiah's kingdom, and ſalvation; that, by thus removing the guilt, and power of their ſins, his covenant may again be ratified with them. For, though in reſpect of their rejection of the goſpel, and their indignation at it's being preached to the Gentiles, they were conſidered as enemies to God; which was over-ruled for the calling of the Gentiles, through ſpecial love to them: yet in regard to the original election of that people in Abraham, &c, and the immenſe number of elect perſons, that are yet to ſpring from them; they are ſtill to be favoured of God, for the ſake of their pious fathers: ſeeing God would, in his perſevering love, and kindneſs to that race, through all ages, ſhew, that however he is ſaid to repent of his threatenings and judgments, and is thus better than his word; yet he never repents, or is ſaid to repent, of his ſpecial gifts, or diſtinguiſhed favours beſtowed upon, or promiſed to fallen man. So that as the Gentiles, who had once no knowledge of God, had at length obtained mercy, through the unbelief of the Jews, and by means of their preachers: even ſo the unbelieving Jews might at length obtain mercy, through the mercy ſhewn to the Gentiles, and receive the goſpel from them in their turn. For God had alternately left both of them in unbelief, ſhut up as in a priſon, for the

26 And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved: as it is written, There ſhall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob:

27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I ſhall take away their ſins.

28 As concerning the goſpel, *they are* enemies for your ſakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' ſakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

30 For as ye in times paſt have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even ſo have theſe alſo now not believed, that through your mercy they alſo may obtain mercy.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſellor?

35 Or who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

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appointed time; in order, that at length he might have mercy upon them all, by bringing both Jews and Gentiles, and all nations to the knowledge of his ſalvation by faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

V. 33—36.] The apoſtle had now gone as far in unravelling, illuſtrating, and vindicating the myſterious deſigns of God, as was proper, or profitable: yet he well knew that much darkneſs, and difficulty muſt ſtill reſt upon them; and that preſumption, pride, and unbelief would ſtill multiply enquiries, and objections. But he would give no countenance either to thoſe, who, with moſt abſurd arrogance, pretend to reduce all poſſible exiſtence, truth, or knowledge, to the ſize of their own intellect, and to believe no more than they can comprehend; or to thoſe, who know no end of ſpeculating, and diſputing, and of arguing from revealed truths to their unrevealed precedents, and conſequents, as they ſuppoſe them to be. Inſtead of this he cloſed the ſubject, by breaking forth into admiration, and adoration of the unfathomable depth, and infinite treaſures of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! His views are immenſe, and eternal; and his reaſons, for every part of his vaſt deſigns, are taken from himſelf, and his purpoſe of glorifying his own perfections; to us therefore they muſt be impenetrable, and inexplicable, but they are all conſiſtent with the riches of his juſtice, truth, and love. His judgments and determinations, and his wiſdom in them, cannot be fully inveſtigated, or comprehended by any created being, much leſs by us ſinful worms: His dealings with his creatures cannot be traced out; for they are in the vaſt deep, where his footſteps cannot be known. So that we ſhould be ſatisfied to underſtand, and receive by faith, the information, which he graciouſly reveals: and to believe him to act with perfect wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and goodneſs, when we cannot comprehend what he is doing, or when his diſpenſations *ſeem to us* not reconcileable to theſe his eſſential perfections. This muſt be the duty, and the ſituation of created intelligences: for what being hath an intuitive acquaintance with the mind of the great Creator; that he ſhould be able to diſcover his unrevealed deſigns? (1 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 10.) Or who can pretend, that he hath counſelled the moſt High, and therefore underſtands his intentions, and can unravel his decrees? (*Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 13.) Or who hath *firſt* given any thing to the Lord, or rendered him any ſervice, previous to his having received ſo much from him, as to be bound by the ſtrongeſt obligations to devote his all to him? If any can prove, that the Lord is thus indebted to him; he ſhall certainly be recompenſed by Him: but all ſuch claims, and all men's diſputations againſt his decrees, diſpenſations, truths, and precepts, &c, involve in them the moſt irrational arrogance, and horrible blaſphemy. For *of Him*, as the ſelf-exiſtent, all-ſufficient, and eternal Fountain of being, and perfection, all creatures were originally derived: *by*, and *through Him*, they all ſubſiſt, are provided for, and diſpoſed of; and *to Him* they all are, or ought to be, wholly devoted; and in one way or other, they all ſhall proclaim, or diſplay the glory of his perfections, and the honour of his great name. Inſtead therefore of murmuring, and objecting, all men ſhould, and all believers will moſt cordially ſay, "To Him be glory for ever, Amen."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord will be juſtified in all his ſayings, and overcome when he is judged; and the preſumption of his enemies will iſſue in the further diſplay of his glory. He never caſts away thoſe, whom he hath foreknown, and predeſtinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son; and if this ſeal be affixed to our ſouls, we may be aſſured of his everlaſting favour. We may alſo chearfully hope, that He hath reſerved for himſelf a larger proportion of ſuch perſons, in the worſt of times, than fall under our cognizance, or comport with any of our computations: and inſtead of reviling, or making interceſſion againſt the multitudes of worthleſs profeſſors of chriſtianity, with whom we are ſurrounded; we ſhould ſtill hope and pray, that a remnant, according to the election of grace, may yet be gathered from among them. For as our ſalvation originates wholly from the entire free grace of God, without any reſpect to our works; ſo

CHAP. XII.

Contains exhortations, 1ſt. To a holy devotedneſs to God, to humility, to a concern for each other's welfare, and to a faithful improvement of talents, in the duties of every ſtation for the common good of the church, 1---8. *2d. To mutual love, diligence, patience, hope, prayer, hoſpitality, compaſſion, condeſcenſion, &c,* 9---16. *3d. To a peaceable, and becoming conduct towards all men, and to a perſevering kindneſs to enemies,* 17---21.

we may expect to ſee that grace abound in the converſion of the chief of ſinners of every deſcription. But though mere grace muſt have the whole glory of our ſalvation: yet ſinners periſh through, and for their own wickedneſs; and they, who ſeek God's favour in unauthorized ways, will never obtain what they are in purſuit of. Numbers are thus left to be blinded, and given up to the ſpirit of ſlumber, and to preſumptuous confidence; till all their advantages tend to enſnare, harden, and bind them faſt in the bondage of ſatan: and it is only of the mercy of God, that any of us are preſerved from, or extricated out of theſe ſtrong deluſions, which might juſtly have been awarded us, as the recompence of our pride, and ungodlineſs.

But the Lord over-rules the fall and ruin of ſome, to the ſalvation of others. His awful judgments on daring tranſgreſſors frequently warn their companions or neighbours to flee from the wrath to come: and on the other hand the converſion of notorious ſinners ſometimes excites others to enquire after him. But what extenſive, permanent, and moſt glorious effects may be produced, in the whole creation of God, through eternal ages, by the fall of angels, and men, by our redemption in Chriſt, and by the diſpenſations of God towards his church, and the world, we cannot tell. However, a hint of this, a glimpſe, as it were, into the inviſible world, ſhould remind us, that the Lord may have ten thouſand wiſe and gracious reaſons, for his moſt ſevere, and terrible judgments, of which we can form no conceptions; and this may ſerve to repreſs the fooliſh, and impious conceit, that we are competent judges of His conduct. Thus the fall of the Jews was the occaſion of the Gentiles being enriched with the precious, and unſearchable treaſures of Chriſt; and his juſtice, truth, and wiſdom were glorified in that awful diſpenſation: yet the perſons concerned have had their eyes ſo darkened, that they can ſee nothing of theſe glories in it.

We, who are the miniſters of the goſpel, however mean and unworthy we are in ourſelves, ſhould magnify our office, as tending unſpeakably more to enrich, and bleſs mankind, (provided it be faithfully executed;) than all arts, ſciences, commerce, or improvements whatſoever unitedly can do. Whilſt we labour for the converſion of thoſe, among whom we are called to miniſter; we ſhould have an eye alſo to others, and even to thoſe, who are moſt prejudiced againſt us; if by any means we can excite them to emulation, or do any thing to ſave ſome of them; for they too are our own fleſh. Though the Lord over-rules his works of judgment, to the reconciling of ſinners to himſelf; yet he moſt delighteth in mercy: and he will ere long diſplay his glorious power, by making the ſalvation of one people the introduction to that of others, till it ſhall be as life from the dead to all the nations of the earth. The happy days approach; (though a thouſand years in God's ſight are but as one day;) and whilſt we wait and pray for them let us be thankful for our engrafting, as branches of the wild olive tree, into the holy tree of God's church, to partake of the root, and fatneſs of it; and that the bleſſing of Abraham might come on us Gentiles, by faith. But let the ſtate of thoſe, who were the natural branches of this tree, warn us not to reſt in external profeſſion, or advantages; not to boaſt over, or prefer ourſelves to others; not to indulge pride, or carnal ſecurity. If we truly ſtand at all, it is "by faith:" this implies that we are guilty, weak, polluted, and helpleſs in ourſelves; and warns us to be humble, watchful, and afraid of deceiving ourſelves, or of being overcome by temptation. Alas how hath the once flouriſhing church of Rome fallen, by neglecting the apoſtle's caution! And how many other churches, and individuals have, in a meaſure, trodden the ſame path, either to utter ruin, or deep diſgrace! But bleſſed are they, who fear always, and walk humbly with God; who contemplate with holy awe, and fervent gratitude, the ſeverity, and the goodneſs of the Lord, as revealed in his word, and diſplayed in his providence; who are thus led to be ſober, and to watch unto prayer; who in the conſtant exerciſe of living faith "continue in his goodneſs," and wait for its complete effect in their eternal ſalvation. But if any preſume themſelves to be the peculiar people of God, and deſpiſe others, whilſt in fact they are ſtrangers to his new-creating grace; they will at length be cut off, and caſt as unfruitful branches into the fire: whilſt ſuch as have been moſt eſtranged from the truth, will find admiſſion to all the privileges of the goſpel, if they abide not in unbelief.

As pride is the genuine offspring of arrogance: ſo a *ſpiritual* knowledge of God's myſterious truths and diſpenſations, will tend to prevent our being wiſe in our own conceits. His dealings with his creatures appear very different, when viewed in detached parts, from what they will do, when ſeen as conſtituting a moſt glorious whole. Zion's great Deliverer ſaves none from wrath, but thoſe who are ſeparated from ungodlineſs; for his covenant with his people enſures their ſanctification, as well as their juſtification. His gifts and calling are "*without* "*repentance*," in reſpect of his true church: this he hath ſhadowed forth in his dealings with Iſrael as a nation. Their captivities, diſperſions, and excluſion from the church, are emblems of the believer's corrections, and rebukes for his tranſgreſſions: and the continued favour of the Lord towards that people, and the final mercy intended for them, for their father's ſake, denote the perſevering patience, and victorious love of God to thoſe, whom he hath choſen in Chriſt before the foundation of the world, and will finally ſave *for his ſake*. As we therefore have obtained mercy, through the unbelief of the Jews; let us pray, and uſe proper means as we can, that through our mercy, they may ſpeedily obtain mer-

CHAP. XII.

I Beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reaſonable ſervice.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

3 For I ſay, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himſelf* more highly than he ought to think; but to think ſoberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith.

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cy: (Notes, &c. *Hoſ.* c. i. ii. iii:) and inſtead of perplexing our minds about ſecret things; let us walk in the light which the Lord hath graciouſly afforded us: and conſcious of our inability to comprehend his deep deſigns; let us adore the riches of his wiſdom and knowledge, whoſe judgments are not to be inveſtigated, nor his ways traced out; whoſe mind none can penetrate, or comprehend; who needs and regards no counſellor; who firſt gives life and all things to every one; and to whom none can render any thing, which he hath not firſt received from him. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." (*Dan.* c. iv. ver. 34—37.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1, 2.] The apoſtle, having now cloſed the more doctrinal, and argumentative part of his epiſtle, (which hath been ſhewn to be well guarded, and of very practical tendency;) proceeds here to enforce more particularly a variety of important duties, from evangelical principles. He intreated, or exhorted the Romans, as his brethren in Chriſt, in the moſt earneſt, and affectionate manner, by the mercies of God in their election, redemption, converſion, and abundant privileges, that they would evidence the ſincerity of their love, and honour the goſpel, by preſenting themſelves, as a living ſacrifice unto God. The alluſion ſeems to be made to the living animals, which were preſented as ſacrifices before the altar, that they might be ſlain, and thus offered to God upon it. Thus chriſtians ſhould preſent their bodies before God, to be employed in his ſervice, to be ſpent and worn out by hardſhips or labours for him, or even to be put to death in his cauſe, if called to it; that ſo they might be wholly devoted to his glory. (c. vi. v. 12, 13. 16.) The body, with it's members, ſenſes, and organs, is the inſtrument of the carnal mind, in executing it's purpoſes, and gratifying its evil inclinations: when therefore the mind is made ſpiritual, the body ſhould, in like manner, execute it's holy purpoſes, and expreſs it's ſpiritual affections. Thus the ſoul becomes the conſecrated prieſt, and the body the living ſacrifice unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt. In general this ſacrifice muſt be preſented alive, to be employed in the worſhip, and work of God; though ſometimes at length, it muſt alſo be offered up to death, by martyrdom. As the legal ſacrifices, (which that of Chriſt had now ſuperſeded,) were to be without ſpot, or blemiſh: ſo the bodies of believers muſt be ſeparated from the practice of all iniquity, or they cannot be fit to be an euchariſtic ſacrifice to God; but being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, they are acceptable to Him; and the worſhip and obedience performed by them, as the inſtruments of the renewed ſoul, are far more pleaſing and honourable to Him, than legal ſacrifices could be. This is a reaſonable ſervice, and worſhip, ſuited to rational creatures, and to their relations and obligations to God, as redeemed ſinners; whereas the oblation of bulls and goats, when ſeparated from its typical meaning, had nothing in it ſo ſuited to the nature of God and man. But in thus wholly dedicating themſelves to the ſervice of the Lord, they muſt go entirely againſt the courſe of this evil world, and incur the cenſure, ridicule, and enmity of ungodly men, which would greatly interfere with their worldly intereſts. They muſt not therefore form any ſchemes of worldly happineſs, or conform to the maxims, cuſtoms, and faſhions of mankind in general. They muſt not comply with common uſages, as to any of their purſuits, or employments, in any reſpect, wherein ſuch uſages were contrary to the holy commands of God, the ſpirit of the goſpel, the intereſts of piety, the proſperity of their own ſouls, the improvement of their talents, "always abounding in the work of the Lord," for the honour of God, and the welfare of mankind. In all ſuch matters the reproach of ſingularity is honourable, the want of it ſuſpicious, and to be faſhionable is to be unchriſtian. A ſerious regard to ſuch rules as theſe would ſoon ſhew men, in what things they "muſt not be conformed to this world:" and it would eaſily convince them, that affected ſingularity in things minute, or indifferent, comes far ſhort of the ſpirituality of the rule; and that men excuſe their vain amuſements, ſplendid decorations, expenſive feaſtings, waſte of time, &c, &c; becauſe they love the friendſhip of the world, ſavour earthly things, and cannot endure ſelf-denial, or the croſs; not becauſe they can fairly prove that the world in ſuch things is ſo conformed to the ſpirit of the goſpel, that they may ſafely conform to it. In order therefore to eſcape ſuch ſnares, the apoſtle calls upon them "to be transformed by the renewing of the mind." This transformation of the ſoul into the holy Image of Chriſt, (as he was transfigured on the Mount;) this daily renovation, and ſpiritualizing of the judgment and affections by the power of the Holy Spirit, is the only effectual cure of "conformity to this world;" becauſe it produces conformity to *that*, which is above: and, with the promiſes, aſſurances, and ordinances given to chriſtians, it is proper to exhort them to it, *as their duty*. Thus they prove, or make trial of, and experience the happineſs to be found in obeying the ſalutary, excellent, and holy will of God, made known in his ſpiritual law, and now enforced by the bleſſed goſpel. This alone can be an acceptable ſervice to God, as being perfect in its own nature, and ſuited to the perfecting of our ſouls in holineſs.

V. 3—5.] The former exhortation was in the affecti-

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the ſame office;

5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Chriſt, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us propheſy* according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or miniſtry, *let us wait* on *our* miniſtering: or he that teacheth, on teaching:

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with ſimplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that ſheweth mercy, with chearfulneſs.

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onate ſtyle of brotherly love, but this is in that of apoſtolical authority. According to the diſtinguiſhing favour ſhewn to him in his call to that office, St. Paul, charged the Romans to beware of ſpiritual pride, to which their diſtinguiſhed ſituation might peculiarly expoſe them. (c. xi. v. 20. 25.) Let no one of them, however eminent for rank, abilities, learning, or ſpiritual gifts, think more highly of himſelf, than conſiſted with the truth of his caſe and character, as a loſt ſinner ſaved by ſovereign grace. Let none forget the Giver of his peculiar diſtinctions, the end for which they were beſtowed, and the improvement required of them. Let none over-rate his own talents, as if they entitled him to ſuperiority over others, or authorized his emulation, or ambition. But let every one ſoberly, and prudently eſtimate his own gifts and attainments, according as the Lord had diſpenſed to every man his proportion of faith, and the benefits connected with it: that he might neither bury his talent in the earth, as under valuing it; nor yet grow proud of it, or above the duties of his proper ſtation in the church, or diſpoſed to aſpire after thoſe, for which he was not qualified, or to envy and oppoſe ſuch as filled them. In ſhort every one of them ought to be in the church, as the members are in the human body: where each is fitted for it's place, and as it were contented in it; and there quietly performs its proper function, for the good of the whole. Thus united unto Chriſt our head, animated by one Spirit, and endued with different gifts, chriſtians are the members of one myſtical body, and ſhould ſeek its welfare, in humble diligence, diſintereſted love, and unambitious quietneſs. (1 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 12—31.)

V. 6—8.] As God, the Giver of every good gift, had imparted to every one of them, his abilities, providential advantages, ſpiritual gifts, miraculous powers, or qualifications for that office in the church, to which he had been called; and as they had no claim upon Him for the leaſt of theſe benefits, which he had an undoubted right to beſtow, in that meaſure and proportion he ſaw good, as an act of mere grace and favour: ſo every one ought to be ſatisfied in his place, and with his work, and ability to perform it, and endeavour to ſerve God and his church thereby. If any one therefore were endued with the gift of prophecy, and was enabled either to foretel future events, to deliver any meſſage from God, or to explain his word for the edification of the church: let him exerciſe this gift, according to his ability, which would be in proportion to the degree of faith, by which he depended on the teaching of the Holy Spirit: or, (as ſome explain it,) let him ſhew himſelf to be truly inſpired, by ſpeaking in entire conſiſtency with the analogy of faith, or that ſyſtem of divine truth, which God had made known to his church, by his prophets, and apoſtles. If a man were called to the office of a deacon, in receiving, and diſpenſing the charities of believers, among the poor, the ſick, the priſoners, &c; or in any other way to miniſter to the common benefit, by managing the concerns of the church: let him faithfully, diligently, and ſtedfaſtly attend to that good work, and ſerve Chriſt, and his brethren in it. If any man were called to teach young perſons, or new converts, the firſt principles of chriſtianity, or in any way to inſtruct others in the truth and will of God; let him give himſelf up to the duties of that ſtation, well ſatisfied with his work, and let him neither envy his ſuperiors, nor deſpiſe thoſe beneath him. If another were called to the higher functions of the paſtoral office, by authoritatively counſelling, encouraging, exhorting, admoniſhing, inſtructing, or reproving his fellow chriſtians: let him be chiefly concerned to do his work in a proper manner, and to give himſelf to it, as the great buſineſs, and pleaſure of his life. He, who having this world's goods, was enabled to ſerve the common cauſe, and to provide for his needy brethren, by giving of his abundance to them: let him do it liberally without covetouſneſs, and in ſimplicity, without oſtentation, or aſſuming authority on that account; but with a ſingle deſign of glorifying God by doing good to men. He alſo, who was called to exerciſe authority, either in the church, over any deſcription of it's miniſters, or in any magiſtracy, or preſidency in the community: let him deem himſelf advanced, not for his own honour, but for the good of others; and let him accordingly employ himſelf diligently, in the performance of his duty. And finally, in whatever way any one might be called to exerciſe compaſſion, or to alleviate miſery; let him do it with chearfulneſs, notwithſtanding the expence, hardſhip, danger, or diſguſting circumſtances, to which it might expoſe him; counting it his happineſs by any means to be uſeful. I am aware, that theſe verſes are commonly explained of the different orders of church-officers, and rulers; and ſo every man endeavours to find his own ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical polity in them: but though the various duties of the miniſtry, in all its parts, be principally intended; I ſee no proof that the apoſtle meant them reſtrictively; but he rather ſeems to have inculcated a general improvement of every man's talents, for the common benefit of the church, whatever his gifts, and place were. And as there were ſaints in Ceſar's houſhold ſoon after; ſo it is poſſible that chriſtians might be

9 *Let* love be without diſſimulation. Abhor that which is evil: cleave to that which is good.

10 *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

11 Not ſlothful in buſineſs; fervent in ſpirit; ſerving the Lord;

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing inſtant in prayer;

13 Diſtributing to the neceſſity of ſaints; given to hoſpitality.

14 Bleſs them which perſecute you; bleſs, and curſe not.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

16 *Be* of the ſame mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate. Be not wiſe in your own conceits.

17 Recompenſe to no man evil for evil. Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.

18 If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, ſaith the Lord.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

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called to the lower functions of the magiſtracy. However, as the epiſtle was intended by the Holy Ghoſt for the edification of the church in all ages; ſo it may be ſuppoſed, that the duties of chriſtian magiſtrates, as well as thoſe of church rulers, are hinted at in the general language uſed by the apoſtle.

V. 9—16.] The apoſtle next exhorts the Romans to take heed, that their profeſſed love of each other was pure from that diſſimulation, that unmeaning, and deceitful compliment, with which the world abounds notwithſtanding it's ſelfiſhneſs. This hollow ſhew of affection, they ought by all means to avoid; and to be cordial, faithful, liberal, compaſſionate, forgiving, and kind in their whole temper and conduct. Under the influence of divine grace they ought alſo to learn an habitual deteſtation, and dread of all kinds of evil; and that love for, and delight in every thing good, kind, excellent, or uſeful, which might induce them to cleave conſtantly to it, whatever oppoſition or temptation they met with. (*Amos*, c. v. ver. 15.) By a kind of *new natural affection*, the effect of regeneration, they ſhould delight in every exerciſe of mutual love, as brethren in Chriſt: and in deep humility, and a diſpoſition to animadvert on their own faults, and to notice the gifts, and graces of others: they ſhould learn to prefer, and honour one another, and to yield the reſpect and precedency to others, which ambitious men claim to themſelves. Whatever buſineſs any of them were called to, they ought to avoid all ſlothfulneſs, and to do it in a ſkilful, diligent, and aſſiduous manner, from love to Chriſt, and zeal for the honour of the goſpel, with fervency of ſpirit, as ſerving the Lord in their moſt ordinary employments. This would ennoble every buſineſs, and render it acceptable to God; and it would redound to the credit of the goſpel, if every chriſtian acquitted himſelf better in the buſineſs he undertook, than other men did. In all this, they were called on to rejoice in the hope of that glorious inheritance, which the promiſe of God enſured to them: and thus to bear up under their various trials with ſubmiſſion, conſtancy, chearfulneſs, and meekneſs. And as they could do none of theſe things of themſelves; they ought to perſiſt in earneſt prayers, notwithſtanding all the diſcouragements, which they would feel, and the temptations they would meet with, to render them ſlack in that duty. Not only ought the wealthy, but all of them according to their ability, to diſtribute to the neceſſity of their poorer brethren; and hoſpitably to entertain in their houſes, ſuch as were driven out by perſecution, or came as ſtrangers from other cities, or were in any way deſtitute; truſting in God to provide for the expence thus incurred. And, with this kindneſs to their friends, they muſt admit of no reſentment againſt their enemies; but ſhould wiſh well to, and pray for their perſecutors, and all men; and never allow themſelves to utter bad wiſhes, or imprecations againſt any one. Inſtead of grudging, or envying the proſperity of their brethren or neighbours; they ought benevolently, and unfeignedly to rejoice with them; as well as to ſympathize with, and endeavour to comfort thoſe, who mourned. Thus they all ought to be united in one mind and affection, and to judge themſelves intereſted in the welfare of every individual of the body to which they were joined. Nor ought they to covet, value, favour, or aſpire to high things, ſuch as great wealth, honourable connexions, preferments, reputation; but to be ſatisfied to aſſociate with, pay attention to, and live like, men of low eſtate, or to ſtoop to mean, and low accommodations: being contentedly poor, or condeſcendingly, and benevolently rich: and above all things, they ſhould avoid all conceit of their own wiſdom, as if they were above being taught by ordinary rules, or ought to be at the head of every buſineſs; or as if nothing could be well done, if they were not conſulted about it.

V. 17—21.] The preceding exhortations had principally reſpected the behaviour of chriſtians one toward another: but theſe mainly relate to their conduct among their unconverted neighbours. No provocation ought ever to induce them to render evil for evil to any man,

CHAP. XIII.

Contains exhortations 1*ſt. To ſubjection to magiſtrates, payment of taxes, and due reſpect to all civil ſuperiors;* 1---7. 2*d. To the various duties of love, contained in the ſecond table of the law,* 8---10. 3*d. To temperance, chaſtity, and univerſal conformity to Chriſt, in the near proſpect of complete ſalvation,* 11---14.

however vile his character was. In every part of their conduct, and in all their dealings, they ought ſtudiouſly to contrive, that uprightneſs, punctuality, ſincerity, and fidelity might evidently appear in them, in the ſight of their moſt ſevere judges. By the moſt harmleſs, and forbearing conduct, and by every ſacrifice, and conceſſion, they ought, if poſſible, to avoid all quarrels, and litigations, and to live at peace among their moſt unreaſonable and injurious neighbours: avoiding all contention, as the greateſt evil; except it were a *meek* but ſtedfaſt contention for the truth. When they were inſulted, defrauded, or aſſaulted, even if no redreſs could be obtained from the magiſtrate, they muſt not on any account preſume to avenge themſelves; but rather give way to, and without oppoſition endure the effects of, the wrath of their enemies. For they ſhould remember, that God had claimed vengeance as his own work; and that when an unauthorized perſon preſumes to avenge himſelf, he invades God's prerogative, and, as it were, attempts to wreſt his ſword of juſtice out his hand. (*Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 35.) On the contrary, they ought to wait for the opportunity of their enemy being in diſtreſs, in order kindly to ſupply his wants, and alleviate his ſufferings; as a man would feed, and give drink to a weary, wounded, fainting traveller. In doing this, they would uſe the proper method, for melting down his obdurate heart into reciprocal affection: like the founder, who not only puts fire under the hard piece of metal, but heaps fire over it alſo, that by fire on every ſide, it may at length be melted. (*Prov.* c. xxv. v. 21, 22.) In this conteſt of love againſt hatred, they ſhould perſevere with a fixed determination, not to yield, or to be overcome, by any degree, or number of injuries, or by any ingratitude of ill uſage; ſo as to give way to reſentment, or to ceaſe from embracing the opportunity of returning kindneſs: but with a holy pertinacity to perſiſt in the endeavours of overcoming evil with good, after the example of the Lord towards them. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 38—41, *Luke*, c. vi. v. 27—35.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Surely they ſtrangely miſunderſtand the doctrines, which from the apoſtle's words we have been conſidering, who ſuppoſe them inconſiſtent with exhortations, and inſtruction in the particular duties of chriſtianity! Or as inimical to the practice of them! The ſame inſpired writer, who moſt fully eſtabliſhed, and moſt earneſtly argues for, the doctrines of grace, is alſo moſt exact and particular in exhorting chriſtians to their various duties. They, who ſeem afraid that his doctrines may tend to licentiouſneſs, will be equally averſe to the *impracticable* ſtrictneſs of his precepts: and many, who pretend to be zealous friends to the former, are apt to quarrel with the latter *as legal*, when echoed by the faithful preachers of the goſpel. But the mercies of God apprehended by faith, and experienced in the heart, form the grand motive to all willing obedience. If we love the Lord in our inmoſt ſouls; we ſhall deſire, that our bodies alſo, (the work of his creating power, and the purchaſe of his redeeming blood,) ſhould be preſented to him as a living ſacrifice; that he may be magnified in and by them, whether by the actions, and ſufferings of a devoted holy life, or by laying it down for his ſake; which is in every reſpect our reaſonable ſervice. May we then, with a willing mind, bring them to be waſhed, and conſecrated to the Lord, as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto him! The transformation of the ſoul, by the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, produces ſo holy a judgment, and taſte, and ſuch heavenly affections; that it will readily ſhew us, in what reſpects we muſt avoid conformity to the world; and it will lead us to an equal diſtance from uſeleſs ſingularities, and timid, carnal, and diſhonourable compliances. But if the world poſſeſs, or have a large ſhare in the heart; ſome excuſe will be invented, by indulging the favourite inclination. Experience alone can ſhew us how good and pleaſant the acceptable, and perfect will of the Lord is: ſo that the more we refuſe conformity to a vain, and wicked world, that we may walk with God in his holy ways; the more indifferent we ſhall grow to the former, and the greater delight we ſhall take in the latter. Every avenue of the ſoul ſhould be guarded againſt pride: and repeated warnings on this head are needful to every man, eſpecially to thoſe, who are in any reſpect made conſpicuous. If indeed we ſoberly eſtimated our endowments, and compared them with our deſerts; if we duly conſidered from whom, and for what we had received them, and how far we have come ſhort of a proper improvement of them: then they would all tend to our humiliation, as well as the increaſe of our gratitude; and thus we might know, and improve our talents, and yet be covered with ſhame for not having better improved them. But we are apt to ſhine in our own eyes, and to think of ourſelves more highly than we ought to think: and this leads us to neglect the glory of God, and our duty as members of the Body of Chriſt; and to indulge emulation, ambition, conteſts for precedency, contempt of others, and diſcontent with our own proper place and work. Let us then watch, and pray againſt this evil; and whatever our gifts, or ſituation may be, let us endeavour to occupy with our talent, humbly, diligently, chearfully, and in ſimplicity; not ſeeking our own credit, or profit, but the good of many. Let us ſtudy, from undiſſembled love, to exceed in *evident* benevolence, kindneſs, and covetouſneſs, thoſe mere appearances, which polite ſelfiſhneſs aſſumes; and to be *really* as ready to oblige and be ſerviceable, as worldly people *profeſs to be.* Thus abhorring all evil, cleaving to all good, and delighting in every exerciſe of brotherly love; being in our element, when contributing to the comfort of others; and habitually ready "in honour to prefer others to ourſelves;" we ſhall adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and it will appear amiable in the eyes of thoſe, with whom we live.

Whilſt religion cuts the ſinews of that ſelfiſh activi-

CHAP. XIII.

LET every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame:

4 For he is the miniſter of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be

ty, which keeps the world in motion; it ſupplies their place by ſtill more efficacious principles: and love to Chriſt, with zeal for the honour of the goſpel, will influence the intelligent chriſtian to be diligent in his worldly buſineſs, and to acquire ſuperior ſkill in it, that he may therein ſerve the Lord with fervency of ſpirit. The joyful hope alſo of heavenly felicity will better ſupport him in his labours and trials, and endue his ſoul with more patient conſtancy, than the expectation of worldly riches or diſtinctions can do their deluded votaries: whilſt by inſtant continuance in prayer, he will find his hope confirmed, and his alacrity in duty revived from time to time. Thus chearfully diſpenſing of his gains, or earnings to the neceſſities of his brethren; uſing hoſpitality without grudging; bleſſing, and wiſhing well even to his worſt enemies, and feeling no malice againſt any man; ſharing the joy of the proſperous, and ſympathizing with the ſorrowful; being of one heart with all the children of his heavenly Father; not aſpiring to high things in this world, but condeſcending, (if ſinful worms can be ſaid to condeſcend,) to men of low eſtate; and not thinking any honeſt employment beneath him, or any proviſion too mean for him; he may paſs ſafely, comfortably, and uſefully through life, and be habitually prepared for a better. His regard to the honour of the goſpel, and his love to mankind, will diſpoſe him, as far as he can, to provide things honeſt, and creditable in the ſight of all men; to live peaceably, if poſſible with all men; to bear injuries without retaliation, or ſtrenuous reſiſtance, committing his cauſe to God, to whom vengeance belongeth; to pity and relieve the miſeries of his perſecutors, or enemies, and to endeavour by perſevering kindneſs to convert them into friends: as the love of Chriſt, and his own experience cannot fail to ſupply motives for perſiſting in this *only* conteſt, and render him ambitious of this moſt honourable victory of "overcoming evil with good." And what now is this, but a few particulars of the holy law of love expounded and enforced by evangelical principles? Yet if our eternal ſtate were to be determined, even in reſpect of the moſt conſcientious part of our lives, according to the obedience we have paid to them, or our failure therein; even Sinai's fire, and thunder would not be ſo tremendous as ſuch a judgment. But, if as redeemed ſinners, juſtified in Chriſt Jeſus, we are called to obey theſe beautiful precepts by his grace, and for the honour of his name, whilſt his blood ſtill cleanſes away our daily ſtains; we then ſee them to be kind monitors to ſhew us, in what manner, we may prove the ſincerity of our love, enjoy the foretaſtes of heaven, be bleſſings to all around us, and be maturing for the employment and felicity of angels. And if all, who contend for the doctrines of grace, were thus a peculiar people zealous of good works, the goſpel would appear in its genuine, ſimple beauty, and all would be put to ſhame, that falſely accuſed our good converſation in Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—5.] Proceeding affectionately to exhort the chriſtians at Rome, "by the mercies of "God," the apoſtle next calls on them "to be ſubject to "the higher powers!" The Jews were apt to entertain ſcruples on the lawfulneſs of obeying heathen magiſtrates; and this gave occaſion to many turbulent ſpirits among them to excite ſcandalous, and ruinous inſurrections: the ſame ſpirit might creep in among the profeſſors of the goſpel, to the great diſgrace of it: and at length, eccleſiaſtics, eſpecially in the church of Rome, claimed the moſt exorbitant exemptions in this particular. Under the influence therefore of the prophetic Spirit, the apoſtle uſed the moſt deciſive language on this ſubject: every ſoul of them, whether Jew, or Gentile, chriſtian, or miniſter, was abſolutely required to be ſubject to the authority, and edicts of the emperor, ſenate, or others, who held authority in the ſtate; that is, in all things lawful. Theſe were not only heathen, but oppreſſive, and even perſecuting powers; and Nero, who was then emperor, was a monſter of cruelty, caprice, and wickedneſs, perhaps unparalleled in the annals of mankind: yet no exception was made on this account. Chriſtians were to look above ſuch matters; and to conſider God, as the Source of all power, and civil government as his appointment for the benefit of mankind: the ſeveral forms of government, prevailing in different places, were to be conſidered as the effect of his ſuperintending providence; and the perſons raiſed to authority were to be regarded as his deputies in their office, whatever they were in their lives. In their private capacity therefore, they were required to render a prompt, and quiet obedience to thoſe governors, under whom their lot was caſt, patiently ſubmitting to the hardſhips, and thankfully receiving the benefits, thence reſulting. Nor were they to object the vices of the conſtitution, the adminiſtration, or the rulers, as an excuſe for refuſing ſuch ſubjection; though doubtleſs it would have been allowable for them, in a *peaceable*, *legal*, and *conſtitutional manner*, to have applied ſome remedy to theſe evils. For it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle meant to determine the divine right of abſolute monarchy, or of any form of government in preference to all others; when it was evidently his intention to inculcate ſubjection to the ruling powers of every place, and time, in which believers lived. As the benefits of civil government are ſo many, and it is evidently God's appointment for maintaining ſome order among the apoſtate race of men: ſo any man, who ſets himſelf *illegally* to oppoſe the eſtabliſhed government of that na-afraid; for he beareth not the ſword in vain: for he is the miniſter of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore *ye* muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake.

6 For for this cauſe pay ye tribute alſo: for they are God's miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; cuſtom to whom cuſtom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

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tion, in which he lived; (for Paul himſelf claimed *the protection of the laws againſt the illegal* violence even of magiſtrates;) would be conſidered as reſiſting the providence, and rebelling againſt the authority of God: and thus he would expoſe himſelf to condemnation at God's tribunal, as well as at that of the magiſtrate; and be anſwerable for all the miſchief he had occaſioned. For rulers, in the general courſe of things, are not a terror to honeſt, quiet, and good ſubjects; but to depredators, and malefactors: and upon the whole the benefits of government, even when in many inſtances it is oppreſſive, far more than counterbalance its evils. So that they, who would be free from terror in this reſpect, ſhould live honeſt, and inoffenſive lives; and then they will generally be countenanced, protected, and even commended by their rulers; and may look on them, whatever their characters, or adminiſtration may be in other reſpects, as the miniſters of God's providence for their good, in defending their perſons, property, and habitations from the violence of wicked men. On the other hand, the evil doer ought to be afraid: for the magiſtrate does not bear the ſword of juſtice in vain; but as the miniſter of God's providential government of the world; as a revenger, by his authority to puniſh thoſe, who violate the peace of the community: ſo that it is abſolutely neceſſary for men to ſubmit to the authority of the magiſtrate; not only from fear of his indignation, but alſo for conſcience ſake towards God. If the ruler abuſe his authority, God will call him to an account for it; there are legal and conſtitutional checks upon thoſe, who want to introduce tyranny: and on great occaſions, the people of the world will ſometimes, with one conſent, ariſe againſt a cruel oppreſſor, and ſubvert his government; (as the Romans did againſt Nero, who was condemned to die, as an enemy to mankind, by the approbation of the whole world:) but chriſtians need take no active, or leading part in ſuch tranſactions; ſo that they form no exception to this rule. If laws are unreaſonably formed, or iniquitouſly executed; this ſhould be endured as a croſs laid on us, till ſuch, as are legally authorized, apply a remedy to the evil: and if we are required by human authority to ſin againſt God, we muſt ſtedfaſtly refuſe obedience, and chearfully endure the conſequence, well ſatisfied with the bleſſing pronounced on thoſe, who ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake.

V. 6, 7.] The ſame reaſons render it the duty of chriſtians to pay taxes alſo: as the advantages of government are great; ſo muſt its expences be very large. Rulers are God's providential miniſters, who are called to attend conſtantly to this very thing. It is proper, and even for the good of the community, that they, their families, and attendants, ſhould appear in dignity and ſplendour: they are, and ought to be, taken from the higheſt ranks in the community; as the temptations of ſuch ſituations muſt generally be irreſiſtibly ſtrong, to thoſe, who have been educated in comparative indigence. Both governours, and governed are fallen creatures; and therefore man's natural ſelfiſhneſs can by no method whatever be excluded. Some exceſs of expenditure, ſome improper accumulation of treaſure, ſome waſte of it in providing for relatives, and dependents, muſt be expected, though not excuſed. So that taxes muſt be impoſed, and ought to be ſcrupulouſly paid. Sometimes they will be oppreſſive, or exceſſive: but this grievance ſhould be patiently endured, till it can be conſtitutionally redreſſed. So that the chriſtian muſt render to the rulers, the tribute, cuſtom, exciſe, or impoſt demanded legally from him, with as much exactneſs, as he would pay any other debt. He muſt uſe no colluſion, fraud, heſitation, or murmur: and all ſmuggling, or dealing in countraband goods; all withholding, or evading duties impoſed on any commodity; and every ſpecies of, this kind of impoſition, is a direct rebellion againſt God's providence, and moſt expreſs commandment. And however it may be palliated, or varniſhed over; it is not merely a defalcation of the revenue, but it is a robbery of all, who pay taxes: for ſuch colluſions will not prevent the ſum required from being raiſed upon the public: ſo that when one tax falls ſhort, another is impoſed; and when he, who ſhould pay five pounds, pays but three; his more conſcientious neighbour muſt pay ſeven, inſtead of five, and is therefore directly robbed of forty ſhillings. At the ſame time all the villanies of the whole body of ſmugglers, &c, are abetted by every one, who puts his hand to ſuch a diſhoneſt buſineſs. In ſuch a caſe to declaim about the vices, and extravagancies of rulers, &c, is to add one ſin to another: theſe things never were worſe than in the days of Nero; they are inſeparable from human nature: the great Lawgiver was aware of them, when he gave the commandment: and if no man pay a tax, till the character, and adminiſtration of all concerned in managing public buſineſs, and the diſpoſal of the public money and the tax itſelf, met his full approbation; none would ever be paid by the ſelfiſh, and unreaſonable part of the community, and the public exigencies could never be anſwered. This ſubject is the more enlarged on, becauſe the arguments and examples of ſome avaricious profeſſors of the goſpel, draw in well meaning people to wound their conſciences, and diſgrace the cauſe, by evading or refuſing taxes, in a diſingenuous and fraudulent manner, which is as contrary to ſimple truth, as to common honeſty. Moreover, the apoſtle requires chriſtians, to render fear, or reverence, and honour to thoſe, to whom they belong, on account of their authority, rank, or any other civil diſtinction; neither ſuppoſing that religion required a ſtiff, and rude ſingularity, in refuſing

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not kill, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, Thou ſhalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of ſleep: for now *is* our ſalvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far ſpent, the day is at hand: let us therefore caſt off the works of darkneſs, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honeſtly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make not proviſion for the fleſh, to *fulfil* the luſts *thereof*.

cuſtomary titles, or expreſſions of honour and reſpect to ſuperiors; or that it allowed that petulance, and ſcurrility, with which many delight to vilify the characters, and conduct of their rulers, and thoſe in high ſtations. Their faults ſhould in general be regarded with candour, and ſilence; (for their ſituation is conſpicuous, and their temptations very great;) and though the honour due to their rank, and authority may conſiſt with diſapprobation of their conduct; yet not with reviling, and defamation of them.

V. 8—10.] We cannot ſuppoſe that the apoſtle meant to prohibit the contracting of debts on any account: but to direct chriſtians to pay all legal demands upon them, without needleſs reluctance, and delay, and with great punctuality: and that they ſhould avoid all ſuperfluous expence, that they might be preſerved from debt, and from the danger, and diſcredit of not rendering to all their dues. Yet when all ſuch demands were anſwered; they would ſtill owe love to all men, with all the duties that reſult from its enlarged exerciſe. It may indeed be rendered, “ ye do owe no man any thing, but to love “ one another:” the whole of what the apoſtle would inculcate was only the exerciſe of love in it's various branches: ſo that he who loved another, actually fulfilled the law, in reſpect of its requirements towards his neighbour. We have already copiouſly explained theſe commandments. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xx. *Lev.* c. xix. v. 18.) The apoſtle, by thus appealing to the moral law, as the ſtandard of duty, after having ſo fully ſhewn that no man can be juſtified by it, completely eſtabliſhes the diſtinction between the law as a covenant, and the law as a rule; and our deliverance from it in the former ſenſe, that we might obey it in the latter.

V. 11—14.] Some think that the apoſtle here refers to the approaching deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the more complete eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, that followed: but there is no proof of it. He ſeems rather to ſpeak of the ſtate of believers in this world, and their expectation of approaching, complete ſalvation. It behoved them to conſider how long they had heard, and profeſſed the goſpel; and the ſhortneſs of the time, which might yet remain to them, in which to glorify God amongſt men. Thus they would perceive, that it was full time for them to ſhake off all remaining ſloth, and indifference, and to attend to every duty with increaſing zeal and vigour: as the day of ſalvation drew nearer continually, and was then actually much nearer, than when they firſt believed in Chriſt; and conſequently their term of remaining uſefulneſs on earth, was proportionably abridged. The purchaſe of ſalvation was finiſhed with the humiliation of the Saviour: it begins to be applied when we come to him by faith: it will be finiſhed as to the ſoul, at the hour of death; and as to the body at the day of judgment. The life of faith might be called *day*, in compariſon of the darkneſs of their idolatrous and unconverted ſtate: yet it was but *night*, or the twilight, in compariſon of the light of heaven. But this night was far ſpent; that day was at hand: it was therefore incumbent on them to prepare for, and anticipate it, by caſting off their former ſins, in which they had lived, during their heathen darkneſs, as a man would filthy, and ragged garments; or as he would put off his night clothes, before he went out of his chamber. And they ought not only to put on their day clothes, but their armour alſo; by applying for, and cultivating all thoſe holy diſpoſitions, which arm the ſoul to repel temptation, and are at the ſame time its ornament, and beautiful attire: even as the burniſhed armour is deemed the conqueror's moſt honourable decoration. The apoſtle therefore exhorted them to join with him, in walking after a becoming, and conſiſtent manner, as thoſe, who enjoyed the light of God's word, and the hope of heaven; keeping at a diſtance from all exceſs, or intemperance; from all ſloth, and unchaſtity, and every wanton look, word, or action; and from all contention, envy, and malevolence. And then, inſtead of multiplying exhortations, he called upon them to put on the Lord Jeſus himſelf; and ſo do the whole at once. Let the mind, and example of Chriſt be reflected in all their tempers, and conduct; that all, who ſaw their piety, purity, zeal, benevolence, ſelf-denial, &c, might recognize the image, and character of Chriſt in them. That as they ſtood juſtified before God in the robe of his imputed righteouſneſs; ſo they might appear before men adorned with his Image for their ſanctification. Then they would not deviſe, or contrive means for gratifying any of their carnal luſts; nor would they be anxious to provide for the indulgence of their appetites; but would find their ſatisfaction in

CHAP. XIV.

Contains exhortations, 1ſt. To mutual candour, as to leſſer differences, from the conſideration of their relation, and accountableneſs to Chriſt, 1---12. 2d. To caution, charity, humility, and ſelf-denial, in the exerciſe of their chriſtian liberty, 13---23.

ſuch things, as pertained to the life of their ſouls.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

' The grace of the goſpel directs our thoughts to the providence of God, as well as to his promiſes, and commandments: and thus it induces ſubmiſſion, and chearful compoſure; where pride, and the carnal mind ſee nothing but cauſe for murmurs, and diſquietude. Chriſtians ſhould always remember, that there is no power, but what is derived from God; " that the *powers that be*, are " ordained of God," though not according to what *we might think* the moſt eligible plan; and therefore " that every " ſoul is bound to be ſubject to the higher powers:" that whilſt ſo many, diſdaining every yoke, are not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities, and want to level all other diſtinctions, that themſelves may riſe to diſtinction, by reſiſting the power, and deſpiſing the ordinance of God; there may be alſo a proteſt in the land againſt ſuch turbulent innovators, entered into by a great multitude " who fear " God, honour the king, and meddle not with thoſe " that are given to change." Indeed it is far more agreeable to the pride of man, to riſe to reputation by declaiming againſt kings, and princes; than to be employed in humbling himſelf before God for his own ſins, and in diligently mortifying his own luſts. But admitting that there are faults in governors, in their adminiſtration, and even in the conſtitution: yet there are legal methods of preventing or redreſſing grievances; and there are men, to whom ſuch concerns properly devolve: ſo that there can be no occaſion for the miniſters, or profeſſors of the goſpel to leave their peaceful duties, and to bring the truth into diſgrace, by becoming volunteers in ſuch ſervices, as apoſtles, evangeliſts, martyrs, &c, never meddled with. And whatever may be the caſe in ſome countries, where a change can hardly be made for the worſe: yet ſure our civil and religious liberties, when compared with the general condition of mankind in every age and nation hitherto, are too valuable to be hazarded for the " caſtles in the air," which modern projectors want to erect in the ſtead of them. Even if the crimes, and oppreſſions of governors would juſtify chriſtians in " reſiſting the power," which they would not do in the days of Nero: yet ſuch conduct would be inexcuſable amongſt us. Our advantages from civil government are immenſe; our grievances minute, and often imaginary; and they are rather the fault of human nature, than of our conſtitution, or public adminiſtration. For ſelf-confident ſpeculators on this ſubject, (even ſuch, as, believing the doctrine of man's entire depravity, engage in this ſervice,) almoſt univerſally blame this, or the other form of government, for thoſe evils, which in fact are inſeparable from our fallen nature; and they expect that benefit from the change of forms, or perſons, which can only be produced by the renovation of men's hearts to the holy Image of God, and the mortification of that carnal ſelf-love, which is univerſal to mankind. Let then chriſtians recollect, that the world lieth in wickedneſs; and that they are ſtrangers and pilgrims in it: that for their ſhort time here, it is their wiſdom, and duty to make the beſt of things as they find them: that ſubmiſſion to God's providence and precept requires their peaceable ſubjection to their governors; and that in refuſing this ſubjection, they rebel againſt God, and muſt give an account to him of it. That in general, our rulers are, what all rulers ought to be, a terror to evil doers, and not to thoſe, who do well; as the honeſt, and conſcientious have nothing to fear from them, but enjoy great ſecurity, and religious toleration, in what manner ſoever, they chooſe to worſhip God: and that, with few, if any exceptions, none are made afraid, but thoſe who ought to fear; even they, whom the magiſtrate, as the miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon evil doers, muſt puniſh, unleſs he would bear the ſword in vain. " So " that in every way it becomes us to be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake." At the ſame time magiſtrates may hence learn from whom, and for what they have their power, and what account they muſt render of it; that they too may attend to their duty in the fear of God, with whom there is no reſpect of perſons. It is alſo incumbent upon chriſtians to be exact, and exemplary in paying tribute, and cuſtom; conſidering their rulers as God's miniſters for their good, and receding from their perſonal intereſts, for the public good. They ſhould therefore avoid all appearance of thoſe covetous, and fraudulent practices, by which ſo many plunder their fellow-citizens, by with-holding their ſhare of the public revenue. And they ought alſo to refrain from contumelious, and diſreſpectful language of their governors, and ſet an example of rendering fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour is due: and let thoſe, who ſpeak ſo much in favour of liberty, which they confound with licentiouſneſs and anarchy, ſeriouſly aſk themſelves, whether their reaſonings, and ſpeculations can be made conſiſtent with ſuch ſcriptures as theſe? Whether Chriſt, his apoſtles, or his primitive diſciples ever ſpent their zeal about ſuch topics? (Note, &c. *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 15—22.) And whether ſuch declamations, and ſcurrilous invectives, againſt thoſe, whom the ſcripture commands us to honour, and obey, can be for the credit of the goſpel, and the benefit of true religion. As to ſuch efforts, as are any where made by thoſe, to whom ſuch truſts conſtitutionally devolve, to preſerve, increaſe, or aſſiſt the *real* liberty of mankind, perſonal, civil, or religious, or to check the career of deſpotiſm or oppreſſion, over men of any climate, complexion, or religion: let us forward them with our prayers, and, by every means, conſiſtent with the peace, and good order of the community: but not by factious language, or diſorderly behaviour, againſt the mild government for which our moſt lively gratitude is due to the great Diſpoſer of all events.

Whilſt we rejoice at deliverance from the condemnation of the law; may we have its precepts written in our hearts, and tranſcribed into our lives: that prudence, honeſty, and punctuality may mark all our tranſactions, HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful diſputations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth deſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. Yea, he ſhall be holden up: for God is able to make him ſtand.

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and regulate all our expences, and the payment of our debts. May we learn to love all men as ourſelves; and then we ſhall not only avoid groſſer injuries to their perſons, connexions, property, or characters; but we ſhall do no kind or degree of evil to any man, but ſhall ſtudy to be uſeful, and beneficial in every relation, and ſtation of life. The longer we have heard, and profeſſed the goſpel; the more ſhould we deem ourſelves bound to ſhake off all ſloth: and the nearer our ſalvation approacheth; the more diligent ſhould we be to finiſh the work of life, and to go forth to meet our Lord. Emerging from the night of unconverſion, and the twilight of our firſt glimmering views of heavenly things, and looking forward to the day of perfect knowledge and purity; let us reject, and flee from the works of darkneſs, and put on the whole armour of light: let us ſtudy to walk in a manner, conſiſtent with, and honourable to our profeſſion; to avoid every kind of exceſs, and inexpedient indulgence, and all ſpiritual, as well as carnal wickedneſſes; and inſtead of making any proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil its luſts; let us ſtudy to put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to imbibe his ſpirit, to copy his conduct, and to walk in every reſpect, even as he walked.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1. *Him,* &c.] Notwithſtanding the authority veſted by Chriſt in his apoſtles, and their infallibility in delivering his doctrine to mankind; yet differences of opinion prevailed even among real chriſtians: nor did Paul go about, by an authoritative declaration of his Lord's will, to put a final termination to them. For though a propoſition may be certain, and important truth; yet the heart cannot profitably receive it, till it be ſuitably diſpoſed for it; and a man muſt himſelf perceive the nature, authority, glory and excellency of the doctrine, and the grounds on which it reſts; before he can make any uſe of it: ſo that to profeſs, or aſſent to it, before he hath thus been led into it, by the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, would often be hypocriſy, and always unavailing. So eſſential are the right, and exerciſe of private judgment, in all poſſible caſes, to the exiſtence of true godlineſs! And ſo uſeleſs an incumbrance would an infallible judge be, for deciding controverſies, and producing unanimity amongſt chriſtians; if ſuch a one were appointed! The apoſtle, (as well as his brethren,) had ſufficiently declared their mind reſpecting the Moſaic law: and where attention to it, was likely to interfere with the ſimplicity of men's dependence on Chriſt, he zealouſly contended againſt it: yet many ſincere believers could not be convinced, that they were under no obligations to obſerve it. If the method of ſubſequent ages had been then in uſe, theſe perſons would have been excluded from the church, and anathematized as obſtinate heretics; and afterwards they would have been ſhunned as ſchiſmatics: but Paul, in all the plenitude of his apoſtolical authority, could endure his fellow chriſtians to differ from him in opinion, as to leſſer matters; and inſtead of peremptory injunctions, he gave a general rule of vaſt importance for our conduct, in all ſuch caſes. He exhorted the paſtors, and members of the church at Rome, to receive among them, as a brother, the weak believer; and not to perplex him with diſputations about ſuch matters, as appeared doubtful to conſcientious perſons; but to leave him, under the general uſe of means, and loving inſtructions, to grow ſtronger in faith, and riper in judgment, by the gradual inward teaching of the Holy Spirit. This rule applies to many particulars, both reſpecting doctrine, worſhip, and practice: though ſuch candour, like all other good things, may be carried to a dangerous extreme. If a man do not profeſs repentance, and a believing dependence as a loſt ſinner on the merits, and atonement of Chriſt, as God manifeſted in the fleſh, and a reliance on the Holy Spirit for teaching and ſanctification; it does not appear, that he can properly be regarded as a believer, or admitted into communion with ſuch. (2 *John,* v. 9, 10.) But when theſe things are profeſſed in words, and not denied in works, a man ought *at leaſt* to be received as one, that is weak in the faith, and meekly helped forward, though he may yet be under the power of many prejudices, and miſtakes. And if this rule were adopted univerſally, chriſtians need not be divided into ſo many ſects, worſhip in ſo many ſeparate places; or deſtroy the communion of ſaints, and expoſe the common cauſe, by ſo many virulent, and unintereſting controverſies about doubtful, or indifferent matters.

V. 2—4.] The apoſtle next proceeded to exemplify his general rule by a particular inſtance. One chriſtian, either a Gentile convert, or a Jew, who had got over the prejudices of his nation, believed it lawful to eat any kind of meat, without regarding the diſtinctions of the law, in that reſpect: another, either a Jewiſh convert, or one who had imbibed ſome of their prejudices, would only eat vegetables, (eſpecially when in company with Gentile converts;) leſt he ſhould unawares eat any unclean thing. This indeed ſhewed that he was weak, and uneſtabliſhed in the faith, and confuſed in his judgment: yet it evinced him to be very conſcientious. Here then mutual candour was to be exerciſed: the chriſtian, who knew and uſed his liberty in this matter, muſt not deſpiſe his weak brother, as ignorant, ſuperſtitious, or *legal,* and ſo diſdain to aſſociate with him, or uſe contemptuous language reſpecting him: and on the other hand the ſcrupulous believer muſt by no means condemn his brother, as ſelf-indulgent, or lax in his conduct; or to ſhun, and ſpeak againſt him on that account. For, if indeed he was a believer, God had accepted him, and

5 One man eſteemeth one day above another: another eſteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7 For none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt.

11 For it is written, *As* I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God.

12 So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another

takes him into his family, without regarding ſuch legal diſtinctions: and it did not behove any one to judge, and condemn another's ſervant, for ſuch things, as his own maſter did not object to. He was only accountable to his own Lord, who would juſtify or condemn him, uphold him, or leave him to fall, as he ſaw his real character to be: and if indeed he was a believer, the Lord's power and promiſe were abſolutely engaged to uphold him, and were abundantly ſufficient for that purpoſe. (Notes, &c. c. viii. v. 28—39.)

V. 5—9.] The caſe was the ſame in reſpect of the obſervance of days. Some of them conſidered the Jewiſh ſabbaths, new moons, and other ſolemnities to be ſtill in force; and accordingly they regarded them in a religious manner: others deemed ſuch appointments to have loſt all their obligation, and in this reſpect they regarded every day alike: for we cannot ſuppoſe that they paid no reſpect to the Lord's day, or that they never obſerved any days of faſting and prayer, &c. In ſuch matters it was chiefly neceſſary, that every man ſhould be fully ſatisfied in his own mind, as to his own duty, and that he acted from proper motives in it. If then a chriſtian regarded a day, conſcientiouſly ſetting it apart for devotion; he might be ſuppoſed to do it from reſpect to the authority, acceptance, and glory of the Lord: and if another chriſtian, deeming ſuch diſtinctions to be ſuperfluous, omitted all regard to thoſe days, which the other deemed holy; it ſhould be ſuppoſed, that he did it with a view to the honour of Chriſt, of his legiſlative authority, and his fulfilment of all theſe ancient typical obſervances. So in like manner, the believer, who eat any kind of food, ſhould be conſidered as regarding the will, and glory of the Lord in it; whilſt he returned thanks both for his food, and for his chriſtian liberty; on the other hand, he that refrained from this or the other meat, being contented with, and thankful for, what he did eat, ſhould be conſidered, as doing it from a ſelf-denied, and conſcientious regard to the will of the Lord, even though his ſcruples were judged to be groundleſs: ſeeing no real chriſtian alloweth his own humour, indulgence, intereſt, or credit, to be the end, for which he lives, as to the general tenor of his conduct; nor does he even avoid, wiſh for, or meet death from ſuch ſelfiſh motives: but whether his life be prolonged, he aims to ſpend it to the glory of Chriſt; or whether death be expected, he refers the time, manner, and circumſtances of it to Him, that he may be honoured thereby. So that whether chriſtians, live, or die, the glory of their Lord is that grand end, to which every thing is habitually directed, and ſubordinated: ſeeing whether they live or die, they are his property, to be diſpoſed of as he pleaſes; and his beloved, to be taken care of by him in all poſſible events. For to this very end, Chriſt both died on the croſs, and roſe again, and liveth anew in heaven; that in our nature he may be the ſovereign Lord of all his people, both during their lives, and after their death: as they willingly devote themſelves to him, and are prompt to labour, ſuffer, or die for his ſake; as he orders all things reſpecting the time and circumſtances of their death for his own glory, and their good; and as, when they die, they are taken to be with him for ever, and he will raiſe their bodies to ſhare the ſame felicity. Chriſt is alſo the Lord of the dead, and the living, who do not believe in him: he ſpares their lives, cuts them off by death, and executes vengeance upon them, as he ſees good: yet the former ſenſe ſeems to have been principally intended. It is worthy of our obſervation, that the apoſtle moſt cogently ſhewed chriſtians what they ought to be, and do, by ſtating the character and aims of true believers, and by ſhewing them what charity would ſuppoſe concerning their brethren, who differed from them, if their conduct were in other reſpects conſiſtent with their profeſſion.

V. 10—12.] This ſuggeſted another reaſon, why they ſhould not judge, or deſpiſe one another: as they muſt all ſtand in judgment before Chriſt; when it would be known from what motives every man had acted. The prophecy referred to hath been before explained of Chriſt, as Jehovah, our Righteouſneſs, &c, (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xlv. v. 20—25:) but the apoſtle's tranſition from "*the judgment ſeat of Chriſt*," to "*giving an account of* "*ourſelves to God*," ſhews how familiar it was to him, to underſtand the predictions uttered by Jehovah, as the words of his divine Lord, and Saviour. Of this we ſhall meet with many inſtances.

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any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a ſtumbling-block or an occaſion to fall in *his* brother's way.

14 I know, and am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itſelf: but to him that eſteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkeſt thou not charitably. Deſtroy not him with thy meat, for whom Chriſt died.

16 Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

18 For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat deſtroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 *It is* good neither to eat fleſh, nor to

V. 13—18.] The apoſtle concludes his former ſubject, by exhorting the chriſtians to whom he wrote, eſpecially the Jewiſh converts, not to judge, cenſure, or condemn one another any more: and he then enters upon another exhortation, in which the Gentile converts were principally concerned. This he introduces by uſing the ſame word, in ſomewhat of a different ſenſe. Inſtead of *exerciſing their judgment* about others, let them learn to *act judiciouſly* in their own conduct, that they might not enſnare their brethren, or occaſion them to ſin: as if a man ſhould heedleſſly lay a ſtone, or a trap in another's way, which might occaſion his falling, or being hurt. This they would be apt to do, by an inexpedient uſe of lawful things. The apoſtle knew, by the doctrine, and revelation of Chriſt, that no kind of food was any longer polluting in itſelf: yet if a man ſuppoſed the ceremonial diſtinctions to be ſtill in force; the meat which he took, contrary to his judgment and conſcience, would be unclean to him; and he therefore ought to abſtain, till he was more fully ſatisfied in that matter. Now if a ſtronger, and better informed believer, induced his weaker brother, by his example and influence, to eat ſuch things, as his conſcience forbad, and ſo to bring guilt, and diſtreſs upon himſelf; it was obvious that he did not walk charitably. For the tendency of his conduct was to the ruin of one, for whom Chriſt died; ſeeing it tempted him to ſin, which naturally tends to condemnation. This does not imply, that the weak brother would actually periſh; or that any periſh, for whom Chriſt died, in a ſpecial manner, as given to him of the Father. But the contraſt is made between the love of Chriſt to the weak believer, who ſhed his blood to ſave him; and the want of love in his ſtronger brother, who would not abridge himſelf of his meal, from a regard to his welfare; but would rather prove an occaſion of ſin to him, and ſo hazard the loſs of his ſoul, whom he might hope to be a believer, than reſtrain the exerciſe of his chriſtian liberty! We may however obſerve that the apoſtles did not write in that exact, ſyſtematical ſtyle, which ſome affect; otherwiſe they would ſcrupulouſly have avoided ſuch expreſſions. In uſing their liberty therefore, which was good in itſelf; they ought to be careful not to do it in ſo unguarded a manner, or with ſuch bad effects, as might give occaſion to its being evil ſpoken of: for the privileges of the kingdom of God, (Note, *Matt.* c. iii. v. 2,) no more conſiſted in meats, and drinks, than its requirements did: ſo that a believer, who would uſe his liberty at any rate, and at all events, laid as undue a ſtreſs on the indulgence of the new diſpenſation; as a Jewiſh convert did on the ceremonial diſtinctions of the old one. To ſtand juſtified before God, to be at peace with Him, to poſſeſs peace in the heart and conſcience, and to experience that pure joy, which the Holy Spirit communicates, are the great privileges of the kingdom of God: and to walk by faith before Him, as a reconciled Father, in righteouſneſs, and in chearful, holy obedience, according to the grand requirements of the moral law, and by the ſanctification of the Spirit, is the ſubſtance of the duties of the kingdom: and he, who in ſuch things ſerveth, and obeyeth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and is approved before men to be a true believer, and ſhould therefore be received as ſuch by his brethren, without reſpect to his leſſer differences of opinion, or practice. To infer from hence, as ſome have incautiouſly done, that a peaceable, exemplary chriſtian, who is not too rigid in his ſentiments, or tinctured with bigotry, will generally be eſteemed and loved by mankind; would imply a cenſure on Paul, or the other apoſtles, on the prophets, and moſt eminent believers in every age, nay on Chriſt himſelf, as if they had not been ſo candid and liberal as *we* ought to be: for we know what favour the world ſhewed them. But in fact the men of the church, and not thoſe of the world, are excluſively meant.

V. 19—23.] The apoſtle proceeded to inculcate an aſſiduous, and perſevering attention to the intereſts of peace among chriſtians, and to all thoſe things by which mutual edification might be promoted. Let then none of thoſe, who underſtood their liberty, allow their own indulgence in any kind of food, to counteract the work of God, in the converſion of the Jews, the ſpread of the goſpel, or the ſanctification of believers. Indeed he would have it known, as his decided judgment, (though he had been educated a Phariſee,) that all kind of meats were alike pure in themſelves: yet it would be evil for a man to eat them, when it had a direct tendency to ſeduce a weak brother into ſin. Nay, ſo much ought love to preponderate over all ſuch paltry conſiderations; that drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

22 Haſt thou faith? have *it* to thyſelf before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, becauſe *he eateth* not of faith: for whatſoever *is* not of faith is ſin.

it would be good, and right for a man to abſtain wholly from fleſh, or wine, or any other indulgence, by which his brother would be tempted to ſin, made uneaſy in his conſcience, or weakened in his hope, or the vigour of his obedience. If any one of them, therefore, had ſtronger faith, and aſſuredly believed, that he might lawfully eat any kind of food; let him not make oſtentation of it, or improperly ſeize on every occaſion of acting according to it: but let him poſſeſs it, as in the ſight of God, who would know his uprightneſs, when others judged him on that account: and let him uſe his liberty with humility, caution, prudence, and ſelf-denial; and without ſeeming to prefer himſelf, or to deſpiſe his weaker brother. It would be a great happineſs to him, to be free from all doubt, or ſelf condemnation in thoſe things, which he allowed himſelf to do: but if any one queſtioned whether any indulgence was lawful, or not; and yet example, perſuaſion, or inclination prevailed with him to venture upon it; he would certainly commit a ſin, for which his conſcience would condemn him, and for which even God would condemn him, if he did not repent of it. For as he did it not in faith; as he was not fully perſuaded in his own mind, that he might innocently do it; he would be guilty of preferring his own inclination to the dictates of his conſcience, and the ſuppoſed will of God. For in general every action muſt be ſinful, which is not done in a believing apprehenſion, that we are acting according to the command, or by the allowance of God, and may therefore conſider ourſelves to be in the way of his promiſed bleſſing. It is obvious how groundleſs the ſcruples of ſome ſerious perſons from this text, concerning the Lord's ſupper, muſt be: for the apoſtle's argument is wholly about another ſubject.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is of great importance for us to diſtinguiſh between thoſe, who are weak in faith, and ſuch as are ſtrangers or enemies to it: for we ought to receive, and affectionately to cheriſh the former; but to beware of, and withdraw from the latter. But it is very difficult for us to bear properly with the miſtakes, infirmities, and prejudices of our brethren; or to make proper allowances for weakneſs of natural capacity, the bias of bad education, or the effects of partial, and erroneous inſtruction, under their firſt religious impreſſions. We are all prone to make our own views the ſtandard of truth; to deem things certain, which to others appear very doubtful; to expect by vehement diſputations to bring men to ſee with our eyes; to perplex new converts with topics, which they cannot as yet underſtand; and to expect them at once to acquieſce in all thoſe truths, which we have been learning for ſeveral years. Thus it becomes almoſt impracticable to prevail with thoſe to receive, and hold communion with, each other; who have been received by, and who enjoy communion with, the Lord! Thus ſome have been expelled by, or have ſeparated from, their brethren: and conteſts, or ſchiſms have diſgraced the church, grieved her beſt friends, and rejoiced her enemies: thus chriſtians have deſpiſed, or condemned each other about doubtful, or frivolous matters, as if the very eſſence of faith and piety had been concerned! Nor is this pernicious fire yet extinguiſhed: nay there are too many, who ſeem to wait for opportunities of fomenting contentions among brethren. The diſtinctions between meats and days were at leaſt as important, as many things, which are now controverted amongſt us; and it was far more certain on which ſide the truth was found. Yet men might be real chriſtians, who could not receive even the apoſtle's determination of it! Surely then we ſhould enlarge our candour beyond thoſe narrow limits, which many would aſſign to it! And if we could demonſtrate every tittle of our doctrine, and every part of our worſhip, &c, to be ſcriptural: yet we ſhould not deſpiſe, or condemn a man, becauſe he was not able to ſee the concluſiveneſs of our arguments: and if we muſt aſſume it as undeniable, that he is juſt as far miſtaken, as he differs from us; we ſhould at leaſt treat him with that tenderneſs, which we ſhew to one, who wants an eye, a leg, or an arm. Let then all, who love the goſpel, ſhun thoſe perſons who excite; and all thoſe ſhibboleths, which tend to multiply, to perpetuate, or to exaſperate, diviſions among thoſe, who appear to hate ſin, and love Chriſt: let us ceaſe to deſpiſe, or judge one another about leſſer differences; let us beware, that we attempt not to reject, or to caſt down thoſe, whom God hath received, and will uphold; or to judge and condemn his conſcientious ſervants. Let us remember our own unworthineſs, and fallibility, and the numerous inſtances, in which we have been entirely miſtaken, when we were confident that we were in the right: let us endeavour to be fully perſuaded in our own minds, about our conduct; and leave others to the judgment of God. Thus if ſome deem it expedient to obſerve a day, in commemoration of any of thoſe great events, which relate to the purchaſe of our ſalvation, let them ſpend it in a holy manner to the glory of God: and if others deem it beſt not to obſerve ſuch days, let them act with humble ſimplicity in diſſenting from the opinion, and practice of their brethren. Thus all may be done in a quiet,

CHAP. XV.

Contains 1ſt. Exhortations to tenderneſs towards weak believers, after the example of Chriſt; and to mutual love and harmony in the worſhip of God, 1---7. 2d. The union of Jews and Gentiles in one church proved to be according to the ſcriptures, 8---13. 3d. The apoſtle ſhewing his reaſon for thus addreſſing the Romans; giving an account of his extenſive uſefulneſs as the miniſter of Chriſt to the Gentiles; avowing his purpoſe of viſiting Rome in his *way to Spain; and deſiring their prayers in reſpect to his previous journey to Jeruſalem, with the contributions of the Gentile converts,* 14---33.

WE then that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves.

2 Let every one of us pleaſe *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

3 For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf: but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

4 For whatſoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope.

5 Now the God of patience and conſolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Chriſt Jeſus:

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peaceable, thankful, and conſcientious manner; as becomes thoſe, who profeſs neither to live, nor to die to themſelves, but to him, who died for them, and roſe again, and ever liveth to be the Lord both of the dead and of the living. Inſtead therefore of cenſuring, reviling, deriding, or deſpiſing one another; let us all prepare to appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt: as he hath ſworn, that every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to him. We ſhould therefore carefully judge ourſelves, both as to our ſtate, and conduct; that our confeſſion of Chriſt may be proved genuine, by our devoted obedience to him. Whilſt we ſhun ſuperſtitious ſcruples, and aſſert our chriſtian liberty; let us beware of ſpiritual pride, and ſelf-preference: and whilſt we *pity* ſuch, as are yet enſlaved to needleſs obſervances; let us be careful not to abuſe our liberty, by an inexpedient uſe of things lawful; or by venturing upon ſuch as are doubtful. Let us conſider what effects our conduct, and example may have upon others: and though it may not be always proper to humour the ſcrupuloſity of ſome profeſſors; yet when there is a probability of grieving, offending, or turning aſide a weak believer, or of ſtumbling an hopeful enquirer; we ſhould ſurely wave our liberty, if nothing call for the exerciſe of it, except our own indulgence. For ſurely it cannot be an imitation of the love of Chriſt, who died for the weak, as well as the ſtrong; if we put any perſonal ſatisfaction in competition with the ſpiritual good of our brethren. Verily it muſt be confeſſed, that we are often faulty in ſuch matters: and thus our good comes to be evil ſpoken of; becauſe we uſe lawful things in an uncharitable, and ſelfiſh manner. But let us remember that the comforts, and obedience of the goſpel are alike ſuperior to meats and drinks; and that both unite in "righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt:" and that when we moſt highly value ſuch ſpiritual privileges, and abound in ſuch ſpiritual duties; we enjoy the greateſt aſſurance that we are accepted of God, and approve ourſelves beſt before men, to be real believers. Let us then follow after all thoſe things, which tend to peace, and mutual edification: let us ſtudy a holy indifference about the moſt lawful of earthly enjoyments; and learn to renounce whatever comes in competion with the welfare of our brethren, the peace of the church, and the glory of God Let us ſtudy more humility, and ſelf-denial, in the exerciſe of our knowledge; more to regard our acceptance with God, and leſs to deſire the applauſe of men. In every doubtful or indifferent matter, "happy is he, who condemneth not himſelf in the "thing, which he alloweth." Numbers venture into places, and upon actions, againſt which their own conſciences revolt, becauſe they are induced by inclination, and emboldened by the example of thoſe, who on ſome account have obtained the reputation of godly men. But whether the things themſelves be, or be not lawful; as they cannot do them in faith; as they heſitate concerning the lawfulneſs of them; and as they cannot heartily pray for the preſence and bleſſing of God in them; ſo they are condemned for indulging themſelves in ſo doubtful a caſe. But few are ſo happy as to be quite free from ſelf-condemnation in every thing that they allow: a ſound judgment, a ſimple heart, a tender conſcience, and an habitual ſelf-denial, are neceſſary for the enjoyment of this comfort; and moſt of us ſee frequent cauſe to condemn ourſelves, and by daily repentance, faith, and prayer to deprecate the merited condemnation of our God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—3.] The apoſtle here proceeds with the argument of the preceding chapter. He admitted, that they, who knew their liberty, in reſpect of the above-mentioned diſtinctions, were generally ſtronger in faith, as well as ſounder in judgment, than their more ſcrupulous brethren. But for that reaſon they ought to *bear with* their infirmities without deſpiſing them; and even to *bear* their infirmities, by patiently ſubmitting to ſelf-denial on their account, and meekly enduring their uncharitable cenſures; whilſt they perſevered in their endeavours to promote their welfare, and to maintain a peaceful communion with them. So that, inſtead of pleaſing themſelves in the indulgent uſe of their liberty, or humouring their pride, ſelf-will, or reſentment; they ought readily to recede from their own inclinations, in order to pleaſe their neighbour, as far as could conduce to his good, or to mutual edification, by obviating his prejudices, and gaining upon his affections. Thus Chriſt, from love to ſinners, renounced his own eaſe, comfort, and reputation; expoſed himſelf to the reproach, and revilings of the enemies of God, and lived in this polluted, miſerable world, amidſt contempt, calumnies, and perſecutions, till he finiſhed his ſufferings by the ignominious death of the croſs, amidſt the inſults of his embittered murderers: according as it had been predicted of him by David, who ſpake as a type of him. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* lxix. v. 9. 20.)

V. 4—7.] The apoſtle took occaſion from this quotation to remind the Romans, that the whole of the ancient ſcriptures had been penned for *their* inſtruction, as much as for that of thoſe, to whom they were firſt delivered: whether they contained types, or predictions of

6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Chriſt alſo received us to the glory of God.

8 Now I ſay that Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, to confirm the promiſes *made* unto the fathers:

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cauſe I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy name.

10 And again he ſaith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praiſe the Lord all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again Eſaias ſaith, There ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, and he that ſhall riſe to reign over the Gentiles; in him ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.

14 And I myſelf alſo am perſuaded of you, my brethren, that ye alſo are full of goodneſs, filled with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another.

15 Nevertheleſs, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in ſome ſort, as putting you in mind, becauſe of the grace that is given to me of God,

16 That I ſhould be the miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to the Gentiles, miniſtering the goſpel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt in thoſe things which pertain to God.

Chriſt, gracious promiſes, precepts, admonitions, or examples. In order that by patiently cleaving to the Lord in faith and holy obedience, amidſt all their trials and temptations; and by taking comfort from the daily peruſal of the ſcriptures; they might poſſeſs a joyful hope of heaven, notwithſtanding their paſt ſins, and preſent manifold defects. He therefore prayed for them, to that God, who is infinitely patient and long-ſuffering toward-us; who commands us in like manner to bear with one another; and who is the Author and Giver of patience to his people, and the ſource of all their conſolations, that He would render his exhortations effectual; and grant them to be of one judgment, and one heart, diſpoſed to entire harmony and affection, and full of diſintereſted love, and compaſſion for each other, after the example of Chriſt; that ſo nothing might hinder them from joining as with one mind, and one mouth, in the worſhip of God, in glorifying him for his mercies, and adoring his perfections; as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is approached by ſinners, through his beloved Son, and is become their reconciled Father in Him. He therefore again exhorted them to lay aſide their prejudices, and diſputes, and to receive one another as brethren, without regarding the diſtinctions of Jew, and Gentile, or leſſer differences of opinion: even as Chriſt had received them, without making exceptions to any of them; that God might be glorified in their ſalvation, as he alſo would be in their mutual love, and harmony.

V. 8—13.] In order to conciliate Jews and Gentiles into one church, Jeſus Chriſt had aſſumed his human nature among the former; he had ſubmitted to circumciſion, and exerciſed his perſonal miniſtry among circumciſed perſons; thus fulfilling the predictions and promiſes delivered to the fathers of the Jewiſh nation: the Gentile converts could therefore have no pretence for deſpiſing the Jews. On the other hand, after Chriſt's aſcenſion, the goſpel had been moſt ſucceſsfully preached among the Gentiles; that they eſpecially might glorify God for his mercy, as had been predicted by the ancient prophets; (Notes, &c. *Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 43. *Pſ.* xviii. v. 49. *Pſ.* cxvii. *Iſaiah*, c. xi. v. 1. 10.) So that the Jews could have no reaſon to be ſhy of the Gentiles, whether they regarded the will of their aſcended Lord, or the prophecies of the ſcripture. In the laſt quotation it had been ſhewn that the Gentiles were to truſt, or hope in that Meſſiah, who was to reign over them: hence the apoſtle took occaſion to pray, that God, the author and object of this hope, would fill them with every kind of joy, and ſpiritual peace, by enabling them ſimply to believe in him, as revealed in his beloved Son, and by relying on his gracious promiſes; that ſo they might attain to a prevailing, abiding, and realizing hope of eternal life, through the ſanctifying and comforting influences, and energy of the Holy Spirit.

V. 14—17.] The apoſtle, being about to conclude his epiſtle, ſhews the Romans why he, who had never ſeen them, had addreſſed them in ſo earneſt, and copious a manner. This did not ariſe from any doubt that he entertained concerning them: for he was fully perſuaded, that they were replete with that goodneſs, that kind, and affectionate Spirit, which he had inculcated; as well as with knowledge in every part of the goſpel, ſo as to be able to admoniſh one another, without any other aſſiſtance. Nevertheleſs he had written with the more confidence to them, about ſome particulars, to put them in remembrance of their duties, and their dangers; becauſe God had peculiarly favoured him in appointing him to be the apoſtle, and the miniſter of Chriſt to the Gentiles. His ſpecial miniſtry required him to preach

18 For I will not dare to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.

19 Through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; ſo that from Jeruſalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt.

20 Yea, ſo I have ſtrived to preach the goſpel, not where Chriſt was named, leſt I ſhould build upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee: and they that have not heard ſhall underſtand.

22 For which cauſe alſo I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more place in theſe parts, and having a great deſire theſe many years to come unto you;

24 Whenſoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you; for I truſt to ſee you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if firſt I be ſomewhat filled with your *company*.

25 But now I go unto Jeruſalem to miniſter unto the ſaints.

26 For it hath pleaſed them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution, for the poor ſaints which are at Jeruſalem.

27 It hath pleaſed them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their ſpiritual things, their duty is alſo to miniſter unto them in carnal things.

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the goſpel among the Gentiles, and to ſuperintend their affairs, (as the prieſt uſed to do the ſacrifice, or the burning of incenſe;) in order that their perſons and ſervices might be preſented to God, in an acceptable manner, by the hands of the great high Prieſt within the veil, being ſanctified by the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit; and he therefore deemed himſelf called upon to attempt this ſervice towards them alſo. For in this important truſt he had ſome ground of glorying, not in himſelf, but in the unmerited and rich favour of Jeſus Chriſt towards him; not in carnal things, but in thoſe, that pertained to God, and his worſhip: and this induced him to addreſs this epiſtle to the chriſtians at Rome.

V. 18—21.] The apoſtle's ſucceſs in his miniſtry had correſponded to the importance of the truſt delegated to him. He would not ſpeak of more, than Chriſt had wrought by him, in bringing the heathen nations to obey the truth, in word, and deed: as it ſeems ſome oſtentatious teachers were forward to do. What had been done was indeed entirely the work of Chriſt; but he had choſen to make uſe of him as his inſtrument. His preaching had therefore been attended with extraordinary miracles, wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, whoſe divine agency had alſo diſpoſed the hearts of the hearers to embrace the goſpel. So that from Jeruſalem, in a very extenſive circle of ſome thouſands of miles, even to Illyricum, on the borders of Italy, he had fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt, and inſtructed vaſt multitudes with great accuracy in that holy doctrine. Hence it appears that Paul preached in ſome places, which Luke hath not mentioned in "the Acts of the Apoſtles." Indeed it had been his holy ambition to carry the glad tidings of ſalvation to thoſe, who had not before heard of Chriſt; and thus to face the dangers, and hardſhips of making the firſt aſſault on the kingdom of ſatan, in every place. Nor was he diſpoſed in general to build on the foundation laid by other miniſters, who were competent to carry on the work they had happily begun; but rather to fulfil the ſcripture, which foretold, that many nations and rulers would ſee, and underſtand ſuch things, as they had before been ſtrangers to. (*Iſaiah*, c. lii. v. 15.)

V. 22—29.] As the Romans were already favoured with the goſpel, it did not accord with the apoſtle's plan to leave his more urgent employment to go among them: this had long hindered him from viſiting them. But as he had now brought the churches, which he had planted, to eſtabliſhment in the faith; and as he had no immediate call to any new ſcene of action, in the parts, where he had before laboured: ſo he now purpoſed to gratify the deſire, which he had for many years experienced, of going to Rome. But he alſo intended a journey into Spain, a large country, ſtill much further to the weſt, where probably the goſpel had not then been preached: in his way he purpoſed to ſtay for a time at Rome; and when he had in part ſatisfied his affectionate deſire of communing with the believers there; he expected they would help him forward toward Spain. But in the mean time, he muſt take a long journey in the oppoſite direction, in order to perform an important ſervice to the poor chriſtians at Jeruſalem; for whom the Gentile converts had raiſed a very liberal contribution. This they had done willingly: but indeed they were in ſome reſpects debtors to them. For the Jewiſh preachers had firſt carried the goſpel among them; and the primitive believers there had impoveriſhed themſelves in promoting that doctrine, the bleſſing of which they now ſhared with the Gentiles; whoſe duty it therefore was to communicate to them of that temporal abundance, which is ſo generally ſpent in a carnal manner. When therefore he had performed this ſervice, and had affixed his ſeal, as it were, to this good fruit produced by the Gentiles, in order to conciliate the minds of their Jewiſh brethren; he intended to paſs by Rome to Spain. And whenever he ſhould be permitted to come to them, he was confident, that he ſhould be employed to communicate to them, an abundant ſupply of thoſe ſpiritual gifts, conſolations, and bleſſings, which are conveyed to ſinners by the goſpel of

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have ſealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

29 And I am ſure that, when I come unto you, I ſhall come in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt.

30 Now I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye ſtrive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my ſervice which *I have* for Jeruſalem may be accepted of the ſaints;

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreſhed.

33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Chriſt: ſo that they would certainly be edified, eſtabliſhed, comforted, and increaſed in numbers, by his coming, his preaching, and the miraculous powers, that he ſhould be employed to impart to them. Thus the apoſtle never loſt ſight of his object, or let ſlip any opportunity of inculcating mutual love between the Jewiſh and Gentile converts. This paſſage ſhews that the epiſtle was written previous to his departure for Jeruſalem, with the contributions of the churches. (*Acts*, c. xx. v. 1—4:) but the date of A. D. 58, commonly affixed to it, allows only of 14 years after Paul's converſion, to his ſecond journey to Jeruſalem; and this appears contrary to his own account; (*Gal.* c. i. v. 18. c. ii. v. 1.) It is not known, whether the apoſtle ever accompliſhed his intended journey into Spain; but he went to Rome in a very different manner, from what he had purpoſed.

V. 30—33.] The apoſtle deemed his journey to Jeruſalem to be of ſo much importance, that he ought not to decline it: yet he was aware, that it would be attended with great danger and difficulty, through the enmity of the Jews, and the ſtrong prejudices of the chriſtians againſt him; which neither his zeal in their behalf, nor the liberality of the Gentile converts could counterbalance. He therefore beſought the Romans, for the ſake of Chriſt their common Lord, and for that love's ſake, which the Spirit of Chriſt had wrought in their hearts to each other, according to his own loving nature, and his conduct towards them, that they would earneſtly unite in prayers for, and with him, that he might be protected from the malice of the unbelieving Jews, who would otherwiſe diſappoint all the plans which he had formed; and that the prejudices of the Jewiſh believers might be ſo removed, that they might accept of, and take in good part, the ſervice, which he went to perform. That ſo, if the Lord pleaſed, he might not come to them grieved, and diſappointed, but with joy and comfort, and alſo have his ſpirit refreſhed and enlivened by joining with them in thankſgivings to God, and by what he witneſſed of the grace beſtowed upon them. In the mean time he prayed, that the God of peace, as reconciled to believers in Chriſt, and as diſpoſing them to live together in peace and harmony, might be with them all, for their comfort, and to prevent all diſputes and diviſions among them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If the powerful of this world domineer over the weak, it muſt not be ſo in the church of Chriſt: but every one, in proportion as he is ſtrong in faith and grace, muſt be tender, patient, and compaſſionate to the feeble-minded, to thoſe, who are compaſſed with infirmities, confuſed in their views, harraſſed with ſcruples, doubts, and temptations, and unable to enjoy the peace and comfort of the goſpel, though they appear to walk in the obedience of it. Even if their infirmities be attended with bigotry, cenſoriouſneſs, or peeviſhneſs; we ought ſtill to bear with, and pity them, and to ſubmit to ſelf-denial for their good: and inſtead of pleaſing ourſelves, whatever may become of them, we ought to give up our own humour, and inclination, as far as we can pleaſe them for their good, to edification; though we muſt not be men-pleaſers, helping to deceive them by our flatteries, and compliances. If any man deem himſelf ſtrong; and is at the ſame time diſpoſed to revile, deſpiſe, condemn, and reject the weak and ſcrupulous, becauſe they cannot accede to his whole ſyſtem, &c: it is evident that pride and ſelfiſhneſs are ſtronger in his heart, than faith, and grace; and that he hath more of the knowledge that puffeth up, than of the love that edifieth. He is the moſt advanced chriſtian, who is moſt conformed to Chriſt, and moſt willing to give up his own eaſe or indulgence, and to endure reproach, and ſuffering, after his example, and in proſecution of that great deſign, for which He ſhed his blood: and if in doing this, we are reviled by furious zealots, and uncharitable bigots, we may with humble accommodation uſe the Redeemer's words, and ſay "the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are "fallen upon me." For whatever is written either in the Old, or the New Teſtament, is intended for our inſtruction, and may be applied to our caſes, for our direction, and encouragement; that by patient faith, perſevering obedience, and comfort derived from the word of God, "we may embrace, and ever hold faſt, the bleſſed "hope of everlaſting life, as given to us in Jeſus Chriſt." Thus relying on the mercy and truth of the God of all patience, and conſolation; we ſhould pray continually, that we and our brethren in Chriſt, may be like minded towards one another, after his example; that the diviſions of the church being healed, all who are called by his name may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus, with one mind, and with one mouth. And till this perfect union ſhall be effected; we ſhould learn to agree, notwithſtanding our leſſer differences; and to receive one another as brethren, whilſt we hold the great doctrines of ſalvation for ſinners by the blood, and Spirit of Chriſt; and this will tend greatly to the credit of the goſpel, and the glory of God.

The whole plan of redemption is ſuited to reconcile us to one another, as well as to our gracious God; and

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Recommending Phebe to the Chriſtians at Rome, and ſending ſalutations to ſeveral of them, 1---16. *2d. Cautioning them againſt thoſe, who cauſed diviſions, &c,* 17---20. *3d. Mentioning ſeveral friends, who joined in their ſalutations of them,* 21---23. *4th. Concluding with prayers for them, and aſcriptions of glory to God,* 24---27.

I Commend unto you Phebe our ſiſter, which is a ſervant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh ſaints, and that ye aſſiſt her in whatſoever buſineſs ſhe hath need of you: for ſhe

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we may ſay of every contention among chriſtians, that "an enemy hath done this." The fulfilment of ancient promiſes and prophecies, in Chriſt's coming amongſt the Jews, and in the great ſpread of the goſpel among the Gentiles, and through diſtant nations, and languages, that they might glorify God for his mercy, and hope in that Branch from the Root of Jeſſe, who was raiſed up to reign over them; ſhould teach us to ceaſe from our murmurings and diſputings, and to join in grateful praiſes, and thankſgivings, to Him, who glories in his merciful victories among the heathen, and hath called them to rejoice with his people. If we would have the God of hope to fill our hearts with all peace, and joy in believing, (and a ſinner can have abiding holy joy and peace in no other way;) if we would abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghoſt; we muſt rely on, and pray for, the teaching and influences of that divine Agent; and we muſt be careful not to grieve him by our evil tempers, or ſinful paſſions, nor yet to quench his ſacred fire, by negligence, or procraſtination: for by ſuch things we often bring darkneſs, and diſconſolation upon ourſelves. We ſhould hope the beſt of others, and commend what is good in their conduct: but they, who are really moſt full of goodneſs, and knowledge, and able to admoniſh one another, will be moſt thankful to be reminded of their duty, and cautioned againſt danger, by thoſe that are authorized to watch over them, who have obtained grace to be faithful in their miniſtry; and who evidently deſire, that the perſons and ſervices of their brethren may be acceptable to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt. It is indeed an honour to be employed by the Lord Jeſus; and for him to work by us, in thoſe things which pertain to God, and in rendering ſinners obedient by word and deed. But the whole glory muſt ultimately be referred to him: oſtentation ſhould carefully be avoided, in ſpeaking on ſuch ſubjects; and it is ſeldom expedient to mention ourſelves in ſuch matters, except as we want to obviate men's prejudices againſt our miniſtry, when they impede our uſefulneſs. But indeed, how trivial are the labours, and how limited is the uſefulneſs, of moſt of us, when compared with thoſe of the apoſtle; whoſe miniſtry was attended with the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in ſo remarkable a degree, and whoſe unwearied labours would admit of no bounds, but thoſe of the human ſpecies, or of his own life! It is honourable, when miniſters, who have the opportunity, boldly face oppoſition and hardſhip in carrying the goſpel to thoſe places, where Chriſt hath not yet been named; and had rather make irruptions into the uninvaded provinces of ſatan's dark domain, than ſtay to garriſon ſuch as have already been torn from him. This is a noble ambition: but as moſt of us muſt in ſome meaſure build upon the foundation that others have laid before us; we ſhould at leaſt take heed how we build thereon, that our ſuper-ſtructure may not diſgrace, or expoſe the good foundation; as is too often the caſe. Our beſt deſires may meet with many hindrances; our well concerted plans may be diſappointed; our very prayers may ſeem to remain unanſwered: but, proceeding in the path of duty with ſelf-denying zeal and love, endeavouring to conciliate the minds of chriſtians to one another, and to excite them only to emulation in good works; and ſeeking our comfort in communion with God, and his ſaints; all will ſurely terminate to our advantage: and even the ſervices, which we would have performed, and could not, ſhall be graciouſly accepted, and rewarded. The rich believer ſhould deem himſelf a debtor to the poor; and they who have been made partakers of ſpiritual bleſſings, ſhould count it their duty to miniſter in carnal things, to thoſe, through whom they were brought to the knowledge of ſalvation. There is a bleſſing, a fulneſs of bleſſing in the goſpel of Chriſt, which we ſhould expect to know, and to communicate, but with which numbers are totally unacquainted, and moſt of us experience in a degree far beneath, what the primitive believers did. We ſhould therefore ſtrive together in our prayers, with, and for each other, that for Chriſt's ſake, and by the love of the Spirit, a great bleſſing may come upon the ſouls of chriſtians, and the labours of miniſters: that envy, prejudice and a party ſpirit may not prevent the faithful, zealous ſervants of Chriſt from being accepted by the ſaints, in their diſintereſted endeavours to do them good, (as is frequently the caſe;) but that they may meet the people, wherever they go, with joy, and may by them be refreſhed; and that the God of peace may be the ever-preſent Comforter of all, who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. Amen.

NOTES

CHAP. XVI] V. 1, 2.] The epiſtle was probably ſent by Phebe, according to what is added at the end of it in our Bibles; but theſe additions are of no authority, and ſometimes palpably erroneous; and therefore will not be inſerted. As Cenchrea was the ſea-port of Corinth, where a ſeparate church was founded; this evinces that the apoſtle wrote from Corinth. Phebe acted as a ſervant, or a deaconeſs, to the church at Cenchrea, and was probably employed in relieving the needy women amongſt them. This, ſhe muſt have undertaken freely, out of love to the work alone, as ſhe appears to have been a perſon in good circumſtances. (1 *Tim.* c. v. ver. 9—16.) The chriſtians at Rome were exhorted to receive her to their fellowſhip, and alſo to aſſiſt, and ſupport her in the buſineſs, which hath been a ſuccourer of many, and of myſelf alſo.

3 Greet Priſcilla and Aquila my helpers in Chriſt Jeſus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but alſo all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewiſe *greet* the church that is in their houſe. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the firſt fruits of Achaia unto Chriſt.

6 Greet Mary, who beſtowed much labour on us.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinſmen, and my fellow-priſoners, who are of note among the apoſtles, who alſo were in Chriſt before me.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Chriſt, and Stachys my beloved.

13 Salute Apelles approved in Chriſt. Salute them which are of Ariſtobulus' *houſhold*.

11 Salute Herodion my kinſman. Greet them that be of the *houſhold* of Narciſſus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphoſa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Perſis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus choſen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Aſyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his ſiſter, and Olympas, and all the ſaints which are with them.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiſs. The churches of Chriſt ſalute you.

17 Now I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences con-

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had brought her thither; as ſhe had been helpful to many chriſtians, and to Paul alſo, who was not backward to acknowledge his obligation to her.

V. 3—5.] This excellent pair had now returned to Rome; though but a ſhort time before they had been at Epheſus. (Notes, *Acts*, c. xviii. v. 1, 2. 24—28. 1 *Cor.* c. xvi. v. 19.) They had ventured their lives, in protecting the apoſtle at Epheſus; as if they had been willing to lay down their own necks, and to be beheaded in his ſtead: and as his life was ſo uſeful to all the churches of the Gentiles, they, as well as he, were under the greateſt obligations to them. He therefore gave his affectionate ſalutations, and good wiſhes to them, and to the church in their houſe; or to the ſeveral chriſtians, of which their family was compoſed, and who met continually together to worſhip God. He alſo deſired to be remembered with the ſame expreſſions of affection to Epenetus; (for the words *greet*, and *ſalute* are the ſame in the original;) he was peculiarly beloved by the apoſtle, having been his firſt convert in Achaia, and the earneſt of his ſubſequent uſefulneſs. Perhaps he was the firſt of the houſhold of Stephanas, who embraced the goſpel. (1 *Cor.* c. xvi. v. 15.)

V. 6—15] We do not know what Mary this was; or in what reſpect ſhe had beſtowed much labour on the apoſtle, and his friends; but ſhe had in ſome proper manner been very active in providing for their ſupport, and comfort. Andronicus and Junia, being Jews, and of the ſame tribe and family with Paul, had on ſome occaſion been impriſoned with them for the ſake of the goſpel. As they had probably been converted, on, or ſoon after, the day of Pentecoſt; they were well known and eſteemed by the other apoſtles, whilſt Paul had been a perſecutor: as they were *in Chriſt* united to him by faith, before the apoſtle was. Of the perſons, who are next mentioned, we know nothing certain. Apelles had approved himſelf to be a true believer by his exemplary, zealous conduct. Probably Ariſtobulus was not a chriſtian; but he had ſeveral in his houſhold, of whom the apoſtle had ſome knowledge. Narciſſus is ſuppoſed to have been a very powerful, and wicked man, of whom we read in the Roman hiſtorians; yet he too had believers in his family. Rufus ſeems to have been the ſon of Simon the Cyrenian: and his mother had ſhewed ſuch attention to Paul, that he deemed her deſerving of the honour and reſpect due to a parent. It is remarkable, that the apoſtle, amidſt all his engagements, ſhould be ſo well acquainted with the names and characters of many chriſtians, reſiding in a city, which he had never viſited! This ſhews his indefatigable diligence and attention to every thing relative to the churches of the Gentiles. It may alſo be obſerved, that he never mentioned the name of Peter, which he doubtleſs would have done, had he then reſided at Rome; which powerfully militates againſt all the traditions of antiquity reſpecting him, on which ſo enormous a fabric of uſurpation and ſuperſtition hath been erected.

V. 16. *A holy*, &c.] This expreſſion of ſpiritual affection, to which the apoſtle exhorted them, to ſhew that his epiſtle had produced its' intended effect, in promoting mutual love amongſt them, has been ſuppoſed to have been uſed by men and women ſeparately: yet as it ſeems afterwards to have been laid aſide, becauſe of abuſe, or ſlanders; that opinion perhaps is groundleſs, and rather the effect of modern ideas of propriety, reſulting from licentious refinement, than ſuited to the pure ſimplicity of thoſe primitive times. He further informed them, that the ſeveral churches of Chriſt, which he had viſited, deſired to expreſs their affectionate regard to them.

V. 17—20.] The apoſtle wrote from the fulneſs trary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are ſuch ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly; and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wiſe unto that which is good, and ſimple concerning evil.

20 And the God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. Amen.

21 Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jaſon, and Soſipater, my kinſmen, ſalute you.

22 I Tertius, who wrote *this* epiſtle, ſalute you in the Lord.

23 Gaius mine hoſt, and of the whole church, ſaluteth you. Eraſtus the chamberlain of the city ſaluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

24 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

25 Now to him that is of power to ſtabliſh you according to my goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the revelation of the myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the world began,

26 But now is made manifeſt, and by the ſcriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlaſting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith:

27 To God only wiſe, *be* glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. Amen.

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of his heart: and therefore, when he ſeemed to be concluding, his overflowing love induced him to begin again, as ſome further topic was ſuggeſted to his mind. Thus he here ſtopped, to warn them to note, and ſet a mark upon the perſons, whoſe conduct, doctrine, or inſinuations tended to make diviſions in the church; and to avoid them, as they would ſuch, as were infected with ſome dangerous diſeaſe. For, whatever they pretended, they did not ſerve Chriſt, or ſeek his glory, in what they did; but they rather ſought the indulgence of their appetites, and ſtarted their opinions, in order to ſupport themſelves, and live inplenty without labour. Thus, by their affectionate language, and plauſible harangues, they impoſed upon the judgment, and inſinuated themſelves into the affections of thoſe perſons, who were favourably diſpoſed to hear the goſpel, but unſuſpecting, and undiſcerning. He was the more earneſt to caution the Romans againſt ſuch artful deceivers, becauſe their unreſerved obedience to the will of Chriſt was ever ſpoken of with great approbation. He was therefore greatly rejoiced with this good report of them, and wiſhed it to prevail ſtill more: yet he would have them to be obedient from an eſtabliſhed judgment, as well as from a proper diſpoſition of heart: he deſired that they might be wiſe and prudent in every good work; and only ſimple and unexperienced concerning evil, and ſo unacquainted with its painful effects. He knew that ſatan, who was to bruiſe the heel of the ſeed of the woman, (Note, *Gen.* c. iii. v. xv,) would annoy them to the uttermoſt: but their reconciled God, the Author of inward, and outward peace, ſhould ſhortly bruiſe him under their feet, and give every believer an entire, and final victory over him. He therefore only prayed that the pardoning mercy, and ſanctifying grace of Chriſt might always be with them.

V. 21—23] (*Acts*, c. xiii. v. 1. c. xvi. v. 1—3. c. xvii. v. 7. c. xx. v. 4.) The apoſtle, not being an expert writer, generally employed an Amanuenſis. Tertius, who wrote this epiſtle, has been ſuppoſed to be the ſame perſon as Silas; becauſe *Silas* in Hebrew ſignifies *the third*, as *Tertius* does in Latin; but this is uncertain. Gaius was probably the ſame perſon, to whom John addreſſed his third epiſtle. Being a man of affluence he hoſpitably entertained Paul, and his company; and he was ſo liberal in ſuch ſervices, that he might be called the hoſt of the whole church. Eraſtus, as the ſteward, or treaſurer of Corinth, muſt have been a perſon of conſiderable rank, who had embraced the goſpel.

V. 25—27.] The apoſtle at length concluded, with aſcribing glory to God, in ſuch a manner, as to direct their faith, and dependence to be placed on him. He was aware that nothing but the Almighty power of God could preſerve them from the fatal aſſaults of their ſubtle, and potent enemies. But God was able to eſtabliſh them in the faith, hope, and obedience of the goſpel, which he had preached to them; in conſiſtency with the doctrine of Chriſt, reſpecting the ſalvation of ſinners, and the calling of the Gentiles. This great myſtery had been concealed from mankind in general ſince the beginning, and had only been in part revealed to the Jews: but at length it had been openly manifeſted, by the writings of the ancient prophets. and their accompliſhment; and by the preaching of the goſpel according to the commandment of the eternal God to his apoſtles and evangeliſts; that it might be made known to the nations, in order to bring them off from their idolatries and iniquities to the obedience of faith. To this God of infinite wiſdom and knowledge, from whom all wiſdom originates, all glory and worſhip ought to be rendered for ever, through his Son Jeſus Chriſt. By the only wiſe God we muſt underſtand the Deity, without reſpect to the diſtinction of Perſons; or the Father, without excluding the Son, or the Holy Spirit; who in many ſcriptures are ſhewn to be coequal with the Father, in all divine perfections. But the Godhead is revealed to us, in, and by the incarnate Word, our divine Mediator; thus we ſee the glory of God, and our adoration and worſhip muſt in the ſame way be preſented before Him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

True religion teaches men, humbly and frankly to acknowledge their obligations even to thoſe, who in many reſpects have been their inferiors; and it becometh ſaints to receive, and be helpful to each other for the Lord's ſake, as they have opportunity; and to requite the kindneſs that hath been ſhewn to any of their brethren: and the whole church is under obligations to thoſe, who venture their lives, or lay themſelves out to preſerve, or aſſiſt the uſeful ſervants of Chriſt. If an apoſtle ſo kindly remembered each of thoſe, who had beſtowed labour upon him; much more will the Lord remember all the ſervices, which have been performed from love to him and the goſpel. Seniority in faith gives a real precedency; and the bonds of grace are nearer than thoſe of nature. Chriſt is as much preſent in the family worſhip of thoſe, who meet in his name, as in the more public aſſemblies of his ſaints. Believers are often found in thoſe families, of which the principals are unconverted: and they ſhould perform their ſeveral relative duties with chearfulneſs, and a deference to their ſuperiors, though ſtrangers to the grace of God.

In order to maintain uninterrupted our communion with the Lord and his ſaints; thoſe perſons muſt be marked, diſgraced and avoided, who aim to prejudice believers againſt each other, to draw them off from their faithful paſtors, or to ſeduce them into ſtrange doctrines contrary to the ſimple truths of God's word. For notwithſtanding their flaming zeal, and head-ſtrong confidence, as if they only were the ſervants of Chriſt; they evidently do not belong to our Prince of peace, but are the ſlaves of their ſelfiſh intereſts, their ſenſual appetites, or their ambition. By their apparent affection and compaſſion, and by their well-worded declamations, they deceive many hopeful injudicious perſons: and few are abſolutely ſecured from their plauſible deluſions. Whilſt therefore we give chriſtians, merited commendation for their obedience hitherto; we ſhould uſe every proper means to render them wiſe to that which is good, and to keep them inexperienced as to that which is evil: as well as to encourage them, and ourſelves with the aſſurance, that the God of peace will bruiſe ſatan under our feet ſhortly. Every expreſſion of the moſt endeared affection ſhould be uſed among believers, but in the moſt pure and holy manner. They, who honour Chriſt by ſhewing kindneſs to his people, will be honoured of him by having their names written in the book of life. True religion does not require men to quit public ſtations, when they can fill them to the glory of God, and the benefit of his church. Truſting in the power of God to eſtabliſh us in the faith, and hope of the goſpel; thankfully receiving the revelation of the myſtery, which was ſo long kept ſecret from mankind; endeavouring to make known the goſpel according to the ſcriptures of the prophets, and the commandment of the everlaſting God; remembering that we are called to obedience of faith; and that every degree of true wiſdom is from the only wiſe God; we ſhould endeavour by word and deed to render glory to him through Jeſus Chriſt; that ſo the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be with us for ever. Amen.

The Firſt Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the CORINTHIANS.

We have read before of Corinth, and of the church, which Paul had there planted. (Notes, &c. Acts, c. xviii. v. 1---18.) *But ſpeedily after he left them, other teachers aroſe among them, who made great pretenſions to eloquence, wiſdom, and knowledge of their chriſtian liberty; and thus undermined the apoſtle's influence, and the credit of his miniſtry. By theſe means the Corinthians were divided into parties; engaged in violent diſputes; and ſeduced into various irregularities, abuſes, and errors. The apoſtle therefore, receiving an account of theſe diſorders, wrote this epiſtle to them; in which he laboured to re-eſtabliſh his authority among them, and to take them off from their falſe teachers; in order that he might the more effectually remedy the other evils, that prevailed amongſt them. By general truths, he, with great addreſs, and prudence, made way for a more direct, and particular oppoſition to the ſeveral errors and irregularities, that had got ground during his abſence. He ſtated the truth, and will of God in various particulars, with great energy of argument, and animation of ſtyle: he reſolved ſeveral queſtions, that had been propoſed to him; he intermixed exhortations, and directions with his other ſubjects; and he concluded with affectionate, and pathetic prayers for them. Though this epiſtle be not ſo ſyſtematic, or argumentative as the preceding one: yet we ſhall find it replete with inſtruction. It ſeems to have been written from Epheſus, juſt before the apoſtle left that city.* (Acts, c. xix.)

CHAP. I.

Contains Paul 1ſt. Declaring his apoſtleſhip, ſaluting the chriſtians at Corinth; thanking God for their converſion, and ſpiritual gifts, and expreſſing his aſſurance of their final ſalvation, 1---9. *2d. Exhorting them to unity, and reproving their diviſions, &c,* 10---16. *3d. Shewing the faithful preaching of the croſs of Chriſt, though deſpiſed by Scribes, and Philoſophers, to be ſuited to glorify God, to humble and ſave ſinners, to render them holy and happy, and to teach them to glory in God alone,* 17---31.

PAUL, called *to be* an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt through the will of God, and Soſthenes *our* brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called *to be* ſaints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both their's and our's:

3 Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt;

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge;

6 Even as the teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed in you.

7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

8 Who ſhall alſo confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

9 God *is* faithful: by whom we were called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—3.] (Notes, &c, *Rom.* c. i. v. 1—3.) As there ſeems to have been a party at Corinth, who depreciated Paul's miniſtry, and affected to deny his apoſtolical authority: ſo it was proper for him to begin his epiſtle with an expreſs declaration, that God had by his mere grace, and of his ſovereign will, called him to that office: and it was conciliatory, and condeſcending in him to join Soſthenes with him, in this ſalutation and addreſs, as he meant to blame many things, that had crept in among them. Probably he was one of the Corinthians, who having been appointed to the miniſtry, accompanied Paul in his travels. (Note, *Acts*, c. xviii. v. 17.) He addreſſed the church of God, or the collective body of chriſtians, at Corinth, as "ſanctified in Chriſt," which ſome explain of their having been ſeparated, or ſet apart for God, in his eternal purpoſe, as choſen in Chriſt to be holy; others of their being actually united to him by faith, and ſanctified by the communication of his Spirit. With them he alſo joined all thoſe in every place, who invoked the name of the Lord Jeſus; (probably with an immediate reference to the other churches in Achaia:) who was equally the Lord, and Maſter of the apoſtle, of Soſthenes, and of every believer among them. This ſhews us how inſeparable the invocation of Chriſt was to the profeſſion of chriſtianity in thoſe days. Some would indeed render it, "thoſe, who are called by the name of the Lord Jeſus:' but I apprehend it may be ſhewn to be inconſiſtent with the proper conſtruction of the Greek language, thus to render it: and that this interpretation would never have been adopted, if the previous oppoſition of men's minds, to the divine adoration of Chriſt, had not induced them to have recourſe to it. To all who invoked Chriſt, the apoſtle gave his uſual ſalutation, deſiring in behalf of them the pardoning mercy, the ſanctifying grace, and the comforting peace of God, through Jeſus Chriſt.

V. 4—9.] Before the apoſtle entered on the immediate ſubject of his epiſtle, he endeavoured to conciliate their affections, by calling to their recollection the benefit, which they had derived from his miniſtry. He always thanked God on their account, for having beſtowed his grace upon them, by and through Jeſus Chriſt, by which they had been turned from idolatry to the faith of the goſpel, and the worſhip of God: moreover they had been enriched by Him with all ſpiritual gifts, and miraculouſly enabled to ſpeak in divers languages, and with abundant knowledge of divine things. So that, as the teſtimony of Chriſt had been confirmed among them by the miracles of the apoſtle; ſo they had been enabled to work ſimilar miracles, after they had embraced it: in ſo much that they came behind other churches in no ſpiritual gift, before their new teachers came among them; and they need not be told by whom the Lord had conferred theſe benefits upon them. With theſe they had appeared to be edifying one another, as thoſe, who waited for the coming of Chriſt their Lord and Judge, (Notes, &c, *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 14—30;) who by the continued ſupplies of his grace would confirm them to the end of their courſe, in the faith and hope of the goſpel; that they might be preſerved blameleſs in their conduct through life, and ſtand completely juſtified and ſanctified in the day of judgment. This would certainly be the caſe, if they were what they profeſſed and appeared to be: ſeeing God was faithful to his promiſes, and covenant engagements to his people, which he had ratified with them perſonally, when he had effectually called them to be partakers of Chriſt and all his purchaſed bleſſings, and to a life of communion with him. Though the apoſtle afterwards intimated his doubts of ſome of the Corinthians; yet he here addreſſed them, as being, in the judgment of charity, what they profeſſed to be. Out of the abundance of his heart he repeats the words "Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," ſo often, that there

10 Now I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and *that* there be no diviſions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

11 For it hath been declared to me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the houſe* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I ſay, that every one of you ſaith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Chriſt.

13 Is Chriſt divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Criſpus and Gaius;

15 Leſt any ſhould ſay that I had baptized in mine own name.

16 And I baptized alſo the houſhold of Stephanas: beſides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the goſpel: not with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the croſs is to them that periſh fooliſhneſs; but unto us which are ſaved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and will bring to no-

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is a danger of thoſe readers being diſguſted with them, whoſe hearts are ſtrangers to that holy affection, which occupied that of the apoſtle.

V. 10—16.] After this conciliatory introduction the apoſtle proceeded to the ſubject, on which he particularly wrote to the Corinthians; and to point out that leading evil, which gave riſe to all other abuſes, that he meant to reprove. He beſought, and exhorted them by the name, the honour and authority of Chriſt, to ceaſe from their murmurings and diſputings; that they would all join in the ſame language of faith, that they would avoid all ſchiſms, contentions, or diſunion of heart, and that they would be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and judgment. Conſidering the different capacities, educations, habits, and prejudices of mankind, it ſeems impoſſible to avoid all difference of opinion in religion: but it is equally true that fallen men will never on earth love God with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themſelves: yet the rule, and exhortation muſt not be changed on that account. As we have one rule, and ſtandard of truth; and one Spirit to be our Teacher: ſo, in proportion to our humility, ſimplicity, diligence, &c, we come to be of one mind and judgment, in the great concerns of religion: and were we perfect in theſe things, we ſhould alſo be perfectly united in ſentiment and affection. This will be the caſe in heaven: it will at length be ſo in a great degree on earth. The nearer we come to it, the more we approximate to perfection: all our diviſions ariſe from a ſinful cauſe, which muſt not be excuſed; but whilſt it ſubſiſts we ſhould endeavour to bear with each other, in reſpect of it, and ſo to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Yet we ſhould continually pray for the more abundant pouring out of the Spirit of truth and love upon ourſelves, and all our fellow chriſtians, that we may be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind and judgment. This ſeaſonable admonition the apoſtle gave them; becauſe he had been informed by thoſe, on whom he could depend, and whom he heſitated not to mention to them, that the church at Corinth was troubled with contentions: they were in ſuch a divided ſtate, that he might ſay, that every one of them was attached to ſome one teacher, in oppoſition to all others. As if one profeſſed himſelf to belong to Paul's party, another to that of the eloquent Apollos, another to Peter, the great apoſtle of the circumciſion; and as if others even ſeemed to profeſs themſelves to belong to Chriſt, to excuſe their diſregard for all his miniſters. It has been probably thought, that the apoſtle does not mention theſe names, as really the heads of the parties into which the Corinthians had divided: but to ſhew the evil of the thing itſelf, and the abſurdity of dividing the church, out of a diſpoſition inordinately to honour ſome particular teacher; or to deſpiſe faithful miniſters under pretence of honouring Chriſt. However reſpectable the names were, that were thus cried up, the thing was indefenſible: but it would give leſs umbrage for him to mention Apollos, Cephas, &c, than expreſſly to name the falſe teachers, who were the authors of the miſchief. He therefore demanded of them, whether Chriſt, and his ſalvation, or his myſtical body, could be thus divided, and one part ſet in oppoſition to another? Had Paul, or any of their other teachers, acquired a right to them, by atoning for their ſins upon the croſs? Or had any of them been baptized in the name of Paul, as his diſciples, who were at all adventures to ſtand up for, and honour him? As matters had turned out among them, he was thankful, that he had baptized ſo few of them; leſt his opponents, not being very ſcrupulous, ſhould have averred that he baptized them in his own name. He could recollect but a few, whom he had baptized, (nor was it neceſſary that he ſhould be immediately inſpired with the remembrance of ſo immaterial a fact;) the reſt had been baptized by others, according to Chriſt's appointment, without any mention of Paul's name in it, as they very well knew.

V. 17—25.] Some perſons, ſuppoſing the adminiſtration of ſacraments to be the moſt honourable part of the miniſterial work, have conjectured ſeveral reaſons, why Paul did not perſonally baptize the Corinthian con-thing the underſtanding of the prudent.

20 Where *is* the wiſe? where *is* the ſcribe? where *is* the diſputer of this world? hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wiſdom of God the world by wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a ſign, and the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom:

23 But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.

25 Becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men; and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men.

26 For ye ſee your calling, brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not

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verts: but the reaſon, which he aſſigns is entirely ſubverſive of their imagination. Chriſt did not ſend Paul, as his apoſtle, to baptize men in his name, (which outward form might be adminiſtered with equal validity, by thoſe of inferior ſtation, and endowments;) but to preach the goſpel, which was a more important, and difficult ſervice. So that, attending to his proper work, he left others to baptize thoſe, who embraced the truth. But ſome of the Corinthians might be ready to think, that he was not ſo competent to preach the goſpel, as this ſeemed to imply: and he readily allowed, that he uſed not the wiſdom of words, thoſe plauſible reaſonings rhetorical flouriſhes, or arts of oratory, with which they were ſo faſcinated by ſome of their teachers. For Chriſt had ſent him to deliver an important meſſage in plain language; and he was aware, that ſuch decorations, inſtead of giving efficacy to his ſubject, would degrade it, and even render the croſs of Chriſt of none effect. Such arts of pleaſing would have enervated the ſolemn, affecting ſubject, and obſcured its glory: if the preacher did not ſeek his own honour, by the exerciſe of ſuch ſplendid gifts, he would at leaſt have excited men's attention to, and admiration of him, rather than of his meſſage: and the Holy Spirit would not generally have wrought, when the credit would have been given to the inſtrument, rather than to the Agent. In fact, the preaching of ſalvation for loſt ſinners by the ignominious and agonizing crucifixion of the incarnate Son of God, if fully explained and faithfully applied, muſt appear fooliſhneſs in the abſtract, to ſuch, as continue in the way to deſtruction. The ſenſual, the avaricious, and the ambitious would alike ſee it incompatible with their favourite purſuits: the Phariſee, and the moraliſt would exclaim againſt it, as needleſs and tending to licentiouſneſs. The Scribe, the Sadducee, and the heathen philoſopher would each have his reaſons for deriding, and reviling it: and the looſe profeſſor would *fooliſhly* ſuppoſe, that Chriſt was crucified to purchaſe him the licence of gratifying his luſts. But they, who had been brought into a ſtate of ſalvation by faith of the operation of God, knew this deſpiſed doctrine to be the ſuitable means, by which the power of God wrought, in pulling down the kingdom of ſatan, and converting ſinners to himſelf. And as to the opinion of the wiſe men of the world, God had declared that he would deſtroy their wiſdom, and bring it to nothing. (*Job.* c. v. v. 13. *Iſaiah*, c. xxix. v. 14. *Rom.* c. i. v. 16.) Indeed where were the wiſe philoſophers, the learned Scribes, and the diſputers of the world to be found? They were employed in confuting one another's ſyſtems; they ſcarce agreed in any thing, except in rejecting and deſpiſing the goſpel: (*Iſaiah*, c. xxxiii. v. 18:) and it was evident that their wiſdom, and learning had been of little uſe to mankind. And could it be denied, that God had expoſed the folly of this kind of wiſdom, in the moſt conſpicuous manner? In his infinite wiſdom he had left a great part of the world to follow the dictates of their own boaſted reaſon; and the event had demonſtrated, that man's wiſdom was incompetent to find out, or retain the knowledge of God his Creator; ſo that idolatry, atheiſm, or ſcepticiſm was the univerſal effect. When this experiment had been ſufficiently tried; it then pleaſed God to ſend forth his apoſtles, and evangeliſts, to preach that doctrine, which was derided as fooliſhneſs, and they delivered their meſſage in the moſt artleſs, and unadorned manner: when behold, moſt wonderful effects followed! Vaſt multitudes believed the report, and ſo were ſaved from their idolatry, and iniquities, and became the accepted worſhippers and ſervants of the living God! The Jewiſh Scribes indeed, not ſatisfied with all the demonſtrations of Jeſus being the Meſſiah, as not reliſhing his ſpiritual ſalvation, demanded a ſign from heaven, and waited for a Meſſiah, who ſhould come with outward obſervation: and the Greeks wanted a doctrine ſuited to their ſuppoſed wiſdom, and ſupported by reaſonings and ſpeculations, like their own. But the ſervants of God preached Chriſt crucified: this was the grand peculiarity of their doctrine, the centre of their inſtructions, and the topic, with which they enforced all their exhortations. This doctrine of a crucified Meſſiah; of Him, who had been put to death by their rulers, as an impoſtor, being their long expected Deliverer and King, to whom all ſubjection was due, and from whom all bleſſings were to be expected; was a ſtumbling-ſtone to the Jews, who took offence at it, and ſo perſiſted in unbelief: whilſt the philoſophizing Greeks derided, as the exceſs of folly, the idea, that *a Jew*, and one, whom that deſpiſed nation had crucified with ignominy, ſhould be honoured as the Governor and Judge of all mankind, truſted in as the only Saviour from everlaſting miſery, and even adored as the infinite and Almighty God. But all they, whether Jews or Gentiles, who were called according to God's eternal purpoſe, not only ſaw the power of God in the miracles by which the goſpel was confirmed, in the reſurrection of Chriſt, and many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:

27 But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence.

30 But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

in the accompliſhment of ancient prophecies; and his wiſdom in the glorious plan of redemption, as harmoniouſly honouring all the divine perfections, and magnifying the divine law: but they experienced Chriſt to be the power, and wiſdom of God, to deliver them from the bondage of ſin, and to make them wiſe unto ſalvation: and they obſerved Him, and his goſpel to be the grand medium, by which the power, and wiſdom of God were diſplayed, in the ſubverſion of ſatan's kingdom of idolatry, and ſin, and in confounding all the ſubtle devices of him and his ſervants. For in fact, thoſe ſchemes, doctrines, and diſpenſations of God, which proud men decried as fooliſh, and weak, were proved to be far ſuperior in wiſdom, and far more efficacious in their operations, than all that men ever could have deviſed and attempted for the ſame, or ſimilar purpoſes. Thus the doctrine of ſalvation by faith in a crucified Jew, which appeared to the carnal mind, a fooliſh device; and the preaching of it, by unlearned, and obſcure perſons, which appeared a weak expedient; had, by the power of God accompanying it, done more in a few years towards making men wiſe, and holy, than all the learning of Jewiſh Scribes, and Pagan philoſophers, or the power of armed legiſlators had ever been able to effect, or ever would have effected to the end of time.

V. 26—31.] The perſons, who had been called to embrace, and then ſent forth to preach the goſpel, were a living demonſtration of what the apoſtle was inculcating. This, the Corinthians might ſee for themſelves: for as the goſpel had not been preached to them "with wiſdom of words," or by a parade of learning and philoſophy: ſo, but very few of the wiſe ſages or politicians amongſt them had been called by it; nor yet many of the mighty princes or warriors, or the noble and honourable of the earth. A few ſuch perhaps they had heard of, in whom the omnipotence of divine grace had been diſplayed. But in general, both in reſpect of the profeſſors, and preachers of the goſpel, God had made choice of men, who were deemed *fooliſh* by the world, becauſe of inferior abilities and learning, to confound all the proud reaſonings, and contemptuous objections of the wiſe philoſophers and rabbies: he had choſen men of low birth, and mean circumſtances, and even of feeble and timid ſpirits, who by their holy lives, heroic conſtancy, patient ſufferings, and ſucceſsful labours, might ſhame, and confound the mighty of the earth. He had choſen ſome of the loweſt and baſeſt vulgar, or poor deſpiſed Jews, or even thoſe that had previouſly been of infamous characters; that being made wiſe, holy, and uſeful by the grace of the goſpel they might confound and aſtoniſh thoſe, who formerly deemed them even beneath contempt: nay he had choſen the moſt ſtupid and licentious idolaters, who in the proud language, and ſentiments of the Jews, were conſidered as ſcarce exiſting in reſpect of God and religion; that by their converſion, and pious converſation he might confound, and ſhame the Scribes, Phariſees, and unbelieving Jews, and juſtify him in their rejection. In ſhort the Lord had ordered every thing, reſpecting the converſion of ſinners, the preachers of the goſpel, the plan of redemption, and the way of acceptance, in ſuch a manner, as to give no one of the human ſpecies any ground of boaſting or "glorying in his preſence;" either in reſpect of abilities, learning, noble birth, privileges, atchievements, moral character, natural good diſpoſitions, or any other diſtinction whatſoever, either before or after his converſion. Why then ſhould the Corinthians ſo value theſe endowments in their teachers; when God had poured contempt upon every thing of that kind? Even *that* diſtinction, in which alone they might glory, was not in any reſpect of themſelves. It was *of Him*, by the ſovereign choice, and regenerating grace of God, that they, ſinners of the Gentiles, were *in* Chriſt Jeſus by faith; who, by the appointment and free mercy of God was made to all believers the whole of ſalvation: for they being in themſelves ignorant, fooliſh, guilty, polluted, enſlaved, and condemned; Chriſt was conſtituted to each of them "wiſdom," that by his word and Spirit, and from his fulneſs, and treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, they might receive all that inſtruction, and counſel, which might render them wiſe unto ſalvation, and for every ſervice, to which they were called: "and righteouſneſs;" that being intereſted in, and juſtified by, the merits of his obedience unto death, and made the righteouſneſs of God in him; they might thus poſſeſs a title to eternal life: "and ſanctification," that by the power of the Spirit of Chriſt, they might be gradually renewed to his image, and made perfect in holineſs, and meetneſs for their heavenly inheritance: "and redemption;" that by his power, and grace being delivered from the bondage of ſin and ſatan, they might at length be completely reſcued from all remains, and traces of this hateful ſlavery; and be ſaved from the condemnation, and all the conſequences of ſin; till by the redemption of the body from the grave, death itſelf ſhould be ſwallowed up in everlaſting victory. (*Rom.* c viii. v. 23.) Thus, according to the ancient prophecy, (*Jer.* c. ix. v. 23, 24,) they who gloried, might glory in the

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle, ſhewing 1ſt. *The plain, faithful, and humble manner, in which he had preached to the Corinthians; and the real wiſdom of the goſpel, though deſpiſed by the princes of this world,* 1---9. 2*d. That it cannot be underſtood, and received, except* through *the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and* by *the ſpiritual man,* 10---16.

ſpecial favour, the all-ſufficient grace, and precious ſalvation of Jehovah; though in themſelves they had nothing to glory in, but every thing to be aſhamed of. Here again the apoſtle refers to Jeſus, the Lord our Righteouſneſs, and Strength, what the prophet had ſpoken of Jehovah. (*Iſaiah*, c. xlv. v. 24, 25.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The *true* church of God compriſes all thoſe, in every place, who are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, and called to be ſaints; who call upon him as God manifeſt in the fleſh, for all the bleſſings of ſalvation, and who acknowledge and obey him as their Lord, and the Lord of all ſaints, of all men, and of all creatures: and it includes no other perſons. In behalf of all ſuch we ſhould pray for an increaſe of grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: we ſhould thank God for the grace beſtowed on them by Jeſus Chriſt; with an eſpecial remembrance of thoſe, with whom we are more immediately connected; and we ſhould rejoice in thoſe gifts, and that knowledge, whereby the teſtimony of Chriſt is confirmed among them. But miniſters, with a mixture of authority, and affection, muſt remind their flocks, that an account muſt be given of all their advantages, at the coming of Chriſt; and call upon them daily to wait and prepare for that event. He will confirm his true diſciples unto the end; and they may confidently truſt in him to preſerve them blameleſs to that day, and to preſent them faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy. Yet, as many appear to be chriſtians, and are endued with uſeful gifts, who have not been called to the fellowſhip of Chriſt: ſo it is proper to exhort profeſſors to prove the reality of their faith, and the ſincerity of their love, and to wait for the coming of their Lord, by watchfulneſs, diligence, and a careful improvement of their talents. How ſtriking the contraſt between the language of the apoſtle, and that of many modern divines! The name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was *to him* the ſweeteſt melody, or "as ointment "poured forth:" *they* ſeem to fear nothing ſo much, as a too frequent, or a too honourable mention of him! and whatever repetitions, they may fall into; they will be ſure to offend no man, by too much, or too often, enlarging upon his dignity, and condeſcenſion; his love and atoning ſufferings; his character and offices; his merits and ſalvation!

Satan hath always endeavoured to ſtir up ſtriſe amongſt chriſtians, as one of his grand devices againſt the goſpel: we ſhould therefore uſe all our influence, to prevail with them, by the name, and for the honour of our common Lord, to avoid all conteſts, and as much as poſſible to ſpeak the ſame thing, and to be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind and judgment; and we ſhould perſevere in praying for this moſt deſirable harmony. For it muſt greatly pain every ſerious, and judicious believer, to ſee and hear of the diviſions, which take place, through the ſpiritual pride, ambition, ſelfiſhneſs, and malignant paſſions of turbulent and deſigning men; and through the prejudices, inſtability, want of judgment, love of novelty, and eager ſpirit of ſome real believers. Thus the church is divided into parties; congregations are diſtracted by inteſtine contentions, and men are drawn away from their faithful paſtors to rank themſelves under the banners of ſome confident deceiver, who *privily* brings in damnable hereſies couched in plauſible language, propagated under ſpecious pretences, and varniſhed over by an ingenuity, which might have been better employed. Thus profeſſors become the diſciples of men; and regardleſs of the apoſtle's expoſtulations, they ſtill glory in ranking themſelves among the partiſans of this, or the other preacher; as if Chriſt were divided! Or as if that Teacher, whom they extol to the contempt of others, had been crucified for them, or they had been baptized in his name; and vowed to be his faithful ſoldiers unto their lives end! We ſhould be very thankful, if we have been preſerved from giving any ſanction to, or occaſion for, ſuch diſgraceful conteſts; and if we are conſcious, that we have ſhunned all appearance of ſeeking our own credit, inſtead of the glory of Chriſt: we ſhould be careful to avoid giving ſuch men any opportunity of dragging us forth as parties, in theſe unchriſtian diſputes; and we ſhould pray continually for the meekneſs of wiſdom, that we may know how to counteract the peſtilent endeavours of ſuch "firebrands of the "church," without giving them any handle, or plauſible pretence againſt us.

They, whom Chriſt hath ſent to preach his goſpel, are often incapable, and ſhould never be ſtudious, of "that wiſdom of words," which carnal men admire; nor ſhould the hearers of the goſpel look for ſuch worthleſs decorations of that divine doctrine, which is moſt beautiful in it's native ſimplicity. Too often the croſs of Chriſt is rendered of none effect, by the vain affectation of the preachers, to recommend it by the ſtudied graces of elocution, or the oſtentatious parade of learning and philoſophy. Thus its edge is blunted, its convincing plainneſs is obſcured, it's genuine beauty and glory are tarniſhed; the preacher has his worthleſs reward in human applauſe, or uſeleſs popularity: but the Spirit of God diſdains to ſet his ſeal to ſuch a carnalized goſpel; it proves the mere ſhadow of a feaſt at which the gueſts are ſtarved; and an amuſing diſplay of ingenuity, inſtead of an aſſault on the ſtrong holds of ſatan by the heavy artillery of divine truth! But ſuch attempts to make the real goſpel palatable muſt be unſucceſsful: it ever was, and will be fooliſhneſs to ſuch, as are in the road to deſtruction: and the only way to render it inoffenſive, is to leave out, or ſlightly paſs over the offenſive parts of it; and this is too commonly done by thoſe, who ſtudy to embelliſh their doctrine, and recommend themſelves, by the wiſdom of words, or the excellency of ſpeech. But the true miniſter of Chriſt is no manpleaſer: he will with great plainneſs of ſpeech deliver

AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of ſpeech or of wiſdom, declaring unto you the teſtimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakneſs, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my ſpeech and my preaching *was* not

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his whole meſſage, however it may be derided or reviled; that by it, as a ſure touch-ſtone, men may learn what road they are travelling. Thus whilſt to numbers it appears fooliſh, to thoſe who are ſaved it proves the power of God. It is His determination to deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and to bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent: he will not honour carnal weapons, or ſelf-ſufficient inſtruments; he will pour contempt on carnal wiſdom, and will abaſe either in deep humiliation, or final deſtruction, all the learned ſcribes, the wiſe philoſophers, and the noiſy diſputers of the world. Indeed where are ſuch perſons commonly to be found, but amongſt the ſcornful deſpiſers, or virulent oppoſers of the doctrine of Chriſt crucified? What have they done towards rendering the world wiſe, and holy? Or what have they to propoſe ſo excellent, as to merit a preference to the goſpel, which they reject? Stubborn facts evince the folly of this wiſdom, and ſhew, that amidſt all the diſplays of the eternal power, and godhead, with which we are ſurrounded, human reaſon and learning know him not, but uniformly lead men to idolatry, impiety, or infidelity: and on the other hand it hath pleaſed God, from age to age by "the fooliſhneſs "of preaching," the deſpiſed doctrine of ſalvation by faith in a crucified Saviour, God in human nature, purchaſing the church with his own blood, to ſave multitudes, even all that believe, from ignorance, deluſion, and vice; and to make them meet for his heavenly kingdom. For the true miniſter of God inſiſts eſpecially upon this great doctrine, which is no leſs a ſtumbling to ſome, and fooliſhneſs to others at preſent, than in the apoſtle's days; but which is known and experienced to be the wiſdom, and power of God to all, who partake of the high and gracious calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. Nor is there a ſtronger demonſtration of man's depravity, blindneſs, and folly, than this circumſtance; that neither facts, nor arguments can repreſs his arrogance in treating this wiſdom of God as fooliſhneſs, this power of God as weakneſs; though none of his own devices or efforts can produce effects in the leaſt comparable to thoſe, which he cannot deny to be wrought by it! Let them then call it folly, enthuſiaſm, weakneſs, or madneſs, or what they pleaſe; may we ſhew in our lives, that it is a wiſe, holy, and bleſſed doctrine; and we ſhall feel in our hearts that it gives a peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding. And though we too ſee, that but few of the wiſe, the mighty, the noble of this world are called to the knowledge of the truth: yet we perceive alſo, that God employs the fooliſh, the weak, the deſpiſed, and baſe of this world, to confound the devices, and expoſe the folly of the wiſe, to diſappoint the deſigns of the mighty, and to diſgrace and bring into contempt the honourable of the earth: ſo that in every thing he takes care, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence. But let us not fear knowing how vile and worthleſs we are; for thus ſinners are brought by ſovereign grace to believe in Chriſt, who of God is "made to them wiſ"dom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption:" ſo that having all in him, they may be ſatisfied to have nothing as of themſelves; and when moſt covered with ſhame at the diſcovery of their own folly, and blindneſs; they may yet glory in the Lord, and his ſalvation; they may have hope to glorify him on earth, and to be preſerved as monuments of his love, to praiſe him for ever in his heavenly felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—5] When the apoſtle had come, as a Jewiſh ſtranger, among the polite, learned, and licentious Corinthians; he had not attempted to catch their attention by any affected elegancy, or ſublimity of language, by the trappings of human oratory, or by the ſpeculations of philoſophy. For he came to declare to them the teſtimony of God, concerning the only method of ſalvation from eternal miſery; and ſuch a meſſage admitted not of theſe worthleſs embelliſhments. Whatever knowledge therefore he poſſeſſed, either of Rabbinical, or Grecian learning, he determined to keep them out of ſight, and by no means to make a parade of them; but to deliver his meſſage, as if he had known no other ſubject, than that of Jeſus the Meſſiah, even Him that was crucified, and who was ſo generally deſpiſed, and execrated; and thoſe things that related to redemption for ſinners through his blood. This was the centre, and ſubſtance of his preaching; but he did not mean that he confined himſelf wholly to this one topic, to the excluſion of other parts of God's revealed truth and will: for we are ſure from his own writings, that he preached man's relation to God, as his Creator, Benefactor, and Governor; the holy character and law of God; the future judgment, and eternal ſtate of righteous retributions; the loſt eſtate of man, regeneration, repentance, converſion, the neceſſity of perſonal holineſs, attention to relative duties; and in ſhort the whole counſel of God, as the great circumference to that circle, of which Chriſt crucified is the centre, wherein all the lines meet. But, upon the moſt mature deliberation, he had determined to know nothing, even among the refined, and ſpeculating Corinthians, which was not connected with, or tended to elucidate, recommend, evince, or adorn this great doctrine of ſalvation by the croſs of Chriſt. In adhering to this determination, he had been deeply ſenſible of his own weakneſs, and inſufficiency; and aware of the prejudices, and oppoſition, which he had to encounter: and he was even oppreſſed with much fear, and trembling, leſt his infirmity ſhould prevent his ſucceſs, or diſgrace his glorious doctrine. So that he had acted among them with much diffidence, modeſty, and meekneſs, and without any thought of making himſelf the head of a party; as ſome of their preſent ſelf-ſufficient teachers did. His addreſs, and ſtyle of preaching with enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we ſpeak wiſdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, *even* the hidden *wiſdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him? even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the ſpirit of

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had been entirely devoid of "the perſuaſive words of "human wiſdom," which often ſeduce men into error, and entice them into the views of deſigning orators, by moving the paſſions, impreſſing the imagination, and impoſing upon the judgment. On the contrary he left the ſucceſs of it to be produced entirely "by the demon- "ſtration of the Spirit, and the exertion of his divine "power." This many expoſitors underſtand excluſively of the miracles, by which the Holy Spirit powerfully demonſtrated the truth of the goſpel: but this alone, without his internal operation upon the mind, as the Author of divine life in regeneration, would never produce true faith: and it is unreaſonable to confine the expreſſion to thoſe operations, which were peculiar to one age; and to exclude thoſe, which are alike neceſſary, and to be depended on, in every age. But the annexed reaſon puts it beyond doubt, that the latter were principally intended: for the apoſtle would uſe no other arts of perſuaſion, than that plain and faithful addreſs to men's hearts, and conſciences, which the Spirit of God was uſed to employ as the means of convincing them of ſin, and ſo powerfully demonſtrating the truth and preciouſneſs of the goſpel to their ſouls: becauſe he would not have their faith to ſtand in, or reſt upon, the wiſdom of men, but on the power of God. Now that faith, which is produced by, and wholly reſts upon outward miracles, is no more ſaving, or to be depended on, than that, which is the effect of logical reaſonings, or eloquent perſuaſions: (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 13:) whereas that faith, which is the effect of the inward, and powerful teaching, and demonſtration of the Spirit, reſts upon, and is ſupported by the power of God, is certainly ſaving, and will endure through all trials even to the end.

V. 6—9.] Though the apoſtle diſclaimed all pretences to man's deluſive wiſdom, in the things of God; yet he would not allow his preaching to be really fooliſhneſs. Indeed he, and other faithful miniſters, ſpake wiſdom among thoſe, that were *perfect*; that is, who were ſo matured in judgment, experience, and ſpirituality, as to be able to receive it. To ſuch perſons they laid open the rich treaſures of the wiſdom of God, in his method of ſaving ſinners, and in the diſpenſations of his providence; and thus they excited their admiring adoration, and rendered them wiſe, and intelligent in divine things, and in reſpect of their true intereſt, and whole duty, far beyond all other perſons in the world. If therefore the Corinthians had not been initiated into the depths of this divine wiſdom, it was, becauſe they were not proper recipients of them. But this wiſdom was totally diſtinct from, and even in many things, contrary to, the wiſdom of this world, and of its princes, and rulers; whoſe ſagacity, and policy would ſoon come to nought, and not prevent their everlaſting ruin, or that of their ſubjects, and flatterers. For it was the wiſdom of God, as contained in a myſtery, even in the myſterious deſign of glorifying his whole name, in the redemption of ſinners, by the incarnation, and atoning ſacrifice of his coequal Son. This was ordained, and intended by Him, before the world began, in order to bring his choſen people to everlaſting glory; but it had been entirely hidden from men, except as made known by revelation, and as faith ſimply received that information. So that the Gentiles, after all their ſpeculations, knew nothing of this wiſdom: the unbelieving Jews, and their moſt learned Scribes were unacquainted with it: the old diſpenſation had only conveyed ſome general intimations of it: but the goſpel had now diſcovered it more fully to all, who were brought to embrace it. But none of the princes, or great men in the world's eſtimation, had known any thing of it; nay their policy was diametrically oppoſite to it: for had Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, or the Jewiſh rulers underſtood this divine myſtery; they would, at leaſt by fear, have been reſtrained from crucifying the Lord of glory, that divine Perſon, who, even when he hung upon the croſs, was the Lord and King of glory, God in human nature, the Governor and Judge of all the world. Thus the prophecies had been accompliſhed; and what had of old been written might be applied to the glorious redemption now proclaimed to mankind, and the bleſſings thereby conferred on, and prepared for, thoſe, who were taught by the grace of the goſpel to love, and obey God; and which far exceeded all, that had been ſeen, heard, or thought of by men. (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. lxiv. v. 4.)

V. 10—13.] The apoſtle, and other preachers of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, had not diſcovered the myſteries of divine wiſdom by their own ſuperior ſagacity: but God had revealed it to them by his Spirit; who being the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth; comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know *them*, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

15 But he that is ſpiritual judgeth all things, yet he himſelf is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may inſtruct him? but we have the mind of Chriſt.

eſſentially One with, yet perſonally diſtinct from, the eternal Father, not only ſearched all hearts, but was intimately acquainted with the deep things of God, and all the inmoſt counſels of his infinite mind. For as no man can penetrate the receſſes of another's heart, and know the whole of his thoughts, and intentions, as his own rational ſoul is conſcious to them; ſo none can know, diſcover, or comprehend the things of God, but his own infinite Spirit; who is One with the Father, and the Son in the unity of the Godhead, and whoſe office it is to reveal divine myſteries to his church. (*Matt.* c. xi. v. 27.) This is a moſt deciſive teſtimony both to the real Deity, and diſtinct perſonality of the Holy Spirit. Now the apoſtles had not received the ſpirit of the world; they were not actuated by thoſe worldly principles, nor guided by that carnal prudence, of which ſatan, the ſpirit that worketh in the children of diſobedience, is the concealed author: but they were inſpired, and actuated by the Spirit of God, that they might know, and communicate to the church, thoſe things, which God hath prepared for, and freely beſtows on, all believers. Theſe things they declared, not in ſuch words as carnal wiſdom would have ſuggeſted, but in ſimple plain language, dictated by the Holy Spirit: which ſacred ſtyle was formed by comparing one part of divine revelation with another; the ſpiritual nature of redemption, with the holineſs of the divine character and law; the former diſcoveries of God's truth and will, with theſe later ones; the types and prophecies with their accompliſhment; the remedy propoſed, with the ſtate of mankind, and their need of it, &c. Thus their ſpiritual meditations, diſcoveries, obſervations, experiences, and affections, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, led them to uſe a ſolemn, energetic, and faithful method of ſpeaking, which accorded to the majeſty, and importance of their ſubject, and the ſtyle of the ſacred oracles; but totally differed from the affected oratory, or enticing words of man's wiſdom.

V. 14—16.] It was not however to be expected, that the faithful, and ſolemn preaching of the goſpel would pleaſe mankind in general; as "the natural man "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." The term here uſed hath occaſioned much diſputation: but as it is derived from a word, that ſometimes at leaſt ſignifies the rational ſoul of man; it may be ſuppoſed to have reference to the powers of his mind, as well as to his inferior inclinations: and it may be doubted whether it be properly rendered *ſenſual* in another place. (*James*, c. iii. v. 15.) However the apoſtle's argument abſolutely requires, that by "*the natural man*" we underſtand the unregenerate man, however ſagacious, learned, or abſtracted from ſenſual indulgences: for he oppoſes him to the *ſpiritual man*; and the pride of carnal reaſoning is at leaſt as oppoſite to ſpirituality, as the moſt grovelling ſenſuality can be. No man, as naturally born into the world, and not ſupernaturally born again of the Spirit, "can ſee the kingdom of God," or receive in faith and love the ſpiritual myſteries of redemption by the croſs of Chriſt. To all unregenerate men, theſe will, in one way or other, appear *fooliſhneſs*, irrational, unintereſting, unneceſſary, inconſiſtent, abſurd, or ridiculous: and doubtleſs proud reaſoners have ſcoffed at them, more than ever mere ſenſualiſts have done. No ingenuity, addreſs, or reaſoning of the preacher, can prevent this effect; no application of the man's own mind, except in humble dependance on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, can enable him to perceive the real nature and glory of them. For they are ſpiritually diſcerned, that is by the illuminating, and ſanctifying work of the Spirit of God upon the mind; by which a ſpiritual capacity is produced, that diſcerns, approves, admires, loves, reliſhes, and delights in the divine excellency of heavenly things. When this change hath taken place, and a man's ſpiritual ſenſes have been matured by growth, and exerciſe, he may be called "a ſpiritual man:" and he perceives the ſpiritual glory and excellency of every truth, and precept of the word of God; he diſtinguiſhes one object from another, by a ſpiritual taſte, or a kind of *extempore* judgment, and ſo he becomes a competent Judge in ſuch matters. Yet his views, principles and motives fall not under the judgment of any other men: none of them are competent to decide on the propriety of his conduct, as they are ſtrangers to thoſe views, and diſcoveries, which direct his determinations. For what natural man hath underſtood the mind of the Lord, that he ſhould be able to inſtruct him, who is under the tuition of the Holy Spirit? As therefore the apoſtle, and other inſpired perſons were made acquainted with the mind of Chriſt, by whom the Father reveals himſelf to men: ſo none of their ſelf-appointed judges could be competent to decide either upon their doctrine, or their mode of communicating it. They were above ſuch inſtructors, or cenſurers, who could not poſſibly underſtand the principles, on which they acted. In a meaſure all ſpiritual men, "have the mind of Chriſt," and natural men are incompetent judges of their conduct: yet this is in every thing to be tried by the word of God; and nothing muſt be juſtified, or excuſed, which accords not with that rule, when properly explained. But the inſpired apoſtles were employed to ſtate *that mind of Chriſt*,

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Shewing that the Corinthians were carnal, in their diviſions, &c; proving miniſters to be fellow ſervants to one Lord; declaring that he had laid the right foundation among them; and pointing out the danger of building bad materials on it, 1---15. *2d. Conſidering chriſtians as the temple of God; warning them not to defile that temple, not to deceive themſelves, and not to glory in men; and reminding them that all things were their's, as they belonged to Chriſt, and to God in him,* 16---23.

by which men's principles and actions muſt be judged; and in this reſpect they could not be liable to be judged by any man. Some indeed explain the laſt verſe, as an enquiry whether any man had ſo known the mind of the Lord, as to be competent to give Him any counſel, or inſtruction? (*Rom.* c. xi. v. 34.) But the context ſeems rather to fix the meaning to the preceding interpretation; and the apoſtle ſeems to expoſe the abſurdity of a carnal man preſuming to inſtruct a ſpiritual man in reſpect of ſpiritual things: or of an ordinary profeſſor or teacher preſuming to cenſure, or dictate to an inſpired apoſtle, as he thus declared himſelf to be.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is humiliating to conſider, that this moſt honoured ſervant of Chriſt ſhould be conſtrained to juſtify his excellent and uſeful preaching, even to the very perſons, who had been converted by it! But this is connected with a pleaſing admiration of the divine wiſdom, in taking occaſion from that circumſtance, to give his church ſuch valuable inſtructions, concerning the beſt method of declaring the teſtimony of God to ſinners. This wants no excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom to enforce it, but appears moſt venerable, when the witneſs for God is regardleſs of human applauſe, or cenſure; when his whole ſoul is occupied by zeal for the honour of his Lord, and compaſſion for the ſouls of periſhing ſinners; when he is willing, even among the learned, and polite, to be deemed ignorant in other matters; when he determines to know nothing, but Chriſt crucified, and the gracious meſſage he is ſent to deliver in his name. But if this arduous ſervice made even Paul to fear and tremble, through conſcious weakneſs: what reaſon have we to be humble, and ſelf-diffident, when called to declare the ſame teſtimony to mankind! How ſhould we fear diſgracing our honourable miniſtry, by our own folly, or ſin! At what a diſtance ſhould we keep from all ambition, and ſelf-confidence! How carefully ſhould we remember that all our ſufficiency is of God alone! Such humility, and meekneſs adorn, and give dignity to that holy conſtancy and boldneſs, with which we muſt plead the cauſe of God: and a realizing ſenſe of eternal things, of the worth of ſouls, the danger of ungodly men, the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, and the importance of our meſſage, will counteract our natural propenſity to trifling, or affectation of “the enticing words of man's wiſdom.” The more deeply we are convinced that man's perſuaſion can never work ſaving faith; the greater care we ſhall take to ſpeak in a plain, ſerious, and ſcriptural manner, and in imitation of thoſe preachers of old, whoſe word was moſt attended with demonſtration of the Spirit and of power; depending ſingly on his effectual operation to bring our hearers to believe to the ſalvation of their ſouls. The maxims of human wiſdom, whether philoſophical, or political, we muſt diſcard; for they will ſoon come to nought, and ſink into contempt. But experienced believers are ſhewn ſuch glorious diſplays of wiſdom, as eclipſe all they before admired, even as the riſing ſun obſcures the glimmering lamp. The things, which God ordained before the world, in order to bring his choſen people to glory, are ſuch as angels deſire to look down into: they give the humbled and enlightened mind ſuch views of God, and his perfections, works and ways, as fix it in aſtoniſhment, excite it to adoration, inſpire it with love and gratitude, raiſe it above this earthly clod, and all its puny concerns; and enlarge it into the moſt exalted, holy, yet humble ambition after true honour, and greatneſs. But this wiſdom muſt ſtill be hidden from the proud, the carnal, and the unbelieving, notwithſtanding the fulneſs of the goſpel revelation of it. The ſame principles, which influenced the princes of the world to crucify the Lord of glory, ſtill poſſeſs the minds of men in general: and avarice, ſenſuality, or carnal ambition ſtill deſpiſe, and diſregard thoſe good things, which God hath prepared for them that love him, though they paſs man's underſtanding, and infinitely excel in glory and value whatever he hath ſeen, heard, or imagined. Nor do any of us prize, and receive them, except that divine Spirit, “who ſearcheth all things, even the deep things of God,” and who revealed them to the apoſtles, removes the veil from our hearts, and enables us to underſtand their real excellency. On this great Teacher we muſt ſimply depend, whilſt we ſeek to know the things, that are freely given of God to his people, and to obtain the aſſurance that we belong to that favoured company. If indeed we are delivered from the ſpirit of the world, and are taken under the guidance of the Spirit of God; we ſhall more and more regard the words of the ſacred ſcripture; and comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, our holy diſcernment will increaſe, and we ſhall acquire a faculty in ſpeaking on religious ſubjects, in language ſuited to their divine nature, and infinite importance. But whoever teaches, or what language ſoever is employed, the natural man will either oppoſe, deſpiſe, or abuſe the things of the Spirit of God: he cannot cordially receive, or rightly underſtand them: they will remain fooliſhneſs to him, becauſe he wants a ſpiritual diſcernment. On the other hand, he, who is born of God, however ignorant, or illiterate he may be, will become ſpiritual, and ſo capable of diſcerning the harmony and glory of divine truth; he will experience its ſanctifying effects in his heart, and produce correſpondent fruits in his life. His judgment, and conduct will be formed upon the word of God; and they, who preſume to judge, condemn or deride him, for violating the maxims of carnal wiſdom, will only ſhew their own ignorance, and arrogance. They cannot inſtruct him in ſpiritual things by their carnal reaſonings, and they have not known the mind of the

AND I, brethren, could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Chriſt.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and ſtriſe, and diviſions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one ſaith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increaſe.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither is he that watereth; but God that giveth the increaſe.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man ſhall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's huſbandry, *ye are* God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wiſe maſter-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another build-

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Lord Jeſus, or they would not condemn him for acting according to it: and they can no more argue him out of his principles, experience, hope, or duty, by their ſpecious objections; than a man, with good eyes, can be convinced that there is no light from the ſun, or that light is neither pleaſant nor profitable, by the ingenious ſophiſms of a man that hath been blind from his birth.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—3.] The Corinthians had been ſeduced into a mean opinion of Paul's miniſtry, becauſe he had not fully inſtructed them in ſome deep points of doctrine, which their other teachers had particularly inſiſted on, and about which they philoſophized: he therefore here aſſigns the reaſon of his conduct in this reſpect. Though they had been endued with ſupernatural gifts, and knowledge; yet he had obſerved thoſe things in their diſpoſition, and conduct, which rendered it improper for him to ſpeak to them, as to ſpiritual men, who were competent to receive the deeper diſcoveries of divine wiſdom: he was therefore conſtrained to addreſs them "*as* "*carnal*, even as babes in Chriſt." For though he looked upon them as ſincere converts, and thus in a meaſure ſpiritual; yet, even till he left them, they were ſo far from maturity of judgment, and experience, and ſo prone to carnal paſſions; that he deemed it incumbent on him, "to feed them with milk," as the nurſe does the infant, "and not with ſtrong meat," which they could not have digeſted. The ſimpleſt truths of the goſpel, reſpecting man's ſinfulneſs and God's mercy, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the need of regeneration; the day of judgment, and eternal happineſs and miſery, &c, delivered in the ſimpleſt plaineſt language, ſuited them far better, than thoſe deeper myſteries, which admitted of, or led to more ſpeculation, and which afforded the teacher a fairer opportunity of ſhewing his knowledge, ingenuity, and capacity. Theſe the apoſtle did not dwell upon; becauſe he knew the Corinthians could not bear them, but that they would feed their carnal paſſions, inſtead of their faith and love: and indeed, though a conſiderable time had elapſed, they were not yet able to receive, and make a good uſe of theſe ſublimer truths; becauſe they were ſtill under the influence of carnal principles. This needed no other proof, than their well-known conduct: for whilſt they envied one another the gifts, that God had beſtowed on them, and with emulation ſought their own credit in the exerciſe of them; whilſt there ſubſiſted ſuch eager contentions, and ſuch lamentable diviſions among them; could they deny that they were carnal, and acted more like the men of the world, in their competitions and conteſts, than like ſpiritual men? The principles and affections of *the natural man* were more prominent in their conduct; than the humble, meek, loving, and peaceable diſpoſitions, which ſpring from regeneration. It is evident that by *carnal*, and *as men*, the apoſtle does not here intend the prevalence of their ſenſual appetites, but that of their malignant paſſions; not the propenſities of the animal, but thoſe of the fallen ſpirit: and this may confirm us in the interpretation given of this, and ſimilar words in other places.

V. 4—9.] The apoſtle ſtill cautiouſly forbore to mention the falſe teachers, who had done the miſchief at Corinth. Even if Paul, and his beloved brother Apollos had been ſet up for the heads of the contending parties; their conteſts about them would have proved them to be carnal. For who were Paul and Apollos? Not lords over God's heritage, but miniſtring ſervants to them for Chriſt's ſake; by whoſe labours they had been brought to believe the goſpel, according to the gift of God, both to the miniſters, and thoſe converted by them. Paul had been ſent to incloſe, and plant the Lord's vineyard at Corinth; and when he had done this, Apollos had followed him to water the vineyard: but God alone had given the increaſe, and made the plants to grow, and become fruitful. So that neither of the inſtruments were any thing in compariſon with the great Agent. They were both one; both acted as ſervants in the ſame work, and with the ſame intention of glorifying God by ſeeking the ſalvation of ſouls: and they would each receive a gracious reward from their common Maſter, who was the only competent Judge of their faithfulneſs, and diligence in their work. For they were *fellow-labourers of God:* whilſt the church at Corinth was his huſbandry, in which he employed, and wrought by, them: it was God's building, which he was erecting by their means, according to his own plan, for his own glory, and to be eth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, wood, hay, ſtubble;

13 Every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt: for the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire; and the fire ſhall try every man's work of what ſort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he ſhall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work ſhall be burned, he ſhall ſuffer loſs: but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved; yet ſo as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy; for the temple of God is holy; which *temple* ye are.

18 Let no man deceive himſelf. If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe.

his holy temple: and they did the work, which he ſet them to, and no more.

V. 10—15.] Thus far the apoſtle proceeded upon the ſuppoſition, that the labourers were ſkilful and faithful; but he meant to lead the attention of the Corinthians to ſome, that were not ſo: therefore he declared, that for his part, according to the grace beſtowed on him, (to which all the glory was due,) he had laid the foundation of God's building among them, like a wiſe architect; and he knew that it was capable of ſupporting the whole weight of the intended ſuperſtructure. But ſince he had left Corinth, another had builded on his foundation; nay ſeveral had been employed in that work: but let every one of them take heed with what materials, and in what manner they carried on the building. He knew that no man could lay any other foundation of a ſpiritual temple, for the glory of God, or for the ſinner's hope of ſalvation, than what he had laid in his preaching, and which God had laid in his purpoſe, and by the goſpel; namely the Perſon, mediatory office, righteouſneſs, atonement, interceſſion, and grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. If any man pretended to lay any other foundation than this; he could not be conſidered as one of God's miniſters at all: he would not therefore ſuppoſe, that this was the caſe with any of their teachers. Yet even on this foundation very different materials might be builded: ſome might carry on the work with gold, ſilver, and valuable ſtones; others with wood, hay or ſtubble: ſome, who preached the doctrine of ſalvation by faith in Chriſt, and his merits, might inſtruct believers from the word of God in the precious truths of the goſpel, ſhew them their obligations and duties, and teach them to evidence their faith by ſpiritual worſhip and holy obedience. Others might ſubſtitute falſe doctrines, human inventions, abrogated ceremonies, philoſophical ſpeculations, or licentious inferences from the doctrines of grace. Thus the building might be deformed, and weakened by ſuch additions, as would never ſtand the trial, which was appointed. For the time was coming, when the nature, and value of every man's work would be made manifeſt: the day of judgment will openly declare it; the materials of this ſpiritual building, and every man's work in it, will be diſcovered by fire; this will prove them of what ſort they are: the gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones will ſtand the fire, and even be purified by it; and he that hath built with ſuch materials, will receive an abundant reward: but the wood, hay, and ſtubble will be burned; and he, that hath ſpent his time and labour in building with ſuch worthleſs materials, will ſuffer great loſs, even in reſpect of the degree of his future glory: yet, provided he be indeed fixed on the good foundation, he ſhall finally be ſaved; but it will be, as a man is preſerved from the flames of his houſe, when he eſcapes naked through them, and ſo narrowly ſaves his life, with the loſs of all his property. So extremely dangerous is it to teach falſe doctrines, even in connexion with fundamental truths! The abſurdity of the papiſts, in producing this ſcripture in favour of their doctrine of purgatory is obvious: it is to be feared, that the zealous abettors of that doctrine, or of any other of a ſimilar nature, will be found to build wholly without a foundation. (Notes, *Matt.* c. vii. v. 24—27:) Many think that the apoſtle had ſome reference to the general conflagration, by which the day of judgment ſhall be introduced.

V. 16, 17.] This metaphor of a building led the apoſtle to enquire, whether they did not know, that they were the ſpiritual temple of God, who dwelt in them by the Holy Spirit given unto them? Now if any man defiled, or profaned the temple of God, he would be expoſed to his indignation, and might expect the moſt terrible deſtruction; becauſe of the holineſs of the temple, as conſecrated to God. It would therefore be extremely dangerous for any man, by falſe doctrines, or a licentious example to defile the church, or any of its members: and if their teachers were chargeable with ſuch crimes, they would have reaſon to fear the ſevereſt judgments of God; and would be preſumptuous even in hoping to be ſaved as by fire. (c. vi. v. 15—20.)

V. 18—23.] The perſons, more immediately concerned in the preceding warning, would probably deſpiſe it, eſpecially from Paul, whom they diſregarded, as far beneath them in knowledge, and wiſdom: but let them not deceive themſelves in this matter: if any of them appeared to be wiſe in this world, inſtead of truſting to ſuch a diſtinction, let him become a fool in his own opinion, and that of worldly men; for this would be abſolutely neceſſary, in order to his being made wiſe unto everlaſting life. For God accounts this world's wiſdom

19 For the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God. For it is written, He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe, that they are vain.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are your's;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all are your's;

23 And ye are Chriſt's; and Chriſt is God's.

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to be folly; he enſnares the worldly-wiſe in their own politics; and he knows their reaſonings, and imaginations to be vain and worthleſs. (*Job*, c. v. ver. 12—14. *Pſ.* xciv. v. 11.) Let therefore none of them glory in men; as if ſome eloquent, learned, or ſagacious leader were a great honour to them, and they might value themſelves on their relation to him: whereas all things were their's, (if indeed they were believers;) the abilities, gifts, and ſervices of apoſtles and miniſters were intended for their benefit: the world, and every thing in it, belonged to them, as far as it could do them good; its poſſeſſions would be given them, if they could really profit them; its enmity would diſcipline them for heaven; and all providential appointments would ſubſerve their ſanctification: life would be enſured to them, till their work was done, and they were ripe for their reward: death at the appointed hour, would come as their friend to deliver them from ſin and ſorrow, and convey them to their Father's manſions; preſent comforts, and trials would concur in promoting their advantage; and the future judgment, and its eternal conſequence would be altogether in their favour. Thus all things were their's, even as much as if the whole property of the creation had veſted in them: ſeeing they belonged to Chriſt the Heir of all things, and were one with him; his choſen and redeemed people, the members of his body, his beloved, the trophies of his victories, and the jewels of his crown: and as He was God's; his beloved Son, his appointed Surety, the Brightneſs of his glory, and the grand Medium of diſplaying all his perfections in the ſight of all worlds, and to all eternity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Miniſters ſhould ſuit their preaching to the ſtate, and wants of their hearers; and inſtruct them in ſuch things, as more immediately tend to their edification, rather than in thoſe truths, that are agreeable to the inclinations of either party. Babes in Chriſt muſt be fed with milk, and not with ſtrong meat: many truths, which they may hereafter feed upon, would at preſent be uſeleſs, or pernicious; becauſe they are not able to perceive their tendency, or their harmony with other truths. Men may have much doctrinal knowledge; and yet be mere beginners in the life of faith, and experience: nay, their fondneſs for, and acuteneſs in deep ſpeculations may prove them to be in a great degree carnal, and but imperfectly grounded in the firſt principles of experimental religion. Thus many profeſſors, and preachers too, ſhew themſelves to be yet carnal, by their vain-glorious emulations, their eagerneſs for controverſy, their diſpoſition to prefer and exalt themſelves, and to deſpiſe and revile others; and their delight in diſturbing the peace of the church. This is the tendency of ſin, not of grace; of the natural, and, not of the ſpiritual man: and we need much of that "love, which hopeth all things," to ſuppoſe, that ſuch wranglers have any ſpirituality, or are even babes in Chriſt. However, it is an univerſal rule, that theſe diſpoſitions are proportionably demonſtrations, that the carnal mind of worldly men is prominent, and prevalent in them: and whilſt ſo many are ſaying, "I am of Paul, "and I of Apollos;" we may fairly demand of them, whether they are not carnal? For what are the moſt able miniſters, but ſervants of Chriſt, and of his choſen people? They come not in their own name, or about their own buſineſs: they ſeek not their own glory: ſin and folly are all that they have of their own; and their wiſdom and grace are wholly from the Lord. By his help they may plant and water; but he alone can give the increaſe: ſo that they are nothing, and He is only to be conſidered, as the Object of adoring love, and gratitude. Faithful miniſters are afraid of receiving undue honour: though their rank and abilities may differ, they are all one; they are engaged in the ſame work, and aim at the ſame object: they are fellow labourers of God, in his ſpiritual huſbandry, and building; and he will *graciouſly* reward the ſervices, which *by his grace* they have performed. It will be a comfort to them upon reflection to be conſcious of having, like wiſe maſter-builders laid a right foundation: but every one ſhould alſo take heed, what he buildeth upon it. For whilſt many attempt in vain to ſubſtitute ſome other foundation, in the ſtead of Chriſt; and ſo periſh with their deluded followers: there are alſo many, who lay the right foundation, and yet build worthleſs rubbiſh upon it, to their own great loſs and danger, and to the great detriment of their hearers. In expectation therefore of that ſolemn day, when every man's work ſhall be manifeſted, and tried as by fire; we ſhould now be careful to build with approved, and precious materials: we ſhould avoid ſuperſtitious inventions, unſcriptural doctrines, enthuſiaſtical fancies, and philoſophical ſpeculations; as well as a variety of trifling enquiries and diſputations, about which, many, who ſeem to lay the right foundation, waſte their time, and loſe their labour, whilſt they injure the building, and endanger their own ſouls. We ſhould beſtow pains to procure gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones for this work; that by ſound doctrine, and ſcriptural inſtructions, we may build up the ſouls of believers in holy knowledge, hope, love, and obedience; that by our labours, example, and prayers, they may grow up an holy temple to the Lord; that ſo our work may abide the trial, that we may receive a full reward, and that we may have an abundant entrance into the everlaſting kingdom of Chriſt.

It is then peculiarly incumbent upon miniſters, in all their ſtudies, purſuits, ſermons, publications, and converſation, to recollect, that their work muſt be tried by fire; to anticipate the ſentiments, which the day of judg-

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1ſt. The eſtimate to be formed of miniſters, as faithful in their ſtewardſhip; and the account, which will at laſt be required of them, 1---5. *2d. Cautions againſt pride, and oſtentation; and a ſtatement of the uſage, which the apoſtles met with, and of their behaviour under it,* 7---13. *3d. The apoſtle requiring the regard of the Corinthians, as their affectionate ſpiritual Father; ſhewing his tender concern for them; and aſſuring them, that he would ſpeedily come, either with a rod, or in love, &c,* 14---31.

LET a man ſo account of us, as of the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in ſtewards, that a man be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own ſelf.

4 For I know nothing by myſelf; yet am I not hereby juſtified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts: and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.

6 And theſe things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myſelf and *to* Apollos for your ſakes; that ye might learn in us not to

ment will obtrude upon them, concerning their preſent occupations; and to reflect on the irreparable loſs of ſpending their time of ſervice to no purpoſe, or perniciouſly; to conſider the tendency of their undertakings, to compare them with God's word, and to judge themſelves, that they may not be judged of the Lord. For if ſhame and ſorrow could enter heaven; ſurely the miniſter, whoſe work ſhall be burned, yet he himſelf ſaved as through fire, would be overwhelmed with them.

If ſuch conſiderations have no effect upon men's minds, it may be feared that the evil lies ſtill deeper; and they muſt be warned concerning the guilt and danger of defiling the temple of God, by their falſe doctrines, and bad examples. Many of them will indeed deſpiſe ſuch admonitions: but they had better take heed, that they do not deceive themſelves. Aſſuredly the reputation of being wiſe in this world is no favourable evidence; as the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God, who taketh ſuch wiſe men in their own craftineſs, and expoſes the vanity of their counſels, and ſpeculations. It is their intereſt therefore to ceaſe from their own wiſdom, and to be willing to think themſelves fools, and be thought ſo by others; that they may become wiſe by the teaching of the word and Spirit of God. But we ſhould all remember that true chriſtians are the temple of God, who dwelleth in them by his ſanctifying Spirit: and they, who know not this, can hardly be thought even babes in Chriſt. If we are conſcious of this ſpiritual conſecration to God, to be his living temples; let us be careful to have our holy character adorned by an holy converſation; and to avoid whatever may defile either ourſelves, or our fellow chriſtians. And ſurely he is deceived, who deems himſelf the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and yet is unconcerned about perſonal holineſs, or about the peace, and purity of the church. If indeed we are the children of God, we have ſomething nobler to glory in, than in men, and our relation and attachment to them: for all things are ours, apoſtles, prophets, miniſters, ordinances, providential diſpenſations, earth, heaven, life, death, things temporal, and things eternal: becauſe we are one with Chriſt, and his purchaſed and redeemed people; and he is One with the Father, as his beloved Son, and appointed Saviour: ſo that as the glory of God is diſplayed in Chriſt his Son; ſo our ſalvation is ſecured in Chriſt our Head, who will cauſe us to ſit down as conquerors through him, upon his throne; even as he hath overcome and hath ſat down with his Father upon his throne.

NOTES

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—5.] Leſt the Corinthians ſhould ſuppoſe, from what the apoſtle had ſaid, that no reſpect or affection was due to their miniſters; he here ſhewed them in what eſtimation they ought to hold them, and by what meaſure to regulate their regard to them. Whether they were apoſtles, evangeliſts, or ordinary teachers, they were to conſider them as the miniſtering ſervants of Chriſt for their benefit: and as the ſtewards of the myſteries of God; that as his immediate repreſentatives, they ſhould by his authority preſide in his family, take care of his intereſt and honour, inſtruct and direct the ſervices of their brethren, and give every one his portion in due ſeaſon. (Note, *Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 45.) Thus they were entruſted with the myſterious, and ſublime truths of the goſpel; that they might preach them to the people, as they had received them, and apply them with ſuitable admonitions, exhortations, encouragements, and warnings; as every one's caſe required; in order to the converſion of ſinners, and the eſtabliſhment, and edification of believers. Some by the myſteries of God underſtand alſo the adminiſtration of the ſacraments, which were commonly called myſteries by the fathers: but though this be a part of the miniſter's work; yet the external ordinances are not called myſteries in ſcripture, that I recollect; and ſuch terms ſeem to have led men to form a wrong judgment concerning them. Now it was well known, that exact fidelity was the moſt eſſential qualifications required in a ſteward: a man of ſtrict probity, attached to his maſter's intereſt, and impartial in his conduct towards his fellow ſervants, might be a valuable ſteward, though his accompliſhments were but moderate: but nothing could compenſate for the want of faithfulneſs. Thus a miniſter, who uprightly, and ſimply ſought the glory of God, and the good of ſouls; and who impartially diſpenſed the truths of God, without reſpect of perſons, or regard to his own intereſt, honour, think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one againſt another.

7 For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? now if thou didſt receive *it*, why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received *it?*

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we alſo might reign with you.

9 For I think that God hath ſet forth us the apoſtles laſt, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We *are* fools for Chriſt's ſake, but ye *are* wiſe in Chriſt; we *are* weak, but ye *are* ſtrong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* deſpiſed.

11 Even unto this preſent hour we both hunger, and thirſt, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it:

&c, would be accepted of the Lord, and ought to be valued by believers; though he were not ſo eminent in exterior, or natural endowments, or even in ſpiritual gifts and attainments, as others were, who *ſought themſelves* in their more admired miniſtry. This was the general rule: but the apoſtle deemed it a very ſmall matter, what judgment they, or any man formed of him, in this reſpect; whether they ſuppoſed him to be faithful, or not; or whether they were offended with him for his faithfulneſs, and deſpiſed him, becauſe he had not come to them with excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom. Nor indeed did he rely on his own judgment concerning himſelf; becauſe he was aware of the deceitfulneſs of his own heart, (which their ſelf-confident teachers ought more deeply to ſtudy:) for though he was not conſcious of any unfaithfulneſs, or ſelf-ſeeking in his miniſtry; yet this was not ſufficient to juſtify him before God, who often ſees that evil in the heart, which pride hides from the man himſelf. He therefore ſought to the Lord to judge him; and ſo waited for that day, when he muſt appear before his tribunal. (c. iii. v. 13.) But knowing the diſpoſitions of many of them to judge unfavourably of him, through the artifices of their ſeducers; he exhorted them not to judge ſuch matters before the time; but to leave them, till the Lord ſhould come to judgment, when characters and actions would appear in another light, than they then did. For He would both diſcover the ſecret ſins of men's lives, which they had veiled in darkneſs from the view of their neighbours; and diſcloſe the motives, and intentions, which lay concealed in the impenetrable receſſes of the heart; and which would in many inſtances appear to be deſigning, ambitious and ſelfiſh, when a man's words and works were moſt ſpecious and plauſible. Then the faithful ſteward, and the upright believer would be proportionably honoured with the commendation of God himſelf, which would abundantly counterbalance the contempt and reproach of men; but it muſt be a day of detection and confuſion to all hypocrites, and ſelf-ſeeking teachers, &c.

V. 6, 7.] This matter, which eſpecially related to thoſe, who had acquired an undue aſcendancy in the church of Corinth, the apoſtle had ſpoken of, as if he and his beloved brother Apollos had been the only perſons concerned; and had thus by a figure, or as in a parable, transferred it to them, whom he could not be ſuppoſed to undervalue: and in them, the Corinthians might learn not to think too highly of men, calling them maſters, or glorying in being their diſciples; and thus eſteeming them as ſomething more than ſervants, or ſtewards, or above what he had written, according to the word of God, and on other accounts, than becauſe of their faithfulneſs. Indeed both they, and the teachers, (whom they placed in competition with each other, and were ſo puffed up about,) ſhould enquire who had made them to differ, either in ſpiritual gifts, or by converting grace, from their idolatrous neighbours, or their fellow chriſtians? Was this difference the effect of their ſuperior merit, docility, or natural goodneſs? Surely they would not ſay ſo, but would aſcribe it to the diſtinguiſhing mercy, and unmerited grace of God. What had they, which they had not received, as free gifts or as talents committed to their ſtewardſhip? Why then did they glory in, and boaſt of them, as if they had been the independent authors of their own wiſdom and grace; or as if they had not been ſinners, who might juſtly have been left to periſh for ever? Surely upon the principles of the goſpel, a ſinner, ſnatched from deſtruction by ſovereign grace alone, muſt be the moſt abſurd, and inconſiſtent, being in the univerſe, if he grew proud of, or gloried in the free gifts of God; and ſuch ſelf-exaltation muſt be moſt abominable and even ſacrilegious.

V. 8—13.] After the apoſtle had left Corinth, and the church had got more flattering, and eloquent teachers, they were ſatisfied, and pleaſed; they deemed themſelves rich and happy; and they ſeemed to themſelves to reign as kings without Him and his fellow-labourers, who had treated them as children, and kept them under, more than was agreeable to them. They were probably many of them in proſperous circumſtances; they appear to have been exempted from perſecution; they had abundance of ſpiritual gifts; they grew vain of their diſtinctions, and they ſeem to have deemed themſelves pre-eminent above other churches, and uſed this improper language one among another. But the apoſtle intimated to them, that this was a mere deluſion: he moſt cordially deſired, that they ſhould be as happy, proſperous, honourable and pre-eminent, as they thought themſelves: for then he knew that he ſhould have comfort in, and

13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, *and are* the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.

14 I write not theſe things to ſhame you, but as my beloved ſons I warn *you*.

15 For though ye have ten thouſand inſtructors in Chriſt, yet *have ye* not many fathers; for in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the goſpel.

16 Wherefore I beſeech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cauſe have I ſent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved ſon, and faithful in the Lord, who ſhall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Chriſt, as I teach every where in every church.

18 Now ſome are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

19 But I will come to you ſhortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the ſpeech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

credit amongſt them; if they had really reigned as kings, he ſhould have reigned with them; inſtead of being deſpiſed by, and diſtreſſed on account of them, in addition to all his other troubles. For it appeared to him, that God had choſen the Apoſtles, to be ſet apart, like thoſe condemned perſons in the public ſhews, who were brought forth *laſt*, at the cloſe of the day, without any defenſive armour, to fight with each other, or to be expoſed to wild beaſts, till they were ſlain in the ſight of the ſpectators; being appointed unto death, and having no hope of eſcaping it. Thus the apoſtles were diſtinguiſhed by a larger ſhare of contempt, hardſhip, and ſuffering, than any of their brethren, and were appointed to martyrdom at the end of their courſe, and as the only termination of their trials: that thus conflicting with their difficulties and diſtreſſes, in patient faith, and perſevering hope, and ſupported by omnipotent grace, they might be a ſpectacle to the whole intelligent creation, both men and angels; whilſt all holy beings would behold them with ſolicitous affection, and aſtoniſhment; and unholy beings, with malice, rage, and diſappointment. Thus Paul, and his brethren were deemed fools for Chriſt's ſake, not only by ungodly men, but by the Corinthians alſo; who ſeemed to be wiſe in Chriſt, through the admired inſtructions of their ſpeculating teachers, the liberty they ſuppoſed themſelves entitled to, and the politic methods they uſed for eſcaping contempt and perſecution: they deemed the apoſtle, and ſuch as he, weak, timid, and ſcrupulous chriſtians, men of feeble minds, narrow capacities, and inferior attainments; but they ſuppoſed themſelves ſtrong in faith, of great diſcernment, and ſuperior to ſuch fears, diſquietudes, and ſcruples, as troubled others: nay they deemed themſelves honourable, on account of their worldly circumſtances, knowledge, wiſdom, &c; and ſo deſpiſed the apoſtle and his friends as mean, and obſcure perſons. So that whilſt they lived in plenty, He and his companions in travel, (and probably the other apoſtles,) continued even to that day, expoſed to hunger and thirſt; they often wanted even ſuitable raiment to appear in before their auditories; they were buffetted with contempt and cruelty, they wandered about without any ſettled habitation; and they earned their mean, and ſcanty ſubſiſtence by their own hand labour. But when they were reviled, they bleſſed and prayed for thoſe, who reproached them: they endured perſecution patiently; they returned humble intreaties for defamation: yet when thus rendering good for evil, they were treated as the filth of the world, and the refuſe and ſcum of the earth; even to that very time: they were conſidered as below contempt, or as worthy of execration, as peſtilences, and nuiſances, who ought to be extirpated, and purged out of ſociety, as the common ſewer carries away the filth and offſcouring of the city, to prevent infection and diſeaſe. Some underſtand the words of certain human victims, which idolaters uſed to offer to the infernal gods, with peculiar expreſſions of abhorrence, and execration.

V. 14—17.] The apoſtle aſſured the Corinthians, that he did not thus ſtate his diſtreſſes, in order to put them to ſhame for neglecting him, and adding to his troubles. But he affectionately warned them, as his beloved children, that their ambition, their carnal ſeverity, their attachment to falſe teachers, and their lamentable diviſions would expoſe them to great dangers and evils. For though they had got ten thouſand inſtructors to teach them religion, as ſchool-maſters are hired to educate other men's children: yet they would not find many of them endued with the diſintereſted, faithful, and prudent affection of a father; or entitled to the authority and honour due to a parent. This he deemed his character, diſpoſition, and claim: he had been the inſtrument of Chriſt Jeſus, in their converſion to the faith, by ſucceſsfully preaching the goſpel to them. As his children he was ſolicitous for their welfare: and therefore he muſt ſpeak with authority as a parent, and had a right to their reſpectful obedience: however, he would rather beſeech them in love, to be followers of Him, rather than of their new teachers; to adhere to the doctrines, to regard the admonitions, to obey the commands, and to imitate the example, that he had given them. For this purpoſe, not being at that time able to come himſelf, he had ſent Timothy to them, who was his beloved ſon, converted by his miniſtry, reſembling him in his ſpirit and conduct, and faithful in the Lord, as a ſteward of his myſteries: he would recal to their remembrance the apoſtle's doctrines, and the regulations, which he made in every church, which he planted; that whatever had been put into diſorder ſince he left them, might be rectified before he came again.

V. 18—21.] Some of the teachers and profeſſors at Corinth were ſo puffed up with their imaginary importance, and ſuperiority; that they were confident the apoſtle would not dare to come among them, or thus attempt to intermeddle in their affairs: but he aſſured them that

20 For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

21 What will ye? ſhall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the ſpirit of meekneſs?

C H A P. V.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Ordering the excommunication of the inceſtuous Corinthian, 1---5. 2d. *Shewing, that the leaven of ſin muſt be purged out, in order to keep the ſpiritual paſſover by faith in*

he fully intended to come, if the Lord would enable him: and then he would make trial, not of their oratory, and tinſelled eloquence, but of their power to ſupport themſelves in oppoſition to his apoſtolical authority, and the miracles he expected to work in confirmation of it. For the kingdom of God was not ſet up in the world or in men's hearts, by well choſen words, or eloquent harangues; but by the power of God, exerted in working miracles to prove the divine original of the goſpel, and in the efficacious operation of the Holy Ghoſt, to convert the ſouls of men. The Corinthians could not but know, that the apoſtle's teſtimony had been thus confirmed amongſt them. Would they then chooſe that he ſhould come to them with the rod of correction, denouncing ſpiritual cenſures, and inflicting miraculous judgments on the refractory, as he had done on Elymas, and Peter, on Ananias and Sapphira? Or would they, that he ſhould come to them in the ſpirit of tender love, and meekneſs, to encourage, commend, and comfort them? This would depend on their conduct, in reſpect of thoſe abuſes, which he was about to ſpecify: for if they were not remedied, he muſt be compelled to exerciſe ſome ſalutary ſeverity on the offenders.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miniſters of Chriſt ſhould be deeply ſenſible of the importance of their truſt, as well as of the dignity of their office; that as ſtewards of the myſteries of God, they may be faithful to him, and to his church; diſregard their own intereſt, eaſe, indulgence, and reputation, and willingly enduring reproach, and ſuffering for the honour of their Lord, and the ſalvation of ſouls. Thus they ſhould apply themſelves, with diligence, impartiality, boldneſs, and ſimplicity, to diſpenſe the myſteries of God, and rightly to divide the word of truth among the people, according to their characters and conduct: remembering that faithfulneſs is indiſpenſably requiſite in a ſteward; and that every other qualification muſt be contemptible, if this be wanting. Chriſtians alſo ſhould learn to value miniſters, not ſo much in proportion to the brilliancy of their gifts, as by their integrity, and diſintereſted faithfulneſs: and they certainly offend the Lord, who ſlight ſuch, as are true to their truſt; or who tempt them to be otherwiſe, by flatteries, bribes, frowns, cenſures, or contempt. Indeed it ought to be the ſmalleſt matter with us to be judged of men, or blamed for that which God approves, even by thoſe we moſt love: yet it requires a ſuperior ſtrength of faith and grace to be thus totally indifferent to, and uninfluenced by, the opinion of others; and many are by it tempted to waver in, or warp from the conſtancy of their teſtimony. Yet men muſt be incompetent judges of us: nay, though we know more of ourſelves, than any others can do of us; yet our own judgment is not to be depended on, in reſpect of our faithfulneſs, any more than our own works in reſpect of our juſtification. We ſhould therefore rely in this, as in all other things, on the Lord; beſeeching him to preſerve us from deceiving ourſelves, and to plead our cauſe againſt the unjuſt cenſures and ſuſpicions of others; and in reſpect of them we ſhould in all doubtful matters refrain from paſſing judgment; waiting till the Lord come: (Note, *Matt.* c. vii. v. 1—5:) then every ſecret will be diſcloſed, every heart will be laid open, and all their counſels manifeſted, every hypocrite will be unmaſked, every ſlandered believer juſtified, and every faithful ſervant and ſteward applauded and rewarded. Waiting for, and preparing to render our account at this ſolemn ſeaſon; we ſhould beware of thinking of ourſelves, or of others, above what is written in God's word, and of being puffed up one againſt another; leſt we ſhould deſpiſe thoſe, whom God will honour, applaud thoſe, whoſe hidden things of darkneſs he will diſcloſe, or truſt in man inſtead of the Lord himſelf. If we duly conſider what we are by nature and practice; who hath made us in any reſpect to differ from others; and from whom we have received all our talents: we ſhall ſee no ground of glorying in ourſelves on any account, but rather of ſhame, and humiliation before God; even if in ſome reſpects we are diſtinguiſhed from our brethren, and if we do not over-rate our endowments. But indeed we are moſt apt to deem ourſelves full, rich, and honourable, when we are moſt blind, poor, and naked. (*Rev.* c. iii. v. 17, 18.) Profeſſors, like glow-worms, ſhine moſt in the dark, as to their own opinion of themſelves; and the abſence of faithful miniſters concurs with the ſmooth and enticing words of falſe teachers, to buoy them up in vain-confidence, and to lead them to admire the wiſdom of avoiding the croſs, of attempting to ſerve God and mammon, and of deeming ſelf-indulgence the ſummit of goſpel liberty. Such miniſters as moſt deſire, and would moſt rejoice in, their real proſperity, will be the laſt to congratulate them on their admiſſion into ſuch "a fool's paradiſe:" and they may know what a precarious, and carnal kingdom they are advanced to, by their ſhyneſs towards thoſe paſtors, who will alſo reign with them, if ever they are admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

They, whom God hath moſt honoured, have always been proportionably deſpiſed, hated, and abuſed by men: and their ſufferings even unto death have made them an intereſting ſpectacle to all the intelligent creation. The conſideration, that ſo many eyes are upon us, when ſtruggling with difficulties, or conflicting with temptation, ſhould animate us to unconquerable conſtancy and patience; that holy angels and ſaints may rejoice, and evil ſpirits and wicked men may be diſappointed and confounded. The wiſeſt of men, the ſtrongeſt believers, and the moſt honoured of God's ambaſſadors, have been deemed fools for Chriſt's ſake, and treated as weak and

Chriſt; 6---8. 3*d. Exhorting them to avoid ſcandalous profeſſors of chriſtianity,* 9---13.

IT is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and ſuch fornication as is not ſo much as named among the Gentiles, that one ſhould have his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

3 For I verily, as abſent in body, but preſent in ſpirit, have judged already, as though I were preſent, *concerning* him that hath ſo done this deed,

4 In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ye are gathered together, and my ſpirit, with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

5 To deliver ſuch an one unto Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

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contemptible, through bodily infirmities, external poverty, want of worldly accompliſhments, and an unpliant faithfulneſs to the ſouls of men: yea, this hath been their eſtimate among chriſtians, and even their own converts, who have deemed themſelves wiſe in Chriſt, ſtrong and honourable, in exact proportion with their inferiority to thoſe, whom they thus undervalued! It is very inſtructive to reflect on the apoſtles, as inveſted with the higheſt authority in the church, endued with miraculous powers, and conferring them on others, and moſt eminent in holineſs and uſefulneſs; yet even to the end of their lives ſo entirely poor and deſtitute, as often to want the very neceſſaries of life; earning their bread by manual labour, and treated every where as mean, obſcure criminals! It would be uſeful to thoſe, who imagine that the credit of the miniſtry depends in a great meaſure on their making a creditable, or even a genteel appearance, and who emulate the affluent in the expences of their families, to meditate carefully on the ſubject before us; that they might be led to conceive of a more excellent way of maintaining the dignity of character, becoming the miniſters of Him, who had not where to lay his head. If ſuperior rank in the church were now only attended with *apoſtolical diſtinctions*, it would not ſo eagerly be hunted after. However we ſhould not be much caſt down, if *in ſome ſmall degree* we are conformed to the apoſtles, as to ſuch matters: and if we too ſhould be deemed fools for Chriſt's ſake, weak, and deſpicable, even by profeſſors of the goſpel. If we are unable to appear like our wealthy hearers; yet we do not generally want wholeſome food, decent raiment, or comfortable habitations: and if ſometimes a faithful miniſter be thus deſtitute, it is generally the reproach of the people, rather than any diſparagement to him. We ſhould perſiſt in bleſſing, intreating, and being kind to our calumniators, and perſecutors; and if we ſhould be unable to overcome evil with good, but ſtill be treated as the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things; we may recollect that far better men than we are, have been thus vilified. Nay if any miniſter ſhould be bowed down with ſorrow, and diſcouragement, becauſe his own ſpiritual children turn away from him with diſdain and averſion; let him remember that Paul continually experienced the ſame trial. But though no man muſt be followed further than he follows Chriſt: yet believers ſhould remember that a peculiar regard is due to thoſe, whom God hath honoured as the inſtruments of their regeneration; that it is very criminal to deſpiſe, or grieve ſuch faithful friends, as feel a real parental affection for them; and that thoſe inſtructors are commonly influenced by ſelfiſh, or party motives, who want to draw them off, on frivolous pretences, from their affectionate care, and faithful miniſtry. We ſhould however perſevere in attempting to do good to thoſe, who are thus turned from, or againſt us: and it may be uſeful to put them in remembrance of thoſe things, which they have formerly learned from us, but ſeem to have forgotten. We ſhould imitate the tenderneſs of wiſe and good parents, who are not eaſily induced to forego all care even of their diſobedient children; but who know how to employ rebukes and corrections, as well as the language of love, and the ſpirit of meekneſs. The kingdom of God is not ſet up, or ſupported, by florid metaphors, or well turned periods, but by a divine power; and they are the moſt eminent miniſters, not who ſpeak moſt gracefully, but by whom God works moſt powerfully. Spiritual cenſures, and ſcriptural warnings are greatly to be feared, though not now followed by ſenſible temporal judgments: and they who are ſo ſelf-confident as to deſpiſe them, are moſt likely to experience their dreadful effects.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—5.] After the preceding introductory obſervations, the apoſtle next proceeded to animadvert on the moſt flagrant abuſe, which was connived at by the Corinthians. A chriſtian was guilty of inceſt with his mother-in-law, probably whilſt his Father was yet living! (2 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 12.) This was a crime, which even the licentious Gentiles never named, without the moſt indignant deteſtation: yet it was well known, and commonly reported, that this member of the chriſtian church was guilty of it; and he ſeems to have habitually lived with her as his wiſe! But though ſo ſcandalous a wickedneſs was committed, and eſcaped cenſure among them: yet were they puffed up with a vain conceit of their gifts, and ſuperior attainments, and were not aſhamed of, or concerned about it. Probably the guilty perſon held ſome conſiderable rank amongſt them, and was a zealous adherent of ſome of their popular teachers: ſo that a party ſpirit, and a falſe notion of chriſtian liberty ſecured him from cenſure. But, if they had been properly diſpoſed, they would have mourned over ſuch an enormity; and humbled themſelves before God, with earneſt prayers, that he would remove all obſtacles, that he who had done this nefarious deed might be ſeparated from their company. For though the apoſtle was abſent, and could not therefore

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feaſt, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs; but with the unleavened *bread* of ſincerity and truth.

9 I wrote unto you in an epiſtle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then muſt ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with ſuch an one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them alſo that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourſelves that wicked perſon.

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exert himſelf, as he would otherwiſe have done; and though he was aware that his peremptory interference might give much offence: yet, "being preſent in ſpirit," having the whole affair clearly before his mind, (perhaps by a ſupernatural operation of the Holy Spirit;) and being full of concern for the honour of Chriſt, and the welfare of the church; he had already determined in the caſe, and had paſſed ſentence on the criminal, as if he had been upon the ſpot. He therefore charged them in the name, by the authority, and for the honour of Chriſt, that when they met together as a church, they would conſider him as preſent in ſpirit among them, to ratify their ſentence with his apoſtolical authority, and to enforce it by the power of Chriſt; and thus to expel the inceſtuous perſon from their communion; that he might not be conſidered as a chriſtian, but as a heathen, a ſubject of ſatan's kingdom. Yet this was not to be done in hatred, or for his ruin; but in hopes, that it would be the means of bringing him to repentance, and the mortification of his fleſhly luſts, that ſo his ſoul might be ſaved in the day of Chriſt. Probably the apoſtle expected, that this ſolemn ſentence of excommunication would be attended by ſome miraculous infliction of pain and diſeaſe, even to the waſting, or the death of his body: yet by "delivering him over to ſatan," he ſeems to intend his expulſion from the viſible kingdom of Chriſt, into that of ſatan; and not that ſatan would inflict the correction, that might follow. However, we are ſure, that when ſupernatural viſitations do not accompany ſuch cenſures, temporal pains and penalties ought not to be annexed to them. Such abuſes have made way for the diſuſe, or relaxation of ſalutary diſcipline, throughout a great part of the chriſtian church.

V. 6—8] It was evident that the Corinthians had no good cauſe to glory in their eminence, and proſperity: for ſuch an inſtance as this was alone ſufficient to prove, that pure religion was greatly declined among them. What, did they not know, that a little leaven would ſoon ferment, and ſour the whole lump of dough? And that ſuch corrupt principles, and examples, if connived at, would diffuſe their baleful efficacy through the whole church? The judgments of men would thus be corrupted, their conduct would become lax and licentious, and they would all together become a ſcandalous community. As therefore the Jews uſed to ſearch with candles, in every corner of their houſes, that they might caſt out all the leaven, before they made the unleavened bread for the paſſover: ſo ought they to purge out ſuch crimes, and offenders. Theſe indeed were common in their old ſtate of idolatry, but utterly inconſiſtent with the purity of a chriſtian church; which ſhould be a new lump, as they were to reſemble the unleavened bread uſed at the paſſover. For while the Jews had only the type and ſhadow of good things to come, in their appointed feaſt: even Chriſt himſelf, the true Paſſover had been ſacrificed for his church, to atone for their ſins, and to be the ſpiritual ſupport of their ſouls. It behoved them therefore to keep the ſacred feaſt, not with the old leaven of heathen licentiouſneſs, nor yet with the leaven of malice, ambition, contention, or other wickedneſs; but with that ſimplicity, and ſincerity of repentance, and holy obedience, which were the truth, and ſubſtance, ſhadowed forth by the unleavened bread. This might either be applied to the habitual feaſt of communion with God, by faith in Chriſt, or to their commemorating his death in the Lord's ſupper: and it included both perſonal purity, and that of the religious ſociety. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xii.)

V. 9—13.] Probably the apoſtle had in ſome brief epiſtle, (which hath not been preſerved,) warned the Corinthians not to aſſociate with fornicators, or perſons, who were known to live in any kind of lewdneſs; which vice was peculiarly prevalent in that city. Yet he did not mean by this to prohibit all intercourſe with ſuch perſons, or with covetous men, or with ſuch as oppreſſed the poor by iniquitous exactions, or even with idolaters, provided they were not profeſſed chriſtians: for ſo general were theſe crimes, that ſuch a prohibition would have been equivalent to a command to leave their families and occupations, and to become hermits and recluſes; which would by no means be for their good, or for the honour of God. He would therefore now more fully explain himſelf, to mean, that if one called a brother, a mem-

CHAP. VI.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Reproving the Corinthians for going to law before the heathen magiſtrates, inſtead of ſettling their differences among themſelves; and blaming their ſelfiſhneſs, and injuſtice, 1---8. *2d. Shewing that wicked perſons could not inherit heaven; and that the Corinthians were ſuch before their converſion, &c,* 9---11. *3d. Stating the inexpedience frequently connected with the uſe of lawful things; and proving the ſinfulneſs of fornication, and the inconſiſtency of it with the chriſtian character,* 12---20.

ber of the chriſtian church, was guilty of ſuch crimes, or of reviling, or intemperance, &c; he ought not only to be excommunicated, but his ſociety ought to be ſhunned, as infectious, by every believer; and they ought even to refuſe to eat with him, till he had given evidence of his ſincere repentance. Thus the infection might be ſtopped, and the ſcandal prevented; and the moſt effectual method would be taken to convince offenders of their guilt and danger. But the apoſtle did not deem himſelf required, or authorized, to determine any thing concerning thoſe, that were not profeſſed chriſtians; (which might be the reaſon why no mention is made of cenſuring the woman, who had alſo been guilty in this matter, ſhe probably being a heathen:) but did it not belong to them to exerciſe a judicial authority over the members of their own church, and to cenſure the ſcandalous? (c. iv. ver. 5.) As for thoſe without they muſt be left to the judgment of God, who would not permit them to eſcape unpuniſhed. Therefore let them proceed to do their duty, by putting away from among them this notorious offender, without regarding the diſpleaſure that might be excited by it: otherwiſe the apoſtle would be compelled to come unto them with a rod, &c.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How grievous is it, that ſuch crimes ſhould ſometimes be notoriouſly committed by profeſſors of the goſpel, as heathens would be aſhamed of! Woe be to the world becauſe of ſuch offences! And woe be to them by whom ſuch offences come! Yea, to thoſe by whom they are connived at! Spiritual pride, ambition, and falſe doctrines and teachers, directly tend to introduce, and perpetuate ſuch ſcandals: for men's gifts, influence, notions, and connexions are, in ſuch circumſtances, more regarded, than their conduct! So that religious ſocieties, as well as individuals, are generally moſt puffed up, when they have moſt need to be aſhamed, and to mourn: and ſometimes ſuch men are gloried in, eſpecially when eminent in gifts, or affluence, who muſt be taken away, as mortified limbs, before the church can thrive in vital godlineſs. When a man hath wiſdom, zeal, and love, he can have but one judgment in ſuch caſes; and if he poſſeſs authority, or influence, he will uſe it, whether preſent or abſent, in exciting thoſe, who are more immediately concerned, to prefer the honour of the goſpel to every perſonal, or party intereſt, to venture all conſequences in bearing teſtimony againſt ſuch ſcandals, and to ſeparate from among them thoſe, who have done ſuch deeds. It would be deſirable, that all the miniſters, and churches of Chriſt, were enabled to exerciſe ſuch a ſalutary diſcipline, in the name and by the authority of their Lord; and to deliver over into the viſible kingdom of ſatan ſuch as act notoriouſly inconſiſtent with their profeſſion: and that thoſe, who have ſuch diſcipline amongſt them, did always exerciſe it with exact impartiality, due ſolemnity, and tender compaſſion to the ſouls of offenders. But alas it hath been ſo generally abuſed by men's carnal paſſions, or rendered inefficient by family connexions, ſecular and party influence, and an undue regard to the rich above the poor; that a more complete revival of pure and ſpiritual religion ſeems neceſſary, before it can produce its full effect. However, more might be done in moſt places than now is; if fear of man, reſpect of perſons, and carnal policy did not ſometimes deter thoſe concerned, from decidedly acting according to their judgment. But many even glory in their proſperous ſtate, when ſuch abuſes prevail, that fully authorize us to ſay, "your glorying is not good." Few ſeem ſufficiently aware that "a little leaven leaveneth "the whole lump;" and that the honour and ſucceſs of the goſpel, and the flouriſhing of the church requires that the old leaven be diligently ſought out and purged away; though the numbers and wealth of the ſociety ſhould be greatly diminiſhed by it: and that none ſhould be deemed a part of the true church, who does not appear to have renounced, and mortified his old ſins; that thus the whole company may be a new, and unleavened maſs. So far is the ſacrifice of Chriſt our Paſſover for us, from rendering this perſonal, and public ſanctification unneceſſary; that it furniſhes the moſt cogent reaſons, and effectual motives for it: elſe we can neither live by faith in him, nor join in his ordinances with comfort and profit. This feaſt cannot be ſolemnized, theſe proviſions cannot be reliſhed, along with the old leaven of ſenſual indulgence, or that of malice and wickedneſs; but muſt be attended with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth. When individuals, who mourn over thoſe, that have done evil, cannot prevail to have them put away from amongſt them; they ſhould refuſe to aſſociate with them, and proteſt againſt their ſcandals, by withdrawing from them: and though we ſhould not be ſevere on the infirmities, or even the occaſional falls of ſuch, as are humbled for them; yet when any, who profeſſes the goſpel is a fornicator, or covetous, a railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner, charity itſelf requires of us to avoid all fellowſhip with him, even more than we do with perſons of ſimilar crimes, who make no ſuch profeſſion; leſt we ſhould appear to allow of his ſins, becauſe he is of our party, and ſentiments. But how grievous is it, that we muſt needs ſtill go out of the world, (though called chriſtian!) if we ſhould reſolutely refuſe all intercourſe with ſuch characters as are here deſcribed! So prevalent is vice on every ſide! However, we muſt leave thoſe, that are without, and ſtrangers or enemies to the doctrines of grace, to the judgment of God. We ſhould firſt judge ourſelves, and take heed to give no offence to others; then we ſhould ſhun ſuch profeſſors, as would be an offence to us, and a

DARE any of you, having a matter againſt another, go to law before the unjuſt, and not before the ſaints?

2 Do ye not know that the ſaints ſhall judge the world? and if the world ſhall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the ſmalleſt matters?

3 Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, ſet them to judge who are leaſt eſteemed in the church.

5 I ſpeak to your ſhame. Is it ſo, that there is not a wiſe man among you? no, not one that ſhall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, becauſe ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *ſuffer yourſelves to* be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.

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reproach to the goſpel; and thus attending to our own duty in this reſpect, we ſhould wait and pray for times of greater purity in the church of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—8.] Another lamentable evil in the Corinthian church was here reproved by the apoſtle. He abruptly enquired whether any of them could venture to go to law with their brethren before the heathen magiſtrates, who were unrighteous perſons, and might be expected to be unjuſt judges in ſuch matters? Whereas they ought to have ſettled all their differences, (if ſuch there were,) by the arbitration of the ſaints, the holy diſciples of Chriſt. What, with all their ſuperior knowledge, did they not underſtand that believers, being firſt declared righteous, and heirs of God, at the day of judgment, will be aſſeſſors with Chriſt in judging the world, and will concur in the ſentence denounced by him againſt the wicked? And if this honour was intended them, were they not worthy to be entruſted with the deciſion of ſuch petty cauſes, as related only to the things of this life? Whereas, even fallen angels, whoſe ſlaves they once were, and by whom they were long harraſſed, will be judged by them, and the puniſhment of thoſe proud and malignant ſpirits will be embittered by this mortifying circumſtance. If then they had cauſes of this kind to determine, they need not take off their able miniſters from their work, nor ſelect ſuch as were qualified for other ſervices; even thoſe of inferior abilities, and eſtimation in the church were competent for this buſineſs. Some indeed read this interrogatively, "do "ye ſet them to judge, who are eſteemed as nothing by "the church?" Namely the heathen magiſtrates. However, they acted in ſuch a manner, as was very ſhameful to them; for after all their glorying in their wiſdom and gifts, there ſeemed to be not ſo much as one wiſe man amongſt them, not one, that could be truſted as an arbitrator between his brethren! So that ſuch diſputes were carried before the unbelievers, who would thence naturally conclude them to be a ſelfiſh, and litigious ſet of men. Doubtleſs therefore there was a great fault among them, which could not be palliated: their quarrels proved them carnal and ſelfiſh: this event of them was exceedingly diſhonourable to the goſpel: and the connivance at ſuch ſcandals proved that the church was not in a thriving ſtate. Why then did they not ſubmit to be injured, and defrauded in ſuch trivial matters, according to the commands of Chriſt; rather than thus break the peace of the church, and ſcandalize the goſpel? But in fact there were ſuch among them, as ſcrupled not to commit injuſtice and fraud, and that upon their chriſtian brethren: to ſuch a degree had they turned aſide from the pure and holy ſpirit of Chriſtianity! Many learned expoſitors refer this alſo to the inceſtuous Corinthian, whom they imagine to have appealed to the heathen magiſtrates againſt ſuch of the chriſtians as wanted to excommunicate him: but this is ſo contrary to the obvious meaning of the paſſage, and ſo improbable in itſelf, that one cannot but wonder what could induce them to adopt ſuch an interpretation. The Jews were allowed to ſettle matters of property among themſelves, according to their own law; and chriſtians would doubtleſs be admitted to exerciſe the ſame kind of authority: yet voluntary reference to arbitration ſeems rather to be intended. All lawſuits are not prohibited by this: but they could ſcarce take place among believers, if there were not utterly a fault among them.

V. 9—11.] The apoſtle here plainly declared his doubts concerning ſome of the Corinthian profeſſors of chriſtianity, whoſe conduct was ſo contrary to the precepts of God's word. What, did they not know that unjuſt, or wicked perſons, continuing ſuch, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? There is much energy in

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 And God hath both raiſed up the Lord, and will alſo raiſe up us by his own power.

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Chriſt? ſhall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid.

16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, ſaith he, ſhall be one fleſh.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one ſpirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every ſin that man

theſe enquiries, when we conſider that they were addreſſed to a people, that were puffed up with an imagination of their ſuperiority to others in wiſdom and knowledge. If they did not pay a proper regard to ſo plain and evident a truth; he muſt warn them not to deceive themſelves, or each other, and to take heed that ſatan did not deceive them: for they would certainly find that perſons, who lived in the practice of any of the following vices and iniquities, would be excluded from heaven at laſt, whatever their profeſſion, gifts, or creed had been. The word effeminate ſeems not merely to denote perſons of a ſoft and ſelf-indulgent temper and conduct, in leſſer matters; but ſuch as were guilty of laſciviouſneſs, and violated the order of nature by abominable practices, only fit to be named with thoſe of "the abuſers of themſelves with mankind." The apoſtle did not mean, that they, who had been guilty of theſe, or ſimilar abominations, were to be excluded from ſalvation; for even ſome of the real believers at Corinth had been ſuch characters, and had been habitually criminal in one, or many of theſe reſpects. But then, they had been waſhed, not only by the water of baptiſm, but in the fountain opened for ſin and uncleanneſs; ſo that they were ſanctified from the love and practice of ſin, and to the love and ſervice of God, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, as well as pardoned, and juſtified by faith in the name of the Lord Jeſus. Thus their character, and conduct were changed, as well as their ſtate: but if any one of them ſtill practiſed theſe vices, he deceived himſelf, if he ſuppoſed himſelf to be an accepted believer. The arrangement of the words in the eleventh verſe ſhews, that no argument can any where be drawn *merely from that circumſtance*, in reſpect of controverted points of doctrine.

V. 12—17.] It is ſurprizing that ſo many expoſitors ſhould ſpeak of the *Judaizing* teachers, as the authors of the diviſions at Corinth: when their philoſophizing diſpoſition, and their abuſes of chriſtian liberty, plainly ſhew them to have been ſpeculating Gentile converts, who ran into the oppoſite extreme, and introduced a ſpecious ſyſtem of antinomianiſm. As all meats might lawfully be eaten, the ceremonial law being no longer in force; they were diſpoſed to extend the ſame principle even to fornication, as if that too were only prohibited by the ceremonial law, or as if the moral law alſo had loſt its force. This falſe principle, added to their heathen maxims, and habits, ſeems to have made way for their connivance with the inceſtuous man's conduct. Now ſays the apoſtle, admitting the truth of this poſition, that "all things are lawful to a chriſtian," which might be granted, in reſpect of meats, &c: yet all things are not expedient to him, or conſiſtent with his real benefit, and that of his brethren or neighbours: ſo that even this liberty, muſt be uſed, with certain limitations. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xiv. v. 13—23.) Moreover a chriſtian ſhould habituate all his natural inclinations to ſubjection; and not allow them by unreſtricted indulgence, even in lawful things, to obtain a power over him, ſo that he cannot refrain when it is requiſite that he ſhould. Indeed all kinds of food were created for the ſupport of the body; and the ſtomach and bowels were formed to receive, digeſt, and convert them into nouriſhment: yet both the meat, and the body, (in reſpect of its preſent ſubſiſtence,) will ſoon be deſtroyed, according to the appointment of God. But He did not form the body, to be employed in, or waſted by fornication, and uncleanneſs; on the contrary the bodies of believers are "for the Lord Jeſus," to be preſented as living ſacrifices to him, and employed as inſtruments of righteouſneſs in his ſervice, (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. vi. v. 12, 13—16. c. xii. v. 1;) and the Lord Jeſus was appointed to be the Saviour, Proprietor, and happineſs of the body, as well as of the ſoul: for God, had raiſed him up from the grave, as the earneſt of the reſurrection of all his people, by his power, to glory, and immortality. And did they not know, that their bodies were members of Chriſt's myſtical body the church? Was it then meet that the body of a believer, which ſtood in ſo high and honourable a relation to the Lord of glory, the incarnate Son of God, ſhould be diſgraced and abuſed, by a vile intercourſe with an harlot? They ought to know, that this was to become one body, or fleſh, with a licentious woman, by a moſt degrading and pernicious deviation from the original inſtitution of marriage. Whereas, he, that was united to the Lord, was one ſpirit with him; this union was formed by the communication of the Holy Spirit, and was of a ſpiritual, and ſacred nature, compriſing a conformity of judgment and diſpoſition, and a ſympathy of ſoul: and could a chriſtian think of being one ſpirit with Chriſt, and one fleſh with a proſtitute?

V. 18—20.] As this vice was ſo inconſiſtent with chriſtian holineſs; and as the temptation of the Corinthians to it, from former bad habits, from the example of their neighbours, and from abundant opportunities, would be ſo many; they ought to flee from it, as from an enemy, whom they dared not to face: they ſhould doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication ſinneth againſt his own body.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's.

ſhun all incentives to it, and reject every thought of, or ſolicitation to it, without parleying with them. For it might further be obſerved; that other ſins in general have their chief effect upon the mind rather than on the body, and commonly injure others more immediately than the man himſelf: but lewd perſons not only ſin againſt God, their neighbours, and their own ſouls, but againſt their own bodies alſo; diſhonouring and abuſing them to the vileſt purpoſes, and bringing upon them the moſt painful, loathſome, and deſtructive diſeaſes. Thus they, as it were, take their bodies, and by an act of cruelty to themſelves, and gradual ſuicide, preſent them for ſacrifices to the filthieſt demons. This is in ſome degree the caſe in other kinds of ſenſual exceſs; but far more in reſpect of this vice than any other: as every one muſt know, who is acquainted with the horrible effects of lewdneſs in populous cities; and with the vaſt multitudes that are annually cut off, in early life, and in the moſt deplorable manner, by the various diſeaſes, with which it hath pleaſed God to ſhew his abhorrence of it. Moreover chriſtians ought to know, that their bodies were conſecrated to be the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, who dwelt in them, as the gift of the Father, through the Son, to conſecrate them to God, and prepare them for his glory; ſo that in this reſpect too they were no longer their own, but the property of God the Spirit, who had taken poſſeſſion of them as his holy habitation. For they had been redeemed from merited condemnation, and hopeleſs ſlavery, by the atoning ſacrifice of Chriſt; who having thus bought them with a price, had acquired for himſelf, and for the Father and the Spirit, as One with him, a new and endearing right to them, and their ſervices, in addition to that, which he had as their Creator. So that being wholly, and on every account, the Lord's, they were bound to devote both body and ſoul to his glory, in every ſervice to which he called them, and to make no other uſe of either of them, than was conſiſtent with that holy, and entire devotedneſs to God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The high privileges, and glorious proſpects of believers ſhould ſuggeſt arguments to them againſt ſin, and for the practice of every duty: that ſo a juſt ſenſe of the dignity gratuitouſly beſtowed on them, may render them ſuperior to the debaſing allurements of vice, and the love of worldly vanities. Surely the ſaints of God, and the aſſeſſors of Chriſt in judgment upon men and angels, ſhould not ſo eagerly contend with each other about ſecular intereſts, as to make their appeal to the ſtrangers, and enemies of religion! Surely they are competent to decide ſuch inſignificant cauſes among themſelves! If there were not utterly a fault amongſt them, ſuch diſputes would rarely occur: if at any time they became unavoidable; they would commonly be decided by arbitration, were not profeſſors too tenacious of their ſuppoſed right, and too much on their own ſide: for *real* chriſtians, even of inferior abilities might generally determine ſuch matters with ſufficient equity, if they were impartially ſet before, and unreſervedly left to them. However, it muſt be a ſhame to a company of evangelical profeſſors, if there be no man among them ſo wiſe, and faithful, that his brethren dare truſt him to determine their ſecular differences! Indeed law-ſuits with thoſe that *are without* need ſeldom be had recourſe to, if chriſtians were duly diſintereſted, and forbearing; if they would in all tolerable matters, ſuffer themſelves to be defrauded, and injured, for the ſake of peace, and the credit of the goſpel. But brother need not go to law with brother, before the unbelievers, if there were not a very great fault on one ſide, or both: and much deliberation, counſel, prayer, and endeavour for accommodation ſhould ſurely precede; before a man dare to enter upon ſo perilous, and diſgraceful a buſineſs; except indeed it be abſolutely neceſſary, and can evidently be done in a chriſtian ſpirit. But alas, even profeſſors of the goſpel not only refuſe to bear, and forgive injuries; but they will do wrong, and defraud, and that their brethren! Whether ſuch men act contrary to their conſciences, or are miſled by falſe principles; they ſhould be reminded, that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God: for no one continuing an adulterer, a fornicator, or laſcivious, a diſhoneſt, covetous, fraudulent, drunken, or malicious man, can have either title to, or meetneſs for the holy habitation of God, and his ſaints. Many deceive themſelves, and others in theſe matters; but the thing is impracticable, and the hope of it the groſſeſt preſumption. Indeed many, who are now true chriſtians, were once ſuch criminals; and they, who are now the moſt abandoned, may become chriſtians: but then they muſt be waſhed, and ſanctified, and juſtified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Satan takes advantage of men's ignorance, pride, and luſts to drive them from one extreme to another. Thus when they are led to renounce ſuperſtitious ſcruples, they run into inexpedient, or even unlawful indulgences. But the wiſdom from above teaches a man to guard againſt ſuch miſtakes; to abſtain from lawful things when inexpedient; and to exert an authority over his own inclinations; that he may not be brought under the power of any of them. This is a difficult leſſon, but of vaſt importance: and if we conſider how ſoon all animal pleaſures, and our preſent life ſhall terminate, the reflection may teach us moderation in the moſt innocent gratifications, and arm us againſt temptations to ſuch as are unlawful. Our bodies ſhould be conſidered, as "for the Lord," and devoted to his ſervice, that they may at length ſhare his reſurrection, and be made like to his glorious body: and ſurely no believer can ſuppoſe it proper to take the mem-

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Contains 1ſt. Directions concerning marriage, and the conduct of huſbands and wives; with intimations of advantages to be found in a ſingle ſtate, by thoſe, who were capable of it, 1---9. *2d. Inſtructions to married perſons not to ſeparate, even from their unbelieving partners,* 10---16. *3d. Admonitions to every one to abide with God, in the ſtation of life, in which they were called,* 17---24. *4th. Further intimations of the advantages of a ſingle life, in that troubled ſtate of the church: and that, though none were to conſider marriage as ſinful; yet all ought to remember the tranſitory nature of earthly things,* 25---35. *5th. Directions concerning the marriages of virgins, and widows,* 36---40.

NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheleſs, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own huſband.

3 Let the huſband render unto the wiſe due benevolence: and likewiſe alſo the wiſe unto the huſband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the huſband: and likewiſe alſo the huſband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to faſting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6 But I ſpeak this by permiſſion, *and* not of commandment.

bers of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot! Or thus to defile the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and to alienate the Lord's peculiar property, to ſuch vile purpoſes! However it is proper to fortify our minds on every ſide againſt ſuch dangerous temptations, by which ſo many eminent men have been caſt down, and ſhamefully overcome: and in this view even the horrid diſeaſes incident to thoſe, who thus ſin againſt their own bodies, may be profitably reflected upon, eſpecially by the young, and inexperienced; in order to caution them to flee from ſuch a deſtructive vice, and to keep at the utmoſt diſtance from all its faſcinating allurements. But nobler motives ſhould animate the believer's ſoul: being united to Chriſt as one ſpirit, and bought with a price of ineſtimable value; he ſhould conſider himſelf as wholly the Lord's, by the moſt endearing and indiſſoluble ties; that ſeeking all his happineſs in his favour, he may live wholly devoted to Him, and may glorify him in body, and ſpirit, which are His. (Notes, &c. *Prov.* c. ii. v. 16—20. c. v. c. vi. v. 24—35. c. vii. v. 6—27.)

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—5.] It ſeems, that they, who retained their regard to the apoſtle's authority among the Corinthians, had written to him deſiring his deciſion of ſeveral queſtions, that had been ſtarted among them: and he here proceeded to anſwer their enquiries, eſpecially reſpecting marriage. Whilſt ſome of them pleaded for the lawfulneſs of fornication; others ſeem to have imbibed the ſentiments of the Pythagoreans, and to have deemed marriage to be inconſiſtent with chriſtian purity, or at leaſt inimical to intellectual improvement. On the other hand the Phariſees generally taught, that it was ſinful for a man to live unmarried beyond his twentieth year: but at the ſame time they laid down many ſuperſtitious rules, concerning the conduct of married perſons. In determining therefore this matter, the apoſtle firſt allowed, that, in many caſes, and circumſtances, it might be profitable to a man to live unmarried, and might render him more uſeful to others: provided he was able, and willing, to live with that entire chaſtity, which the ſingle life required. Nevertheleſs, *becauſe of fornication*; on account of thoſe propenſities, which God originally for wiſe reaſons implanted in human nature, and which man's ſinfulneſs has rendered generally too predominant to be kept in abſolute ſubjection: and in order to prevent fornication, and other lewd practices, and to remove the temptations to them; every man ought to be allowed to have his own wife, and every woman her own huſband; and in many caſes it was beſt that it ſhould be ſo. Nor ought married perſons to imagine it a virtue in them to live apart; or that it was even allowable for one of them to withdraw, without the conſent, or contrary to the inclinations, of the other: but in every reſpect, they ſhould conſider mutual compliance, and affection, an incumbent duty, and the proper means of living in harmony and purity, and at a diſtance from temptation; remembering that they had an unalienable property in each other's perſon, in reſpect of all the purpoſes, for which marriage was appointed. This places the huſband, and the wife entirely on the ſame ground; and as much forbids him to take another woman, as her to cohabit with another man: ſo that it is abſolutely deciſive againſt polygamy. Nor ought married perſons to deprive each other of that preſervative againſt temptation, which is their due: ſo that they ought not to ſeparate, but by conſent, for the ſpiritual work of faſting and prayer: and even this ſhould not generally be for any long time, eſpecially if they found it inconvenient to them; leſt ſatan ſhould take occaſion to harraſs, and defile their minds by improper thoughts, or even to tempt them to unlawful indulgences.

V. 6—9.] Theſe things the apoſtle ſpake to them, as what were allowable, not as giving them an abſolute commandment. Men might uſe their own diſcretion about marrying: and married perſons concerning their conduct in that ſtate; provided they did not needleſsly croſs each others inclinations, do injuſtice to one another, or throw any temptation in the way. For the apoſtle

7 For I would that all men were even as I myſelf. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8 I ſay therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I.

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* huſband:

11 But and if ſhe depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* huſband: and let not the huſband put away *his* wife.

12 But to the reſt ſpeak I, not the Lord; If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and ſhe be pleaſed to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an huſband that believeth not, and if he be pleaſed to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband: elſe were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a ſiſter is not under bondage in ſuch *caſes:* but God hath called us to peace.

16 For what knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* huſband? or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* wife?

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would have wiſhed, that all his chriſtian brethren had been as free from diſquietude in that reſpect, as he was; that if the glory of God, and the circumſtances in which they were placed, ſeemed to require it, they might live unmarried, with as much content as he did. Some think that he was a widower, but this is uncertain. We muſt not ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle meant, that he wiſhed marriage to ceaſe among chriſtians: but only that every one were enabled calmly to uſe his prudence in that reſpect, without being neceſſitated to marry, when otherwiſe it would not have been adviſable. But the apoſtle knew, that his experience in this matter was not a rule for other men's conduct: as this ſuperiority to the animal inclinations was a ſpecial gift of God, which he gave to one, and not to another, as he ſaw good; and in different proportions. (*Matt.* c. xix. v. 9—12.) He would therefore remind unmarried perſons, and ſuch as had been left in widowhood, that their condition had many advantages, which rendered it good for them to abide in it: but if any of them found that they could not obtain the gift of entire continence, it was allowable, and even incumbent on them to marry; as it would be far better for them, more holy in itſelf, and more becoming their profeſſion, to marry; than to be harraſſed with polluting temptations, and continually in danger of being drawn into forbidden gratifications.

V. 10—16.] As to married perſons, the apoſtle did not counſel, but command them; and not by his own authority, but by that of Chriſt, and according to his precepts, that they ſhould not ſeparate from each other; which was common among the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, and that on very frivolous pretences. The wife muſt not leave her huſband: or if on any account, ſhe had ſuch a diſagreement with him, as made it neceſſary to part from him; ſhe muſt not think of marrying again; or rather ſhe ought to make every advance and conceſſion, to bring about a reconciliation with him, and the ſame rules were to be obſerved by the huſband. Doubtleſs the ſame exception is implied, as our Lord made in the directions given by him in this caſe, (*Matt.* c. v. ver. 32. c. xix. v. 9. *Mark*, c. x. v. 11, 12.) And though Chriſt had not given expreſs rules in the following caſes; yet the apoſtle deemed himſelf authorized to enjoin, that the chriſtian, who was married to an unbeliever, whether an heathen, or a Jew, that choſe to live with him notwithſtanding the difference of his religion, ſhould not put her away; as the Jews, for reaſons peculiar to their ſituation, were required to do by their idolatrous wives. (*Ezra*, c. ix. x.) Though chriſtians were commanded not to marry unbelievers: yet if that relation had been entered into, either before converſion, or through inattention to this rule, it would cauſe great confuſion and ſcandal to diſſolve it, on that account. The ſame held good in reſpect of a chriſtian woman, who had an unbelieving huſband, that choſe to live with her. Nor ought any perſon to ſuppoſe, that this union as one fleſh with unbelievers or idolaters in lawful marriage, was inconſiſtent with being one ſpirit with the Lord, as fornication had been declared to be, (c. vi. v. 15—17:) for the unbelieving huſband, or wife was ſanctified to the uſe of the believer, by the appointment, and command of God; ſo that their marriage was holy and honourable. If this had not been ſo appointed, but chriſtians had been commanded to put away their unbelieving partners, as the Jews did their idolatrous wives; the children of ſuch marriages would have been deemed relatively unclean, and ſo excluded from baptiſm, as thoſe of the Jews in the abovementioned caſe were from circumciſion; but on the contrary, they were accounted holy in the chriſtian churches, and thus admitted amongſt them, as a part "of the viſible kingdom of God." This expoſition of the ſcripture before us has indeed been much controverted; and many have explained *unclean*, and *holy*, to mean *legitimate*, or *illegitimate:* but in all the places, where theſe words are found in ſcripture, there is not one, that will fairly admit of this ſenſe. No doubt the children of heathens, who were lawfully married, were as legitimate as thoſe of chriſtians; yet they are ne-

17 But as God hath diſtributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, ſo let him walk. And ſo ordain I in all churches.

18 Is any man called being circumciſed? let him not become uncircumciſed. Is any called in uncircumciſion? let him not be circumciſed.

19 Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

20 Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called.

21 Art thou called *being* a ſervant? care not for it: but if thou mayeſt be made free, uſe *it* rather.

22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a ſervant, is the Lord's freeman; likewiſe alſo he that is called, *being* free, is Chriſt's ſervant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the ſervants of men.

ver ſaid to be holy. Something more muſt be meant, by the believers ſanctifying the unbelieving party, than merely legalizing their marriage; for that would have been the caſe, if both had been unbelievers: and the children would not *really* be more *holy*, in reſpect of their nature, than if both parents had been unbelievers. But as the word *unclean* is frequently uſed in a relative ſenſe to denote unfit to be admitted to God's ordinances; and *holy* implies the contrary: as in this ſenſe the male children of the Jews were *holy*, and ſo partakers of circumciſion; whilſt thoſe of the Gentiles, and even ſuch, as had one idolatrous parent, were *unclean*, and excluded from circumciſion: ſo, I cannot but conclude, after long attention to the ſubject, that the baptiſm of the infant offſpring of profeſſed chriſtians is here referred to, as at that time cuſtomary in the churches; and that the Corinthians knew, that this was not objected to, when only one parent was a chriſtian. The apoſtle further obſerved, that if the unconverted wife, or huſband choſe to depart, and to diſannul the marriage, according to the laws of the community; the believer was not required to act in oppoſition to it, or as if in bondage by the preceding contract. Yet this ought to be avoided, if it could be; for God had called them to live in peace with all men, as far as poſſible: and though ſuch an union would occaſion much grief and trouble to a believer; yet that ought patiently to be endured: for how did the believing wife or huſband know, but that God would make uſe of them, for the converſion and ſalvation of their unbelieving companion; by means of their pious, affectionate, and exemplary behaviour, edifying converſe, and fervent prayers?

V. 17—24.] The preceding ſubject led the apoſtle to digreſs to a more general topic. In ordinary caſes, and without good reaſons to the contrary, it was proper that every man ſhould continue to ſerve God, by the improvement of thoſe gifts, that God had diſtributed to him; and in that ſituation, in which He had called him: this was the general rule, which the apoſtle gave in all the churches. Thus, if a Jew, or circumciſed proſelyte, had been converted; let him not deny, conceal, or be diſquieted about his circumciſion; or refuſe that regard to the ceremonial law, which might tend to conciliate his unbelieving brethren: but let not the uncircumciſed convert ſubmit to that abrogated ordinance, or at all take that yoke upon him. For in fact the difference between them was in itſelf immaterial, unleſs they put ſuch matters in a wrong place: but obedience to God's commandments was the great matter for a believer to attend to; *(for Paul was no Antinomian.)* Whilſt the Moſaic diſpenſation continued in force, it was proper, that its requirements ſhould be complied with; and it might be ſtill expedient for the Jewiſh converts to pay ſome regard to them: but the Gentiles had nothing to do with them, and need only regard the precepts of the moral law, and the inſtitutions of Chriſt, from a principle of faith in, and love to him. It is obvious that the apoſtle is not here ſpeaking of the way of juſtification, but of the conduct of juſtified believers. In like manner it was commonly adviſable for every man to abide in that profeſſion, trade or ſtation, in which the grace of God had called him to the knowledge of Chriſt; provided it were an honeſt employment For the goſpel would teach a man how to behave in any condition, and patiently to bear it's inconveniences. If then any one were converted in a ſtate of ſervitude, even to a heathen maſter, (which was the common caſe of the ſervants in thoſe days;) let him be leſs ſolicitous about his liberty, than about glorifying God in that trying ſituation. But as it would frequently deprive him of religious advantages, eſpecially that of meeting with his brethren, on the Lord's day, or at other times; and as it would expoſe him to many temptations: ſo, if he had a fair opportunity of obtaining his freedom, he would do well to embrace it. However, even the converted ſlave was called to the nobleſt liberty, as the freeman of Chriſt, and emancipated from ſatan's yoke: and the chriſtian, who enjoyed his outward liberty, ſhould conſider himſelf, as the ſervant of Chriſt, his property, and bound to devote himſelf to him, and obey his will. As therefore all chriſtians had been bought with an invaluable price to be the Lord's ſervants; they ought not by choice, or from ſecular motives, to become the ſervants of men; becauſe that would interfere with their devoted obedience to their common Lord: ſo that every man ought contentedly to abide with God, by conſtantly performing the duties of that ſituation, in which he was converted to the faith of Chriſt; for the common proneneſs of mankind to ſhift and change from one ſtation to another, is generally diſhonourable, prejudicial, and inimical to uſefulneſs. As miniſters were then entirely taken from among the converts to Chriſt in every church, many of whom had doubtleſs been previouſly employed in other occupations; and as ſeminaries for educating men for this ſervice were not then known: ſo it is evi-

24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26 I ſuppoſe therefore that this is good for the preſent diſtreſs, *I ſay*, that *it is* good for a man ſo to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? ſeek not to be looſed. Art thou looſed from a wife? ſeek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou haſt not ſinned; and if a virgin marry, ſhe hath not ſinned. Nevertheleſs ſuch ſhall have trouble in the fleſh: but I ſpare you.

29 But this I ſay, brethren, the time *is* ſhort: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not;

31 And they that uſe this world, as not abuſing *it*: for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.

32 But I would have you without carefulneſs. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may pleaſe the Lord:

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may pleaſe *his* wife.

34 There is difference *alſo* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in body and in ſpirit: but ſhe that is married careth for the things of the world, how ſhe may pleaſe *her* huſband.

35 And this I ſpeak for your own profit;

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dent that the apoſtle did not mean to forbid that change, when it could be made adviſedly, and on good grounds, as well as from proper motives: and in other reſpects his general rule might admit of ſome exceptions.

V. 25—28.] The apoſtle here reſumes his former ſubject, with eſpecial reference to thoſe, that had never been married: for he ſeems to uſe the word rendered *virgins* in this latitude, including both young men and young women. Chriſt had given no commandment in this matter, but had left them free to marry, or not, as they ſaw good; and the apoſtle had received no ſpecial revelation about it. He did not therefore ſpeak *authoritatively*; but he gave them counſel, according to the ſpiritual judgment, which he poſſeſſed, as one who had obtained mercy to be faithful in his ſtewardſhip of divine myſteries. Conſidering the unſettled ſtate of the church, and the perſecutions, to which it was or might be expoſed, he conſidered it advantageous to live unmarried; that they might be leſs incumbered in removing from city to city, and have fewer temptations to ſhrink from impriſonment and death; and that they might be more diſengaged, and ready for any ſervice, which ſhould be propoſed to them, for the furtherance of the goſpel: as their anxieties, occupations, attachments, and incumbrances would be fewer in the ſingle, than in the married ſtate. But if a man were either married, or contracted to a woman under promiſe of marriage, he ought by no means to attempt the violation of his engagements, in order to poſſeſs more liberty for the ſervice of God: though the unmarried might be counſelled to avail themſelves of their advantages, and not to involve themſelves in additional difficulties, during ſuch diſtreſſing times. Yet if either man or woman ſhould deem it beſt, all things conſidered, to marry; they would break no law of God, and ought not to be blamed for it. Indeed they would probably have additional outward trouble, and ſuffering: but the apoſtle would not inſiſt on this, or cenſure their conduct as imprudent; leſt he ſhould deter ſome from marrying, whoſe duty it was, or leſt he ſhould give ſome occaſion to repreſent that ſtate as unholy.

V. 29—31.] It was proper that believers ſhould be reminded of the ſhortneſs of life, and the tranſitory nature of all earthly things, at all times. It remained therefore to be obſerved, that married perſons ſhould reflect how ſpeedily their union muſt be diſſolved, that they might ſit looſe to the ſatisfactions of that endeared relation, and be habitually prepared for a ſeparation: that they, who mourned any temporal loſs, ſhould moderate their grief for ſuch tranſient cauſes; that the proſperous and joyful alſo ſhould repreſs their rejoicing by more ſerious recollections; that they, who were purchaſing houſes or lands, ſhould conſider the uncertainty of their tenure, and not deem themſelves owners of ſuch fleeting poſſeſſions; and that, they who were laying out their worldly riches, ſhould be careful not to abuſe them, or to expect happineſs from their pleaſures, and enjoyments: ſeeing the faſhion, the whole ſcheme, form, and ſhew of this world, was paſſing away, as a pageant or proceſſion through the ſtreet; and would ſoon vaniſh as a phantom. So that the ſpirit of a pilgrim and traveller ought in all caſes to be maintained.

V. 32—35.] In the preceding counſel the apoſtle meant to preſerve believers from perplexing cares, in that unſettled ſtate of the church; for he was ſenſible, that an unmarried man, having grace proportioned to his ſtate, and being enabled to live in it ſuperior to it's temptations, might wholly employ himſelf in contriving the beſt methods of ſerving, and pleaſing the Lord: and not having the charge and expence of a family; he might employ his time, talents, and ſubſtance more entirely in promoting not that I may caſt a ſnare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without diſtraction.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himſelf uncomely toward his virgin, if ſhe paſs the flower of *her* age, and need ſo require, let him do what he will, he ſinneth not: let them marry.

37 Nevertheleſs he that ſtandeth ſtedfaſt in his heart, having no neceſſity, but hath power over his own will, and hath ſo decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

38 So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her huſband liveth; but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will; only in the Lord.

40 But ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide, after my judgment: and I think alſo that I have the Spirit of God.

the glory of God, and the good of mankind; and be ready to travel to any part of the world for this purpoſe, if an opportunity preſented itſelf. But the believer, who was married, muſt needs employ more of his thoughts, and time about ſecular concerns; that he might provide for, and attend to his family, and render things agreeable and comfortable to his wife, whom he was commanded to love, and cheriſh as his own fleſh: and this would exclude him from ſeveral active ſervices, to which he might otherwiſe have been competent. The difference between a virgin, and a married woman was of a ſimilar nature: the former might wholly dedicate her time, and thoughts, her body and ſoul, to the ſervice of God, in following after holineſs, and in doing good: but the latter muſt be engaged in the buſineſs of the family, and in other duties of her ſtation, according to the will of her huſband, whom God had commanded her to obey. So that, though marriage was moſt ſuited to men and women in general; yet individuals, who deſired peculiar advantages for progreſs in perſonal religion, and for doing good, might poſſeſs them in an unmarried life; and *to ſuch* it might be good not to marry, even if the times had been more favourable. But this counſel of the apoſtle was far from countenancing them to ſhut themſelves up in convents, and thus put the lighted candle under a buſhel: on the contrary it inſtructed them to let their light ſhine before men, by an uninterrupted ſeries of active ſervices, for the glory of God, and the benefit of the world. Yet he only gave them this counſel for their profit; and would not by any means caſt a ſnare on them, by perſuading thoſe to a ſingle life, who had not a ſufficient command over their own paſſions. He meant not that this was required of them; but that in ſome caſes it would be comely, and enable them to wait upon God in his ordinances, and commandments, without having their thoughts or affections divided, or diſtracted by other cares, or attachments.

V. 36—38.] Hitherto the apoſtle's meaning has been evident; but theſe verſes are very difficult. Some explain them of a man's reſolutely continuing in a ſingle ſtate; ſuppoſing "*the neceſſity*" mentioned, to be matter of perſonal conſciouſneſs, and not any thing ariſing from the conduct of another: and others would refer them to the caſe of a man, who had betrothed a virgin, and was in doubt whether he ſhould complete the marriage. Yet it ſeems moſt obvious to explain the paſſage of a parent, or guardian, who had the charge of a virgin upon him. If ſuch a one, thought that he acted unſuitably, in letting the virgin, of whom he had the charge, live ſingle, till ſhe had paſſed the prime of her life; and if any attachment, or other circumſtance, rendered it needful; let him determine as he ſaw good, without ſuppoſing it ſinful to allow her to marry with any proper perſon. But on the other hand, if a man were eſtabliſhed in his judgment, that it was beſt for his daughter, or ward, to remain unmarried, in ſuch evil times; and if he ſaw no neceſſity from any thing in her behaviour, diſpoſition, or attachments, to deviate from his own inclinations reſpecting her; and he ſo determined in his mind to keep her unmarried, he did well. So that the parent or guardian, who gave a virgin in marriage to a proper perſon, did well, and was by no means to be blamed; though ſhe might thereby be expoſed to additional difficulties, in thoſe unſettled times: on which account, he who did not give his daughter, or ward in marriage, did better; that is, he acted more for her real advantage, provided ſhe were ſatisfied in the ſingle ſtate.

V. 39, 40.] It muſt further be obſerved, that the law was ſtill in force, which bound the wife to her huſband, as long as he lived, (that is except when legally divorced, for a ſufficient reaſon;) but afterwards ſhe might without ſin marry any other man, provided he were a chriſtian, and in the judgment of charity, a real believer. However the apoſtle judged that widows would be happier, if they continued in that ſtate, as matters were then circumſtanced: and whatever ſome of the Corinthians might ſuppoſe, he thought himſelf to be guided by the Holy Spirit, in giving theſe counſels, and inſtructions. The language employed in ſeveral places of this chapter has led moſt expoſitors to conclude, that the apoſtle did not write by inſpiration in the particulars referred to: and doubtleſs theſe intimations would rather prove, than invalidate, his immediate inſpiration in other parts of his writings. Yet there ſeems no ſufficient ground for the diſtinction: ſometimes he ſpake by way of permiſſion, concerning what was allowable; ſometimes by way of counſel, concerning what was adviſable; and at other times by commandment, concerning what was abſolutely binding on their conſciences; but in all this, he might be guided by the ſuperintendency of the Spirit of inſpiration.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

That, which is good in itſelf, may not always be beſt for a man, when all circumſtances are weighed; and when all the variety of inward evils, and outward temptations, to which he is liable, are conſidered. So that thoſe things, which are good for one man, may not ſo much as be recommended to another; becauſe he is incapable of overcoming the difficulties, to which they expoſe him. For though no man may be diſpenſed with, in breaking the law of God; yet even that perfect rule leaves men at liberty to ſerve Him in that way, which is moſt ſuited to their capacity, and various circumſtances; of which others are often incompetent judges. Thus, if they, who find advantages for ſerving God in the ſingle ſtate, imagine that others might do the ſame; they ſhew themſelves to be ignorant of the ſituation of fallen man in this enſnaring world: for there is no doubt, but many, who from various motives live unmarried, find that circumſtance a great hindrance to them, in reſpect of their ſouls; and are unable, or unwilling, to perſevere in that kind of celibacy, which the apoſtle deſcribes as good. To prevent therefore the fatal effects of unchaſtity, it is generally expedient, and always allowable, "that every man ſhould have his own wife, and every woman her own huſband:" and all reſtrictions of this allowance tend to licentiouſneſs. Every part of the conduct of married perſons ought to be ſo regulated, as to render them agreeable to, and ſatisfied with each other. Whatever therefore, on either ſide, tends to give ſatan an opportunity of tempting the other party to any of thoſe evils, which marriage was inſtituted to prevent, or to render it ineffectual for any of thoſe ends, for which the Creator appointed it, muſt be highly criminal, under whatever ſpecious pretence it may be done; and the offending party is anſwerable to God for the conſequences of ſuch deviation from his commandments. For not only are adultery, and polygamy inconſiſtent with the duties of this relation, and with the mutual property of married perſons in each other; but whatever is diſobliging, and tends to weaken the attachment, and to open the way to either of them looking with more ſatisfaction on another object. Every thing in the chriſtian's conduct ſhould be regulated in ſubſerviency to his communion with God. Abſtinence and abſtraction from earthly pleaſures may for a time be greatly ſubſervient to that end: yet when carried beyond proper bounds, they often produce very contrary effects, and give ſatan peculiar advantages againſt us. They, who, like the apoſtle, are enabled to live with purity and contentment in an unmarried ſtate, ſhould copy his example, by laying themſelves out with double diligence to glorify God, and be uſeful to mankind: they ſhould alſo imitate his prudence and candour, in not preſcribing to, or deſpiſing others, who are not endued with the ſame gift; remembering that in this alſo God hath made them to differ. In counſelling others they ſhould uſe caution; leſt by exciting a man to graſp at advantages, which are out of his reach, they ſhould caſt him into circumſtances of inſuperable temptation; and leſt they ſhould urge him to that, which is contrary to his duty, and diſſuade him from what is beſt for him, and indeed incumbent upon him: for in ſuch matters, no man is competent to judge for another; but every one muſt determine for himſelf, or rather he ought to ſeek counſel from God, how he ought to act. They, who have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, and who have moſt ſtudied the word of God, and human nature, will be the moſt candid, and cautious in giving their judgment, or paſſing their cenſure: for whatever may be good, in reſpect of preſent difficulties, or peculiar circumſtances; they know that marriage is honourable, and fornication is abominable, in all perſons, and circumſtances. They will therefore be careful not to ſpeak, as if marriage were ſinful in any one; and not to throw a ſnare upon thoſe, that pay deference to their judgment. And though they foreſee, that others will have trouble in the fleſh, by means of marrying in certain circumſtances, and might in ſome reſpects be happier in a ſingle ſtate: yet they will ſpare them, without attempting to reſtrict the liberty which God hath allowed them, or condemning them for what they perhaps did conſcientiouſly. They will therefore only counſel them for their profit, and to what is comely, and that they may ſerve God without diſtraction.

Great diſcretion is alſo needful for parents, and guardians; in their conduct reſpecting young perſons; that they do not, by laying down rules, and making determinations, according to *their views* of what is moſt for their intereſt, lead them into, or continue them in dangerous temptations: for it may be *doing well* to permit young perſons to marry, when their attachments, or inclinations are bent that way; when otherwiſe it would be *doing better* to prevent them: as even apparent imprudence, and its troubles are better, than ſin and its effects. How abſurd then muſt vows of celibacy be, eſpecially in very young perſons, and perhaps at the inſtance of others! The probable conſequence of them will be, either the violation of the vows; or a life ſpent amidſt temptation, and mental defilement, or ſtill worſe. This was man's policy! How different from God's wiſdom, even in this chapter, which contains in it more in favour of a ſingle life, than we find in any other part of ſcripture! Believers, when under no other reſtriction, ſhould be ſure, in contracting marriage, to remember that of the apoſtle, "only in the Lord." What miſeries have many endured, through the remnant of their lives; and what bad conſequences have they entailed upon their families, by tranſgreſſing it, on ſome vain pretence or other! It is the Lord's expreſs commandment, that married perſons ſhould not ſeparate from each other, if it can poſſibly be avoided; and that

CHAP. VIII.

Contains cautions 1ſt. Againſt being proud of knowledge; with a declaration of the vanity of idols, ſeeing the one true God alone was to be worſhipped through Jeſus Chriſt, &c. 1---6. 2d. Againſt uſing their liberty ſo as to enſnare, or ſtumble their weak brethren, 7---13.

CHAP. VIII.

NOW as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if any man love God, the ſame is known of him.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of thoſe things that are offered in ſacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

7 Howbeit *there is* not in every man that

ſuch as have ſeparated, ſhould endeavour to be reconciled; or elſe to live ſingle. It is alſo his will, that huſbands and wives ſhould be careful to pleaſe each other, in lawful things, though it leave them leſs time for religious exerciſes, than they enjoyed in a ſingle ſtate. Even if a believer hath been married to an unbeliever, either before converſion, or by inattention to the rule of God's word; the croſs of that incongruous union muſt be patiently endured, and the duties of the relation chearfully performed; that by kindneſs, a good example, and fervent prayers, the unbelieving party may be won upon, in hopes of ſaving an immortal ſoul. Nor need any doubt, but that, even in that caſe, the marriage ſtate is ſanctified to them; and they may ſtill hope that their children, will be made partakers of the ſpiritual grace, as well as the outward ſign of baptiſm, by means of their redoubled diligence to bring them up in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord. In every ſtate, and relation, we ſhould remember, that the Lord hath called us to peace: and that every thing ſhould be done to promote domeſtic, and ſocial harmony, as far as truth, and holineſs will permit.

In order to this, it is proper that every man ſhould walk with God, according to the gift diſtributed to him, and the duties of his ſtation in the community. Believers ſhould not ſhew an inconſtant, and unſettled temper: even a diſpoſition to change from one ſect to another, on frivolous pretences, is frequently injurious and diſhonourable; for theſe generally are as nothing, compared with that chearful obedience to God's commandments, which both evidences our faith in Chriſt, and recommends his goſpel to others. So ſuperior are a believer's privileges to all temporal things; that even the want of perſonal liberty, the moſt valuable of earthly bleſſings, ſhould not much diſquiet him: nor ought he to be careful about it, if called to ſerve God in a ſtate of ſlavery. If the Son of God have made him free from ſin and ſatan, he hath a far nobler liberty, even in bondage, than his unconverted oppreſſor ever formed an idea of. The loweſt condition of his freemen is honourable: and, being bought with a price, we are all his ſervants, and ſhould abide with God, in our proper place, and work; well ſatisfied with his appointment, and not deſirous of a change; unleſs a ſubſtantial reaſon can be given for it: nor ought a believer ſo to attach himſelf to any man from ſecular motives, as to reſtrict himſelf from his liberty in the ſervice of God. But whatever our ſtate, or ſervice may be, we ſhould remember, that the time is ſhort: our temporal comforts and trials will ſoon be terminated: our ſeaſon of preparation, or of uſefulneſs will ſpeedily expire. Let us then ſtudy to ſit looſe to earthly ſatisfactions, to bear up under temporal ſorrows; to be ſober and conſiderate in proſperity; to be chearful in adverſity; to deem heaven our ſole inheritance; and to uſe the things of the world, as not abuſing them, ſeeing the faſhion of this vain world is paſſing away like a ſhadow. Thus we may be helped forward by them in our pilgrimage, kept out of the way of temptation; and enabled to ſerve God and our generation to better advantage, as we paſs through the world to heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—6.] The Corinthians had propoſed another queſtion to the apoſtle, concerning the lawfulneſs of chriſtians eating the fleſh of thoſe animals, that had been ſacrificed to idols. It was cuſtomary with the idolaters to feaſt on ſuch oblations, both in their temples, and in their own houſes; and many of them were publicly ſold in the ſhambles. On this fleſh ſeveral of the chriſtians at Corinth would feaſt without ſcruple; declaring that they knew the idol to be a mere ſenſeleſs log, and the ſuppoſed deity, repreſented by it, a mere nonentity. So that they imagined that it was an evidence of their ſuperior knowledge, to eat ſuch ſacrifices even in the very temples! Now, ſays the apoſtle, in reſpect of this ſubject, we know, that all of us, who are well acquainted with the goſpel, have this kind, and meaſure of knowledge: but we are alſo aware, that ſuch ſpeculations tend to puff men up in a vain conceit of their ſuperior abilities, and attainments, and to foſter a haughty, ſelf-ſufficient, unteachable temper; which is diametrically oppoſite to genuine chriſtianity, and prevents a man from making any progreſs in ſpiritual, and experimental knowledge, and wiſdom: whereas holy affections, and love to God, to heavenly things, and to the brethren, prepare men for receiving further inſtruction, and tend to their edification. If any of them therefore imagined that he knew any thing pre-eminently, and ſo deſpiſed warnings and inſtructions; he certainly knew nothing in that holy, humble and ſanctifying manner, wherein he ought to know God, and his truth and will. (c. iii. v. 18.) But on the other hand, if any man really loved God, valued his favour, and ſought his glory; he was thereby evidenced to be known and approved of God, even through his ſpeculative knowledge were comparatively little: or, knowledge: for ſome with conſcience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conſcience being weak is defiled.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worſe.

9 But take heed leſt by any means this liberty of your's become a ſtumbling-block to them that are weak.

10 For if any man ſee thee which haſt knowledge ſit at meat in the idol's temple, ſhall not the conſcience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat thoſe things which are offered to idols;

11 And through thy knowledge ſhall the weak brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died?

12 But when ye ſin ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt.

13 Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.

(as ſome render it,) "God was known of him," in a ſaving manner, (*John*, c. xvii. v. 3.) In reſpect therefore of the queſtion, it might be allowed, as well known among chriſtians, that an idol had no real exiſtence, further than the ſenſeleſs image, which *ſpecifically* repreſented nothing in the world; for there were no ſuch deities, as thoſe, to whom the temples were conſecrated: (though ſatan and evil ſpirits were *virtually* worſhipped in them all;) and that there was but one true and living God. For though the Gentiles had many deities, celeſtial, terreſtrial, and infernal; ſuperior, and inferior; who were adored as independant gods, or as conſtituted lords, and mediators: yet chriſtians knew, that there was but one God, even the Father, of whom, as the ſelf-exiſtent Author of all being, every creature proceeds, and in whom all chriſtians had their ſpiritual life, and happineſs: and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the appointed Mediator between God and man, the Lord of his redeemed people, and of all things for their benefit: by whom all things at firſt were created, and by whom believers were redeemed, and reconciled to God. We are not to ſuppoſe, that the Lord Jeſus is here ſpoken of, in reſpect of his original nature, as if he were inferior to, or diſtinct from the Father; any more than in other texts, which ſpeak of his mediatorial Perſon, character, office, and authority. The One God even the Father ſignifies the Godhead, as the ſole Object of all religious worſhip: and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt denotes the Perſon of Emmanuel, God manifeſt in the fleſh, One with the Father, and One with us, the appointed Mediator, and Lord of all, through whom we come to the Father, and through whom the Father communicates all bleſſings to us, by the influences and operations of the Holy Spirit. So that this paſſage ſtrongly proves, that Chriſt, the Mediator, is the Object of our worſhip, as One with the Father and the Spirit, in the unity of the Godhead; and as oppoſed to all other pretenders to divine adoration.

V. 7—13.] Though chriſtians, who were matured in judgment, and experience, knew theſe principles; yet every favourer, or profeſſor of the goſpel had not this knowledge: nay ſome real believers were not fully eſtabliſhed in it; inſomuch that ſome of them, even to that time, uſed the liberty of eating the idol ſacrifices, who retained ſome ſuperſtitious regard to a ſuppoſed inviſible object of the worſhip therein performed. So that they had an impreſſion upon their minds, that they were joining in an idolatrous ſacrifice; and thus through weakneſs their conſciences were defiled with a heavy load of guilt. But it was no wiſe neceſſary, that this riſque ſhould be run: for the knowledge and exerciſe of their liberty, in eating any kind of meat, did not recommend them to God; as if their perſons or ſervices were more acceptable to Him, than thoſe of their weaker brethren: though they valued themſelves upon it, and deſpiſed ſuch as were more ſcrupulous. But it would be better for them to be cautious, that they did not uſe their privilege of eating any kind of food, in ſuch an imprudent manner, as to cauſe thoſe to fall into ſin, who were weak in the faith. For if ſuch a one ſaw a chriſtian, who had the reputation of ſuperior knowledge feaſting in an idol's temple; he would be emboldened by this example to do the ſame, or at leaſt to eat of the ſacrifice in another place: at the ſame time not being able to do it in faith, he would commit ſin, and be ſelf-condemned in what he did. Thus the knowledge of the ſtronger believer, being improperly diſplayed, would tend to the ruin of his weak brother, for whom Chriſt died. And though Jeſus would preſerve the weak believer from the fatal effect of the temptation: yet he, who thus tempted him, in this needleſs manner, might in ſome ſenſe be deemed a murderer of his ſoul: and in thus offending againſt their weak brethren, and wounding their conſciences; they muſt needs grievouſly ſin againſt Chriſt, of whoſe body theſe were members; and they would certainly be rebuked of him for it. On which account the apoſtle declared, that rather than thus cauſe his weak brother to offend, or thus diſpleaſe his gracious Lord, he would thenceforth to the end of his life eat only vegetables, and taſte fleſh no more for ever.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Satan as effectually injures ſome men's ſouls by tempting them to be proud of their intellectual powers, as he does thoſe of other men, by alluring them to the groſſeſt ſenſualities. That knowledge therefore which puffeth up the poſſeſſor, and renders him ſelf-confident, dogmatical, and unteachable, is as dangerous at leaſt, as ſelf-righteous pride; even though a pure evangelical creed be the object of it: and they, who are thus elated becauſe they thus know much about the truth, know nothing yet as they ought to know, and need to be ſent to ſchool to learn the *firſt* rudiments of heavenly wiſdom: even though they have multitudes of *ſilly* admirers, and be themſelves of that number. For without holy affec-

CHAP. IX.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Aſſerting and proving his authority; and ſhewing that miniſters have a right to be ſupported by the people, 1---14. *2d. Stating, that he had not availed himſelf of this right; but had in many things waved the exerciſe of his liberty, to promote the ſalvation of ſouls,* 15---23. *3d. Repreſenting his exceeding earneſtneſs in ſecuring an incorruptible crown,* 24---27.

AM I not an apoſtle? am I not free? have I not ſeen Jeſus Chriſt our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

2 If I be not an apoſtle unto others, yet doubtleſs I am to you: for the ſeal of mine apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.

3 Mine anſwer to them that do examine me is this.

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?

5 Have we not power to lead about a ſiſter, a wife, as well as other apoſtles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

tions, and divine love, (which is incompatible with reigning pride,) all human knowledge is worthleſs, and far beneath the attainments of apoſtate angels: but ſanctified affections, and humble grateful love are not only evidences of the Lord's merciful acceptance, but are important ſteps to a good underſtanding in the way of godlineſs. The proud ſpeculator is probably at the top of his attainments: but the loving diſciple, though comparatively ignorant, ſhall daily be edified, and make progreſs in heavenly wiſdom: ſo that he ſhall be abundantly enriched from the fulneſs of Chriſt; when the other, bewildered by the *ignis fatuus* of his own ſelf-conceit, will be fallen into the pit of darkneſs and deſpair. Let us then beware of all pride, eſpecially of ſpiritual pride, which is the grand enemy of God's glory, and of man's ſalvation; and which muſt at all times, in proportion as it prevails, retard our edification, comfort, or uſefulneſs.

Whilſt we refuſe all kinds and degrees of worſhip to the many, that are called gods and lords, and to ſaints and angels, which antichriſtianity hath deviſed for mediators; remembering, that to us there is one God, even the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things: let us examine whether we really do come to God by faith in the divine Saviour? Whether we are ſpiritual worſhippers of the living, and true God, according to his word? And whether we are *in* the Father, *by* the Son, and through the participation of the ſanctifying Spirit? If our evidence and experience in theſe things be clear and deciſive, and our views diſtinct and ſatisfactory; let us bleſs God for the conſolation; but let us not ſuppoſe that this meaſure of knowledge and aſſurance is vouchſafed to all believers: or that we are better in ourſelves, or more beloved of God, than our weaker brethren, the younger children of the ſame family. Let us beware of ſelf-preference, oſtentation, and ſelf-indulgence, and of deſpiſing thoſe, who are diſquieted by needleſs ſcruples; who, though leſs comfortable, may ſerve God more conſcientiouſly and humbly than we do. Such chriſtians, as have knowledge ſhould alſo beware of abuſing their liberty, and of approaching to the verge, or appearance of evil; leſt by any means this liberty *of their's* ſhould prove an occaſion of ſtumbling others, if not of guilt to themſelves. For ſhould a weak believer ſee a profeſſor, that is reputed to have knowledge, ſitting at ſome of thoſe feaſts, or in ſome of thoſe places of public concourſe, for which many plead, (perhaps as plauſibly as the Corinthians in behalf of eating in the idol's temple; perhaps not;) might he not be tempted to do the ſame, though contrary to ſome convictions of his own conſcience? And thus through ſuch a man's knowledge, and carnal ſelf-indulgence, would the ſoul of a weak believer, for whom Chriſt died, be endangered, and his conſcience wounded; or a perſon under hopeful awakenings, might be turned aſide, and utterly periſh. How can men thus ſin againſt their brethren, and violate the law of love, without offending Chriſt, and endangering their own ſouls too? Seeing they act ſo contrary to the ſpirit of the apoſtle, who would have eat no fleſh to the end of life, rather than cauſe his weak brother to offend; and to the mind of Him, who ſhed his precious blood, and poured out his dying prayers for his miſguided murderers.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—6.] Expoſitors in general ſeem to think, that the apoſtle here began a new ſubject, and entered upon a formal vindication of his conduct among the Corinthians: but he ſeems rather to have digreſſed from his ſubject, in order to illuſtrate it by his own example &c: and accordingly he reſumed and concluded it in the next chapter. He had before declared the ſelf-denial he was ready to exerciſe, rather than ſtumble his weak brother: and he here proceeded to ſhew what he had actually done in this reſpect, to promote the goſpel. But in order to ſtate this clearly, it was neceſſary to prove his apoſtolical office, and that he had a right to a maintenance, and other privileges in that character. He therefore enquired, whether he was not an apoſtle? And whether he too was not free, as well as they, if he choſe to exerciſe his liberty? Indeed he was aware that ſome of them would queſtion his apoſtleſhip: but could they deny, that he had ſeen the Lord Jeſus, who repeatedly appeared to him, that he might be an unexceptionable witneſs of his reſurrection, and glory? And were not they his work in the Lord, who, by employing his miniſtry for their converſion, had affixed his ſeal to his apoſtolical commiſſion? For he certainly would not thus have atteſted a direct impoſture. So that they were the laſt perſons, who ought to have made a doubt of it; being themſelves the ſeal, and demonſtration of it. This therefore might ſerve as a brief, but ſufficient anſwer to thoſe, who examined him, concerning the credentials of his commiſſion. It being then determined, that he was the apoſtle of Chriſt: he next enquired whether he had not an indiſputable right to eat, and drink at their expence? And even whether he had not the privilege or li-

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

8 Say I theſe things as a man? or ſaith not the law the ſame alſo?

9 For it is written in the law of Moſes, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

10 Or ſaith he *it* altogether for our ſakes? for our ſakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth ſhould plow in hope; and that he that threſheth in hope ſhould be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? nevertheleſs we have not uſed this power; but ſuffer all things, leſt we ſhould hinder the goſpel of Chriſt.

13 Do ye not know that they which miniſter about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

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berty of marrying a believing woman, and of taking her along with him in his travels; receiving from the churches a maintenance for her, and his family alſo? This in fact ſeveral of the apoſtles did, eſpecially Peter, the apoſtle of the circumciſion, who was attended by his wife, when he went to different places to preach the goſpel. The words *a ſiſter*, *a wife*, are ſo determinate, that they leave no doubt, but ſeveral of the apoſtles were married, and took their wives with them to thoſe places, where they more ſtatedly reſided. To render them a *ſiſter*, *a woman*, as ſome do, would form an unmeaning tautology, or rather one calculated to miſlead the reader: for *a ſiſter* muſt be *a woman*; and the latter word would be wholly redundant, if not intended to ſhew in what relation ſhe was ſuppoſed to ſtand; namely that of *a wife*, according to the general acceptation of the word. When we further obſerve, that Peter is not ſuppoſed to have had any privilege, or prerogative above Paul, and the other apoſtles; we may venture to ſay, that this one text is virtually ſubverſive of the whole enormous baſeleſs fabric of Popiſh ſuperſtition. The apoſtle further enquired, whether he, and Barnabas alone were deſtitute of the right of being ſupported without working? Theſe two uſeful ſervants of Chriſt were called to the apoſtolical office, after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, and ſet out together to preach among the Gentiles. The circumſtances, in which they found themſelves, ſeem to have led them to adopt the method of ſubſiſting by their own labour, in order to promote the goſpel; and they both perſevered in it after they ſeparated: whilſt the other apoſtles, ſetting out among the Jews, who had been uſed to ſupport their teachers, were generally maintained by them without working; and were ſupplied when they journeyed to other places, where churches had not been planted. Thus Paul, and Barnabas, by not requiring a ſupport, ſeemed to have loſt their right to one; and were generally left, by a ſtrange neglect, to labour and ſtruggle with difficulties and neceſſities, for want of an adequate aſſiſtance. This view of theſe verſes ſeems to render their connexion with the foregoing chapter very clear: and removes the appearance of that incoherency and abruptneſs, which is complained of by thoſe, who ſuppoſe the apoſtle to enter on a new ſubject. In fact he was preparing to ſhew the Corinthians how he waved the exerciſe of his liberty, in order to do good; that they might ſee as in a glaſs the impropriety of their ſelfiſh exerciſe of their liberty, "in eating the things offered unto idols."

V. 7—12.] Had the Corinthians objected Paul's not receiving a maintenance, as a proof that he was not an apoſtle, as ſome ſuppoſe; it would have been needleſs for him formally to prove his right to it: but this was abſolutely neceſſary, if he meant tacitly to inſtruct them by his example, to give up their right, and ſelf-indulgence, from love to their brethren. He firſt evinces, that he, as well as other miniſters of the goſpel, had a right to a maintenance, on the principles of natural equity: for who expected others to employ their time, ſtrength, and ſkill in their ſervice, without affording them a ſupport? The ſoldier, when fighting for his country, being thereby deprived of the opportunity of attending to his private concerns, had his charges borne by the ſtate. The perſon employed in planting a vineyard, was allowed a maintenance from it's produce: and he, who tended a flock, was uſed to eat the milk of the flock. And who could think it equitable to refuſe them this recompence for their labour? Ought not therefore the miniſters of the goſpel, who gave up other proſpects of ſupporting themſelves, and their families, that they might with great peril and hardſhip promote the ſpiritual good of others, to be maintained in a decent and comfortable manner by them? And was this merely the dictate of human reaſon? Verily the law gave an emblematical intimation of it, when it forbad the Iſraelites to muzzle the ox, that was employed in treading out the grain. (*Deut.* c. xxv. v. 4.) If the ox were not to be refuſed a ſhare of that abundance, which men enjoyed through its labour: ſurely the laborious, and patient miniſter ſhould be ſupported by thoſe, who received far richer bleſſings by his inſtrumentality. For could it be ſuppoſed that God made ſuch particular laws from a regard to oxen? He indeed required men to be merciful to the beaſts: yet doubtleſs this prohibition was entirely given for the ſake of the

14 Even ſo hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel.

15 But I have uſed none of theſe things: neither have I written theſe things, that it ſhould be ſo done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man ſhould make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the goſpel, I have nothing to glory of: for neceſſity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, If I preach not the goſpel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if againſt my will, a diſpenſation *of the goſpel* is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the goſpel, I may make the goſpel of Chriſt without charge, that I abuſe not my power in the goſpel.

19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet

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human ſpecies; that none ſhould receive his neighbour's ſervice without wages: and eſpecially for the ſake of miniſters, that they ſhould be ſupported in a ſuitable manner, as a recompence for their uſeful, and affectionate labours. In order, that when endeavouring to propagate the goſpel among Gentiles, or when labouring amidſt great hardſhips and neceſſities among unconverted perſons, where no ſupport could be expected, any more than the oxen had when plowing the ground; they might be encouraged by the hope of future maintenance from them, to perſevere in their work: and that, when they were employed in furthering the joy, and growth of believers, they might be partakers of the expected recompence, and might have ſome refreſhment and relief after their hardſhips, by a comfortable maintenance; as the oxen eat of the corn, when treading it out for the benefit of others. And indeed, if the miniſters of Chriſt had ſown the ſpiritual ſeed of the word of God, which was about to produce for their benefit the excellent and permanent fruits of ſalvation: ought they to deem it a great matter, a large expence to themſelves, or a great favour to their miniſters, if they allowed them to reap a portion of their carnal things; which were of an earthly nature, and could not long be preſerved, and which would prove them carnal, if they either tenaciouſly hoarded them, or luxuriouſly ſpent them on themſelves? If then other paſtors, and even their falſe teachers, had been allowed to partake of this privilege among, or mark of authority over, them, much more was this due to the apoſtle, and his helpers, who firſt preached the goſpel among them. Nevertheleſs they had not availed themſelves of this their undoubted right; but had choſen rather to endure labour, pinching want, and every extremity, than to prevent the ſucceſs of the goſpel: yet the Corinthians would not abridge themſelves of the indulgence of a luxurious meal, out of love to their weaker brethren!

V. 13—18.] Another proof the apoſtle here adduced of his right to a maintenance among them. They could not but know, that the prieſts and Levites, who attended on the worſhip of the temple, were maintained from the firſt fruits, oblations, and ſacrifices there preſented: in like manner, the Lord Jeſus had appointed, that the miniſters of his goſpel, ſhould be ſupported by the people, for their ſervices in this ſacred function; and not be obliged to engage in any other. (*Matt.* c. x. v. 10.) Some expoſitors argue from the apoſtle's frequent reference to the law, that the judaizing teachers were his chief opponents at Corinth. Yet the contrary ſeems evident: and doubtleſs all profeſſed chriſtians would become acquainted with, and might properly be referred to, the holy ſcriptures; which are replete in every part with inſtructions to us at this day; though no one thinks of obeying the ceremonial law. However they knew, that he had not inſiſted upon his right in any of theſe things, nor did he thus write to them, in order to induce them to raiſe him an income: on the contrary he deemed himſelf to have ſuch a ground of glorying, (though not before God, yet with them,) in this his ſelf-denying diſintereſted conduct; that he ſhould account it more deſirable to die of want, than by receiving any thing of them to render it void. Probably he had ſeen ſome things in the diſpoſition of the Corinthians, which firſt induced him to decline ſuch favours from them. What had paſſed ſince he left them had ſtill more confirmed him in his purpoſe: he thought himſelf unkindly uſed by them, and in this only way would he ſhew them his ſenſe of their miſconduct: he knew that the falſe teachers wanted an occaſion againſt him; but this diſintereſtedneſs gave him an advantage over them: and they greatly needed to have his example contraſted with their own conduct; which he could not ſo properly have done, had he not previouſly determined to receive nothing from them. Indeed he had nothing to glory in, (though he had faithfully preached the goſpel,) as peculiarly expreſſive of his zeal and love, and which he might oppoſe to the vain-glorious boaſts of their falſe teachers. For he had been called to this work in ſo ſingular a manner; that a neceſſity was laid upon him, and he could not decline the ſervice, or execute it unfaithfully, without incurring the heavieſt condemnation. But if he did it willingly from love to Chriſt, and the ſouls of men; he ſhould have a preſent, and a future moſt gracious reward. Whereas if this diſpenſation had been committed to him againſt his will, and he had only complied with it from ſlaviſh fear, or mercenary principles; where would his reward have been? Or how might he in any caſe poſſeſs the aſſurance of a reward? Truly, by preaching the goſpel freely, without putting his hearers to any expence; and by enduring poverty, hunger, and labour, rather than make an inexpedient, and improper uſe of his liberty, and privilege as an apoſtle of Chriſt. Thus he evidenced that he acted from genuine principles of zeal and love, and ſo enjoyed much comfort, and aſſurance of hope in his own ſoul.

V. 19—23.] The preceding inſtance was not the only have I made myſelf ſervant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law:

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means ſave ſome.

23 And this I do for the goſpel's ſake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly; ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into ſubjection: leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

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one, in which the apoſtle thus denied himſelf. Though he was free from all obligation to comply with other men's inclinations, or to conform to their cuſtoms: yet had he voluntarily become as a ſlave to all men, or to men of every nation, rank, or religious opinion; by renouncing every perſonal conſideration, and making allowance to their prejudices, miſtakes, and infirmities, as far as he could conſiſtent with his duty; in order that he might win over the more of them to the faith of Chriſt. So that he converſed among the unconverted Jews, as though he had conſidered the Moſaic law to be ſtill in force: he had circumciſed Timothy, that he might give them no offence; and he paid that regard to their rules, which conſiſted with his work, as the apoſtle of the Gentiles, without minding the trouble and ſelf-denial occaſioned by ſo doing. Thus he endeavoured to win upon them to attend to his doctrine for their good. Even to the Jewiſh converts, who ſtill deemed themſelves under the authority of the ritual law, he became as one of them; and joined with them in their worſhip, purifications, &c, as far as he could without miſleading them; in order that he might ſoften their prejudices, and be made uſeful to them. Whereas he converſed as freely among the Gentiles, as if he had been unacquainted with the law of Moſes, in order that he might win them over to embrace the goſpel. Yet did he not diſregard the authority and commands of God; but conſidered himſelf to be under the law to Chriſt; bound to receive the moral law from his hand, as a rule of duty; taught by his grace to love, and delight in it; and, being delivered from it's curſe, as engaged by additional motives to yield a prompt obedience to it. In like manner he condeſcended to the infirmities, and ſcruples of the weak in faith, as if he too had been weak; abridging himſelf of his liberty, leſt he ſhould grieve or enſnare them; without making any oſtentation of ſtronger faith, or greater knowledge, or ſhewing any neglect or contempt of them. Thus, in all things lawful, he became all things to all men, by a habitual, chearful, patient endurance of their infirmities, and toleration of their leſſer prejudices, and miſtakes; that by every means, which he could deviſe, he might ſave ſome from the ſeveral deſcriptions of men, among whom he laboured. This he did from love to the goſpel, and a valuation of its bleſſings; that he might not only be a partaker of them himſelf, but that he might ſhare them with numerous converts, and eſpecially with the Corinthians; not being ſatisfied, as it were, to be ſaved himſelf, without he could prevail for the ſalvation of others alſo. Nothing could be more ſuited to ſhame them out of their ſelfiſh uſe of their liberty, than this ſtatement of his own principles and conduct.

V. 24—27.] To illuſtrate his ſubject, the apoſtle called their attention to the Iſthmian games, which were celebrated near Corinth. Did they not well know, that though ſeveral racers ſet out to run for the prize; yet it was only awarded to the victorious perſon, and the reſt were diſappointed? This induced each of them to exert himſelf to the uttermoſt, in order to be ſucceſsful: let then the Corinthians do the ſame in their chriſtian courſe; let them run with earneſtneſs, ſelf-denial and patience, without ſhrinking from hardſhips or perils, and without loitering from attention to worldly allurements; that they might obtain the prize, which ſelf-indulgent profeſſors would come ſhort of. They well knew, that every man, who contended in thoſe athletic exerciſes, muſt prepare himſelf for them by the moſt rigorous, and univerſal temperance; or he could not expect to ſucceed. Now they ſubmitted to this ſelf-denial for a garland of herbs, or ever-greens, which would ſoon wither and decay, even as the honour annexed to them muſt be very tranſient: but chriſtians contended with the enemies of their ſalvation, in the hopes of obtaining an incorruptible crown of glory, and felicity; and ought not to ſhrink from any ſelf-denial, or ſuffering. For his part, he could truly ſay, that he did not ſo run in this race, as to leave the event of it uncertain, or to be willing to be left among the obſcure undiſtinguiſhed multitude of loſers. Nor did he fight, as the pugiliſts uſed to exerciſe themſelves, when their blows only beat the air, having no opponent to contend with; but as they did, when actually engaged in the conteſt. Thus he got the better of his animal inclinations; as they uſed to ſubdue their antagoniſts; when by violent blows, they beat them down to the ground, and kept them under till they yielded the victory. For he not only refuſed his unlawful appetites, or inexpedient indulgences; but he habituated them to

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Adducing the example of the offending Iſraelites, as a warning to the Corinthians, not to truſt in an outward profeſſion, and to ſhun their crimes, &c, 1---13. 2d. Shewing the inconſiſtency of having fellowſhip with Chriſt, and believers in his ordinances, and joining with idolaters in their ſacrifices to devils, 14---22. 3d. Directing their conduct in reſpect of meats offered to idols, &c, that they might do all to the glory of God, and without giving offence to men, 23---33.

brook denial in every thing, when there was a call to it; and he inured his body to, and wore it out in, hard labour, and patient ſufferings, of which the marks and ſcars might be viſible to every one. Thus he ſought and poſſeſſed the aſſurance, that he ſhould not, after having preached to others, (as the heralds called the combatants to the conflict;) be himſelf rejected, as having no title to the incorruptible crown. This does not imply that the apoſtle doubted of his acceptance, or perſeverance; but it ſhewed the Corinthians the nature of his aſſurance, and forcibly cautioned them not to reſt in ſuch hopes, as were conſiſtent with indiſcriminate ſelf-indulgence, even in things lawful. He had abundant occaſions and methods of thus bringing, and keeping under his body, without uſing the tortures, auſterities, and flagellations of the papiſts: whilſt he willingly endured hunger, thirſt, fatigue, impriſonment, &c, in preaching the goſpel; and was frequently in watchings, faſtings and prayers, as well as habitually temporate in all things.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the Lord hears the prayers, and bleſſes the labours of his miniſters, to the converſion of ſinners; he ſets his ſeal to their commiſſion. This ſhould ſatisfy the conſcientious in reſpect of their own call to the work, and be deemed a ſufficient proof to others, eſpecially to thoſe converted by them: though no occaſional uſefulneſs will prove an unholy man to be a real chriſtian; or a ſelf-confident boaſter to be a faithful miniſter. However expedient the ſingle life may be in ſome caſes: yet marriage not only conſiſts with the life of a ſtated paſtor, but with that of a miſſionary, or an evangeliſt; as it did with that of the holy apoſtles: and though miniſters may ſee good, in ſome circumſtances, to labour for their bread, yet they have an undoubted right to a decent maintenance for themſelves, and their families; whether natural equity, or the word of God be appealed to. They, who ſee good not to uſe this power, are the moſt proper perſons to enforce the equity of it: as they may do it with leſs ſuſpicion of wrong motives; and as otherwiſe their conduct might be miſconſtrued to the diſadvantage of their brethren. Nor ought they, who reap the ſpiritual benefit of the miniſter's labours, to yield a proportion of their temporal goods, as if it were an alms, or a great favour conferred on him: for it is at leaſt as much his due, as the ſoldier's, or the labourer's wages. How ſhould it be expected that men will give up the proſpect of lucrative employments, to engage in this warfare, to labour in the Lord's huſbandry, or to feed his flock; if they cannot do it in hope of living by their profeſſion? How can they face the dangers, and endure the hardſhips of plowing up the fallow ground, by preaching to the ignorant, careleſs and profligate, if pinching want be their only proſpect, however diligent and ſucceſsful they may be? Or how can they miniſter to the comfort, and edification of believers, when they are burdened with debts, deſtitute of neceſſaries, ſurrounded by an indigent family, or driven into other employments for bread? How can they but ſuſpect that their hearers are deceiving themſelves, in profeſſing to love Chriſt, and the goſpel; whilſt they enjoy their plenty, and lay up for their families, and leave their paſtor to wear out his life in poverty? Miniſters have paſſions and feelings like other men; they find as much inward, (perhaps more outward,) oppoſition, to the exerciſe of faith, and hope, and patience, as their brethren: ſo that their ſpirits are often broken, and their hands weakened on theſe accounts; when a regard to the real dignity of their office forbids them to complain, and induces them to ſuffer in ſilence and ſubmiſſion.

But on the other hand it behoves miniſters to be as diſintereſted as poſſible: they had better ſuffer all things, and even loſe their lives, than give reaſon to ſuſpect that they act from love to filthy lucre; or that any ſhould make their glorying void, when they avow that the love of Chriſt, and of ſouls dictates their affectionate perſuaſions, and ſolemn warnings. Bnt if they have no cauſe for glorying, to whom a diſpenſation is given to preach the goſpel, and who act according to it; becauſe neceſſity is laid upon them, and woe is to them, if they do not: what will be the caſe of thoſe, who *willingly aſſume this office, and ſeek a deſignation to it*; and then beſtow no pains to preach the goſpel, or to preach at all, but only aim to appropriate as much as poſſible of thoſe funds, that were eſtabliſhed for the maintenance of ſuch as labour in the word and doctrine? Woe, woe, to ſuch idol ſhepherds, to ſuch hireling prieſts; yea to all, who encourage, and reward their unfaithfulneſs! But in proportion as we honeſtly lay ourſelves out in this good work, and willingly embrace opportunities of preaching the goſpel without charge, when they offer themſelves; and give up our right, leſt we ſhould abuſe our power in the goſpel; we ſhall be aſſured, that we act from genuine principles, and ſhall have a gracious reward: for when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, we ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Whilſt we refuſe to flatter the perſons, or palliate the vices of any man, or to deviate from truth and duty to gain favour or applauſe: we ſhould be ready to give up our own intereſt, humour, credit, or inclinations, and to be ſervants to all men, that we may gain the more. A mind freed from narrow bigotry, enlarged by comprehenſive views of the grand object of the goſpel, and taught to keep the great end of doing good continually in view, will know when to wave minute diſcuſſions, to connive at leſs dangerous prejudices; and to venture down towards the ground of other men, in order to argue with them upon their own principles, and to bring them to ſaving views of the goſpel. But whilſt a man poſtpones, or ſubordinates every other thing to this grand object, as

MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all paſſed through the ſea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea;

3 And did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink: (for they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Chriſt.)

5 But with many of them God was not well pleaſed: for they were overthrown in the wilderneſs.

6 Now theſe things were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted.

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far as conſiſts with important truth and duty: whilſt he becomes all things to all men, that he may gain the more to ſhare with them in the great bleſſings of ſalvation; and to be uſeful to men of different ſentiments, and deſcriptions: and whilſt on the other hand, he will not give place for a moment, where eſſential truth, or the ſouls of men are at ſtake: he muſt expect to be deemed a time-ſerver by bigots; inconſiſtent by the ignorant; a bigot by the unprincipled; and unſound, weak, or unfaithful by the ſelf-conceited. Indeed we ſhould always watch againſt extremes. If we have to do with thoſe, who are ſuperſtitious, or ſelf-righteous; whilſt we allow the neceſſity of good works, and connive at their mere external forms; we muſt be very careful to warn them againſt relying on ſuch things, and in leading them to truſt in Chriſt alone. If we have to do with thoſe, who ſeem to be without law, and would endeavour to ſhew them that true religion requires of us no injurious, or uſeleſs obſervances; we muſt ſtill remember, that we are not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt; and muſt not countenance or connive at their looſe principles, or practices: and in condeſcending to the weak, and injudicious, we muſt not tolerate ſuch errors, or faults, as may either injure them, or diſgrace the goſpel. But a ſimple heart, a ſingle eye, and an habitual reliance on God for heavenly wiſdom, will carry a man through ſuch ſervices, and paſt ſuch dangers, as cannot be directed, or guarded againſt by any rules. However, if we would be deemed in earneſt in ſeeking the ſalvation of other men, we muſt not be remiſs in ſecuring our own. We muſt run the race vigorouſly, if we would have them ſo to run, that they may obtain. We muſt endeavour to practiſe our own exhortations: in ſtriving for the maſtery, we muſt be temperate in all things; and in fighting the good fight we muſt contend, as thoſe who know they are oppoſed by real, and formidable enemies. Thus ſubduing our ſinful paſſions, habituating every inclination to ſubmit, keeping our bodies under, and bringing them into ſubjection, we ſhall beſt enjoy the aſſurance, that when we have preached to others we ſhall not ourſelves be caſt-aways; which dreadful event it is to be feared is not at all uncommon. And when we conſider what labour, ſelf-denial, ſelf-abaſement, and perſeverance men ſubmit to, for the corruptible honours, and intereſts of this world; it ſhould make us aſhamed of ſhrinking from any hardſhip, abſtinence, or ſuffering, which may be needful, in ſecuring the incorruptible crown, which we are called to contend for.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—5.] In proſecuting his ſubject, concerning the idols ſacrifices, the apoſtle next referred the Corinthians to the caſe of Iſrael, and the judgments of God, which came upon them for their carnal ſelf-indulgence. He would not have them ignorant, how that all the fathers of the Jewiſh nation, came out of Egypt under the guidance and protection of the cloud, which gave them light by night, and was an overſhadowing canopy to them by day; being an emblem, of God's providential care, and gracious guidance of his people: and that the whole nation was ſafely conducted through the red ſea, in which the Egyptians were drowned. Thus they were initiated, as with baptiſm, into the true religion, under the inſtruction of Moſes, the type of Chriſt; by the over-ſhadowing cloud, and by the waters of the ſea, which bedewed them, but ſwallowed up their enemies. So that the whole nation, men, women and children, were thus acknowledged as the viſible church of God; even as all profeſſing chriſtians were admitted into the church by baptiſm. They all likewiſe, without exception, were ſuſtained by the manna, which miraculous proviſion might be called ſpiritual meat; as it typified Chriſt the bread of life to the ſouls of the true Iſrael: and they all drank of thoſe waters, which flowed from the rock, and which followed them, as a river, through moſt of their wanderings in the wilderneſs. This too might be called *ſpiritual* drink, for it typified the ſacred influences of the holy Spirit, as given to believers through Jeſus Chriſt: and the rock itſelf might be called ſpiritual; becauſe that Rock was Chriſt, a type of Him, who was wounded and ſmitten for our ſins, that ſalvation might be communicated to our periſhing ſouls. Nothing can more clearly ſhew the abſurdity of forcing figurative language into a literal meaning, and ſo grounding doctrines upon it, (as the Papiſts have done in the monſtrous notion of tranſubſtantiation;) than this text. By ſuch a mode of conſtruction we might prove, that the rock was *literally* the perſon of Chriſt; and that *the rock* followed the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs! But common ſenſe is uſually ſufficient to preſerve men from ſuch abſurdities; when there is no perſonal, or party intereſt to ſerve by them. The Iſraelites in the particulars abovementioned, ſeemed to be all alike the people of God, and dear to him: yet was he far from being well pleaſed with the moſt of them; ſo that they were deſtroyed in the wilderneſs, in ſuch multitudes, that their dead bodies lay in heaps upon the ground, as after the carnage of ſome terrible battle. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xiii. v. 21—23. c. xiv. xv. xvi. xvii. *Numb.* c. xiii. xiv. *Jude*, v. 5.)

V. 6—12] The apoſtle next applied the ſubject to the caſe under conſideration: he obſerved, that theſe events were intended to be inſtructive examples to the chriſtian church, or figurative repreſentations of God's

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* ſome of them; as it is written, The people ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as ſome of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thouſand.

9 Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted, and were deſtroyed of ſerpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer.

11 Now all theſe things happened unto them for enſamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but ſuch as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I ſpeak as to wiſe men; judge ye what I ſay.

dealings with his profeſſed worſhippers in other ages, and under other diſpenſations: that by the fatal conſequences of Iſrael's diſobedience and rebellion, others might be deterred from indulging an evil concupiſcence after ſinful or inexpedient indulgences. (Notes, *Num.* c. xi. *Pſ.* lxxviii. cvi.) They were thereby alſo warned againſt all approaches to idolatry, through love to feſtive indulgence; as well as from fornication: and from tempting Chriſt, by provoking him to jealouſy, wearying out his patience, and putting his love and power to the proof; as the Iſraelites had done in the wilderneſs; when He was with them, as Jehovah of Hoſts their Redeemer: and from murmuring ungratefully, at the Lord's diſpenſations towards them, the reſtrictions laid upon them, or the ſpiritual authority exerciſed over them, as the Iſraelites had done; and for which they had been cut off by deſolating judgments, and the deſtroying angel that the Lord employed againſt them. (Notes, *Exod.* c. xxxii. xxxiii. *Num.* c. xiii. xiv. xvi. xvii. xx. xxi. xxv.) Theſe tranſactions have before been fully conſidered; and the application of them to the apoſtle's argument, and to the conduct of the Corinthians, muſt be obvious to every attentive reader: he therefore further aſſured them, that thoſe things which ſeemed ſo ſevere in reſpect of Iſrael, were merciful in the object; being intended as examples to others, to reſtrain their appetites and paſſions, and to exerciſe holy caution, and humble fear: that eſpecially they were written for the admonition of chriſtians, *on whom the completion of the ages was come:* who had the ſubſtance of all their ſhadows, and the accompliſhment of all their prophecies; who enjoyed thoſe advantages, which were the end and perfection of the old diſpenſation; and who lived under the light of the laſt, and moſt complete revelation, that was to be vouchſafed to the world. For in proportion to their light, privileges and encouragements, ſo ought their holy obedience to be; their guilt would otherwiſe be more aggravated, than under the darker diſpenſation of the law; and would be puniſhed with more ſpiritual, but more terrible judgments. (*Matt.* c. iii. v. 9, 10. *Heb.* c. ii. v. 2—5. c. x. v. 26—31. c. xii. v. 25.) It therefore was proper that every man among them, who ſuppoſed himſelf to ſtand ſecure of God's favour, and ſtrong in the faith of the goſpel, without being troubled with weak and ſuperſtitious ſcruples; ſhould take heed that he did not fall away from his ſelf-confident profeſſion, and at laſt fall under the righteous condemnation of God, having no more than the form of godlineſs: or leſt being a real chriſtian, he ſhould, (like Peter, when through ſelf-confidence he neglected to watch and pray,) fall into ſome grievous ſin, and thus wound his conſcience, expoſe himſelf to ſevere rebukes, diſgrace his profeſſion, and injure or ruin of the ſouls of others.

V. 13, 14.] The Corinthians would be the more inexcuſable, in ſuch a caſe; becauſe no temptation had befallen them, but ſuch as men in general muſt meet with, from their own evil hearts, ſatan's ſuggeſtions, and the world's allurements. They had not been tried by ſevere perſecutions to deny Chriſt, or conform to the idolatry that was in uſe; as many others had been, and would be. However, the apoſtle did not mean to diſcourage the humble and fearful among them, by thus mentioning much ſtronger temptations, than thoſe were, by which many had been overcome: for if indeed they truly believed, the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſe and covenant, would ſecure them from being finally overcome by any temptation: He would ſo direct, and over-rule every event, and reſtrain the malice of tempters and perſecutors, as well as communicate ſtrength proportioned to their trials; that they ſhould never be tempted above what they were able: but in ſome way or other, he would in his providence, or by his grace, make a way for them to eſcape, that they ſhould be enabled to bear the trial, and come forth out of it unhurt, however ſharp, heavy, or durable it might be. This cannot mean, that a believer ſhould be rendered victorious over every particular temptation; becauſe in that caſe they muſt all be kept from any actual ſin, which is contrary to fact: yet it muſt imply that no concurrence of circumſtances ſhould ever caſt them into ſuch temptation, as would neceſſitate the commiſſion of ſin; and that nothing ſhould ever occaſion their final apoſtacy and condemnation. (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 33—39.) However the examples, and warnings, which had been given, ſufficiently proved, that they ought to flee from all approaches to, and occaſions of idolatry: for if ſo ſmall a temptation as a feaſt, was more

16 The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?

17 For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18 Behold Iſrael after the fleſh: are not they which eat of the ſacrifices partakers of the altar?

19 What ſay I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in ſacrifice to idols is any thing.

20 But *I ſay*, that the things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye ſhould have fellowſhip with devils.

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſy? are we ſtronger than He?

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24 Let no man ſeek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.

25 Whatſoever is ſold in the ſhambles, *that*

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than they could reſiſt; how could they hope to withſtand in the evil day of fiery perſecution?

V. 15—17.] As the Corinthians valued themſelves upon their ſuperior knowledge and wiſdom; ſo the apoſtle would ſpeak to them as wiſe men, and call on them impartially, and diſcreetly to judge of, and decide upon, what he had further to adduce againſt their feaſting in the idol temples. Would they not allow, that the cup of wine, which was uſed in the Lord's ſupper to repreſent ſpiritual bleſſings, and as an act of praiſe and thankſgiving to God, after it had been bleſſed, and ſet apart by prayer for that purpoſe, was a token of their communion in, and partaking of, the blood of Chriſt, as the atonement for ſin? And was not the bread, &c, a token of their participating of his body? Did not a man's joining in that ordinance imply a profeſſion of faith in Chriſt crucified, and of adoring gratitude to Him for this purchaſed ſalvation? Certainly every one would put this conſtruction upon it: and if a man really intended in his heart, what in this ordinance he profeſſed, he would actually have the communion and participation of the Saviour's blood ſhed, and body broken for the ſins of the world. For all chriſtians, by this ordinance, and the faith therein profeſſed, were united as the grains of wheat in one loaf of bread, or as the members in the human body; ſeeing they were all united to Chriſt, and had fellowſhip with him and one another, by partaking of the ſame bread, as a token of their feeding by faith on the ſame ſpiritual nouriſhment for their ſouls. In like manner to join with idolaters in their feaſts, at the temples of their idols, muſt be underſtood as a profeſſed act of communion with the idol, and it's worſhippers: and if this were not intended, it would be a ſort of hypocritical profeſſion.

V. 18—22.] This might be illuſtrated by the caſe of "Iſrael after the fleſh," the nation of Iſrael, as diſtinguiſhed from the whole company of believers. They, who feaſted, in the courts of the temple, upon the fleſh of the ſacrifices, and peace-offerings, of which part had been burned upon the altar, were underſtood to have fellowſhip with Jehovah and his worſhippers, and to expect a ſhare of the benefits ariſing from ſuch ſacrifices: and was not the meaning of the ſame, when any one feaſted with idolaters, in their idol temples, upon their ſacrifices? But what conſtruction would they put upon this argument of the apoſtles? Would they ſuppoſe him to mean, that an idol was a real being, to whom worſhip was rendered? Or that theſe ſacrifices differed materially from other food? Thus he knew that ſome of them would ſpeculate on the ſubject, to excuſe their ſelf-indulgence. But, though he would allow, that the deities, to which they ſacrificed, were non-entities, and all their account of their origin and exploits were mere fables: yet he muſt inform them that their ſacrifices were actually preſented to devils, fallen angels, malignant demons; and that theſe ambitious rivals of God were gratified by them, in proportion as God was diſhonoured, and provoked: perhaps ſome might fancy, that the name did not ſignify, and that God was worſhipped in theſe rites, though under another title; (as modern ſpeculators have aſſerted, that Jehovah, or Jupiter, &c, are virtually the ſame; and that the ſupreme Being is worſhipped with equal acceptance, in every age, and clime:) but the apoſtle aſſured them, that theſe ſacrifices were not preſented to God, but to the determined enemies of God and man: and he would not on any account have his beloved Corinthians have fellowſhip with devils and their worſhippers. Indeed, they could not make the ordinances of Chriſt to conſiſt with theſe abominable rites: and if they pretended to it, they would provoke the Lord to jealouſy, by this familiarity with his deteſted rivals; as if they were ſtronger than he, and could defend themſelves againſt his judgments: even as a woman, though not guilty of groſs adultery, muſt excite the ſuſpicion and indignation of her huſband, if ſhe aſſociated very familiarly with the man, of whom he entertained a peculiar jealouſy. The apoſtle joined himſelf in theſe enquiries, to ſhew how greatly he abhorred ſuch a conduct, and how he ſhould dread the conſequences, if he were ſeduced into it.

V. 23—28.] (Notes, &c. c. vi. v. 12, 13. c. viii.) The feaſting in the idol's temples being thus ſhewn unlawful, the apoſtle next proceeded to prove, that ſome limitations muſt be aſſigned to their liberty, even in leſſer matters; and expediency and edification be conſulted, even in the uſe of lawful things. He exhorted them eat, aſking no queſtion for conſcience ſake:

26 For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feaſt,* and ye be diſpoſed to go; whatſoever is ſet before you, eat, aſking no queſtion for conſcience ſake.

28 But if any man ſay unto you, This is offered in ſacrifice unto idols, eat not for his ſake that ſhewed it, and for conſcience ſake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof:

29 Conſcience, I ſay, not thine own, but of the other? for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conſcience?

30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil ſpoken of for that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

33 Even as I pleaſe all *men* in all *things,* not ſeeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be ſaved.

therefore, not to ſeek their own indulgence, or ſatisfaction in ſo excluſive a manner; but to ſtudy the welfare and advantage of their brethren, and neighbours, whom they ought to love as themſelves; and for whoſe greater good, they ought to give up every leſſer intereſt. He would therefore direct them to eat without ſcruple, what they bought in the public market; without aſking any queſtions, whether it had been offered to an idol, or not; leſt they ſhould receive an anſwer, which might tend to perplex or wound the conſciences of their brethren, if their own were out of danger: for as the earth, and its fulneſs belonged to the Lord, (*Pſ.* xxiv. v. 1;) ſo they might partake of his bounty, without heſitation, if they knew no reaſon to the contrary. In like manner, if an unbelieving friend, or relation invited them to feaſt in his houſe, and they were diſpoſed to go; (which in many caſes would be lawful and even expedient:) let them eat of the proviſions ſet before them, without aſking any queſtions about them. But if any one informed them, that any thing was part of an idol ſacrifice, let them refrain from eating of it: becauſe it would be proper thus to proteſt againſt idolatry, and to ſhew their judgment of it, for the benefit eſpecially of him, who told them, whether he were a chriſtian, or an unbeliever; and that they might not wound the conſcience of any man. And as the earth, and its fulneſs were the Lord's; they would not need ſuch defiled food, but might be ſupplied with other meat, though they abſtained from it.

V. 29—33.] The apoſtle obſerved, perhaps with reference to their ſelf-confidence, that he did not ſo much mean that they were to abſtain for the ſake of their own conſciences; for he ſuppoſed them to be able to diſcard ſuch ignorant ſcruples: but for the ſake of other men's conſciences, eſpecially thoſe of their weaker brethren. Yet they would enquire, why their liberty was to be thus cenſured, and reſtrained, out of regard to other men's conſciences? Or why they were to be blamed, and ſlandered in eating of thoſe things, forwhich they gave thanks, and which they received in a gracious and believing frame of mind? Thus we may explain this, as the objection of the Corinthians to the apoſtle's directions: but it may be underſtood as his enquiry, why they ſhould ſo incautiouſly uſe their liberty, as to give cauſe for it's being condemned in the conſciences of other men? Or why they ſhould ſo uſe thoſe good gifts of God, which they received with grace, and thankſgiving, as to give cauſe for ſlander? Perhaps the apoſtle meant to take their objection, and thus to turn it upon them. He therefore concluded this ſubject, by admoniſhing them, whether they eat, or drank, in any place or company, and whatever they did, to do it all with an habitual aim at the glory of God: by conſidering his precepts, and allowance in every thing; and the propriety, expediency, appearance, or tendency of their actions, and the conſtruction which others would put upon them: and by acting with prudence, temperance, thankfulneſs, conſiſtency and charity in every thing. Thus the whole tenor of their conduct would ſhew the excellency of the goſpel, and conduce to win over others to it; whereby the name and perfections of God would be the more known, adored, and glorified. This great end they ought habitually to have in view; whatever interfered with it ought to be avoided; and every intereſt, purſuit, and indulgence, ought to be rendered ſubordinate, or even, if poſſible ſubſervient to it. Thus they would be careful to give no needleſs offence, or throw any ſtumbling-block in the way, either of Jews or Gentiles; and not to give cauſe of ſin to the church, or any real believer: but to follow the apoſtle, as he followed Chriſt, (c. xi. v. 1.) according to what he had ſhewn them of his principles and conduct; (Notes, &c. c. ix.) in which he had endeavoured to pleaſe men of all deſcriptions, and in all things, as far as conſiſted with his faithfulneſs; (*Gal.* c. i. v. 10;) in nothing conſulting his own emolument, or ſatisfaction, but the good of many, in order to promote their ſalvation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miſtakes, and ſins of profeſſors commonly originate from ignorance of the ſcriptures, or from a partial attention to them. If this were not a common caſe, men could not ſuppoſe, that any forms, ordinances, or aſſent to doctrines would procure them a licence to indulge their luſts, or impunity in the allowed practice of any ſin. Men may ſeem to be converted, they may relate a ſpecious experience, and make a credible profeſſion of faith; they may be admitted members of the viſible church where the ſtricteſt diſcipline is exerciſed, and ſit

CHAP. XI.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Exhorting the Corinthians to imitate his example, and commending their attention to his injunctions, 1, 2. *2d. Giving directions concerning women propheſying in public,* 3---16. *3d. Reproving abuſes in their aſſemblies, eſpecially in the celebration of the Lord's ſupper: giving inſtructions and warnings reſpecting it, and ſhewing that negligence and irreverence expoſed believers to chaſtiſement,* 17---34.

BE ye followers of me, even as I alſo, *am* of Chriſt.

under the moſt faithful inſtruction; they may be greatly diſtinguiſhed by external privileges, and gifts; they may be baptized in any form, and receive the *ſpiritual meat* and *drink* of the Lord's ſupper in the pureſt ſocieties: and yet, not feeding on Chriſt himſelf in their hearts by faith, God will not be well pleaſed with them, but they will die ſhort of Canaan, and periſh with the multitudes of the ungodly. This is moſt evident from the examples, which are recorded in God's word for our admonition, who in theſe latter ages of the world enjoy the full benefit of all preceding revelations. Theſe ſhould warn us to repreſs every evil luſting; to avoid a feſtive, ſenſual religion, which gratifies the eye, the ear, the taſte; and which connects with ſitting down to eat and drink, and riſing up to play; to keep at a diſtance from every forbidden indulgence; and not to tempt Chriſt, by running ourſelves into thoſe dangers, in which many have periſhed; and to avoid all murmurings and diſputings, by which the deſtroyer hath made ſuch havock in the church. Above all we ſhould beware of a haughty ſpirit, which goes before a fall; and whilſt we think we ſtand, we ſhould truſt in God to preſerve us from deceiving ourſelves, and from falling into, and by temptation; uſing every means of ſecurity againſt ſuch fatal, and lamentable evils. In theſe quiet times we have no temptation to reſiſt, but ſuch as is common to man: and if we cannot now ſtand our ground againſt the world, the fleſh, and the devil, what ſhould we do in the fiery trial of perſecution? If we are not prepared to give up a paltry intereſt or indulgence for Chriſt's ſake; how ſhould we yield our bodies to the flames in his cauſe? However, whether the world ſmiles or frowns, it is a dangerous enemy: but if we are believers, we ſhall be enabled to overcome it, with all its terrors, and faſcinations: nor will our faithful covenant-keeping God, ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able. We may often be alarmed, harraſſed, baffled, and even caſt down; but we ſhall riſe again ſuperior to our foes; for with every temptation the Lord will be ſure to make ſome way for us to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it. Yet his fear put into our hearts will be one great means of our ſafety; and the more humble jealouſy we have of ourſelves, the more we ſhall eſcape ſuch leſſer falls, as are productive of very painful conſequences. We ſhould therefore flee from temptation, and not oſtentatiouſly parley with it: and if we would be deemed wiſe, let us ſhew that wiſdom, by a circumſpect conduct, and not by curious ſpeculations.

Our union and communion with Chriſt, and his people, by partaking of his ordinances, ſhould engage us to avoid all fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, and all conformity to the vanities of the world. When we receive the outward ſigns of the body and blood of Chriſt; we ſhould ſeriouſly enquire into the ſincerity of this our profeſſion of faith in him and his atonement, and of a deſire to live devoted to his ſervice, and united to his people, as one bread, and one body with him. For the world lieth in the wicked one: ungodly men are the ſervants of the devil, and falſe religion is his worſhip; however ingeniouſly ſome may varniſh over or deny this awful truth: nor can we unite the ſervice of God with that of devils, or have fellowſhip with Chriſt, and with thoſe enemies, whoſe works he was manifeſted to deſtroy: and they, who aim at ſuch a coalition, are commonly hypocrites in their religion, and only ſincere in their idolatrous worſhip of mammon. If chriſtians will venture into theſe places, and join in theſe ſacrifices to "the luſt "of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life;" they will certainly provoke the Lord to jealouſy: and as they cannot endure his omnipotent indignation, why ſhould they fooliſhly act, as if they were ſtronger than he? Let us then not be amuſed with vain words, about the innocence of this, or the other worldly pleaſure; ſuch are ſeldom grounded in truth: but if they were, are ſuch indulgences expedient? Do they tend to edification? Do they conſiſt with charity? Might not the time and money be better employed? Doth not the example grieve or miſlead others? Let us not then be ſo ſelfiſh, as to ſeek our own needleſs indulgence, in preference to the important good of our neighbours. Whilſt we truſt in the Lord for our temporal proviſion, and thankfully receive it as his gift; let us be careful to uſe our liberty, or plenty in ſuch a manner, that we may avoid the appearance of evil, of exceſs, or ſelfiſhneſs, and of whatever may occaſion cenſure or ſuſpicion: and that piety, charity, temperance, and prudence may ſo regulate even our feaſts and meals, and every part of our conduct, that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all to the glory of God. Connected with this great end, we ſhould be careful to give no needleſs offence to, or occaſion any prejudice, in the minds of unbelievers of any deſcription; or to cauſe any diſcord in the church, or diſquietude to the conſciences even of weak believers: but that in all things we may pleaſe others rather than ourſelves, as far as conſiſts with our duty, or can conduce to their profit, and ſalvation. And let us remember, that He, who gives us theſe admonitions, and calls us to follow him, as he followed Chriſt, was the penman of thoſe ſcriptures, which moſt fully declare the doctrines of free grace, and of God's eternal purpoſes: which therefore muſt conſiſt with theſe practical inſtructions; though many are unable to perceive that conſiſtency.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1. *Be,* &c.] This verſe moſt evidently connects with the concluſion of the preceding chapter; it referred to what the apoſtle had written concerning his own conduct in the ninth chapter, and it concluded the ſubject, which began in the eighth. He called upon them to be imitators of his example, (even as he

2 Now I praiſe you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the Head of every man is Chriſt; and the Head of the woman *is* the man; and the Head of Chriſt *is* God.

4 Every man praying or propheſying, having *his* head covered, diſhonoureth his Head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or propheſieth with *her* head uncovered diſhonoureth her Head: for that is even all one as if ſhe were ſhaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her alſo be ſhorn: but if it be a ſhame for a woman to be ſhorn or ſhaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, foraſmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cauſe ought the woman to have power on *her* head becauſe of the angels.

11 Nevertheleſs neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman *is* of the man, even ſo *is* the man alſo by the woman; but all things of God.

13 Judge in yourſelves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14 Doth not even nature itſelf teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a ſhame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.

16 But if any man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the churches of God.

17 Now in this that I declare *unto you* I

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copied Chriſt,) eſpecially in the charitable and cautious uſe of their chriſtian liberty; (Note, *Rom.* c. xv. v. 1—3:) and he thus intimated, that they had in this matter followed others, who had acted contrary to the will, and the example of Chriſt.

V. 2—16.] The apoſtle here entered upon another ſubject, and began to diſcuſs ſeveral particulars reſpecting their public aſſemblies; which, with ſome digreſſions, he continued to the end of the fourteenth chapter. As he was about to reprove ſeveral abuſes; ſo he deemed it adviſable to begin by a general commendation of their conduct, in remembering him, and obſerving his injunctions, though this general rule admitted of ſome exceptions; or miſconſtructions had in ſeveral things taken place: and it would therefore be proper to ſhew them his meaning in ſuch matters. In the abundance of ſpiritual gifts beſtowed on the Corinthians, ſeveral women had been endued with the Spirit of prophecy, which enabled them, by immediate inſpiration, to offer prayers for, or give inſtructions to, the congregation, or even to predict future events. This ſeems to have been the only caſe, in which women were allowed to ſpeak in public: and in this reſpect ſome abuſes had crept in. (c. xiv. v. 34, 35. 1 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 11—13.) In order to underſtand what was becoming in this exempt caſe; the apoſtle would have them to underſtand, that Chriſt was the immediate Head, or Ruler of every man among them, whoſe honour was concerned in every part of their conduct: and that the man was the immediate Head, and ruler of the woman, to whoſe authority God had ſubjected her, and who would therefore be diſgraced by any impropriety in her behaviour: and that Chriſt, as Mediator, was ſubject to God as his Head and Principal; to whoſe glory his whole conduct in his mediatorial government was referred. As therefore Chriſt did the will, and ſought the honour of God; ſo the chriſtian ſhould avow his ſubjection to Chriſt, doing his will, and ſeeking his glory; and the woman ſhould acknowledge her ſubjection to the man, and, (in all things lawful,) do what was pleaſing and honourable to him. According to the cuſtom of thoſe days, a veil on the head was the token of ſubjection, and reſpect to ſuperiors: if a man therefore ſhould pray, or prophecy, with ſuch a covering; he would diſhonour Chriſt his Head, by acting out of character, and appearing as if placed in ſubjection to, inſtead of authority over, the woman. On the other hand, it would be inconſiſtent with modeſty, and her ſtate of ſubjection, for a woman to lay aſide her veil on ſuch occaſions: for ſhe would ſeem to forget her place, and to affect authority; which would diſhonour the man, whom God had appointed to be as an Head over her. Nay this would be ſo great an impropriety, that it would be of a ſimilar meaning with the ſhaving of her head; which was a diſgraceful puniſhment, that uſed to be inflicted on women of bad character. If then the women would exerciſe their gifts uncovered, let them be ſhorn, or ſhaven: but if they deemed this ſhameful, let them wear their veil. Some think that theſe propheteſſes had their hair diſhevelled, after the manner of the Pythian prieſteſſes of Apollo; which would be an additional reaſon for the apoſtle thus ſtrenuouſly to oppoſe them. The man indeed, being the image and glory of God, and appointed as his repreſentative in ruling over this lower world, ought not to be veiled on ſuch occaſions. But the woman reflecting, as it were, the man's glory, being formed his counterpart, and the moſt honourable ſubject of his delegated authority, ought to avow her willing ſubjection by praiſe *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worſe.

18 For firſt of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be diviſions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you.

20 When ye come together therefore unto one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's ſupper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own ſupper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in? or deſpiſe ye the church of God, and ſhame them that have not? What ſhall I ſay to you? ſhall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe *you* not.

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wearing the veil. For the woman was not originally created ſeparately, but taken out of the man; as a part of him, yet inferior to him; neither was the man created for the woman's advantage, but the woman for that of the man. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. ii. v. 20—25.) On this account therefore the woman ought to be covered with her veil, even when praying, or propheſying, as an emblem of her being under the power and authority of the man. Many conjectures have been formed concerning the meaning of the following expreſſion "becauſe of the "angels:" but probably the apoſtle referred to the preſence of holy angels, (who had witneſſed the creation of man,) as ſpectators, or even in ſome reſpects as joint worſhippers with believers, in their public aſſemblies: which therefore ought to be regulated with the moſt exact propriety, that theſe heavenly worſhippers might not witneſs any thing unbecoming ſo holy an occaſion. But though the woman had been created for, and ſubjected to, the man; yet no difference was made between them, in reſpect of their acceptance in Chriſt, but they were called together to have fellowſhip with him. Nor ought the authority of the man to be exerciſed harſhly, but in tenderneſs, and love; ſeeing, that, as the woman was originally "from the man;" ſo the man hath ever ſince been "by the woman," born of her, and tended on in infancy by her tender care: that as both were reciprocally means of comfort, and benefit to each other; ſo they ſhould live together in harmony and affection. But all things were to be conſidered, as derived from, and regulated by God, whoſe wiſe appointments in ſuch matters ought to be ſubmitted to. The Corinthians therefore might judge for themſelves, whether, according to the conſtitution of the Creator, it would be comely for a woman to appear uncovered in the act of worſhipping Him? Even nature would teach them, that if a man wore his hair long, and tired in the manner, which cuſtom had appropriated to women: it would be a diſgrace to him, and would be conſidered as a proof of effeminacy, and folly. On the other hand, long hair, when decently tired, according to the cuſtom of the times, would be an honour to a woman, being given to her as a natural veil; and to wear her hair ſhort, as men uſed to do, would appear maſculine and diſgraceful: and for the ſame reaſon ſhe ought to wear her veil on her head, when praying; that ſhe might keep her proper place, and appear in character. Theſe things the apoſtle ſtated as decent, and proper: but if any of the Corinthian teachers appeared inclinable to excite a contention about them; he would only add, that he and his brethren knew of no ſuch cuſtom, as prevailed among them: nor was there any ſuch in the churches of God, that had been planted by the other apoſtles.

V. 17—22.] Another exception the apoſtle muſt adduce to the general commendation, that he had beſtowed upon the Corinthians: ſeeing that when they came together, they often behaved ſo diſorderly, that it tended to their detriment, rather than their edification. For in the firſt place, when they aſſembled, as a ſociety met together for the worſhip of God, in which they ought to have been of one heart, and mind; there were diviſions, or *ſchiſms* among them: though they met in one place, as one congregation; yet they were divided into parties, and were actuated by carnal competition, and mutual animoſity. This diſgraceful report he had heard of them; and he believed it in part, or concerning a part of them: for he was ſo acquainted with human nature, and the temper of the Corinthians; that he was aware theſe *ſchiſms* would be followed by *hereſies* alſo; or by a more entire ſeparation of ſome of them from the reſt, out of zeal for the pernicious doctrines, which they had eſpouſed. This, ſatan was attempting; and God would permit it to take place, in order to diſtinguiſh his approved ſervants, by their ſtedfaſt adherence to the truth, from the unſound profeſſors, that had crept in amongſt them. Their aſſembling together in one place with ſuch divided hearts was very evil; and their ſubſequent conduct was ſo carnal, that though they profeſſed to celebrate the Lord's ſupper; they could not be ſaid to do it, but rather to ſubſtitute another feaſt in the ſtead of it. For, ſtrange to ſay! They brought their own proviſions with them, and eat them ſeparately, not waiting for, or communicating with, each other! So that a ſelfiſh, or intemperate meal had ſucceeded to that holy feaſt of faith and love! And whilſt the poor went away hungry, for want of proper proviſions; the rich eat and drank plentifully, if not to exceſs! And what could be ſaid to ſuch a ſcandalous profanation? Had they not houſes to feaſt in upon their abundance? Did they deſpiſe the aſſembled church of God, as if it had been a company of intemperate revellers? Or did the rich purpoſe to expoſe their poor brethren to ſhame, becauſe they had not ſuitable proviſions? And would they have the apoſtle applaud ſuch profane uncharitable, and ſenſual practices? Indeed he would not do it, though glad to praiſe them, when he could; and this refuſal of commendation implied the ſevereſt rebuke. It is almoſt unaccountable, that a chriſtian church, in a ſhort time after this eminent apoſtle had left them, ſhould run into ſo ſtrange an abuſe of this ſacred ordinance! But the public feaſts of the Grecians were commonly

23 For I have received of the Lord that which alſo I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jeſus the *ſame* night in which he was betrayed, took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and ſaid, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the ſame manner alſo *he took* the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cauſe many *are* weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.

31 For if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat

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conducted in this manner, which appears to us as inconſiſtent with civility, as with piety: the ſelf-conceited Corinthian teachers carried their notions of chriſtian liberty to a ſtrange exceſs; they not only joined in the idolatrous feaſts of their neighbours; but they introduced the cuſtoms of them into the church, and ſo perverted this ſacred inſtitution: and to ſhew the folly of man's wiſdom; they were left thus to diſgrace themſelves more than other churches, becauſe they deemed themſelves wiſer than they. It is alſo wonderful that the apoſtle ſhould expreſs ſo favourable an opinion of the Corinthians in general, notwithſtanding ſuch abuſes: and we ſhould thence learn caution in condemning whole religious ſocieties, becauſe of ſuch evils, as perhaps but few of them approve of, though numbers are ſeduced to connive at them.

V. 23—28.] (Notes, &c. *Matt*. c. xxvi. v. 26—29.) To remedy theſe abuſes, the apoſtle referred the Corinthians to the original appointment of the Lord's ſupper, with which he had been made acquainted by immediate revelation from Chriſt, and which he had faithfully delivered to them. This account of that ordinance entirely coincides with what hath already been repeatedly conſidered; and fully confirms the interpretation, that hath been given of it: but it was of great importance, that it ſhould be here repeated and enforced; that the obligation of that inſtitution to the end of the world might be fully aſcertained. It is here added, that as oft, as they drank of the cup, they were to do it in remembrance of Chriſt; in order that the frequent recollection of his love, his ſufferings, and their obligations to Him, might have a proper effect upon their hearts, and lives: for as often as they attended on this ordinance; they would "ſhew forth," exhibit, profeſs their faith in, and declare the end and efficacy of the Lord's death, till He ſhould come to judgment. The apoſtle here repeatedly ſpeaks of *the bread*, after it's conſecration, or appropriation to that particular uſe; which is deciſive againſt thoſe abſurd and monſtrous interpretations, that have been put upon our Lord's words. He further declared, that whoſoever ſhould partake of this ordinance "unworthily;" that is in a profane, carnal, or irreverent manner, as a ſenſual feaſt, or for ſecular purpoſes, would "be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;" would be chargeable with treating them contemptuouſly; and in a meaſure with a ſhare of their guilt, who wounded his ſacred body, and ſhed his precious blood upon the croſs. It was therefore proper for every man to examine himſelf, concerning the reality of his faith and repentance, the ſincerity of his profeſſion, his intentions in communicating, the ſtate of his heart, and the tenor of his conduct; not in order to find ſome reaſon for abſenting himſelf, but that after ſuch ſelf-examination, and ſerious preparation of heart, he might come to commemorate the Lord's death, in a proper manner. This expreſſly ſhews it to be every chriſtian's duty, to attend on this ordinance; and that both the bread, and the wine ſhould be adminiſtered to all without exception. Indeed in one place, (v. 27,) it is in the original "ſhall eat "this bread, *or* drink this cup, &c;" and the needleſs variation in our verſion hath cauſed ſome cavils in that matter; yet this would as readily prove, that the wine alone, as that the bread alone ſhould be received: but in fact it only ſhews that both bread and wine ſhould be received in a ſerious, believing, and reverential manner.

V. 29—34.] To ſhew ſtill further the neceſſity of ſuch ſelf-examination, the apoſtle declared, that every one, who unworthily partook of this ordinance, would eat and drink *judgment* to himſelf: his very attendance on this religious ſervice would condemn him, and expoſe him to the righteous judgment of God; becauſe he made no proper diſcrimination between the bread and wine, which repreſented the Lord's body, as given a ſacrifice for our ſins, and an ordinary meal. This irreverence, being a heinous crime, would doubtleſs expoſe a man to final condemnation, if he did not repent: but at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the reſt will I ſet in order when I come.

CHAP. XII.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Inſtructing the Corinthians in the origin, nature, variety, and uſe of ſpiritual gifts, 1---11. *2d. Illuſtrating his ſubject, by ſhewing how the members in the human body perform their ſeveral functions for the benefit of the whole,* 12---26. *3d. Applying this to the church, and chriſtians, and exhorting them to love, &c,* 27---31.

it was not the apoſtle's meaning, that it was in its own nature unpardonable, or ſealed a man's damnation; as many have ſuppoſed. On the contrary, he was addreſſing himſelf to chriſtians, and warning them to beware of incurring thoſe temporal judgments, with which God chaſtiſed his offending ſervants: ſo that the ſcruples, and conſequent negligence of numbers, who ſeem in other matters to obey Chriſt, have no ground in this paſſage, except in the apparent harſhneſs of our tranſlation. Indeed, the conſcious unworthineſs, and lamented infirmities of thoſe, who deſire to expreſs their gratitude for redeeming love, are widely different from the profanations of theſe Corinthians, who yet were not at all ſuppoſed to have ſinned beyond the hope of pardon: and generally they, who deem themſelves moſt *unworthy*, are leaſt likely to receive *unworthily*; which is commonly the ſin of the proud and ſelf-ſufficient. But the apoſtle ſhewed his meaning in what follows: for he obſerved, that on account of theſe abuſes many of them were viſited with enfeebling, and waſting ſickneſs; and ſome of them had even been cut off by death: which, yet being called *ſleep*, was charitably ſuppoſed to be that of believers. For if men would call themſelves to an account for their conduct, and humble themſelves before God in deep repentance; they would eſcape many of theſe temporal calamities, as well as final condemnation: but when chriſtians were thus judged, and viſited "with divers "diſeaſes and ſundry kinds of death," "they were "chaſtened of the Lord, that," being thereby led to repentance "they might not be condemned with the "world." As this was the caſe, the apoſtle exhorted them to tarry for each other, and to commemorate their Lord, in charity, and peace, as well as in faith, and piety: and let them ſatisfy their hunger at home, and not think of making a full meal, or a ſenſual feaſt on ſuch a religious occaſion; whereby they expoſed themſelves to condemnation, and very painful viſitations, even by meeting together in the name of Chriſt. As to the reſt he meant to come ſhortly, and then he would regulate matters by his apoſtolical authority. Some explain many things in this chapter of "the love feaſts," which were early introduced into the primitive church: but there ſeems to be no neceſſity for this interpretation: and however well thoſe feaſts might be intended; they were liable to ſeveral great abuſes, and have no claim to the authority of divine inſtitutions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould follow no man further than he follows Chriſt, whoſe example alone is abſolutely perfect: nor ſhould deſire, that others ſhould follow us any further, than we are enabled to copy our Lord, and Maſter. When we muſt blame, in ſome things; we ſhould ſhew our diſpoſition to be pleaſed, by commending and excuſing whatever will admit of it. In order to know our duty in various particulars, we ſhould accurately ſtudy our relations to God, and to each other in ſociety. The Lord's plan of government includes much ſubordination, and materially differs from thoſe of many, who are deemed wiſe in this world. The immediate government of mankind, eſpecially of chriſtians is veſted in One, who bears our nature, and who, as Mediator, acknowledges the Father as his Head: under this mediatorial authority, he hath appointed man to be the Head of the woman, who immediately rules over her, that as he is the image and glory of God; ſo in this, and other inſtances of relative authority, he may ſhadow forth the glory, and obligations of the divine government. But the Lord hath ſo arranged matters, both in the kingdom of providence, and in that of grace; that the authority of the ſuperior, and the ſubjection of the inferior relations, ſhould conduce to the mutual help, and benefit of all parties. Even nature, and the common ſenſe of mankind require that men and women ſhould preſerve a due diſtinction in their apparel, behaviour, and appearance; and the contrary to this is contemptible, and odious. The particulars, by which this diſtinction ſhall be expreſſed are greatly determined by cuſtom; but however faſhions may vary, an effeminate man, and a maſculine woman, will always be diſguſting, and ſhameful. The believer's conduct ſhould be ſo regulated, that it may honour Chriſt his Head; for even his indiſcretions, and improprieties, will in a meaſure diſgrace his profeſſion: in like manner the conduct of women will either do credit to, or reflect diſhonour on their huſbands, or thoſe that ſtand nearly related to them. Much attention therefore to decorum in this reſpect is neceſſary: but eſpecially in every thing relating to the worſhip of God, where nothing unſeemly, or improper for any one's ſtate, rank, or character ought to be tolerated. And not only ſhould our ſenſe of God's preſence influence our conduct in this matter; but even that of the holy angels, who in our aſſemblies muſt witneſs many things unworthy of the ſacred ſervice, and ſhould not be ſhocked by allowed indecencies.

Alas, how often do even the profeſſors of the goſpel meet together for the worſe, inſtead of the better? And how frequently are we all betrayed into this ſin and folly! Eſpecially what animoſities, and perſonal or party contentions often divide religious ſocieties, and corrupt the *apparently united* worſhip! Indeed, in the preſent ſtate of human nature, ſuch ſchiſms, and hereſies cannot altogether be avoided: but whilſt we adore the wiſdom of God, in over-ruling theſe evils, for the manifeſtation of thoſe, that are approved by him; we muſt by no means palliate the guilt of ſuch perſons, as thus divide, and diſtract the church: for the Lord can make the moſt horrid profanations the occaſion of eſtabliſhing the moſt benefi-

CHAP. XII.

NOW concerning ſpiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto theſe dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to underſtand, that no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jeſus accurſed: and *that* no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.

4 Now there are diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit.

cial regulations. Whilſt we ſhould rejoice, that we are under no temptation to pervert the Lord's ſupper to an intemperate revel; we ſhould ſeriouſly enquire, whether profanations equally flagrant, and expreſſive of contempt, are not common amongſt us? How often do avarice, ambition, and extravagance ſend their infidel, impious, or profligate votaries, to qualify for preferment, by this ſacred ordinance! How often do cuſtom and oſtentation lead ſinners of ſuperior rank, to exhibit their petty diſtinctions, even in attending on this humiliating inſtitution! How often is it made the ſupport of Phariſaical pride! Or the cloke of hypocriſy, to cover diſhoneſty, or ſecret licentiouſneſs! Shall we praiſe men for ſuch things? Surely no: we muſt ſtrenuouſly proteſt againſt them. But they, who underſtand what the apoſtles received from Chriſt, and delivered to the church, reſpecting the intereſting ſeaſon, when this ordinance was appointed; and concerning the meaning, uſe, and benefit of it, will perceive that a penitent heart, a ſimple reliance on God's free mercy by faith in Chriſt, according to the New Teſtament in his blood; a thankful recollection of his ſufferings and of his love; a deſire to ſhew forth his death, to profeſs our obligations to him, and to give up ourſelves to his ſervice, in doing good to his people, and to all men for his ſake; conſtitute the proper preparation for acceptably communicating. All, who are able to come in this frame of mind, are bound in gratitude, and by their profeſſed ſubjection to Chriſt, to ſhew forth the Lord's death till he come. Such perſons are not likely to eat and drink unworthily, or to be guilty of the body and blood of Chriſt; and their fears and ſcruples are commonly the effect of miſtake: for every one is fit to come to this ordinance, who can pray for ſpiritual bleſſings in the name of Chriſt, without hypocriſy, and in an acceptable manner. However, there ſhould be an habitual ſelf-examination; and a more particular one at ſome times, when we have opportunity: this will tend to convince the humble believer of the difference between his caſe, and that of the profane perſons before-mentioned, and all proud, and carnal communicants. The ſame method will tend to prevent leſſer evils and miſtakes, which might bring chaſtiſements upon us. But the end of ſuch ſelf-examination ſhould be renewed repentance, acceptance of Chriſt, and prayer for grace to enable us to diſcern the Lord's body, and to attend on this ordinance, in a humble, ſpiritual and grateful manner. In every reſpect we act moſt wiſely for our preſent comfort, as well as for our future good; when we judge ourſelves, that we may not be judged. Our perſonal and family trials ſhould remind us, that the Lord hath a controverſy with us: but as we are apt to be partial, or dilatory in judging ourſelves, we ſhould deem it a mercy to be chaſtened of the Lord, and not condemned with the world; and to ſuffer any thing, even unto death, by which we may eſcape final damnation. Yet it is prudence for us to act with ſuch caution, piety, charity, ſeriouſneſs and temperance; that we may, as much as we can, avoid chaſtenings, which for the preſent are not joyous but grievous, though they bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs to them, who are exerciſed thereby.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—3.] The Corinthians were favoured with a rich abundance of ſupernatural, extraordinary gifts and powers, by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt; which were chiefly exerciſed in their public aſſemblies: and as they were divided into parties, they vied with each other in the oſtentatious diſplay of theſe ſpiritual endowments: this gave riſe to envyings, covetings, repinings, &c, which were equally oppoſite to piety and charity. To remedy theſe grievous evils, the apoſtle began his obſervations on the ſubject, by reminding them of what they had been a ſhort time before. He would not have his Corinthian brethren ignorant of the origin and uſe of ſuch gifts: for though they prided themſelves upon their ſpeculative knowledge; they were in great danger of remaining ignorant in many practical matters. Yet they muſt know, that they had in general been Gentiles, who were carried away by a blind attachment to their idols; even as they were led captive by their luſts, by their prieſts, and by ſatan. Theſe were *dumb* idols, (notwithſtanding all that was boaſted of their oracles;) and therefore they could not confer on their deluded votaries, thoſe gifts of tongues, and that utterance, which they had now received: nor could ſuch idolaters either merit, or acquire theſe endowments, which muſt be aſcribed only to the ſovereign grace of God. It was then proper for them to underſtand, that all ſuch gifts, when real, were confined within the limits of the chriſtian church: ſo that no man, whether Jew or Gentile, who blaſphemed the name of Jeſus, or treated him as a deceiver, that deſerved the death of the croſs, could be ſuppoſed to ſpeak by the Holy Ghoſt; but his pretended, or apparent inſpiration muſt be aſcribed either to human impoſture, or diabolical agency. On the other hand no man could ſincerely confeſs Jeſus to be the Lord, the promiſed Meſſiah, the Son of God, &c, according to his own declarations concerning himſelf; except he ſpake under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The knowledge and belief of this truth, and the boldneſs to profeſs it, muſt come from that bleſſed Agent: in this important ſenſe all true chriſtians had ſpiritual gifts; and none ought either to deſpiſe another; or to deem himſelf over-looked, if he were not favoured with ſuch as were more coveted, but leſs valuable. Perhaps the apoſtle alſo meant, that even this confeſſion from the mouth of a nominal chriſtian, being made under the impulſe of the Holy Spirit, (as wicked Balaam propheſied;) might really be called a ſpiritual gift, that might benefit others, even though it were of no uſe to the poſſeſſor.

V. 4—11.] There was a great diverſity in the ſpiritual gifts conferred on the Corinthians; and they valued

5 And there are differences of adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord.

6 And there are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wiſdom; to another the word of knowledge by the ſame Spirit;

9 To another faith by the ſame Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the ſame Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another diſcerning of ſpirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues;

11 But all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; ſo alſo *is* Chriſt.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

ſome of them far more than others: yet they were all from the ſame divine Spirit, of whoſe operations they were but inſtruments and vehicles. There were alſo various different adminiſtrations, or offices in which men miniſtered to the benefit of the church, according to the work aſſigned, and the talents entruſted to them: but they were all the ſervants of Chriſt; and were dependent on, and accountable to the ſame Lord. In the effects, which followed the exerciſe of their gifts, whether in miraculous cures, or in the converſion of ſinners, &c; the whole was produced by the power of the ſame God, who wrought all theſe changes on the bodies and ſouls of men, through his Son, and by his Spirit, for the glory of his own great name. But the manifeſtation of the power, and glory of the Spirit in theſe extraordinary operations, was not made for the credit of the man, by whom he wrought, but that he might profit others by them: as they were entirely diſtinct from that gracious ſtate of the heart, which diſpoſes a man to improve his talents of every kind; and as theſe gifts were ſometimes beſtowed on mere nominal chriſtians. For the purpoſe of thus profiting others, the Holy Spirit conferred on one man "the word of wiſdom;" by which may be intended ſuch immediate diſcoveries to the ſoul of the grand ſcheme of ſalvation, attended with ſuch powers of diſcourſing about it, as were ſuited to render other men wiſe unto ſalvation. To another the ſame Spirit of revelation gave "the word of knowledge;" by which might be intended an exact, and extraordinary underſtanding of the Old Teſtament types and prophecies; and a capacity of explaining difficult ſubjects, of anſwering objections, of determining caſes of conſcience, or of ſpeaking ſuitable words to different deſcriptions of perſons. Another was endued with a remarkable degree of faith; which rendered him capable of engaging in very perilous ſervices; for which perſons of more exact knowledge might be leſs competent. This kind, and degree of faith might be diſtinct from that gracious faith, which juſtifieth; and ſo be conſidered as a ſpiritual gift beſtowed on certain perſons to enable them to profit others. Some of them were endued with the gift of performing miraculous cures: others were enabled to work miracles of divers kinds. Some predicted future events: others had a ſupernatural talent of diſcerning ſpirits; of perceiving by what principles men were actuated, or of what ſervices they were capable. Some could ſpeak in various languages, which they had not learned: and others could miraculouſly interpret them to the hearers, who underſtood them not. All theſe endowments the Holy Spirit freely beſtowed on, and wrought by them, in that meaſure, and diverſity, which he ſaw good and conducive to the common advantage of the church: ſo that no one had any ground of glorying over others; or of repining as if he were forgotten in this diſtribution. This is a moſt clear, and concluſive atteſtation of the perſonality, ſovereignty, and Deity of the Holy Ghoſt. There is much difficulty in determining preciſely what the apoſtle meant by each of the terms here uſed: but the ſenſe, which appeared moſt probable, hath been choſen; and great exactneſs on ſuch a ſubject is not at all neceſſary at preſent.

V. 12—14.] (*Rom.* c. xii. v. 4, 5.) The apoſtle next illuſtrated the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Holy Spirit, in his diſtribution of theſe gifts, by the ſimilitude of the human body. This conſiſts of many parts, though it conſtitutes one harmonious whole: whilſt every member has it's proper uſe and capacity for the common benefit. Thus Chriſt myſtical, or his church as united to him it's glorious Head, was one great whole, conſiſting of many parts. Beſides the outward baptiſm of water, all true chriſtians had been baptized into Chriſt's body, by the communication of his quickening Spirit, without reſpect to any of their external diſtinctions; and by deriving continual ſupplies of that ſame Spirit, in anſwer to their earneſt deſires and believing prayers, they *drank* more and more into the mind, and diſpoſition of Chriſt; which expreſſion alluded to the wine uſed in the Lord's ſupper. Therefore as the body is one, and hath one common intereſt, though it conſiſt of many members: ſo they were to be conſidered as incorporated by faith in Chriſt, and the ſupply of his Spirit: and if they had all poſſeſſed the ſame gifts, they would have more reſembled a detached member, or ſeveral of the ſame kind, than an organized body.

15 If the foot ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the ſmelling?

18 But now hath God ſet the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleaſed him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot ſay unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more thoſe members of the body, which ſeem to be more feeble, are neceſſary:

23 And thoſe *members* of the body, which we think to be leſs honourable, upon theſe we beſtow more abundant honour? and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comelineſs.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

25 That there ſhould be no ſchiſm in the body; but *that* the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another.

26 And whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Chriſt, and members in particular.

V. 15—26.] This being ſtated, they might ſee the abſurdity of their emulations, covetings and murmurs: for, in caſe there could be a diſtinct conſciouſneſs in each of the members of the human body; and the foot, diſſatisfied with its lowly, laborious, and uſeful ſtation, ſhould covet the function and the powers of the hand; and complain that, as this was not granted, it could not be deemed a part of the body, or at all regarded in it: would not every one ſee that this would be falſe and frivolous? The ſame would be the caſe, if the ear ſhould repine, becauſe not placed in the office, and poſſeſſed of the powers of the eye. For if every part of the body were formed into an eye; where would be the important ſenſe of hearing, &c? Inſtead of ſuch monſtrous productions God hath wiſely, and kindly placed the members, ſenſes, and organs in the human body, as it pleaſed him; and unſpeakably better, than any ſelf-conceited counſellor could have directed. Inſomuch that the idea of every member coveting to be the moſt honoured part, is aſſociated with that of the deſtruction of the body. For that neceſſarily conſiſts of many different members, ſo formed, and placed, as to become one regular whole. Thus, the eye could not contemptuouſly deny, that it wanted not the aſſiſtance of the hand; for without its power of executing, even viſion would be of ſmall value. Nay the head itſelf, the ſeat or ſource of ſenſation and reflection, wants the help of the feet, to convey it about from place to place. Nay this appears ſtill more, in reſpect of thoſe parts, which ſeem feeble, and yet are abſolutely neceſſary to life, or to the well-being of the whole: ſuch as the various veſſels, by which digeſtion, nutrition, and circulation are carried on; and by which nature throws off whatever is redundant, or detrimental. So far in fact are the more honourable parts of the body from appropriating the whole of a man's regard, that the contrary often takes place. And thoſe parts, which we are accuſtomed to conceal, as leſs honourable, are covered and decorated with the greateſt care and expence. For thoſe, that are deemed moſt honourable, do not want ſuch decoration, being comely in themſelves. Thus hath God regulated and proportioned matters in the human body; as an emblem, that the feebleſt believer, ſhould have the moſt care and pains taken with him by his brethren. This was appointed, that there might be no ſchiſm, contention, or diviſion in the body; no emulation, mutual contempt, or murmurs; (as was the caſe among the Corinthians:) but that the members ſhould reciprocally have the ſame care of each other, as of themſelves. So that, if any part of the body be wounded, diſeaſed, or pained, all other parts ſympathize with it, and ſhare the ſuffering; and, on the other hand, they all ſeem to rejoice, and ſhare the pleaſure of that member, which is in health and at eaſe, or which is employed in any honourable or beneficial ſervice.

V. 27—31.] The apoſtle here applied his ſimilitude to the caſe to be illuſtrated. The church was the myſtical body of Chriſt: and believers were particular members of that body. In placing theſe members, God, of his ſovereign wiſdom, had conſtituted ſome of them in the firſt, and moſt honourable office of apoſtles; to whom eſpecially he had "given the word of wiſdom," for the inſtruction of mankind. Next to them he had placed ſome as prophets, who gave particular inſtructions by immediate inſpiration, as by "the word of knowledge:" and after them he had ſtationed paſtors, and teachers to ſuperintend and inſtruct particular congregations, or to preach occaſionally in other places. Beſides the gifts, and authority conferred on theſe perſons; other chriſtians were endued with the power of working miracles, and of healing the ſick; others were qualified

28 And God hath ſet ſome in the church, firſt apoſtles, ſecondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diverſities of tongues.

29 *Are* all apoſtles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all ſpeak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earneſtly the beſt gifts: and yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way.

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to attend, and be aſſiſtant to the apoſtles in their labours, or to help the paſtors in the office of deacons, as well as in various other ſervices. Some were qualified to preſide in, and manage the ſecular affairs of the church, as governors; having a talent for taking the lead in ſuch matters, ſo as to be uſeful to the whole: or they were ſuitable perſons to be left in authority by the apoſtles, when they were forced away from newly planted churches; that they might ſet in order ſuch things as were wanting, and ſo ſupply the apoſtles lack of ſervice among them: whilſt others were beſt qualified, by ſpeaking a variety of tongues, to attempt the converſion of ſuch nations, as had not yet heard the goſpel. But would it be proper that all chriſtians ſhould be apoſtles, prophets, teachers, &c? As this evidently was not the caſe: ſo, if it could be thus ordered; the church would be like a body, that was all eye, all tongue, &c: like an army, conſtituted wholly of general officers; or like a kingdom of all rulers. The Corinthians indeed coveted earneſtly the beſt gifts, or ſuch as were deemed moſt ſplendid and honourable: but the apoſtle was about to ſhew them a more excellent way; even that of love, (c. xiii;) which would influence them to be content with their gifts, and to be principally zealous in making an uſeful improvement of them. Our tranſlation indeed renders the clauſe as an exhortation; but it may with equal exactneſs be tranſlated, "ye do "covet earneſtly," &c; and ſo imply a reprehenſion of their carnal ambition; and this certainly coincides beſt with the argument of the apoſtle.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt acute ſpeculators are often moſt ignorant in practical matters: they, who are moſt elated with the gifts beſtowed on them, are commonly moſt forgetful of the Giver, and the uſe of them: and ſpiritual gifts have generally been the great ſupport of ſpiritual pride. In order to repreſs this hateful diſpoſition, we ſhould often recollect what we are by nature and practice: for though we have not been carried after dumb idols; yet we were by nature children of wrath, even as others; we have idolized worldly objects; and moſt of us have been actually the enemies of God by wicked works, after which we were carried, even as ſatan, the world, and the fleſh led us. If then we have any knowledge of the truth, or any ability to communicate it; we muſt give the whole glory to God. There have been many pretenders to inſpiration, or extraordinary illumination, of one kind or other; but all ſuch appearances muſt be counterfeit in thoſe, who refuſe the Lord Jeſus thoſe perſonal, or official honours, which he claimed to himſelf. For what do ſuch men, but call Jeſus accurſed? They may pretend to ſpeak of him as a good Man, or a Teacher: but whilſt they reject his prieſthood, and deny his Deity, his Oneneſs with, and Equality to the Father; what do they leſs than charge him with blaſphemy and impoſture in advancing ſuch claims; and with abetting idolatry, in teaching all men to honour him, even as they honour the Father? And do they not in effect juſtify the Jewiſh rulers for putting him to death, as an Anathema, "for ſaying "I am the "Son of God?" Can ſuch men ſpeak by the Holy Ghoſt, or according to the language of inſpiration? But if indeed we can from our hearts ſay that Jeſus is the Lord; if we adore him with Thomas, ſaying my Lord, and my God; and if we as ſinners truſt in and obey him as our divine Saviour, Teacher, and King; we may be ſure that we profeſs this faith "by the Holy Ghoſt;" though we cannot explain the manner, in which he hath wrought this conviction in us; and though we be deſtitute of all other ſpiritual gifts. This when genuine is moſt valuable; it may indeed be counterfeited by ſuch as ſay, "Lord, Lord, but do not the things that he ſays;" but the very language is that of the Holy Ghoſt, and may profit others; though the ſpeaker be condemned as a hypocrite. We do not expect miraculous gifts; but the word of wiſdom, and of knowledge, and divers ſpecial endowments by the ſame Spirit, according to our different ſervices to the ſame Lord; and that we may be the inſtruments in thoſe operations of the ſame God, who worketh all in all, may yet be expected by us. Whatever ſtation therefore is allotted us, and whatever abilities we poſſeſs for the duties of that ſtation; we ſhould remember, "that they were given us to profit withal." Even a capacity to ſpeak in the moſt proper, and ſcriptural manner upon any, or every topic of religion, will not profit a man; except he have grace, humbly and ſimply to improve his talent for the edification of others, without ſeeking his own glory therein. Such endowments will indeed infallibly expoſe the poſſeſſor to many additional temptations: and as he will need a larger meaſure of grace to keep him humble and ſpiritual; ſo he will probably meet with a more abundant ſhare of painful experiences, and humiliating diſpenſations. We have therefore little cauſe to envy thoſe, who are eminent in abilities, and popularity; to covet ſuch dangerous diſtinctions; to glory in any meaſure of them beſtowed on us; or to deſpiſe ſuch as are deſtitute of them. Theſe things have ruined many; who being lifted up in pride, have come ſhort of that ſalvation, which they preached to others: they have betrayed many into ſuch evils, as have cauſed them to terminate their days in diſgrace, and diſtreſs: and even the few, who have not apparently been injured by their eminency in gifts, and popularity; have generally had more to relate concerning "thorns in the fleſh, and "meſſengers of ſatan to buffet them;" than their more obſcure, and leſs admired brethren had any conception of.

We ſhould therefore firſt enquire whether we have been baptized into the body of Chriſt by his regenerating

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1ſt. The inſufficiency, and comparative worthleſſneſs of gifts, and miraculous powers, without love, 1---3. 2d. The excellent properties, and effects of love, 4---7. 3d. Its abiding nature, as not only ſurviving man's preſent imperfect knowledge, but even faith and hope alſo; being even greater than thoſe valuable bleſſings, 8---13.

THOUGH I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I beſtow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to

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Spirit? And whether we are drinking into his Spirit, by receiving daily from his fulneſs? If this be our privilege we ſhould be thankful for ſo valuable a diſtinction: we ſhould contentedly occupy the place, which it hath pleaſed the Lord to aſſign us in his church: we ſhould conſider the relation, that we ſtand in, to the Head and to every member of this myſtical body: we ſhould ſeek to have our hearts filled with love to the whole, and to every part of the church of Chriſt: we ſhould eſtimate ſoberly the functions of our ſtation, and expect to be enabled to perform them: we ſhould watch againſt pride, ambition, envy, diſcontent, ſelfiſhneſs, contempt of others, &c: and thus we ſhould ſeek the good of the church, of our own ſphere of action, and of every individual, by properly improving our talents, and performing the duty of our ſtation. If ſituated in the loweſt place, we ſhould not diſdain its ſervices, as if not worth performing: if advanced to a higher ſtation; we ſhould not fancy, that we ſtand not in need of the prayers, and help of our feebleſt and moſt obſcure brethren: theſe too are eſſential to the perfection of the whole: and if we think otherwiſe, we only ſhew our ignorance in ſpiritual anatomy. Nay, we ſhould guard, and take care of the weak, and feeble believer; even as the God of nature hath, with exquiſite ſkill and kindneſs, defended thoſe parts of the body, which, though eſſential to life and health, might otherwiſe eaſily have been wounded, and deſtroyed: and we ſhould cover with affectionate attention, the infirmities, and uncomelineſs of thoſe, whom we deem real believers, and who are expoſed to diſgrace, and contempt; that ſo the more abundant honour may be given to that part which lacked; ſeeing the more honurable of our brethren have no need of ſuch aſſiſtance and ſupport. Though our kind Creator hath effectually provided, that there ſhould be no ſchiſms in our natural bodies: yet he hath for wiſe reaſons ſeen good to make trial of the members of the myſtical body of Chriſt, in this reſpect: and through the remainder of error and ſin in real chriſtians; through the intruſion of hypocrites among them, and through the artifices of the enemy, many diſgraceful and lamentable diviſions ſtill prevail. In proportion as the members of Chriſt have not the ſame care of others, as of themſelves, theſe effects will follow: for if we filled up our ſeveral places in entire, and equal love; there could be no more envyings, jealouſies, murmurs, vain-glory, ſelf-ſeeking, or diſregard of others, than there is in heaven: we ſhould in that caſe every one reciprocally care for all the reſt: we ſhould ſympathize with, and aim to help, the afflicted, tempted, diſtreſſed, or fallen believer; we ſhould feel ourſelves ſharers in the diſgrace and reproach of the poor and needy: we ſhould deem ourſelves honoured and proſpered, in the reputation, ſucceſs, and uſefulneſs of our more diſtinguiſhed brethren: we ſhould rejoice in the conſolation of ſuch, as were glad in the Lord. The meaneſt chriſtian would not then repine, or envy the moſt exalted; but rejoice and bleſs God on his account: the moſt eminent would not diſregard the meaneſt; but would peculiarly endeavour to encourage, and help him. Thus the good of the whole and of every part, would be the uniform object of all, in whatever ſtation they were placed, without any exception; and with the ſubordination of all perſonal intereſts, and ſatisfactions to this ſuperior end. Inſtead of coveting earneſtly the higheſt ſtations, or the moſt conſpicuous gifts: inſtead of acting, as if all were to be apoſtles, prophets, teachers, and rulers: we ſhould then unreſervedly leave the appointment of his inſtruments to God, and thoſe, whom he works by in his providence: and we ſhould chooſe the more excellent way of love; endeavouring to occupy with our pittance of ability, for the good of our brethren; till our Lord come: remembering, that they will not be moſt applauded at that time, who affected the chief places; but they, who were moſt faithful to the truſt repoſed in them, and moſt diligent in their Maſter's work.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—3.] The more effectually to expoſe the radical error of the Corinthians, in valuing ſo highly ſpiritual gifts, and in uſing them in ſo ſelfiſh a manner; the apoſtle in this chapter declares them to be comparatively nothing, and love to be every thing. He had told them, that he would ſhew them a more excellent way; he here averred, (as concerning himſelf, that it might give the leſs offence;) that if he could ſpeak all the variety of human languages moſt perfectly; and if he could diſcourſe in them with the eloquence of angels; or even if he could uſe their heavenly language: yet without charity he ſhould only reſemble the unmeaning noiſe of the moſt common, and leſs harmonious muſical inſtruments. Nay could he alſo deliver prophecies, which ſhould in due time be verified by the moſt ſignal accompliſhment: if he could underſtand, and even comprehend all divine myſteries; if he were poſſeſſed of all the natural and religious knowledge imaginable; and if he could exerciſe that ſpecial faith on Chriſt's power, by which miracles were wrought, to ſuch a degree, that even mountains ſhould literally be removed at his word, to the univerſal aſtoniſhment of mankind: yet without charity he ſhould be nothing, not a chriſtian at all; and be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Charity ſuffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

ſo far beneath the meaneſt believer upon earth. Nay, if from pride, oſtentation, or ſimilar principle, he ſhould give all his goods to feed the poor, even to the ſtarving of himſelf: or if from party zeal, and obſtinate attachment to a ſyſtem, he ſhould give his body to be burned as a martyr, yet without charity he could be nothing better than a deluded hypocrite; and he ſhould derive no benefit from theſe things. The apoſtle meant to ſhew in the ſtrongeſt inſtances imaginable, that nothing could prove a man a true believer, who had not charity. Some of the caſes he ſtates cannot be ſuppoſed to have ever exiſted: yet it ſeems evident from ſcripture, that a man might have the largeſt degree of that faith, by which miracles were performed, without any of that faith, that worketh by love: and that it is poſſible for a man to expend all his wealth in alms, and die a martyr for the truth, without ſaving grace! The word *charity* has been of late ſo appropriated to one external expreſſion of love; which yet may be produced from other principles: that it is deſirable for the word *love* to be here inſerted, according to the exact meaning of the original; in order to render the paſſage more intelligible to common readers.

V. 4—7.] The properties of love, which are here enumerated, ſhew that the apoſtle primarily intended thoſe exerciſes of that holy affection, which reſpect mankind. Yet it is equally evident that no natural benevolence, which ſubſiſts in an unbeliever's heart, can at all anſwer to the deſcription here given. We muſt therefore conclude, that he meant that love, which is the fruit of the Spirit in the believer's heart; the effect of regeneration, the chief principle by which faith worketh. The humbled penitent, obtaining pardon and peace by faith in Chriſt, finds his ſelf-confidence, and his attachment to the world, to be broken down: he has alſo been taught to love the perfections, the holineſs, and the cauſe of God; the perſon, truth, and precepts of Chriſt, and his image in his people: he alſo learns to love his neighbours, and even his enemies, after Chriſt's example, and in obedience to his commands; and he now deſires that they ſhould all be happy, and God be glorified in their ſalvation. This love therefore includes all parties, nations, and characters, in its expanſive exerciſe; though ſtill capable of more particular attachments: it regards both the temporal and eternal intereſts of mankind; and the external comfort, as well as ſpiritual advantage of believers: and in ſubordination to the love of God, it ſeeks to promote the benefit of mankind, and the peace and proſperity of the church, as it's grand objects. This love is the unequivocal evidence of regeneration; and it is a better touchſtone of men's profeſſed faith in Chriſt, than even the love of God; becauſe its effects may more eaſily be examined, and there is leſs danger of falſe affections in it. It was alſo that part of the chriſtian temper, in which the Corinthians were peculiarly defective: and the apoſtle therefore very properly choſe this ſubject, to ſhew them, how low an eſtimate ought to be made of their religion. We muſt alſo obſerve that he deſcribed love, as a man would gold, by enumerating its properties in the abſtract. Wherever it ſubſiſted, it had thoſe properties, whether its quantity were ſmall or great: and by this a man might eſtimate his own attainments in real religion. Some love might exiſt, where great remains of ſelfiſh paſſions obſtructed its exerciſe; (as a little gold may be mixed with a large alloy of baſe metal:) but it would then become leſs evident, and the man's ſtate more dubious. This "love ſuffereth long;" it influences a man, as far as it prevails, to endure the moſt provoking injuries and affronts, for a long time together, without reſentment or retaliation: It "is kind," even to ſuch injurers; perſevering in endeavours to overcome evil with good, and delighting in ſhewing kindneſs to all ſorts of perſons by word and deed. "Love envieth not;" as far as it rules in the heart, it repreſſes our natural pride and ſelfiſhneſs, and cauſes us to rejoice in the comfort, advantage, and honour even of that man, whom nature would regard as an enemy, or a rival. "Love vaunteth not itſelf;" it is an humble, unoſtentatious principle: It never prompts a man to boaſt, to puſh himſelf into notice, to prefer himſelf to others; to act with raſhneſs, and inſolence, or in an overbearing dogmatical ſpirit. "It is not puffed up:" it never leads a man to be elated by endowments, offices, applauſe or popularity; for where love prevails theſe are only regarded and valued as means of good to others, communicated from God, to whom all the honour of them belongs. "Love doth not behave itſelf unſeemly:" it guides a man to a gentle, beneficent, courteous, compaſſionate, reſpectful conduct, ſuited to his rank, ſtation, employment, relative duties, age, &c: and thus it preſerves him from thoſe glaring improprieties of behaviour, into which pride, and ſelfiſhneſs betray others; for he who is influenced by love, will keep the good of mankind continually before him as his object; and this will reſtrain him from thoſe evil tempers, and indecencies, which counteract his grand deſign. "Love ſeeketh not her own:" it never prompts men to ſeek their own eaſe, intereſt, credit, or indulgence, except in ſubordination to the welfare of others, and the glory of God; and it does not allow them at all to ſeek any ſelfiſh end, in the uſe of their gifts and talents, which are conferred on them to profit others withal. "Love is not eaſily provoked;" it is not paſſionate and furious, any more than revengeful; it does not readily take offence, even at many or great affronts; which pride and ſelf-love would deem intolerable. "Love thinketh no evil:" it is unſuſpect-

8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether *there be* knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away.

9 For we know in part, and we propheſy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childiſh things.

12 For now we ſee through a glaſs, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.

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ing, and not apt to impute men's conduct to bad motives without evident proof: it can therefore never prompt a man to invent, or circulate ſlanders, to believe malicious reports, or even needleſſly to expoſe the faults of others; but it will rather influence him to extenuate, or conceal them. For "love rejoiceth not in iniquity:" it is not gratified, (as pride and malevolence are,) with the report of men's vices and follies; but it influences a man to weep over it, and to deſire that it ſhould be found erroneous: "but love rejoiceth in the truth;" love excites joy in the heart, when the triumphs of the truth, and the holy lives of ſuch as profeſs it, are mentioned; or when aſperſed characters are vindicated, by the truth being made known; or when perſons of any ſort act with truth, ſincerity and integrity. "Love beareth all "things:" it *covers* all faults, as far as other duties will admit; it bears with the infirmities and miſtakes of others, with candour and kindneſs; and it ſubmits to any inconvenience chearfully, which this forbearance impoſes. "Love believeth all things:" it diſpoſes a man to believe the moſt favourably of all men, till the contrary be proved; to act as counſel for the accuſed; and even to credit a man's apologies for his faults, his profeſſions of repentance, and his purpoſes of amendment. "Love "hopeth all things:" it prompts a man to hope the beſt of another's character, and intentions, that the caſe will fairly allow him; to hope for the converſion of the ſinner, or the recovery of the back-ſlider; to proceed with hope in his attempts to do good to the moſt profligate, obſtinate, and ungrateful; and it allows no man to deſpair of others, to be wearied out by their perverſeneſs, or to give over all endeavours for their good. In this deſire and hope of finally ſucceeding, at leaſt in ſome inſtances, "Love endureth all things:" it prompts a man to bear any poverty, reproach, perſecution, hardſhip, ſuffering, or even death, in ſeeking to do good to the bodies and ſouls of men, after the example of Chriſt, and in obedience to his commandments. It is obvious to every attentive reader, that in this beautiful deſcription of the properties and effects of love, the apoſtle meant to ſhew the Corinthians, that their conduct had, in moſt particulars, been an entire contraſt to it.

V. 8—12.] The love, which the apoſtle recommended, is alſo moſt valuable, becauſe, "it never faileth:" it never loſeth it's value, or excellency; it will never be changed for any other thing; nor will it ever fail out of that heart, in which it hath taken root. On the other hand, even prophecies would fail: the Spirit of prophecy was ſoon withdrawn from the church; the inſtructions given by the prophets, from immediate revelation, ſoon were ſuperſeded by more ordinary methods; and even the prophecies of the ſcripture will all ſhortly be accompliſhed, and, having anſwered their end, will be of no further uſe. The gift of tongues was of no long continuance in the church; and in heaven no acquaintance with human languages will be of any value. That philoſophical knowledge, on which the Corinthians prided themſelves, ſoon vaniſhed as a dream: and even that kind and degree of religious knowledge, which are acquired on earth, will, as it were, be extinguiſhed by the perfect knowledge of heaven; as the light of the ſtars, by the blaze of noon. Here indeed the ſervants of God "knew "in part, and ſo propheſied in part;" they had a ſmall portion of his ways, works, and counſels made known to them: but when the perfect diſcoveries of another world ſhall be made, all this will be done away, as the uſeleſs taper in the day-time. This might be illuſtrated by the difference between the apprehenſions of a child, and thoſe of a man. The apoſtle could recollect, that when he was a child, he had talked in a childiſh, and unſuitable manner, about the affairs of men; and he had conceived of them, been affected by them, and reaſoned about them with much ignorance, and miſapprehenſion: but when he became a man, he not only put away his toys and childiſh purſuits, but his childiſh manner of ſpeaking, thinking, and judging; as one aſhamed of the impertinence and folly, that had mixed with, and confuſed even the little knowledge, which he had acquired. Thus when on earth, he could only conceive and ſpeak as a child about divine things, when his preſent knowledge was compared with that of heaven: and though he was preſerved from all poſitive error; yet he was aware, that he ſhould find his views of them inadequate, unſuitable, and widely different from the real nature and glory of thoſe ſublime objects of contemplation. For he could here only ſee them "through a glaſs, darkly;" as by the imperfect reflection of a mirrour; or in the obſcure deſcription of a riddle. This view of them by faith, through the medium of revelation, is ſuited to, and ſufficient for the preſent ſtate; but it is inadequate, confuſed, and obſcure, compared with that view of them, which is obtained by thoſe, who "ſee face to face;" and have an immediate, intuitive, and complete diſcovery, of God, of Chriſt, and heavenly things. So that the apoſtle's knowledge of a part of God's glories, truths, and purpoſes, would be as nothing, when he came to know, even as "he was known;" and to perceive thoſe objects with that clearneſs, fulneſs, and adequate conception of them, which correſponds to the perfect knowledge of God himſelf, as far as a finite mind can comprehend infinity.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe *is* charity.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Exhorting the Corinthians to follow after love, and to deſire ſpiritual gifts, eſpecially that of prophecy, 1---5. 2d. Illuſtrating by ſimilitudes the uſeleſſneſs of ſpeaking in an unknown tongue; exhorting them to ſeek each others profit, and that of ſtrangers, in the conducting of their public aſſemblies; and ſhewing the proper uſe of the gift of tongues, and the peculiar advantages of propheſying, &c. 6--25. 3d. Giving directions for the orderly conducting of their aſſemblies; requiring the women to attend in ſilence; reproving the oſtentation and pride of ſome teachers among them; and commanding all things to be done decently, and in order, 26---40.

V. 13. *And*, &c.] Not only was love more excellent, and more enduring than all ſpiritual gifts, miraculous powers, or prophetical diſcoveries &c: but it even far exceeded in value all other chriſtian graces. After the ceaſing of ſupernatural gifts in the church, faith, hope, and love would abide to the end of the world, as the three principal graces, that diſtinguiſhed chriſtians from other men; and as inſeparably connected with, and promoting the exerciſe of, all other holy diſpoſitions; which indeed were in ſome ſenſe included in them. Faith receives God's teſtimony concerning inviſible things, &c, appropriates his inſtruction, and applies for his ſalvation, by looking to, and relying on the divine Redeemer: hope expects the promiſed bleſſings, as iſſuing in eternal life; and thus "is the anchor of the ſoul," keeping it ſtedfaſt in obedience, and patient waiting, amidſt every kind of oppoſition and diſcouragement: and love to God, and to mankind for his ſake, as before deſcribed, is the active principle of all thoſe willing ſervices, in which the chriſtian benefits his generation, by the will of God. Theſe three abide, and muſt abide, as eſſential to godlineſs, under every diſpenſation, and in every age; whatever other changes take place: but "the greateſt of theſe is love." Not that love can do the office of faith, in juſtifying the ſinner &c; any more than the eye can perform the function of the ear: nor can this love be found in any man, who is not partaker of faith and hope. But theſe are the means, by which a proud, ſelfiſh, carnal, condemned criminal is brought to love a reconciled God, and to love men for his ſake: they are, as the ſcaffolding, without which the building cannot be erected; yet the building is more valuable than the ſcaffolding, and when that is completed the other will be taken down, as of no more uſe. For love is the very nature and image of God; the bond of perfection, the eſſence of holineſs, and the fulfilling of the law. Faith and hope are only requiſite for us, as ſinners, in this imperfect ſtate: faith will therefore ſoon be loſt in viſion, and hope in fruition: but perfect love will flouriſh for ever, the buſineſs, element, joy, and glory of heaven itſelf; uniting God and all holy creatures, in the moſt perfect harmony and felicity, without the leaſt alloy of any contrary principle, through all the ages of eternity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Splendid abilities, extenſive learning, admired eloquence, and exact knowledge in the myſteries of God, may be poſſeſſed by a proud and ſelfiſh man; who is as a ſounding braſs, or tinkling cymbal in his moſt complete diſplays of theſe conſpicuous endowments. Indeed the powers, or eloquence of angels, and all imaginable gifts of miracles or prophecy, cannot demonſtrate a man to be any better than Balaam, or Judas: and even the moſt aſtoniſhing liberality, or patient fortitude under perſecution, even to tortures and death, may ſpring from other principles, than love; and in that caſe they will avail nothing before our heart-ſearching Judge. How then are they deluded, who expect acceptance and reward for thoſe good works, which are as ſcanty in their degree, as they are corrupt and ſelfiſh in their principle! And how are even chriſtians often faſcinated, to admire oſtentatious eloquence, gifts, and abilities; and to undervalue honeſt, ſimple, and unadorned love, which ſeeks only to do them good! But where does this heavenly love reſide, which the apoſtle ſo warmly panegyrizes? Is ſhe returned to heaven, being wearied out with our contentions, and ſelfiſhneſs? Or does ſhe dwell in ſome obſcure retreat, at a diſtance from the diſputes of the world, and of the church? Certainly ſhe is but ſeldom ſeen amongſt us, has but few votaries, and little influence; and is treated with ſtrange neglect on earth! Alas numbers, who might be ſuppoſed to be ſomewhat, if we only looked at their talents, knowledge, and zeal; appear to be nothing, or very little, if love be the touchſtone of their characters. Indeed this chapter may be conſidered as an anſwer to the wrangling pamphlets of angry diſputers about religious truth, of different names and ſentiments. Many of theſe ſeem incapable of long-ſuffering, or kindneſs to any, but their own party: envy, boaſting, railing, ridicule, ſlander, and acrimony, are the prominent features of the portrait, which they exhibit to the view of the public. In the moſt unſeemly manner they trumpet their own praiſes, vent their own reſentments, expoſe and triumph over their opponents, forget all decent regard to every kind of ſuperiors, and turn religious inveſtigation into a vain-glorious, ſcurrilous and ſelfiſh conteſt for victory, and not for truth. It is evident, that many of this ſtamp are eaſily provoked, and hardly pacified; that they think evil of others, and rejoice in detecting the faults, and follies of thoſe, who differ from them. In ſhort, the attentive obſerver will perceive that every part of the apoſtle's definition of love forms a complete contraſt to the conduct of many, who in different ages have had numerous admirers, for their zeal, and ability, in contending for the ſentiments, or forms of theit own ſect or party. But alas, we need more love, than we generally poſſeſs, to animadvert on ſuch abuſes, without being betrayed into a meaſure of imitation of them. Let us then rather enquire, whether this divine love inhabit and influence our hearts? Have we learned to ſuffer long and to be kind? Are we taught to repreſs envy, and to rejoice in the ſuperior reputation,

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FOLLOW after charity, and deſire ſpiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may propheſy.

2 For he that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue ſpeaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man underſtandeth *him*; howbeit in the Spirit he ſpeaketh myſteries.

3 But he that propheſieth ſpeaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himſelf; but he that propheſieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all ſpake with tongues, but rather that ye propheſied: for greater *is*

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and ſucceſs of our brethren? Hath love inſtructed us "in honour to eſteem others better than ourſelves," and cured us of inſolence, raſhneſs, and oſtentation? Hath this divine principle guided us into a becoming behaviour to our ſuperiors, equals, inferiors, opponents, competitors, friends, relatives, and all orders of men in the church or the community? Have we attained the habit of giving up our own intereſt or inclination, whenever the good of others requires it? Can we bear affronts, without being eaſily provoked? Are we diſpoſed to be unſuſpecting, to mourn over the ſins of others, to bear with their infirmities, dulneſs, and perverſeneſs: to believe, hope, and endure all things for their ſakes? If ſome ſparks of this heavenly flame have been kindled in our hearts; we know that there is much of a contrary nature to counteract its efficacy. Here then is a call for watchfulneſs, diligence and prayer; that our "love "may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in "all judgment;" and that our ſelfiſh nature may be more entirely ſubdued, and mortified. Hence we ſhall alſo ſee ſtill more our need of the cleanſing blood of Chriſt: and ſhall learn to walk humbly before God, and to bear with others; as conſcious that we need the patience of forbearance both of our Lord, and of our brethren. Yet, if this love be planted in our hearts, (though as an exotic in an unfriendly ſoil and climate;) it will never fail, but will certainly grow up to maturity: and it will flouriſh abundantly, when prophecies ſhall have ceaſed, and when human ſcience and eloquence ſhall have vaniſhed away; and when even our higheſt attainments in divine knowledge, in this preſent world, which are indeed very ſmall, compared with thoſe of the apoſtle, will appear like the liſpings, the imaginations, and the reaſonings of a little child. But, if that feeble, indiſtinct view, which we obtain by faith, in the mirrour of God's word, be ſo delightful, as we have ſometimes found it; with what raptures ſhall be ſeen face to face, and know "even as we are known." Let us then put away the childiſh things, which amuſed us in an unconverted ſtate; for ſo we now clearly ſee them to have been: let us learn to value things according to their intrinſic worth, and not, as children, admire all that glitters, whether it be gold or tinſel: let us ceaſe from our childiſh diſputes about mere externals, and non-eſſentials; that we may value, and ſeek an increaſe of faith, hope and love from the Giver of all good gifts: and whilſt we contend, that faith alone can juſtify the ſinner, by forming his relation to the Saviour; and that hope alone can ſupport the ſoul, amidſt all the trials of life and death: let us ſtill remember, that Love is ſtill greater than theſe uſeful and needful graces; being the evidence of our title to eternal life, and the meetneſs for, and earneſt of that holy, and unſpeakable felicity, (1 *John*, c. iv. ver. 7—21.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1—5.] Having ſhewn the excellency of love, the apoſtle exhorted the Corinthians to follow after it, as the great object of their unremitting purſuit, in preference to all other things: and then they would do well to deſire ſpiritual gifts, that they might be enabled to be uſeful to their brethren: eſpecially they ſhould value "the gift of propheſying." By this the apoſtle ſeems to have meant, an immediate communication from the Spirit of God, concerning the meaning of the holy ſcriptures, or ſome point of doctrine or practice, in which the church, or individuals wanted inſtruction, at the time. This was a gift beſtowed on ſeveral of them, by which they became occaſional, or extraordinary teachers in the church; and it ſeems to have generally been accompanied by the gift of predicting future events, when circumſtances required it. The Corinthians ſeem not to have valued this gift ſo much as that of ſpeaking with tongues, or of working miracles, becauſe it was leſs ſhewy: but the apoſtle inſtructed them, that it was greatly to be preferred *by them*, becauſe more uſeful, in their ſituation. For he, who ſpake in a language, which the hearers underſtood not, did not ſpeak to men, but to God only; nor would others receive any benefit, though under the impulſe of the divine Spirit, he ſpake the moſt ſublime myſteries of the goſpel, in the moſt ſuitable words. Whereas, he, that propheſied, ſpake to men, to edify them in divine truth, to exhort them to holy practice, or to comfort them under their manifold trials. Indeed he, who ſpake in an unknown tongue, might derive inſtruction, and benefit from his own words, and his faith might be eſtabliſhed by the exerciſe of this miraculous gift; in caſe he was not elated with pride, and influenced by oſtentation. But he that propheſied would edify numbers, even the whole company of believers preſent, which would be far more deſirable. As the apoſtle rejoiced in every thing conducive to their proſperity, he deſired that they might all be endued with the gift of tongues; but ſtill more, that they ſhould all be capable of inſtructing others, by the gift of propheſying; for the prophet was certainly a more honourable, and uſeful perſon, than he, who ſpake with tongues, except the latter were alſo endued with the gift of interpreting his diſcourſe into the language underſtood by his hearers, that ſo the church might be edified by what he ſpake. This was not generally the caſe: for a man might be miraculouſly enabled to ſpeak in one, two, or more languages, that he had never learned: and yet being left ignorant of others; he might be unable to explain his meaning to thoſe, who neither underſtood the language he that propheſieth than he that ſpeaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you ſpeaking with tongues, what ſhall I profit you, except I ſhall ſpeak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by propheſying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving ſound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a diſtinction in the ſounds, how ſhall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battle?

9 So likewiſe ye, except ye utter by the tongue words eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken? for ye ſhall ſpeak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, ſo many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without ſignification.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I ſhall be unto him that ſpeaketh a barbarian, and he that ſpeaketh *ſhall be* a barbarian unto me.

12 Even ſo ye, foraſmuch as ye are zealous of ſpiritual *gifts*, ſeek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue,

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he ſpake in, nor that which was his native tongue. Or to counterpoiſe this diſtinction, which tended ſo much to elate the poſſeſſors; they might be left incapable of giving utterance with propriety, perſpicuity, or promptitude, ſuited to a public aſſembly, even in their native tongue, to thoſe divine truths, which they ſpake fluently in another language, under the influence of the Holy Spirit: and another man might be miraculouſly enabled to underſtand, and interpret into the language of the audience, what was thus ſpoken, who yet himſelf might be unable to ſpeak fluently in the language, which he interpreted; for even in ordinary caſes, underſtanding a language, and being able to ſpeak fluently in it, are very diſtinct attainments.

V. 6—12.] To convince the Corinthians of what he had aſſerted, in the moſt inoffenſive manner, the apoſtle put the caſe, that when he came next to Corinth, he ſhould only diſplay his gift of ſpeaking in a variety of languages among them; and he enquired, of what uſe his viſit would be to them? Surely of none; except he ſpake intelligibly, either by immediate revelation from God, or by ſome prophetical meſſage ſuited to their caſe, or concerning ſome doctrine in which they wavered, or were miſtaken. Unleſs, in ſome of theſe ways, (which indeed it is difficult for us to diſtinguiſh with exactneſs,) he gave them clear inſtructions: all that he could ſay in unknown languages would be an unmeaning noiſe. For even lifeleſs things, that are uſed to give ſound, ſuch as muſical inſtruments, could give no direction to thoſe, who were to ſing or dance to them, unleſs a proper diſtinction was obſerved in the ſounds made by them: and if the trumpet ſhould be blown at random, without any diſtinction between that ſound, which called the combatants to the field, and others; what ſoldier could underſtand when to prepare himſelf for the battle? If then an intelligible diſtinction of ſounds was neceſſary, in the ordinary concerns of life, much more muſt they be ſo in thoſe of religion. For unleſs they uttered ſignificant, and intelligible words, how could the hearers underſtand what was ſpoken? They might as well ſpeak in an empty room, or an unfrequented deſert, where their words would be loſt in the air, and never reach an human ear. There might indeed be as many languages in the world, as there were different regions, or as there were perſons in their congregation at Corinth: and each of theſe would be ſignificant to the perſons, who were accuſtomed to it. That circumſtance therefore ought to be conſidered; otherwiſe, even in ordinary converſation, the ſpeaker and hearer, who underſtand not each other, would reciprocally be as barbarians to each other; however expreſſive, polite, and copious, the languages were, in which they ſpake; and they would be more likely to deſpiſe each other, than to be profited by, or ſatisfied with the interview. As in the common concerns of life it was ſo requiſite for men to underſtand each other: even ſo the Corinthians, amidſt their zeal for ſpiritual gifts, ought to act conſiſtent with common ſenſe, and deſire to excel in thoſe things, by which they might edify the church; and not in ſuch as could only procure them irrational admiration.

V. 13—19.] If any of them muſt needs ſpeak in an unknown tongue amongſt their brethren; let them pray to be endued alſo with the gift of interpreting what was ſpoken; that it might not be a mere oſtentatious diſplay of their powers, without meaning or uſe. Suppoſing the apoſtle ſhould come and pray, as the mouth of the congregation, in an unknown tongue; his ſpirit might indeed be very devoutly engaged in the worſhip of God: but, as others could not underſtand him; ſo his own underſtanding would be unfruitful, having no juſt and proper exerciſe, and producing no benefit to his fellow-worſhippers. What would then be the proper inference from this obſervation? Truly, he would therefore pray from the fulneſs of his ſpiritual affections; and in the ſober exerciſe of his underſtanding alſo, by uſing ſuch words as might edify others, and enable them to join with him. In like manner when he ſang the praiſes of God, he would endeavour to have his ſpiritual affections engaged as much as poſſible; yet he would alſo conſider, as a rational man, what language would be beſt underſtood by the congregation. But if any of them, neglecting this dictate of my ſpirit prayeth, but my underſtanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo: I will ſing with the ſpirit, and I will ſing with the underſtanding alſo.

16 Elſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ſpirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned ſay Amen at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt?

17 For thou verily giveſt thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I ſpeak with tongues more than ye all:

19 Yet in the church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an *unknown* tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children in underſtanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in underſtanding be men.

21 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I ſpeak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, ſaith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a ſign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, but propheſying *ſerveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all ſpeak with tongues, and there come in *thoſe that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not ſay that ye are mad?

24 But if all propheſy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt; and ſo falling down on *his* face

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common ſenſe, ſhould celebrate the praiſes of God, and return thanks for his mercies, in the moſt ſpiritual and fervent manner; but in an unknown tongue: how could he who occupied the place of a private believer, who had neither learning, nor the gift of tongues, give his aſſent to the thankſgiving, by ſaying, *Amen*, as was cuſtomary among them? For in fact he had not underſtood any thing which was ſpoken. The one might give thanks in a very proper manner: but the other could derive no benefit from it. Many indeed of the Corinthians ſuppoſed themſelves to excel in this particular gift, and were pleaſed to make a ſhew of it: but the apoſtle thanked God, that he ſpake with tongues more than they all, and was enabled to preach in more languages: the whole praiſe of which he gave to the Lord. Yet he had rather utter five words, or the ſhorteſt inſtructive ſentence, amongſt believers in the public aſſembly, in a rational manner, ſo that others might underſtand him, and be edified by what he ſaid; than irrationally to ſpeak ten thouſand words, or the moſt copious diſcourſe, in an unknown tongue, which could be of no uſe to them. Had the apoſtle lived about the Era of the reformation, and written expreſſly againſt the church of Rome; he could not more emphatically have expoſed the abſurdity and wickedneſs, of worſhipping God, and performing all public ſervices in Latin, of which the common people underſtand not one word. No wonder the rulers of that church lock up the ſcriptures alſo in an unknown tongue; ſeeing they muſt otherwiſe bear too evident a teſtimony againſt them.

V. 20—25.] Theſe intimations of the ignorance and childiſhneſs of the Corinthians, who were ſo diſpoſed to ſelf-wiſdom, are very remarkable. As they profeſſed to have much knowledge, let them not be children in underſtanding: for it was really as trifling and vain in them thus to make a parade of the gift of tongues, merely to amuſe, or aſtoniſh thoſe, who could not underſtand them; as any of the competitions, and amuſements of little children could be. Let them indeed be as infants in reſpect of malice, being of a gentle forgiving diſpoſition, without reſentment, or rancour: but let them act as grown men in underſtanding, as thoſe that were matured in judgment and experience, and capable of acting with propriety and wiſdom in their whole conduct. In the law, or in the Old Teſtament, God had foretold, that he would ſpeak to offending Iſrael, by men of other lips, &c, and yet even then they would not hear him. (*Deut.* c. xxviii. v. 49. *Iſaiah*, c. xxviii. v. 11.) This ſeems primarily to have related to the languages of thoſe foreign nations, by whom God intended to execute vengeance on Iſrael: but it might alſo denote, that he would inſtruct them, by perſons endued with the gift of tongues, for their conviction of the truth. Wherefore this gift, when exerciſed amongſt ſuch, as did not underſtand what was ſpoken, was to be conſidered rather as a rebuke, than a favour: but in its proper uſe, it was intended for a ſign to unbelievers, and in order to their converſion: whereas propheſying was more immediately intended for the edification of believers. Yet the gift of tongues might be ſo abuſed, as even to prove exceedingly injurious to unbelievers, which ought to be taken into the account. If therefore, the whole church of Corinth ſhould be aſſembled in one place; and they ſhould all, who were able, ſpeak with tongues, ſeveral at once, and others in ſucceſſion; whilſt the reſt underſtood not what was ſpoken: and if any perſon, uninſtructed in chriſtianity, or not believing it, ſhould come in, to make his obſervations; would not ſuch irrational and confuſed proceedings confirm his prejudices, and cauſe him to conclude, that they were a company of madmen, or frantic enthuſiaſts! But if they all propheſied, and one ſtated, he will worſhip God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a pſalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

27 If any man ſpeak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the moſt *by* three, and *that* by courſe; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep ſilence in the church; and let him ſpeak to himſelf, and to God.

29 Let the prophets ſpeak two or three, and let the other judge.

30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace.

31 For ye may all propheſy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets.

33 For God is not *the author* of confuſion, but of peace, as in all churches of the ſaints.

34 Let your women keep ſilence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as alſo ſaith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them aſk their huſbands at home: for it is a ſhame for women to ſpeak in the church.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

37 If any man think himſelf to be a prophet, or ſpiritual, let him acknowledge that the

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or occaſional teacher after another, ſpake by the Spirit of God, in a pertinent, inſtructive, or convincing manner; on ſome point of doctrine or practice: ſuch a perſon coming in among them, would hear ſomething from every ſpeaker to convince his underſtanding, to awaken his conſcience, and to move his affections: he would find his ſecret objections anſwered, his ſecret thoughts divulged, his ſecret ſins reproved, and the real ſtate of his heart and ſoul made known to him, though before they were unperceived. Such means might therefore be expected, by the divine bleſſing, to produce a full perſuaſion of the truth and excellency of the goſpel: ſo that, it would often happen, that the curious, or ignorant deſpiſer would be ſuddenly changed into a humble worſhipper; and that under the power of his deep conviction, he would even proſtrate himſelf in adoration of the living God, and confeſs He was evidently preſent in the midſt of the aſſembled chriſtians.

26—33.] How then were their public meetings ordered? And how ought they to be conducted? When they came together, all, who were endued with ſuch gifts, were ready eagerly to ſeize the opportunity of exerciſing them: ſo that one would begin to ſing a pſalm, or ſpiritual ſong; another to diſcourſe on ſome doctrine, another to ſpeak in an unknown tongue, another to declare ſome ſpecial revelation, that had been made to him; or another to interpret what had been ſpoken. So that ſeveral of them would be ſpeaking at the ſame time, in different parts of the aſſembly: and whilſt every one was more deſirous to be heard, and admired, than to hear and be edified, the whole ſcene became confuſed; and the great end of their coming together was overlooked. As a general rule, by which ſuch abuſes might be remedied, they ſhould always take care, that all things might be done with a view to their common edification. If then any of them choſe to ſpeak in an unknown tongue; let no more than two, or at moſt three, one after another, exerciſe this gift, at one meeting; and let ſome one interpret their diſcourſe. But if none preſent were enabled to do this, let him, who was about to ſpeak in an unknown tongue, be ſilent; and be content, on proper occaſions, to ſpeak to himſelf and to God, in meditation and prayer; without obtruding his unintelligible diſcourſe upon the congregation, who ought to be more profitably employed. Let the prophets alſo ſpeak by two or three, at the ſame time meeting in due order; and let thoſe prophets eſpecially, who were ſilent, exerciſe their judgment upon what was ſpoken, to determine whether it accorded with the ſcripture; as falſe prophets would creep in among them. In caſe any thing ſhould be immediately revealed to one, who ſat by, that required their preſent attention; let the firſt, on a proper intimation given, keep ſilence, 'till that had been conſidered: or, as ſome render it, let the other wait, till the firſt have done ſpeaking. For they need not to be eager to ſpeak firſt; ſeeing, by properly waiting, they might all propheſy, (who had that gift,) and all be edified. Nor could it be urged, that the divine impulſe upon their minds conſtrained them to ſpeak immediately; as the frantic heathen prieſteſſes did: for the ſpirits of the prophets, (their minds when moſt powerfully influenced by the Holy Ghoſt;) were ſubject to their government, and might be reſtrained, directed, and regulated by reaſon and judgment, as at other times. As that gracious God, whoſe Spirit ſpake by them, was by no means the author of confuſion, and diſorder, ſuch as muſt enſue from the vehement utterance of many ſpeakers at once, vying with each other, who ſhould attract moſt attention; but of peace, harmony, mutual love, and good order: as was evident in the conduct of all the churches of the ſaints, in this, and other particulars.

V. 34, 35.] (c. xi. v. 3—16.) To reconcile theſe verſes with the ſcripture referred to, it ſeems moſt natural to ſuppoſe, that ſome of the Corinthian women were uſed to ſpeak publicly, when not under any immediate impulſe of the Holy Spirit; and perhaps they interrupted the other ſpeakers by enquiries or objections, according to the diſputatious ſpirit that prevailed. The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to propheſy, and forbid not to ſpeak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

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apoſtle therefore laid it down as a general rule, (to which the foregoing caſe was the only exception,) that they were not to be allowed to ſpeak in the public congregation, or to aſſume the office of teachers, or diſputants: for this by no means conſiſted with the obedience to their huſbands, which the law of God inculcated. (*Gen.* c. iii. v. 16.) But if they met with any thing in the public inſtructions, which they could not underſtand, or aſſent to; let them wait till they went home, and then aſk their huſbands about it; who were ſuppoſed able and willing to inform them, and who were the moſt proper perſons for them to confer with. For it was inconſiſtent with modeſty, and propriety, and would be ſcandalous among their neighbours, for women to make a practice of diſcourſing in the public aſſemblies.

V. 36—40.] The abuſes here reproved were peculiar to the church at Corinth: yet they deemed themſelves a model for others to imitate! Was then their's the mother church, from whom the preachers of the goſpel had firſt come forth? Or had the word of God reached them alone? As it was evident neither of theſe was the caſe: and as many churches had been planted before them, why did they preſume to ſet themſelves up above, or againſt the wholeſome regulations, obſerved elſewhere? Indeed ſome one, or more of their ambitious teachers might be ſtrenuous in ſupporting the innovations, which he had introduced; profeſſing that he was a prophet, and a ſpiritual man, who need not to be thus tutored: and if he really was ſo, let him ſhew it, by acknowledging theſe things to be the commandments of Chriſt by his apoſtle. But if any man were, or pretended to be ignorant of Paul's apoſtolical authority, and of the obligation of theſe inſtructions; let him continue ignorant, for he would enter into no further debate with ſuch a man: yet let not others countenance him. Upon the whole therefore, the apoſtle exhorted them to deſire to propheſy, in preference to all other ſpiritual gifts, yet not to forbid the ſpeaking with tongues: but let all things relative to their public aſſemblies, be regulated with a ſtrict regard to decorum, propriety, and regularity; as this muſt tend moſt to their own edification, and the credit of the goſpel among unbelievers; as well as be moſt honourable and acceptable to God. To adduce this text in any argument about the external ceremonies uſed in divine worſhip, (which always appear decent and orderly to thoſe, who invent and impoſe them, and the contrary to thoſe, who diſſent from them,) is doubtleſs wreſting it from its proper meaning.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All our purſuits ſhould be regulated by, and ſubordinated to love; which we ought to follow; without wearying, though it ſeem to flee from us. Every endowment or poſſeſſion is valuable in proportion to its uſefulneſs; and all public ordinances ſhould be conducted, as may moſt tend to the edification, exhortation, and conſolation of believers, and the converſion of ſinners. Even fervent ſpiritual affection, muſt be governed by the ſober exerciſe of the underſtanding: or elſe, with the beſt intentions, men will run into the greateſt extravagancies, and diſgrace the truth, which they mean to promote. What ſhall I profit? Or in what reſpect ſhall I be profited? are proper enquiries, when we are conſidering in what manner to conduct our meeting together for religious exerciſes. Miniſters eſpecially, ſhould not only ſtudy to exerciſe their gifts with acceptance, and reputation: but they ſhould in the firſt place enquire, what advantage their hearers may derive from their ſubject, and their manner of treating it. Alas! for want of this many a good ſpeaker, in delivering an eloquent, and admired diſcourſe, is even more unmeaning than "things without life giving ſound:" and if they, who play on muſical inſtruments, made no more exact diſtinction in their ſounds, than many preachers do in their doctrine and exhortation; they would be unfit even to direct the motions of the dancers, much more to call the ſoldier to arm for the battle. Whilſt we exclaim againſt prayers and worſhip in an unknown tongue; and thank God for emancipating us from ſuch an impoſition: we ſhould enquire, whether ſome, who uſe the language of their country, do not affect ſuch elegant phraſes, ſuch ſonorous words, and ſuch learned diſcuſſions; that they render themſelves as unintelligible to the common people, as if they preached in Greek! This is ſometimes in a meaſure the caſe with them, whoſe doctrine is worthy of attention: for as to ſome teachers, obſcurity is the beſt qualification! If we uſe language in any reſpect above the capacities of our moſt illiterate and weakeſt hearers, to pleaſe a few, who are more learned and polite; how ſhall they, who moſt need inſtruction, know what is ſpoken? Indeed it might as well be ſpoken to the air. But if we ſpeak in plain, ſimple, and perſpicuous language, which even children may underſtand, (and this does not imply coarſeneſs and vulgarity,) we may be ſure that the more intelligent part of our audience will be edified, if they are diſpoſed to receive inſtruction. And ſure, a miniſter of Chriſt ſhould more deſire to excel for the edifying of the church; than in order to obtain the character of a polite, eloquent, or learned ſpeaker! Whatever judgment others may form in this matter; all, who are actuated by the love and zeal of the apoſtle, will chooſe to ſpeak five words ſo as to be underſtood, rather than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue: and will wave the diſplay of their natural or acquired abilities from the ſame motive, that the apoſtle did his gift of divers tongues. Whether we pour out our prayers, ſing the praiſes of God, or thank him for his mercies; we ſhould be careful to unite ſpiritual affections with ſober judgment: and they, who lead in ſocial worſhip, ſhould uſe ſuch language, as may affect and inſtruct the meaneſt fellow-worſhipper, and enable him to add his cordial Amen to what is ſpoken. We ſhould indeed be as children in reſpect of malice and revenge; and a childlike docility, ſimplicity, dependence,

CHAP XV.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Declaring the goſpel that he had preached at Corinth, and ſhewing how the reſurrection of Chriſt had been demonſtrated to others, and to him, 1---11. *2d. Proving the reſurrection of chriſtians to be inſeparably connected with that of Chriſt; and that the denial of that doctrine would be ſubverſive of chriſtianity; illuſtrating it by ſimilitudes; anſwering objections to it, and explaining the change that muſt take place in the bodies of believers, &c,* 12---50. *3d. Shewing that a ſimilar change muſt be made in the bodies of ſuch, as ſhall be found living at the day of judgment; and concluding with the triumph of faith and hope over death and the grave; and with an exhortation to ſtedfaſtneſs and diligence in the work of the Lord,* 51---58.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the goſpel which I preached unto you, which alſo ye have received, and wherein ye ſtand;

2 By which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unleſs ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you firſt of all that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins according to the ſcriptures;

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and ſubmiſſion becomes us: but childiſh and ridiculous deviations from the maxims of good ſenſe, and ſober reaſon are unbecoming the diſciples of Chriſt; who ſhould endeavour to attain a ripeneſs in wiſdom and underſtanding, and to walk wiſely towards them, that are without. For though religious ordinances ſhould peculiarly be directed for the edification of believers: yet proviſion ſhould alſo be made for thoſe unbelievers, that may come amongſt us, to make their remarks: nor ſhould any thing be admitted which may reaſonably excite their diſguſt, or needleſſly confirm their prejudices. They are ready enough to deem us mad, and enthuſiaſtic, without our giving them any ground for the charge: and the more willing we are to bear unmerited contempt and reproach, the more careful ſhould we be not to deſerve them. This hath not been ſufficiently attended to, and many things have been ſaid and done, without warrant from ſcripture, by good men, which have ſent away occaſional hearers rivetted in their prejudices againſt the truth, and diſpoſed to ridicule it in every company. But when the word of God is ſoberly ſpoken, with an addreſs both to the underſtanding and the affections, and with a cloſe application to the conſcience; ſuch hearers are often unexpectedly impreſſed, being judged, convinced, and arraigned by what they hear. The very ſecrets of their hearts ſeem to be diſcloſed by the experimental addreſs of the preacher; and they are induced to join in that worſhip which they before deſpiſed; and to confeſs that God is of a truth amongſt thoſe perſons, whom they came to deride.

In all things therefore edification ſhould be aimed at; ambition, emulation, and ſelf-preference ſhould be ſteadily repreſſed: men ſhould be ſwift to hear, and ſlow to ſpeak; more ready to receive, than *forward* to give inſtruction; and willing, (unleſs the caſe require the contrary) to ſpeak to themſelves and to God, leaving others to edify the congregation to better advantage. When profeſſors, who imagine themſelves qualified, and called to be teachers, are ſo full of their ſubject, that they cannot refrain from ſpeaking, however unadviſed, or irregular their conduct may be; it is evident that they are more influenced by ſelf-ſufficiency, and ambition, than by humble zeal and love. For the Spirit of God moves the will and affections, in a manner conſiſtent with the exerciſe of ſober reaſon and diſcretion. "Even "the ſpirits of the prophets were ſubject to the prophets;" and doubtleſs this muſt be at leaſt equally the caſe with inferior teachers. For God is the Author of peace and good order, and not of confuſion: and He never teaches men to neglect their relative duties, to act unbecoming their age, and ſtation, or inconſiſtent with decency and regularity. Indeed ſuch reſtrictions are not always regarded by thoſe, who deem themſelves immediately influenced by the Spirit of God, and more ſpiritual and zealous, than their prudent brethren; yet it behoves them to ſhew, that they are ſo, by acknowledging ſuch regulations to be the commandments of Chriſt, and excellently ſuited to render the worſhip and conduct of his people reſpectable before men, and honourable to him. Whereas deviations from them often lead to ſuch things as are indeed ſhameful; and ſuited to prejudice men's minds againſt the goſpel, as if it diſſolved men's relative obligations, put an end to all regular ſubordination, and taught even women to act inconſiſtent with that modeſty, which is their peculiar ornament, and honour. But if men will remain ignorant of ſuch things, it is not adviſeable to be always debating with them; we muſt leave them, and take heed to ourſelves. However valuable theſe miraculous gifts were in the primitive church; we cannot well read this epiſtle without reſigning to the will of God, in his with-holding them from us. Man's heart is ſo prone to pride, oſtentation and folly; that even ſuch endowments were made occaſions of grievous ſins and offences! Our vain-glory is ſufficiently excited by our inferior, and ordinary gifts, or abilities; which militates greatly againſt our uſefulneſs and peace. We therefore want nothing to increaſe the dangerous malady. Let us then be contented with our preſent means, and methods of inſtruction; let us endeavour to do all things decently and in order; and let us moſt deſire that grace which ſanctifies and humbles the ſoul, and ſo prepares it for heavenly felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—11.] The apoſtle here entered on another ſubject. The Corinthians were tinctured with the Sadducean ſpirit of Jewiſh ſceptics; or rather with the philoſophizing temper of the Grecians, who derided the doctrine of the reſurrection, and denied the poſſibility of it: and ſome even aſſerted virtue to be its own reward, and the expectation of a future recompence to be

4 And that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third day according to the ſcriptures:

5 And that he was ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was ſeen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this preſent, but ſome are fallen aſleep.

7 After that he was ſeen of James; then of all the apoſtles.

8 And laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the leaſt of the apoſtles, that am not meet to be called an apoſtle, becauſe I perſecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was beſtowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore whether *it were* I or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed.

12 Now if Chriſt be preached that he roſe from the dead, how ſay ſome among you that there is no reſurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen:

14 And if Chriſt be not riſen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* alſo vain.

15 Yea, and we are found falſe witneſſes of

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a mean unworthy motive. So that certain perſons began to teach, that there would be no reſurrection; allegorizing, or explaining away what had been revealed or declared to them on that ſubject: though it does not appear that they denied the immortality of the ſoul. In order to ſtop the progreſs of ſo pernicious an error, the apoſtle began by ſtating the ſubſtance of the doctrine, that he had taught them; which they had received by faith as a divine teſtimony; in which he ſuppoſed them ſtill to be ſtedfaſt; and by which they would certainly be ſaved, being already brought into a ſafe ſtate; in caſe they remembered and cleaved to what he had delivered to them: this they would do, unleſs they had believed with a vain, empty, and inefficient faith, in which caſe they might be left to embrace tenets ſubverſive of the whole doctrine of Chriſt. (v. 14—17. c. xi. v. 19.) In the firſt place, and as a matter of the greateſt importance, he had delivered to them, even as he had received it of the Lord Jeſus, that He, the Meſſiah, the Son of God, had died a ſpotleſs ſacrifice of infinite value, for the ſins of all his believing diſciples, according to the types, prophecies, and promiſes of the ſcriptures: that, being really dead, Pilate had delivered his body to Joſeph of Arimathea to be buried; and that on the third day he aroſe again, as had been foretold. To demonſtrate this his reſurrection, on which the whole of his religion reſted, he firſt appeared to Peter; then in the evening of that day, to thoſe of the twelve apoſtles who were aſſembled; and on the evening of the ſucceeding firſt day of the week, when Thomas was preſent, and confeſſed him, as his Lord and God: that afterwards he appeared to above 500 diſciples at once in Galilee, moſt of whom had been ſtill preſerved to be living witneſſes of that great event; though ſome had fallen aſleep, having died in faith and hope, and ſo departed to be preſent with their Lord. Afterwards James was favoured with a viſit from his riſen Saviour: probably this was James the ſon of Alpheus, who wrote the epiſtle; but we have no other account of this appearance of Chriſt. Then he was ſeen of all the apoſtles, before, and at his aſcenſion: and laſt of all he had graciouſly manifeſted himſelf to Paul alſo, in ſuch a manner, that he could not but know aſſuredly, that he was Jeſus, who had been crucified. In this he had acted with peculiar condeſcenſion and mercy; becauſe he was ſo vile and worthleſs, that he was more properly to be deemed *an untimely birth*, or an *abortion*, than in any way entitled to expect ſuch diſtinguiſhed favour. In this reſpect he conſidered himſelf as the leaſt of the apoſtles, and unworthy to be numbered among them, ſeeing he had ſo wickedly, and cruelly perſecuted the church of God; (though in gifts, and authority he was not a whit behind the chiefeſt of them.) However, by the rich mercy, and powerful grace of God, he was at length brought to be a chriſtian, and an apoſtle, and to be employed in many important ſervices: nor was this diſtinguiſhing favour ſhewn him in vain; ſeeing he had been conſtrained by the love of Chriſt and of ſouls to labour more abundantly, than all the other apoſtles. Yet this was not to be aſcribed to him, or to any thing in his natural diſpoſition more towardly than others; but wholly to the grace of God, that was with him, which wrought both the willing mind, and gave him the ability, thus to abound in the work of the Lord. As therefore all the apoſtles had been witneſſes of Chriſt's reſurrection; ſo both they and he had every where preached the ſame doctrines. Theſe were then to be conſidered as the grand peculiarities of chriſtianity, which could not be denied, without virtually attempting to ſubvert the whole ſyſtem. Several other appearances of Chriſt, after his reſurrection, have been conſidered in the evangeliſts; but this account mentions circumſtances not before recorded, and it illuſtrates that important ſubject.

V. 12—19.] If then all the apoſtles preached the reſurrection of Chriſt, as an undoubted fact, a fundamental doctrine, and the great demonſtration of the truth of the goſpel: how was it that ſome of the Corinthians ſhould venture to declare, that no reſurrection of the dead was to be expected? Probably they argued againſt the poſſibility, or credibility of ſuch an event; and then endeavoured to put a figurative conſtruction upon it. This was in reality a denial of Chriſt's reſurrection: for that authenticated fact demonſtrated the poſſibility of the dead being raiſed; it confirmed all that he had

God; becauſe we have teſtified of God that he raiſed up Chriſt: whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not.

16 For if the dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt raiſed:

17 And if Chriſt be not raiſed, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your ſins.

18 Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.

20 But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, *and* become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept.

21 For ſince by man *came* death, by man *came* alſo the reſurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Chriſt the firſt-fruits; afterward they that are Chriſt's at his coming.

24 Then *cometh* the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he muſt reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

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taught about that doctrine; and it was an earneſt of the reſurrection of all believers, (*John*, c. v. ver. 24—29. c. xi. v. 25, 26:) and to invalidate the reſurrection of Jeſus would ſubvert chriſtianity itſelf. For that was the grand proof that he was the Meſſiah; it evinced the acceptance of his atonement; and it made way for his aſcenſion, interceſſion, and mediatorial kingdom. The whole therefore of the apoſtle's doctrine was ſo connected with the reſurrection of Chriſt; that if that could be diſproved, their preaching would have been evinced to be empty, uſeleſs and deluſory, and the faith of their hearers groundleſs and unprofitable. Yea they would have been convicted of bearing falſe witneſs in ſo ſacred a cauſe, as if God had needed ſuch baſe frauds to ſupport religion in the world! And, notwithſtanding all the miracles wrought by them, their ſelf-denying labours, holy lives, and patient ſufferings unto death, it would be proved, that they combined together to deceive mankind with a moſt egregious falſhood! For the general propoſition, "that there is no reſurrection," concludes in it that particular one, "that Chriſt is not riſen:" and the reſurrection of others can only need a continuation of that ſame omnipotent exertion, which raiſed him from the grave. But if Chriſt were not riſen, their faith was vain, and "they were yet in their ſins:" as no repentance, or reformation could poſſibly take away their guilt; (for otherwiſe theſe had been effected;) and nothing could prove that Chriſt's atonement had been accepted, except his reſurrection from the dead. Nay further, they who had died in the faith, and fallen aſleep in Jeſus, whether by a natural death, or as martyrs, were certainly periſhed in their ſins, if Chriſt were not riſen: for whatever might be urged on other grounds for the immortality of their ſouls; there could be no other way of forgiveneſs, acceptance, and eternal life, but through the merit of his ſacrifice, the belief of which could not conſiſt with the denial of his reſurrection. And if the conſolations derived from the hope and earneſts of another life were to be thus torn from them, and they were allowed no other benefit from Chriſt, than what related to this preſent life; they would be of all men moſt miſerable. Some explain this wholly of the apoſtles, as expoſed to peculiar hardſhips, and ſufferings, and as peculiarly guilty in propagating an impoſture, if indeed Chriſt were not riſen. But there ſeems no proof, that this reſtriction was intended; nor on the contrary would it follow, that chriſtians were in fact more unhappy than other men, if there ſhould be no future reward; for even then, their hopes of it, and that conſolation which is thence derived, would counterbalance their peculiar trials, ſelf-denials, and hardſhips: but if this hope, and conſolation were torn from them; they would indeed be more miſerable than other men; having loſt their reliſh for thoſe vain pleaſures, which alone could be hoped for; experiencing earneſt deſires, which muſt certainly be diſappointed; and enduring many peculiar evils without any peculiar ſupport, and conſolation. But as the caſe really is, chriſtians have not only the hope of a future felicity, (which even if groundleſs muſt afford much conſolation, whilſt it prevailed;) but they have the earneſts, the beginnings, and firſt-fruits of it, in thoſe holy affections towards God, and that joy in him, which a ſtranger intermedleth not with: and therefore they are ſo far from being of all men moſt miſerable, that they of all men enjoy the moſt ſolid comfort, amidſt all their difficulties and trials, and even in the ſeaſons of the ſharpeſt perſecution. Many of the Corinthians were not aware what dangerous inferences were fairly deducible from the tenet, they had liſtened to: and their falſe teachers would doubtleſs diſavow them: yet it was proper thus to expoſe them, that they might be put upon their guard, and not patronize opinions pregnant with ſuch miſchief to the ſouls of men, and ſo deſtructive of the animating hopes and comforts of all believers.

V. 20—28.] In oppoſition to theſe errors, the apoſtle teſtified, as one inveſted with authority, that aſſuredly Chriſt was riſen from the dead, as had been proved by the moſt infallible evidence; and was become the firſt-fruits of the whole harveſt of thoſe, that *ſlept* in death, even of all believers, that had died from the beginning, and of all, that ſhould die to the end of the world. He was the firſt, who aroſe to die no more; and the moſt illuſtrious of all, who ever ſhould ariſe: He aroſe as a public Perſon, as the Surety, the Repreſentative, and the Fore-runner of his ſaints: his reſurrection was a pledge, and aſſurance of their's; and as the firſt-fruits, preſented to God, to ſanctify and ſecure his bleſſing up-

26 The laſt enemy *that* ſhall be deſtroyed is death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he ſaith, all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifeſt that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

29 Elſe what ſhall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead riſe not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

30 And why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour?

31 I proteſt by your rejoicing which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead riſe not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

34 Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin not; for ſome have not the knowledge of God: I ſpeak *this* to your ſhame.

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on, the whole crop. For as by man ſin and death entered into the world; ſo by Man, by One in human nature, came the reſurrection of the dead: and as, in conſequence of their union with, and relation to Adam, all are born mortal, and at length die; even ſo, in, and by Chriſt ſhall all be made alive. All men indeed, through his undertaking, being placed under a diſpenſation of mercy; ſhall be raiſed from the dead, that their future ſtate may be accordingly determined: yet none will be finally benefitted, but they, who are united to him by faith; and of theſe the apoſtle particularly treats in this chapter. But this reſurrection muſt be effected in an orderly manner, according to the appointment of God: Chriſt himſelf hath been the firſt-fruits: hereafter, at his coming, his redeemed people will be raiſed before others; and at laſt the wicked will ariſe alſo. (1 *Theſ.* c. iv. ver. 14—18.) Then the end of this preſent ſtate of things will arrive: and the ſolemnities of the final judgment being concluded; Chriſt will deliver up the Mediatorial kingdom to God, even to the Father, from whom he received it; having previouſly put down all authority, and power, which have been placed in oppoſition to his cauſe, and kingdom. For He muſt reign, till all enemies be ſubjected to him; for thus it had been predicted, and the ſcripture cannot be broken. (*Pſ.* cx. v. 1.) Of theſe enemies death will be the laſt that will be put under the Redeemer's feet: when he hath finally delivered all his people from this univerſal conqueror, and entirely deſtroyed him. For when it is ſaid, that Jehovah hath put all things under the feet of Chriſt; it is evidently meant of *all creatures*, and with an exception of the great Creator, who put all things under him: ſo that, when all things ſhall be ſubdued to the incarnate Son, and the end of his mediatorial, and delegated authority ſhall be thus completely anſwered; then will the Son himſelf, as Man and Mediator, be ſubject under Him, who hath put all things under him; all the power and authority will be acknowledged to have been of God, and all the honour will be referred to him; His abſolute kingdom ſhall then ſuperſede the Mediatorial kingdom of Chriſt; that God may be acknowledged, and glorified, "as all in all;" the firſt great cauſe, and the laſt end in every thing, and the object of univerſal adoration, and obedience, &c. The diſtinction between the mediatorial kingdom of Chriſt, and the abſolute, univerſal, and everlaſting kingdom of God, is every where implied in ſcripture. The Father, as the Head of the abſolute kingdom, ceaſed not to reign, when the Son was advanced to the mediatorial throne: that authority was only intended to endure for a time, in order to accompliſh certain important ends, to the glory of God in man's ſalvation. At the day of judgment this kingdom will be terminated: Chriſt, having executed his commiſſion, will ceaſe to reign over all worlds as Mediator, having publicly delivered up the kingdom to God in the perſon of the Father: yet he will, in human nature retain a peculiar authority over his redeemed people: and as One with, and equal to, the Father, he will, with Him, and the Holy Spirit, reign One God over all, bleſſed for evermore: nor will he any more ceaſe to reign *in this ſenſe*, when he hath given up the mediatorial kingdom; than the Father ceaſed to reign, when he appointed the Son to that kingdom. For in this paſſage, as in ſome others, the Perſon of the Father is mentioned, as filling the throne, and appointing the Mediator; in order to diſtinguiſh that abſolute authority of God, from the delegated authority of the Son in human nature.

V. 29—34.] The apoſtle having ſhewn the order, and event of the general reſurrection of the dead, proceeded to ſhew ſtill further the importance of a firm belief of it. The expreſſion "baptized for the dead," has given occaſion to a variety of ingenious conjectures, and learned diſcuſſions: but it ſeems to refer to the caſe of thoſe, who preſented themſelves for baptiſm, immediately after the martyrdom of their brethren, or at their funerals; as if freſh ſoldiers ſhould enliſt, and preſs forward to the aſſault, to ſupply the places of thoſe, who had fallen in the battle: for thus they profeſſed their faith in Chriſt, and ventured the rage of their enemies, at the very time, when others had been put to death for the truth. But what advantage could they propoſe to themſelves from ſuch a conduct, if there were no reſurrection? Or what wiſdom could there be in ſo doing? For in this caſe, chriſtianity itſelf would loſe the great evidence of its truth; even the immortality of the ſoul might be called in queſtion; believers were yet in their ſins; and they, who had died as martyrs had loſt their ſouls as well as their lives! This might ſhew the Corinthians how greatly their ſentiment tended to diſcourage men from profeſſing the goſpel in times of perſecution;

35 But ſome *man* will ſay, How are the dead raiſed up? and with what body do they come?

36 *Thou* fool, that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that body that ſhall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of ſome other *grain:*

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath

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and to make them afraid, and aſhamed to own the cauſe of Chriſt. If this were the caſe, why did chriſtians in general, or the apoſtles and evangeliſts in particular, live in continual jeopardy, or danger of ſuffering and death, by their open profeſſion of the goſpel, and their zeal in promoting it? They could have no ſufficient encouragement for ſo doing, if the dead aroſe not. The apoſtle could proteſt in the moſt ſolemn manner, “ by *their* rejoicing,” or his rejoicing with them, and on their account; (ſeveral copies read it “ *our* rejoicing;) that he “ died daily:” he was every day expoſed to the peril of martyrdom, he expected that violent death continually; and his manifold hardſhips and ſufferings rendered his life a kind of lingering execution. To all this he had nothing to oppoſe but the joyful hope, and bleſſed earneſts of future felicity, through his crucified, and riſen Lord; and the pleaſure of bringing others to ſhare the ſame ſalvation: which, *upon their principles*, muſt prove a mere deluſion. What profit then could he derive from his late perils at Epheſus, if the dead would not ariſe: he had there “ after the manner of men,” or “ *humanly ſpeaking*,” even “ fought with wild beaſts.” It is not probable that the apoſtle literally fought with wild beaſts in the public ſhews: ſuch an event could ſcarce have been paſſed over unnoticed by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apoſtles. As a Roman citizen he would ſcarce have been expoſed to ſuch an indignity: and the expreſſion “ after the manner of men,” favours the figurative interpretation. But the irrational fury of his enraged enemies, with the extreme danger to which he was thereby expoſed, might very properly be repreſented as a conteſt with ſavage beaſts of prey. His conduct in ſtedfaſtly perſevering to profeſs and preach the goſpel abundantly demonſtrated, that he moſt firmly believed that doctrine, with which all his hopes and comforts were inſeparably connected. Whereas the epicurean maxim, “ let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;” (let us indulge every ſenſe and appetite without reſtraint, and ſhrink from all hardſhip, as much as poſſible, for death will ſoon terminate our pleaſures, and nothing further is to be expected;) would be the natural inference from a denial of the reſurrection, when carried to its unavoidable conſequences. Let none then be deceived by the ſpecious reaſonings, and pretences of their falſe teachers: for even a heathen poet, (Menander,) could teach them, that ſuch “ evil communications;” or the familiar converſe of thoſe, who inculcated ſuch falſe and pernicious principles, would “ corrupt their good manners;” and tend to ſelf-indulgence, an undue regard to their preſent eaſe, intereſt, or reputation, and a diſpoſition to neglect their duty, conceal their ſentiments, and avoid ſuffering for Chriſt's ſake. Indeed they had already produced theſe effects in many inſtances, and were diffuſing their baleful influence. He muſt therefore call upon them to “ *awake righteouſly*,” in a righteous manner, and as became righteous perſons, from the lethargy, into which theſe deluſions had thrown them: for whilſt they were ſo elated with an opinion of their ſuperior knowledge, it was evident that ſome among them had not the humbling, ſanctifying, and ſaving knowledge of God: and their communications corrupted the good manners of the reſt. This muſt be ſpoken to their ſhame, and it behoved them to be humbled for, and aſhamed of it; as better things might have been expected from them, conſidering the opportunities, which they had enjoyed, and the profeſſion they had made. It is evident, that the apoſtle conſtantly aimed to bring the Corinthians to a more humble opinion of themſelves, and gradually to draw them off from their falſe teachers.

V. 35—38.] The philoſophizing ſceptics concerning the reſurrection, were ready, (as the apoſtle well knew,) to enquire in what manner the dead could be raiſed, after their bodies had been turned to duſt, mixed with other ſubſtances, and even become a part of other bodies? And if this were poſſible, with what bodies would they come forth from the graves? With ſuch as they had on earth, or with others, of another form, and conſtitution? Such an enquirer the apoſtle addreſſed as a fooliſh, and ignorant man; who pretended to limit omnipotency; and to deny the poſſibility of an event, becauſe he could not ſolve all difficulties about it, and comprehend in what manner it could take place. Even the ordinary productions of the earth exhibited a proceſs, which might tend to illuſtrate the ſubject: for the ſeed ſown in the ground does not vegetate except it corrupt, and die. Some modern diſciples of theſe Corinthian objectors have maintained againſt the apoſtle, that the ſeed does not die in vegetation; becauſe the *germen* lives, and expands itſelf; and only the extraneous matter corrupts. But in fact the ſeed, as ſuch, doth die: it ceaſes to be a grain of corn, and can no more be uſed as ſuch; though a part of it ſprings as it were into new life, by a proceſs, which we can no more fully comprehend, than we can the manner of the reſurection: ſo that the body ſown is not the ſame, which will be, when it hath ſprung up, and produced the full corn in the ear; but a bare grain of wheat, barley, or other corn. This, (after corrupting in the earth,) by the wonderful power of God, ſprings up, and produces an increaſe; and he gives that increaſe a body, as it pleaſeth him, by his creating energy: yet, whatever elſe is changed, he always gives every ſeed its own body, and ſo preſerves a complete diſtinction between the different kinds of vegetable productions. Thus the bodies of believers, after corrupting and turning to duſt, will be raiſed in a new and more glorious form; not in every reſpect the ſame that they were, but far ſuperior, and more excellent. This will be done in the infinite wiſdom, according to the ſovereign will, and by the Almighty power of God; but in a manner inexplicable to us. The identity of the ſame particles of matter, as nepleaſed him, and to every ſeed his own body.

39 All fleſh *is* not the ſame fleſh: but *there is* one *kind of* fleſh of men, another fleſh of beaſts, another of fiſhes, *and* another of birds.

40 *There are* alſo celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtrial: but the glory of the celeſtial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terreſtrial *is* another.

41 *There is* one glory of the ſun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars: for *one* ſtar differeth from *another* ſtar in glory.

42 So alſo *is* the reſurrection of the dead. It is ſown in corruption; it is raiſed in incorruption:

43 It is ſown in diſhonour; it is raiſed in glory: it is ſown in weakneſs; it is raiſed in power:

44 It is ſown a natural body; it is raiſed a ſpiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a ſpiritual body.

45 And ſo it is written, The firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul; the laſt Adam *was made* a quickening Spirit.

46 Howbeit that *was* not firſt which is ſpiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is ſpiritual.

47 The firſt man *is* of the earth, earthy: the ſecond man *is* the Lord from heaven.

48 As *is* the earthy, ſuch *are* they alſo that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, ſuch *are* they alſo that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly.

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ceſſary to the reſurrection of the ſame body, is no where mentioned in ſcripture: and this chapter ſeems greatly to militate againſt ſuch an opinion. God hath many other ways of preſerving perſonal identity: the ſame particles do not conſtitute our bodies for two hours together, in any one part of our lives: yet we are the ſame perſons, both in body and ſoul, from childhood to old age. So that there is no need to clog the doctrine with this opinion, which furniſhes infidels with their moſt ſpecious objections againſt it.

V. 39—44.] The fleſh of different animals is very differently conſtituted, produced, and ſupported; yet we cannot comprehend the manner, in which the Creator hath made and preſerves this difference; though it is evidently intended to fit them for their ſeveral kinds of life, their divers elements, nutriment, and uſes, &c. Cannot he then raiſe our bodies, ſuited to the ſtate intended for them, conſiſtent with our perſonal identity, and in a manner inexplicable to us? The ſame varied wiſdom and power of God hath formed celeſtial, as well as terreſtrial bodies: but the celeſtial appear far more ſplendid than the terreſtrial: yet even among the former, there are different degrees of glory, as they are in themſelves, or as they appear to us. The ſun is far more glorious than the pale moon: yet the reflected light of the moon far exceeds that of the remote ſtars; and ſome of them ſhine more bright than others. Thus alſo will it be, in the reſurrection of the dead; the bodies of the righteous will appear as much more glorious, than they now do, as the heavenly luminaries excel a clod of the earth; yet will they ſhine with different degrees of ſplendour, as the ſun, moon, and ſtars do. The body, in this mortal ſtate, and as laid in the grave, "is ſown in corruption;" it tends to corruption, and after death it is ſpeedily waſted, and decayed: but at the reſurrection, it will be raiſed in incorruption; without any ſeeds of mortality, diſeaſe, or decay in its conſtitution; but fitted for a ſtate of perfect health, vigour, and activity to all eternity. Here, during life, at death, and in the grave, the body is ſown in diſhonour: it lives as a condemned criminal; various ſufferings and diſeaſes are the forerunners of the execution, which takes place at death, with much ignominy and diſgrace: and the waſting ſtate of a dead corpſe is very diſhonourable in itſelf; though the death and burial of Chriſt has ſanctified the grave to all believers, and his reſurrection hath aſſured us, that the body ſhall be raiſed in glory: the triumph over death and the grave will be honourable: the body will be rendered moſt beautiful, and glorious; it will be made fit for that heavenly felicity, and thoſe employments, in which angels are to be aſſociated; and it will reſemble the glorious body of the Lord Jeſus himſelf, the firſt-born from the dead. "It "is alſo ſown in weakneſs: our manifold diſeaſes, and death in which they terminate, are peculiar evidences of human imbecillity; and the ſtate of the body in the ground, devoured by worms, a loathſome object, and turning to the duſt, ſhews moſt affectingly how little all men's power and abilities can do for them: but the body of a believer will not only be raiſed by Almighty power; it will alſo be endued with a power of which we have no conception, and be rendered capable of ſuch motions, and of producing ſuch effects, as utterly ſurpaſs whatever we have heard, ſeen, or perhaps imagined. In ſhort the body is here ſown a *natural*, or an *animal* body: it reſembles the bodies of animals in its wants, appetites, pains, and diſeaſes; and after death it turns to duſt, as they do: but hereafter it will be raiſed a ſpiritual body, capable of the ſpiritual work, worſhip, and happineſs of heaven; entirely refined from all its ſenſual droſs, and low deſires; needing no more food, reſt, ſleep, or recreation; no longer capable of reliſhing animal pleaſures; and no more a clog to the ſoul, but an help-meet to it, in all holy exerciſes. For there is a natural body, ſuited to our ſtate on earth, and a ſpiritual body ſuited to the heavenly ſtate; nor can theſe be in every reſpect the ſame.

V. 45—49.] In the hiſtory of the creation it was written, "that the firſt man Adam was made a living

50 Now this I ſay, brethren, that fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery; We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump: for the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.

53 For this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal *muſt* put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where *is* thy ſting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

“ ſoul;” which natural life had been communicated to all his poſterity, but without the ſpiritual life originally connected with it; ſo that ever ſince the fall, the very mind of man had been carnal, as well as his body mortal. But “ the laſt Adam,” the latter Surety or covenant head of any of the human race, “ *was* a quickening Spirit:” the Author, and ſource of ſpiritual life, and holineſs to all his people, by the ſupply of his Holy Spirit. Nor does this quickening energy relate only to their ſouls; for he will alſo quicken and change their mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in them. But the natural and carnal ſtate in both caſes preceded the ſpiritual: we are born in ſin, bearing the image of the firſt Adam; and are afterwards born again, to bear the image of the ſecond Adam; the ſoul continuing *numerically* and *identically* the ſame, though new created: in like manner we firſt have a natural and mortal body like that of Adam, and at length we ſhall have an incorruptible and ſpiritual body, like that of Chriſt; yet it will be in one ſenſe the ſame body, equally our's, though in another ſenſe it be changed. The firſt man was formed of the duſt of the earth, and was earthy in his nature and original: but the ſecond Man, to whom all believers are united and conformed, “ is the Lord from “ heaven,” the Lord of glory, Jehovah, God in human nature. As long as we are conformed to the earthy Adam, which in reſpect of our bodies will be till the reſurrection, we are earthy; our bodies during life are groſs, animal, and diſeaſed; and after death, they turn to the duſt, whence they were taken: but when we ſhall be conformed to the heavenly Adam, our bodies will become heavenly, and ſuited to that ſpiritual and immortal felicity, to which we ſhall then be admitted. Even the apoſtle, and all chriſtians had borne the image of the earthy Adam; but they had the aſſurance of God's promiſe, that they ſhould at length bear the image of the heavenly Adam; not only in thir ſouls, but in their bodies alſo, which would be raiſed very different in their appearance and capacities than they were, when on earth; and thus all philoſophical objections were ſhewn to have their foundation in ignorance of the ſcriptures, and of the power of God, (Notes, *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 29, 30.)

V. 50—54.] The ſame change muſt alſo be made in the bodies of thoſe, who ſhall be found alive at the day of judgment: for fleſh, and blood, the human body in its preſent form, and groſs manner of ſubſiſtence, and with its preſent animal wants, propenſities, and infirmities, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, or partake of its pure and refined pleaſures: nor can corruption, or the body as mortal, corruptible, and inſtrumental to ſo much ſin, inherit incorruption, or the incorruptible, and unchangeable felicity of heaven. The apoſtle therefore declared to the Corinthians a myſtery, which could not be known, except by immediate revelation, or underſtood except by faith receiving that revelation. Speaking of the whole multitude of believers to the end of time, as conſtituting one family, to which he, and the Corinthians belonged, he might ſay, “ *We* ſhall not all “ ſleep”, or die, “ but we ſhall all be changed.” As the apoſtle elſewhere ſpeaks of himſelf, as one of thoſe, who ſhould be “ *raiſed up* by Jeſus, (2 *Cor.* c. iv. ver. 14;) ſo there can be no ground for the ſuppoſition, which many have formed from his language, that he expected to live till the coming of Chriſt, which he judged to be very near: and the notion of others that he alluded to the *firſt* reſurrection previous to the millenium, is inconſiſtent with the language of the paſſage: for they, who died 1700 years ago, as much “ ſleep in Jeſus,” though they ſhould ariſe immediately; as they do, who ſhall remain in the ſtate of the dead till the general reſurrection. The apoſtle therefore only meant to ſpeak of himſelf, as belonging to that one family, of which moſt would die, and be raiſed again; and all muſt one way, or other be changed. This change will be effected in a moment, inſtantaneouſly, as the eye twinkles; by the Almighty power of Chriſt, when the trumpet ſhall ſound, (which certainly will ſound in a moſt aſtoniſhing manner,) as the ſummons to all men to meet their Judge. Then the voice of Chriſt will be heard by all the dead, and they will be raiſed again to life, in their own order; and then the bodies of living believers will be changed from natural to ſpiritual, from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal; even as a man's form is changed by putting on new raiment. When this change hath taken place in reſpect of all believers; then the ſaying of the prophet will finally be accompliſhed, (*Iſaiah*, c. xxv. v. 8.) Death, and all his power ſhall be annihilated and ſwallowed up, in the complete victory obtained over him by Chriſt, and all his people; and ſin, with all its conſequences ſhall ever after be wholly confined to the place prepared for the devil and his angels.

V. 55—58.] With the glorious proſpect before the eyes of his faith and hope, the apoſtle, in the moſt beautiful and animated apoſtrophe, addreſſed death and the grave, as real perſons, the univerſal and moſt terrible

56 The ſting of death *is* ſin; and the ſtrength of ſin *is* the law.

57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

conquerors, and oppreſſors of the human race: he demanded of death where was now his ſting, or his deſtructive dart, with which he had cauſed ſuch anguiſh and terror, and wrought ſuch wide-ſpread deſolations? And of the grave, what was now become of its victory, by which he ſeemed to have ſhut up in his dark dungeon, as vanquiſhed foes, all the generations of men, that had lived on earth? For it was now evident, that death and the grave need not alarm, and could not hurt any true believer. Indeed the ſin of man was the ſting, and deſtructive weapon of death, which both enabled him to kill the body, and had made that fatal ſtroke tremendous: and the holy law, pronouncing the ſentence of condemnation againſt every tranſgreſſor, gave ſin its power to bring death upon mankind, and to embitter his dying agonies with the dread of future puniſhment. This was the natural and univerſal ſtate of man; and he muſt have thus lived, died, and periſhed miſerably, had not God provided deliverance for him. But chriſtians might now return thanks to Him, with joyful hearts, for having given them the victory over theſe dreadful foes, by Jeſus Chriſt, and through his vicarious ſufferings and glorious reſurrection; and for bringing them to this faith and hope in him. They might therefore at preſent triumph over the fear of death in the confidence of a glorious reſurrection for their bodies, as well as of immediate, and eternal happineſs for their ſouls; and they would all at length moſt certainly triumph in the full poſſeſſion of thoſe bleſſings, and in a complete victory over theſe enemies. He therefore exhorted them, as his beloved brethren, to continue ſtedfaſt in the profeſſion and faith of the goſpel, and immoveable in their adherence to the truth and will of God, amidſt all dangers, and temptations: and eſpecially to continue ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the belief of the reſurrection, notwithſtanding the artifices of their falſe teachers. At the ſame time, let them attend to, and abound in, all thoſe good works, which the commandment and honour of their Lord required, from love to his name, his cauſe, and his people: ſeeing that they had the fulleſt aſſurances, that their labour *in the Lord* or from ſuch motives, as his goſpel ſuggeſted, would by no means be in vain, either unrewarded, or unſucceſsful; but that the whole of it would iſſue in his glory, the good of mankind, and their own everlaſting advantage.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the faithful miniſter ſees his beloved people drawn aſide to embrace dangerous errors; his chief comfort under the trial muſt ariſe from being able to appeal to them, that the doctrine he preached was ſcriptural; and from full ſatisfaction, that they who received, and ſtand faſt in it, will be certainly ſaved; and that none of them can periſh, if they keep in remembrance the inſtructions he gave them; unleſs they deceived themſelves with a vain, a dead, and inefficient faith. In order, that we may poſſeſs this comfort, we muſt be careful to deliver the truths of God's word, pure as we have received them; and in that order, and proportion, in which they ſtand in the ſcriptures: and he, who attends to theſe ſacred oracles, will know aſſuredly, that the death of Chriſt for our ſins, and his reſurrection for our juſtification, are eſſential, and fundamental truths, which muſt in all places, and on all occaſions be explicitly, and ſtrenuouſly inſiſted on. Apoſtles and prophets concur in bearing teſtimony to them, even more than to many other truths: and, bleſſed be God, the demonſtration of our Lord's reſurrection is equal to the weight, that is to be ſupported by that important fact. (Notes, &c. *John*, c. xx.)

The moſt eminent chriſtians are always the moſt humble: they continually reflect on the aggravated ſins of their unconverted ſtate; eſpecially if they were long, or greatly ſet in oppoſition to the goſpel. The more evidently God hath pardoned them, the leſs diſpoſed will they be to excuſe themſelves. They feel their unworthineſs of the diſtinctions conferred on them; they are diſpoſed in honour to prefer others to themſelves; and, though they cannot but be conſcious of what the Lord hath done *for*, *in*, and *by* them; yet taking their whole conduct, and obligations together, they readily conclude, that none are ſo vile, and worthleſs as they. But in reality it is a great thing for a man with propriety, humility, and truth, to ſay, "by the grace of God, I am what I am:" the declaration only becomes thoſe, who are walking under the influence of holy principles; and is utterly unſuitable to the character of the looſe, conceited, or formal profeſſor. But if we really fear and love the Lord, and walk in his ways, we muſt aſcribe all the glory to his grace and mercy: if much hath been forgiven us, we ſhould pray to be enabled to love much: if our converſion have been remarkable, we ſhould earneſtly deſire, that the grace beſtowed on us may not be in vain: if we have ſet out late in life to ſerve the Lord; we ſhould aim to redeem the time that hath been loſt, by labouring more abundantly, than our brethren: and, whilſt we charge all our ſins, and follies upon ourſelves, we muſt remember to aſcribe all the good we do to the grace of God, that is with us.

How ſubtly doth ſatan bring in falſe doctrines, by men of abilities, learning, or eloquence, in a covert, and plauſible manner; that the ſimple may ſuſpect no danger! Such teachers with apparent modeſty, queſtion whether we have rightly underſtood the ſacred writers? and whether the doctrine, that they oppoſe, be contained in them? they enquire whether a more rational interpretation may not be given to ſuch, and ſuch texts? Whether the more obvious meaning do not involve abſurdity, or even impoſſibility? Whether any but the weak and illiterate can credit ſuch myſteries? And whether we had not better adopt a figurative ſenſe, or admit ſome other reading, or even ſuppoſe the ſacred penman to be miſtaken; than aſſent to ſo *incomprehenſible*, and therefore *irrational* a doctrine? If indeed they could prove the myſteries, that

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Contains 1ſt. Directions concerning the collections to be made for the Chriſtians in Judea; and an account of the apoſtle's intentions about coming to Corinth, 1---9. *2d. A recommendation of Timothy, and an intimation concerning Apollos's coming to them,* 10---12. *3d. Exhortations to watchfulneſs, ſtedfaſtneſs and love; with a commendation of the houſhold of Stephanas, and an account of the apoſtle's ſatisfaction, in the coming of certain perſons from them to him.* 13---18. *4th. Salutations from the churches, &c; and the apoſtle's ſolemn, and affectionate concluſion of the epiſtle,* 19---24.

they oppoſe to be *contrary to fact, to intuition, or demonſtration*; their principles might be admitted: but when they apply them to doctrines, which are merely *above* reaſon, and contrary to their *ſuppoſed probabilities*, and *vain reaſonings*; they are perfectly inadmiſſible, and irrational, unleſs man be wiſer than his maker. But the dupes of ſuch ſpecious pretences are ſeldom aware, whither theſe *rational* improvements of the creed, and of the ſcriptures tend: they do not perceive, that according to them, man's preſumptuous reaſon ſits in judgment on God's infinite wiſdom; man's weakneſs is made the ſtandard of omnipotence; and man's vain conjecture the meaſure of divine revelation! But indeed this is perfectly conſiſtent with thoſe œconomical, and political ſentiments contended for by the ſame *oracles of an enlightened age*; by which children are ſet to judge, whether their parents are fit to be honoured and obeyed, or not; ſervants are called on to determine the ſame concerning their maſters: and in ſhort, not only is all ſubordination virtually deſtroyed, but in every relation, the inferior is conſtituted the judge of his ſuperiors, without any appeal from his arrogant tribunal! In like manner the principles before cited, when fairly examined, are found to involve conſequences, ſubverſive of thoſe truths, which are profeſſedly venerated; to invalidate the teſtimony of ſcripture, and to tend to univerſal ſcepticiſm: they prove, (if they prove any thing,) that the preaching of the apoſtles, and the faith of primitive believers, were vain; and that the martyrs for the goſpel were falſe witneſſes for God, by teſtifying truths and facts, which remote poſterity, has found out to be falſe, or needleſs! This is eſpecially the caſe in reſpect of thoſe doctrines, that relate to the Perſon, undertaking and atonement of Chriſt, and the way of acceptance by faith in Him: if Chriſt had not riſen, his ſacrifice could not have been depended on; and conſequently believers muſt ſtill have been in their ſins; they who ſlept in this faith muſt have periſhed; the preachers of the goſpel muſt either have been deceivers or deceived; and the diſciples having only hope in Chriſt, as to this preſent world, muſt have been of all men moſt miſerable! What then muſt be the tendency of their tenets, who indeed profeſs to believe that Chriſt is riſen; yet deny, explain away, or over-look that great doctrine, which he eſpecially roſe again to eſtabliſh, and demonſtrate! But aſſuredly Chriſt both died for our ſins, and roſe again from the dead for our juſtification, and as the firſt fruits of our reſurrection: that as death entered by man, ſo might life eternal be introduced by One, in our nature. We certainly know, that all *in Adam* die; and it is equally ſure, that all *in Chriſt* ſhall ariſe to immortal glory. Undoubtedly the ſuffering, dying, riſen, and aſcended Saviour, will ſoon appear to raiſe the dead and judge the world: may we be found among thoſe, "that are Chriſt's at his coming!" It ſhould be with us a matter of ſerious enquiry, whether we are now his true diſciples or not? For ſoon the end will come, the mediatorial kingdom will be delivered up to God, even the Father; and all, who ſhall then be found enemies, will be put under Chriſt's feet, and muſt be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction. Would we then triumph in that ſolemn and important ſeaſon, we muſt now ſubmit to his rule, accept of his ſalvation, and live to the glory of God through Him. Then ſhall we at length rejoice in all his victories, and participate his glories; we ſhall exult with immenſe ſatisfaction, in the bleſſed accompliſhment of the Redeemer's undertaking; and in being with Him, our Head in human nature, put under the abſolute dominion of our reconciled Father, "that God may be all in all;" that he may receive the whole glory of our ſalvation; and that we may for ever ſerve him, and enjoy his favour, without ſin or death; and without needing repentance, forgiveneſs, a ſacrifice, or a Mediator any more to all eternity.

But ſhould we loſe ſight of this animating proſpect; ſhould any one prevail to argue us out of theſe our expectations: how muſt our zeal, diligence, and boldneſs be enervated, and our rejoicing damped! Who then would ſtep forward to ſucceed thoſe illuſtrious ſoldiers of Chriſt, who have nobly bled in the cauſe of truth? Who would confeſs him in this evil world? Why ſhould we ſtand in jeopardy every day? Why ſhould we venture the rage of men, more ſavage than lions and tigers, more venemous than ſerpents, and more ſubtle than foxes? Such principles would ſoon induce us to depart from our conſtancy; and make us exclaim, "what advantageth "it us, if the dead riſe not?" Or even tempt us to ſay, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Let us not then ſuffer ourſelves to be deceived by corrupt reaſoners; but let us ſeparate from them, and venture our all, on the ſingle teſtimony of God's word. Let us fear aſſociating with ſceptical, profligate, or ungodly men; for "evil communications corrupt good manners:" let us warn our children, our juniors, or our hearers to ſhun them as a peſtilence: let us awake to righteouſneſs, and not ſin; let us not hearken to thoſe, who know not God, in whatever ſcience elſe, they may excel; being aſſured that this ignorance will be found ſhameful, in proportion to the abilities, opportunities, confidence, or profeſſion of thoſe, in whom it is found.

If any are diſpoſed to ſtart cavilling objections, or make preſumptuous enquiries, when truths are ſcripturally propoſed; let them remember the appellation, which the apoſtle, or rather the Holy Spirit, gives to ſuch wiſe men of this world. For they may thence learn, that man's wiſdom conſiſts in becoming a little child, and ſimply believing his maker. The works of creation and provi-

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NOW concerning the collection for the ſaints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye.

2 Upon the firſt *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as *God* hath proſpered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

3 And when I come, whomſoever ye ſhall approve by *your* letters, them will I ſend to bring your liberality unto Jeruſalem.

4 And if it be meet that I go alſo, they ſhall go with me,

5 Now I will come unto you, when I ſhall paſs through Macedonia: for I do paſs through Macedonia.

6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whitherſoever I go.

7 For I will not ſee you now by the way; but I truſt to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

8 But I will tarry at Epheſus until Pentecoſt.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened

dence read us daily lectures of humility, as well as teach us to admire the variety of the great Creator's wiſdom, and goodneſs. Till we can fully comprehend the whole proceſs, by which a bare grain, corrupting in the earth, produces many ears of corn at the harveſt; and till we can ſatisfactorily anſwer all queſtions, and ſolve all difficulties about it: let us learn to be the pupils, and not aſſume to be the counſellors of the moſt High: and let us hold faſt the ſure hope of a glorious reſurrection; without puzzling ourſelves about the manner, in which infinite wiſdom, and almighty power can effect it. Certainly, all they, who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that felicity, will excel in glory all preſent ſplendours, as celeſtial bodies tranſcend the terreſtrial: and yet they too ſhall exceed one another in glory, as one ſtar differeth from another; whilſt Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall unſpeakably outſhine them all. This contemned, degraded, corruptible, weak, ſinful, vile, and dying body, ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, immortal and glorious; it ſhall become vigorous, active, and beautiful beyond conception; this natural body ſhall be raiſed *ſpiritual.* Here our very ſouls are carnal and animal, there our very bodies will be ſpiritual. Our ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven, will give new and immortal life, as "a "quickening Spirit," both to our ſouls and bodies; that in both, according to our meaſure, we may bear his image, and glorify his name. As fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; let us then not ſow to the fleſh, of which we can only reap corruption: as they, who ſhall be exempted from death, muſt be changed; let this reconcile our minds to that change, which death will begin, and the reſurrection complete in our bodies; when death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory. Let us then ſeek the full aſſurance of faith and hope, that in the midſt of pain, and in the proſpect of diſſolution, we may triumphantly exclaim, "O death, where is thy "ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?" That we may hail the ſharpeſt pangs of dying, and think without emotion on the darkneſs, the corruption, and the horrors of the tomb; aſſured, that there our bodies will ſleep at eaſe; that in the mean time our ſouls will be preſent with our beloved Redeemer; and that our bodies will ſhortly ariſe to ſhare that unſpeakable felicity. But ſin is the ſting of death, and who can diſarm that king of terrors? For the law is the ſtrength of ſin; and who can anſwer it's demands, endure it's curſe, or expiate his own tranſgreſſions? Hence the terror and the anguiſh! Hence the wretched cleave to life; ſave when infidelity, deſpair, and rebellion, iſſue in madneſs and ſuicide! Hence death is juſtly terrible to the unbelieving, and impenitent! Hence the needleſs alarms of the weak and trembling believer! Thanks be to God, that there is deliverance and victory for us in Chriſt Jeſus! May he give us faith, and increaſe our faith; that we may not only be ſafe, but joyful and triumphant! And having theſe aſſurances, let "us be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in "the work of the Lord; as knowing that our labour is "not in vain in the Lord."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—4.] The Corinthians ſeem to have been previouſly acquainted with the apoſtle's intention of raiſing a contribution from the gentile churches, for the poor chriſtians in Judea: and as they were more wealthy than moſt of their brethren, he did not intimate a doubt of their liberality in that good work: but he deemed it proper to point out to them, the method, which he had given orders for, in the churches of Galatia. On the firſt day of the week, when their principal aſſemblies were held, let every man treaſure up a proportion of his gains, according as God had proſpered him during the preceding week: thus a larger ſum would gradually be provided, than could at once have been collected. It ſeems, from our tranſlation, as if every one was directed to keep this ſum ſeparate by himſelf, till the apoſtle came. Yet it was probably meant, that the whole ſhould be laid up in a common treaſury; but every one was allowed to determine *for himſelf* how much he would thus contribute: and the annexed reaſon confirms this interpretation. This being previouſly attended to, the apoſtle, when he arrived at Corinth, would ſend ſuch perſons with the money, as they choſe, and approved of: the letters mentioned might either be ſuch as he meant to write to the apoſtles, or elders at Jeruſalem; or ſuch as they ſhould give their meſſengers, by way of recommendation. But if it were deemed more ſatisfactory, and advantageous, he would go in perſon to convey their contributions.

V. 5—9,] The apoſtle was meditating to make a progreſs through Macedonia, when he wrote this epiſtle: and he ſeems to have given them ſome intimations, that he would go to Corinth, in his way to Macedonia, as well as on his return; though it be not here mentioned.

unto me, and *there are* many adverſaries.

10 Now if Timotheus come, ſee that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I alſo *do*.

11 Let no man therefore deſpiſe him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

12 As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly deſired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he ſhall have convenient time.

13 Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit you like men, be ſtrong.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

15 I beſeech you, brethren, (ye know the houſe of Stephanas, that it is the firſt-fruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints,)

16 That ye ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus; for that which

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(2 *Cor*. c. i. v. 15.) However he had formed his determination of coming, and he aſſured the Corinthians that he would make ſome ſtay among them, if the Lord would give him leave: for he did not think it ſufficient *merely* to call on them as a traveller in his journey; when ſo many things required his preſence among them. His plan therefore was, to tarry at Epheſus, till the feaſt of Pentecoſt; the reſt of the ſummer he meant to employ in his progreſs through Macedonia, and then perhaps to ſpend the winter with them; expecting that afterwards they would help him forward in his journey, whitherſoever he purpoſed to go He might intend to ſail from Epheſus to Corinth firſt; then after a ſhort ſtay to go into Macedonia, and afterwards return to winter there. However, he deemed it incumbent on him to tarry ſome time longer at Epheſus; as great opportunities of ſervice were afforded him, great ſucceſs attended his labours; and many adverſaries were excited to oppoſe him, to terrify or diſſuade men from embracing the goſpel, or to diſcourage and miſlead the new converts. His preſence therefore was peculiarly neceſſary; though his dangers, and hardſhips were proportionably increaſed. It is evident, that the apoſtle wrote this from Epheſus: though the ſpurious addition at the cloſe of the epiſtle dates it from Philippi; and ſo flatly contradicts the text! Nor is it at all probable, that Timothy was one of thoſe, by whom it was ſent. Probably the uproar made at Epheſus by Demetrius haſtened the apoſtle's departure: and his plan ſeems in other reſpects to have been circumſtantially deranged.

V. 10, 11.] Timothy had been ſent before the apoſtle into Macedonia, with directions to viſit Corinth, (c. iv. ver. 17. *Acts*, c. xix. v. 22:) but ſuch was the diſpoſition of many in that city, that it was neceſſary to charge them not to behave improperly to him, when he came. For the apoſtle was apprehenſive, that their party quarrels, and oppoſition to his authority, would induce them to ſhew ſuch diſlike to, and contempt of Timothy, as to make him afraid of executing his commiſſion among them. He therefore aſſured them, that Timothy was faithful and ſkilful in the work of the Lord, even as he was: let none of them therefore deſpiſe him, becauſe of his youth, or his ſuppoſed deficiency in "the wiſdom of words, and excel-"lency of ſpeech:" let them encourage and countenance him in executing his commiſſion, and in bearing teſtimony againſt the abuſes, that had crept in among them: let them not take offence at his faithfulneſs, or permit him to go away, as one that had incurred their diſpleaſure: but let them conduct him forth in peace and love, on his journey towards Epheſus, where the apoſtle expected him, with the brethren that accompanied him; or both he, and the brethren at Epheſus expected him, as one whom they greatly loved. Probably Timothy returned to Epheſus, before Paul was driven thence.

V. 12. *As*, &c.] A party at Corinth ſeem to have profeſſed themſelves attached to Apollos, in order to cover their oppoſition to Paul: yet he greatly deſired that eminent miniſter to go among them, being of opinion that his preſence would tend to allay their diſputes, and having the moſt entire confidence in his wiſdom, and humility. But perhaps Apollos feared leſt his preſence ſhould have a contrary effect; or he might be fully employed in another place; or perhaps he thought it right to expreſs his decided diſapprobation of the conduct of the Corinthians, by abſenting himſelf, till they came to a better temper. However, he was not at all willing to go to Corinth at that time; though he intended to viſit them when he could with more conveniency. (*Acts*, c. xviii. v. 24—28.)

V. 13, 14.] The apoſtle being about to conclude his epiſtle, called upon the Corinthians, inſtead of preſuming on their gifts, and privileges, to be upon their guard againſt temptations, and vigilant in avoiding the ſnares of the deceiver: he exhorted them to ſtand faſt in the faith; as they were in great danger, and already began to waver: he reminded them to be valiant and prudent as became men, in their conflict with their common enemies; and not to behave like children in diſputing with, and envying each other: he directed them to be ſtrong in the grace of Chriſt for their work and warfare; inſtead of amuſing themſelves with curious ſpeculations: and above all, he warned them to manage all their concerns according to the dictates of that love, which he had ſo fully explained to them. (c. xiii.)

V. 15—18.] Stephanas ſeems to have been with the apoſtle at Epheſus, when he wrote this: but his houſhold remained at Corinth; and ſeveral of his family were qualified for uſefulneſs, and ought to have poſſeſſed great influence in that church; as they were the oldeſt converts to chriſtianity in all Achaia; and as they had habitually employed themſelves in every ſervice, by which they could miniſter to the good of their brethren. The apoſwas lacking on your part they have ſupplied.

18 For they have refreſhed my ſpirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are ſuch.

19 The churches of Aſia ſalute you. Aquila and Priſcilla ſalute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their houſe.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiſs.

21 The ſalutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.

23 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you.

24 My love *be* with you all in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

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tle therefore beſought them, to ſubmit themſelves to the counſel, influence, or miniſtry of this family; and of others, who concurred with him in his endeavours to promote the peace and purity of the church, or laboured diligently in that good cauſe. The coming of Stephanas, &c, (who had probably brought the epiſtle to him from ſome of the church at Corinth,) had given him pleaſure; becauſe they had further explained what the epiſtle had not cleared up, concerning the ſtate of things amongſt them: and their repreſentation of the proper diſpoſition of many of them, together with their pious converſation had refreſhed his ſpirit; as they doubtleſs had frequently refreſhed their's: he therefore admoniſhed them to acknowledge ſuch perſons as thoſe, for the ſervants of Chriſt, and examples for them to follow: in preference to thoſe teachers, who undermined, or oppoſed his apoſtolical authority.

V. 19, 20.] (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xvi.)

V. 21—24.] An ammanuenſis having written the reſt of the epiſtle; the apoſtle thought proper to pen what follows, with his own hand; and to unite the ſolemn warning, therein given, with his moſt affectionate ſalutations; that on both accounts it might make the deeper impreſſion. Whatever gifts, knowledge, eloquence, or eminence, any man poſſeſſed; yet if he did not love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema, &c. If he had not a cordial affection for, and love to his perſon, ſalvation, precepts, cauſe, glory, and people; he was, and would be accurſed until, and when, the Lord ſhall come. If his conduct proved it, let him be ſeparated from them, as an accurſed thing, devoted to deſtruction: and in caſe he did not repent, and learn to love Chriſt, He would execute this awful ſentence when he came to judge the world. But in caſe it could not be proved, or was not ſuſpected by men; yet it was known to the Lord: and he who had not genuine love to Chriſt, certainly abode under the wrath of God, and would at laſt ſink into utter deſtruction, as a ſacrifice to his juſtice. For he muſt be an enemy of God's holy character, and righteous government; an unhumbled, impenitent ſinner, and an unbeliever under the covenant of works, and the curſe of the law; he muſt be deſtitute of all true holineſs, incapable of ſpiritually performing any good work, and unfit for the employment, and pleaſures of heaven: who, under the profeſſion of chriſtianity, did not love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; or who apoſtatized from that profeſſion. The word *Anathema* is Hebrew, and ſignifies "*an accurſed thing devoted to deſtruction:*" *Maranatha* is Syriac, and ſignifies, "*the Lord cometh.*" Some Jewiſh uſages are ſuppoſed to be referred to; but the above is the undoubted meaning of the paſſage. The apoſtle however did not pen this awful warning, (for which he ſaw too much occaſion, in the conduct of the Corinthian teachers;) from reſentment, or harſhneſs of diſpoſition: and he therefore expreſſed his earneſt deſire that the grace and favour of the Lord Jeſus might be with, and reſt on them; and he concluded by ſuch an aſſurance of his cordial love to them all, in Chriſt, and for his ſake, as is not found in any other epiſtle. To which he annexed his Amen, as aſſuring them of his ſincerity in it; notwithſtanding the rebukes he had given them, and the improper treatment he had received from them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is incumbent on miniſters to exhort their people to works of charity, eſpecially towards the Lord's ſaints; and to direct them in the beſt way of collecting and applying their contributions: and all chriſtians ought to be ready for ſuch good works, in proportion as the Lord proſpers them in their ſecular concerns. When ſmall ſums are weekly appropriated to ſuch purpoſes, they are parted with more conveniently, and leſs reluctantly, than when greater ſums are required at once. For they are conſidered as a part of the weekly expence, and ſo ſpared in other things: whereas in the other caſe, the fund for charity has often been previouſly ſpent on ſuperfluities, and the ſum required cannot well be afforded. Such weekly collections therefore, as are made by ſeveral laudable ſocieties in this metropolis; in which even poor people, and mechanics, by the conſtant payment of trivial contributions raiſe annually large ſums for the relief of the ſick and deſtitute, cannot too warmly be recommended. Much real good is done by them, the goſpel is adorned and recommended, an excellent example is exhibited, and the rich are excited to a proportionable liberality: may ſuch ſocieties be eſtabliſhed in all the churches of Chriſt! Theſe charitable works conſiſt well with the deſign of the chriſtian ſabbath: but when ſuch funds are raiſed; prudent, pious, diſintereſted and humane perſons ſhould be choſen to apply them: nor ought any man to deem ſuch a ſervice foreign to his place, except he be neceſſarily engaged in ſtill more important work. All our purpoſes ſhould be taken in ſubmiſſion to the Lord's will; and our conduct ſhould be regulated by the diſpenſations of his providence, in connexion with the precepts of his word. Miniſters ought not readily to leave thoſe places, in which great and effectual doors are opened to them, even though there are many adverſaries: nay this circumſtance may often render it more incumbent on them to continue in their poſt, though dangerous, and difficult;

that they may eſtabliſh and encourage the weak, or wavering. It is wonderful that they, who attend on the work of the Lord in the moſt faithful manner, ſhould have cauſe for fear amongſt profeſſors of the goſpel; or be in danger of being deſpiſed and diſquieted by them! Yet the prevalence of party, the influence of corrupt teachers, or the infection of looſe principles frequently produce this effect: eſpecially, when they, who are required to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all authority, are young, diffident, or deficient in external accompliſhments. But ſenior miniſters ſhould uſe their influence to repreſs this ſpirit; that their faithful younger brethren may be ſecured from contempt, enabled to do their work in peace, and receive due kindneſs from thoſe among whom they labour. The faithful, and zealous ſervants of Chriſt will commonly be harmonious among themſelves; even when their injudicious hearers place them in competition with each other: they will concur in oppoſing ſuch evils; though they may have different opinions about the beſt method of remedying them; and therefore they will leave others to follow their own judgment, even when widely different from their own.

Exhortations to vigilance, conſtancy in duty, ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith, and mutual love, can never be unſeaſonable. They are moſt worthy of imitation and authority, who have addicted themſelves to the labour of love, in miniſtring to the ſaints; rather than ſuch as are fluent in ſpeech, and forward to aſſume the lead in public concerns. We ſhould alſo willingly ſubmit to thoſe, who are experienced and mature in the faith of Chriſt; or who labour to promote that cauſe, for which the apoſtles ſpent, and laid down their lives. Faithful and pious perſons may ſupply what is lacking in each other; and their converſation will refreſh the ſpirits of ſuch, as are like-minded. Chriſtians, though divided by ſeas, and mountains, and though they diſapprove of ſome things in each other's creed, or practice; will yet cordially wiſh well to, and pray for, one another. But they, who love not the Lord Jeſus, can be chriſtians only in name; and they muſt certainly abide under an awful curſe, which the Lord when he cometh will execute; except repentance and faith; which worketh by love, prevent the awful doom. Our obligation to the divine Saviour, and our reaſons for loving him, are infinite: yet many that are called by his name, profeſs his truth, nay preach his goſpel, are ſtrangers to this holy affection, and only ſeek their own advantage, credit, eaſe, or pleaſure in their religious performances. They may conceal this fatal defect from the moſt diſcerning of their fellow ſervants; but the Lord, when he cometh, will ſurely detect it. Let us then call ourſelves to account in this matter, and not ſuffer ourſelves to be put off with any religion, which does not include the love of Chriſt, earneſt deſires of his ſalvation, gratitude for his mercies, zeal for his glory, and obedience to his commandments. Let us then enquire, whether all things do indeed appear worthleſs compared with Chriſt and his righteouſneſs? whether we are willing to give up worldly objects when they come in competition with him? Whether we love his image in his people? Whether we love his ordinances, as means of communion with him? Whether we rejoice to hear him glorified, and grieve to ſee him diſhonoured? Whether we allow ourſelves in any known ſin, or the neglect of any known duty? By theſe enquiries impartially anſwered, we may form a good judgment of the ſtate of our ſouls. But whilſt we warn thoſe around us not to deceive themſelves; we ſhould beware of the appearance of anger and reſentment. We ſhould deſire that the grace of Chriſt may be with thoſe, whom we thus caution; and we ought to aſſure ſuch perſons of our cordial love in Chriſt, whom we ſee it needful to reprove in the moſt plain and ſolemn manner.

The Second Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the CORINTHIANS.

This epiſtle ſeems to have been written within a year after the foregoing; whilſt the apoſtle was on his progreſs through Macedonia. Having heard by Titus, that his firſt epiſtle had produced very good effects on many of the Corinthians; he wrote this alſo, in order to prepare the way more completely for his viſit to them. He therein juſtified himſelf from the charge of levity, or carnal policy, in delaying his journey to Corinth: he gave directions reſpecting the inceſtuous perſon, who had been excommunicated: he expatiated on his conduct in the chriſtian miniſtry; intermixing many exhortations with the avowal of his motives, and fervent affections in his ſacred work: with great addreſs he recommended to them the collections for the poor chriſtians at Jeruſalem; and ſhewed the manifold advantages of ſuch ſervices: at length he more directly, yet with great reluctance, contraſted his own gifts, labours, ſufferings, and conduct with the pretences of their falſe teachers; and then he concluded with various admonitions, and affectionate good wiſhes. Theſe epiſtles may appear to ſome readers leſs intereſting, becauſe they mainly refer to the peculiar circumſtances of the Corinthian church; but in fact they are more inſtructive on that very account: as directions, and admonitions, ſuited to many of the more ordinary incidents of life, are thereby communicated; which could not ſo advantageouſly have been adduced, in a more general diſcourſe on the great doctrines and duties of chriſtianity.

CHAP. I.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Saluting the Corinthians, and bleſſing God for conſolations, and deliverance from his late extreme perils &c, 1---11. *2d. Expreſſing his joy in the teſtimony of his conſcience, and his confidence in their attachment to him,* 12---14. *3d. Vindicating his conduct in delaying his viſit; ſhewing the ſtability of the doctrine and promiſes of the goſpel, and his own eſtabliſhment in the faith; and declaring that he had poſtponed his viſit, in order to ſpare them &c,* 15---24.

PAUL, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the ſaints which are in all Achaia:

2 Grace *be* to you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3 Bleſſed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourſelves are comforted of God.

5 For as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt.

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your conſolation and ſalvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings which we alſo ſuffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your conſolation and ſalvation.

7 And our hope of you *is* ſtedfaſt, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the ſufferings, ſo *ſhall ye be* alſo of the conſolation.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Aſia, that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life:

9 But we had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead:

10 Who delivered us from ſo great a death,

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—7.] The apoſtle joined his beloved Timothy with himſelf in this Second Epiſtle to the Corinthians; that he might eſtabliſh his reputation, and influence among them. Hence we learn that Timothy was come to him from Epheſus, before he wrote this Epiſtle. He addreſſed it, not only to the church of Corinth, but alſo to all the ſaints in Achaia; meaning all that profeſſed chriſtianity, who were to be conſidered as ſaints in the judgment of charity. After the uſual ſalutation, he abruptly brake forth in thanks and praiſes to God, as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo reconciled to, and the Father of all believers in him; as the Father of mercies, the ſource and author of every kind of mercy to ſinful men, who abounded in mercy, and delighted in the exerciſe of it; and as the God of all comfort, the inexhauſtible and everlaſting ſpring of peace, joy, and conſolation to all, who truſted in him. For the apoſtle was raiſed above the painful ſenſe of his own ſufferings by good tidings of the churches, that had been planted by him: and his heart was now full of ſatisfaction in what he had heard from Corinth by Titus. He therefore bleſſed God for comforting him, and his companions in labour, in the midſt of their troubles and perſecutions, that they might be able to encourage others, that were in trouble, by ſuggeſting the ſame conſolatory topics, which God had made uſe of for their comfort. They could alſo aſſure them of the ſufficiency of ſuch divine conſolations: for in their own caſe they had experienced, that as ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake, and ſuch as he endured, abounded in them, and they had the largeſt ſhare of them; ſo their conſolations alſo abounded in proportion, by the grace of Chriſt and the joy of his ſalvation. When therefore they were afflicted; they had their painful trials allotted them, in order to qualify them for their work, in promoting the conſolation and ſalvation of their hearers: for as theſe bleſſings were efficaciouſly communicated to the ſouls of believers, by means of their ſharing ſufferings ſimilar to thoſe of the apoſtle; ſo the example of conſtancy, patience and fortitude, which he, and his brethren exhibited, tended to embolden them for theſe ſufferings, and to animate them in perſevering in the midſt of them; and their experimental and ſympathizing exhortations and inſtructions led them to behave properly under, and to derive benefit from, them. On the other hand, when they were comforted; their conſolations were intended for the encouragement of their people alſo; that they might aſſure them, from their own experience, of God's faithfulneſs to his promiſes, and his gracious readineſs to ſupport thoſe, who ſuffered for his ſake; and by ſhewing them how comfort might be found: which conſideration reconciled them to their ſufferings, and rendered their conſolations doubly welcome. Thus the apoſtle's hope concerning the Corinthians was rendered ſtedfaſt, by what he had heard, notwithſtanding all, that had been reprehenſible in them: as it was evident they ſhared in his ſorrow and uneaſineſs; and were willing to partake of his ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake; and therefore he was aſſured, that they would partake alſo of his conſolation in Chriſt.

V. 8—11.] The apoſtle, and his aſſociates had met with peculiar trials and perils in Aſia, of which he would not have his Corinthian brethren to be ignorant. Some think that he referred to his ſufferings in the Leſſer Aſia, eſpecially when he had been ſtoned at Lyſtra. (*Acts*, c. xiv.) But this was ſo long before, that he would ſcarce have thus mentioned it on that occaſion. As he ſeems to have written this Epiſtle from Philippi, or at leaſt when he was in Macedonia; and as Epheſus was the chief city of the proconſular Aſia, from which he had juſt before been driven by Demetrius, and the tumult excited by him, (*Acts*, c.

and doth deliver: in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver *us*;

11 Ye alſo helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *beſtowed* upon us by the means of many perſons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world, and more abundantly to youward.

13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I truſt ye ſhall acknowledge even to the end;

14 As alſo ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye alſo *are* our's in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a ſecond benefit;

16 And to paſs by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I uſe lightneſs? or the things that I purpoſe, do I purpoſe according to the fleſh, that with me there ſhould be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

xix.) So it is probable that he referred to the furious perſecutions attending on that tranſaction. However, he had been weighed down with diſtreſs, and ſufferings, that were beyond meaſure grievous, from the concurrence of outward dangers and hardſhips, with inward diſquietude about the ſtate of the churches, that he had planted: ſo that they were unſupportable by any ſtrength, which he had previouſly poſſeſſed; and he was by them led to deſpair of being any longer preſerved in life, to execute his plans of future uſefulneſs. He even conſidered himſelf as a condemned perſon, having the ſentence of death in himſelf, in that he judged his doom inevitable. Nor indeed had he any method of eſcape, by his own contrivance or efforts; or any confidence in himſelf; but he was brought to truſt only in God, who by his Almighty power raiſeth the dead, and was therefore able to reſcue him: accordingly he had delivered him from ſo imminent a peril of death, when it ſeemed to have taken hold of him; and he ſtill continued to deliver him from the rage of his enemies; he therefore was encouraged to truſt, that he would yet deliver him and preſerve his life for future uſefulneſs. This he expected in anſwer to the prayers of the Corinthians, who, he doubted not, had thus aſſiſted him, and would continue to do ſo: that his life being granted to him, by means of the prayers of many perſons; numbers might alſo unite in bleſſing God on his account, and for the benefit derived through his miniſtry. In all this he ſpake in the plural number, as joining his fellow-labourers with him: but he doubtleſs meant it with ſpecial reference to his own caſe.

V. 12—14.] Many of the Corinthians had been prejudiced againſt the apoſtle; and ſome ſtill inſinuated things to his diſadvantage: but amidſt this diſcouragement, and all his other trials, he poſſeſſed a conſtant ſource of joy, and exultation, in the teſtimony of his own conſcience. For though as a ſinner he could only rejoice, and glory in Chriſt Jeſus; yet as a believer, he might rejoice, and glory in his inward conſciouſneſs of really being what he profeſſed, and appeared to be; and eſpecially in that he had been enabled to exerciſe his ſacred miniſtry with ſimplicity, and ſingleneſs of heart, aiming only to glorify God, by doing good to men; and in that godly ſincerity, that unadulterated integrity, which ſprang from the fear and love of God, and approved itſelf to him: and in that he had not been warped by carnal wiſdom, by any concealed aim at his own intereſt, reputation or authority, or by any duplicity or diſſimulation, but had acted under the influence of divine grace, to form, and execute ſuch deſigns, as were beſt ſuited to promote the converſion of ſinners, and the proſperity of the church; without regarding the reproaches, and ſufferings, to which this expoſed him. This had been his habitual conduct, in every part of the world, ever ſince he had been called to profeſs, and preach the goſpel: but he had more abundantly manifeſted this diſintereſted, ſelf-denying ſpirit, this ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, in his whole behaviour towards the Corinthians; though they had been the firſt to ſuſpect, and accuſe him of the contrary. However, he now wrote no other things on this ſubject, than what they read in the former Epiſtle, or *than they knew*, from what they had witneſſed of his conduct; nay, what moſt of them acknowledged to be true, and he truſted would acknowledge to the end; they had indeed acknowledged him *in part* (or as to a *part of them*,) to have been the inſtrument of their converſion, and that they rejoiced in their relation to him, and his attention to them: and this was no more than correſponded to his rejoicing in them, and on their account, which he truſted would be complete in the day of Chriſt, when he came to judge the world.

V. 15—20.] Confiding in the teſtimony of his conſcience, and in the affections of the Corinthians in general, Paul had purpoſed to have viſited them before that time; in the firm perſuaſion, that, according to his earneſt deſires, they would have derived a ſecond benefit from him. He intended to have paſſed by Corinth in his way to Macedonia, and to have called upon them as he went, and then afterwards to have returned, and made a longer ſtay with them. This muſt have been his plan, for Corinth was out of his way into Macedonia; nor could he be ſuppoſed to have gone by that road, except in order to viſit them. (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. xvi. v. 7.) Probably he had given ſome other intimation of his purpoſe to the Corinthians than what is contained in the former epiſtle. However, he ſaw reaſon to alter his plan, and to

18 But *as* God *is* true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

19 For the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the promiſes of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

21 Now he which ſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt, and hath anointed us, *is* God

22 Who hath alſo ſealed us; and given the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my ſoul, that to ſpare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye ſtand.

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go into Macedonia by another way: this, his opponents at Corinth ſeem to have urged againſt him, as a proof that he was an inconſtant, and unſtable man; who altered his conduct and doctrine, as circumſtances required, and as ſuited his preſent conveniency. But would they believe ſuch accuſations againſt him? Would they aſcribe his conduct to levity? Or would they conclude that his purpoſes were formed and changed from worldly policy; ſo that he affirmed, or denied, taught, or retracted, as beſt ſuited his intereſt, or ambition? Some of them might indeed ſuſpect him of this, and make it an argument againſt his doctrine: but as God was true and faithful, to whom he made his appeal; his word, or preaching to them, was not propoſed in this fickle, and wavering manner: he had never contradicted what he had once taught them; nor ſaid *nay* in any point, after he had ſaid *yea* reſpecting it: but he had ſteadily perſiſted in one uniform teſtimony: ſo that the doctrine preached by him, Silas, and Timothy, had been like its great Author, "the Son of God, Jeſus the Meſſiah," who is "the "ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever:" thus they had propoſed his ſalvation to them with the moſt entire conſiſtency, and unwavering ſtedfaſtneſs. They had not ſaid firſt *yea*, and then *nay*, in theſe matters; but had conſtantly declared, that all ſalvation was to be found *in him* alone; and that the covenant of grace, and all its engagements were fully confirmed *in Him*, to all, who are found united to him by faith. In theſe doctrines, they had been moſt explicit, and decided: though in various leſſer matters, they had uſed a prudent ſelf-denying accommodation; and had been careful not to inſtruct them in the deeper myſteries of chriſtianity, before they were able to bear them; (1 *Cor.* c. iii. ix.) In this uniform and confident teſtimony the apoſtle perſiſted; becauſe he knew, that all the promiſes of God to his people throughout the ſcripture, were made in, and by Jeſus Chriſt, and that all centred in him, the great Surety of the new covenant, by which they are made to ſinners: and that, by giving his Son to be the Saviour of ſinners, God had verified his ancient predictions, proved the divine original of the ſcriptures, and given an aſſurance of fulfilling his largeſt promiſes to all believers. Thus he had, as it were, ſet his irrevocable Amen to the promiſes he had before given; he had confirmed them by the ſureſt evidence that could be imagined; he had, as it were, pledged his own glory for the performance of them; his truth and perfections would be diſhonoured, if they ſhould fail of accompliſhment; whilſt their performance would every way redound to the glory of God, in the ſalvation of all believers.

V. 21, 22.] The apoſtle's eſtabliſhed belief of theſe truths, and reliance on theſe promiſes, were not the reſult of human wiſdom, or outward teaching; but were effected by the power of God, who had brought the Corinthians alſo to a firm faith in Chriſt, and to fellowſhip with him. He had anointed them by his teaching, and ſanctifying grace, and ſo removed their natural blindneſs, and prejudice againſt the truth: He had alſo ſealed them, both to mark them for his own, and to ſecure them to himſelf, by enſtamping the divine image upon their ſouls, through the new-creating power of his Spirit: whoſe graces and holy conſolations were the earneſt in their hearts of the heavenly inheritance, to which they were called. From theſe cauſes the apoſtle derived his conſtancy, and confidence in preaching the Goſpel; and *they* were influenced by them to hold faſt their faith without wavering. Some indeed interpret "*the anointing*" of miraculous powers, and *the ſeal*, of the ſacraments: but as the apoſtle includes the Corinthians with him, in theſe things; ſo it is more conſiſtent with the tenor of ſcripture to explain his words of ſuch divine communications, as belong to chriſtians in general, and of which none elſe partake. (1 *John.* c. ii. v. 20.) Sacraments are but outward ſeals of the covenant, and neither diſtinguiſh believers from others, nor ſecure all, who partake of them: but the renewal of the divine image on the ſoul in the ſanctification, and the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt, form a ſeal and earneſt of a more diſtinguiſhing and permanent nature. (*Eph.* c. iv. v. 30.)

V. 23, 24.] Having thus vindicated his conduct and doctrine from the charge of inconſiſtency: the apoſtle in the moſt ſolemn manner called God to witneſs the truth of what he was about to aſſert: he deſired that he would teſtify for, or againſt him, as he ſaw the caſe to be; and he could expect nothing but awful judgments *on his ſoul*, if he ſpake falſely after ſuch an appeal. With this introduction, he declared, that he had poſtponed his viſit to Corinth, that he might ſpare them thoſe cenſures, and miraculous judgments, which he feared would be unavoidable, if he had gone thither immediately, after he left Epheſus. He had not then received any information what effect his former epiſtle had produced; he was aware, that time would be required to bring their matters into ſome better method; and he thought it more adviſable to wait a little longer, that he might at length

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come, not with a rod, but in love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs. He did not mean by this to claim an abſolute authority, in dictating to them as of himſelf, what they ſhould believe; or even to inſiſt in a dictatorial manner on their receiving every particular, which he taught them, by the command of Chriſt. He had not uſurped dominion, or lorded it over them in that manner; but had before acted, and was ſtill diſpoſed to act, with gentleneſs, and forbearance, as an helper of their joy and conſolation in Chriſt, by his inſtructions, admonitions, and counſels. Yet he deemed it neceſſary to act with authority, and even ſharpneſs againſt ſuch, as perverted the goſpel, and corrupted its doctrines; for *by faith* they ſtood accepted with God, and were enabled to ſtand ſtedfaſt amidſt trials and temptations. Thoſe perſons therefore, who perverted their faith by their falſe doctrines, and corrupt practices, were about to take from them that ſupport, by which they ſtood; to cauſe them to fall into various evils; to *mar their joy*, and to do them immenſe miſchief, if not oppoſed. As helpers of their joy therefore, the apoſtle, and his friends, muſt take a decided part againſt theſe enemies to their holineſs and comfort.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The church of God is his peculiar reſidence, in which he diſplays his glory: and communicates his grace: all therefore, who belong to it, ſhould be ſaints, devoted and conformed unto Him. Many perſons of a different character will intrude amongſt them; but grace and peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, will be given to the ſaints alone. We ſinners, who have believed in Chriſt, ſhould ever be ready to bleſs and praiſe our God, even amidſt our ſharpeſt ſufferings. He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; nor can we expect too much from his infinite compaſſion, and love; or too highly celebrate the praiſes of what he hath already done for us. Tribulations we muſt expect they are needful, profitable, and unavoidable: and they, who have been moſt honoured of the Lord Jeſus, have alſo been moſt conformed to him in ſufferings: but he proportions his conſolations to the troubles of ſuch, as ſimply truſt in and ſerve him; and he renders them thereby capable of comforting others, by the comfort, wherewith they are comforted of God. The afflictions and conſolations of miniſters eſpecially are often intended for the ſake of others, as well as themſelves: that by their example, experience, counſels, and exhortations, they may promote the conſolation and ſalvation of their people. For theſe bleſſings are commonly applied to men's hearts efficaciouſly by means of trials, and afflictions; and the miniſter, who is a ſtranger to ſufferings, and divine conſolations, can ſeldom duly ſympathize with the mourners, counſel the tempted, encourage the dejected, or even bear with the infirmities of the weak. This ſhould reconcile us to our ſorrows, and teach us to ſeek this benefit from them: and it ſhould animate us to a more earneſt application for proportionate grace and conſolation; that we may exhibit an edifying example under our trials: for aſſuredly we ſhall rejoice in heaven on account of the ſharpeſt of thoſe afflictions, which have been rendered ſubſervient to our ſalvation, and that of any of Chriſt's beloved people. We may have a ſtedfaſt hope of ſuch profeſſors, as ſympathize with the afflicted ſervants of Chriſt, and are willing to ſuffer for his ſake; being confident, that as they partake of the ſufferings, they ſhall alſo ſhare the conſolations of his goſpel. The Lord ſometimes permits his beloved children, to be preſſed out of meaſure even above ſtrength, and to be driven almoſt to deſpair of deliverance; that having the ſentence of death in themſelves, they may be effectually cured of ſelf-confidence, and learn more ſimply to truſt in His Almighty power, and all-ſufficient grace. This often occurs in the concerns of their ſouls: inward temptations, and conflicts connected with outward difficulties, fill them with deſponding fears, and anxieties; they are made to feel, that infinite mercy, and omnipotent grace alone can preſerve them from the more terrible downfalls, or even from final ruin; thus they are driven from all ſelf-confidence, and learn to caſt themſelves wholly on God: and when he hath repeatedly reſcued them "from ſo great a death," they admire his truth, power and love, and are encouraged to hope, that he will yet deliver them, and make them victorious over all the enemies of their ſouls. In ſuch ſcenes of conflict and terror, we feel our need of being helped by the prayers of our brethren: and we ſhould thence learn to pray for all, who are thus tried, and tempted; as well as to unite in thankſgivings with ſuch as have received gracious deliverances. Thus all our trials and mercies, being mixed with prayers and praiſes, will iſſue in the glory of God, and in our own, and each other's ſpiritual advantage. And even the moſt afflicted chriſtian, who is fully aſſured of eternal felicity, ought to deſire, and value life; as long as God is pleaſed to make him uſeful to the ſouls of men, and an inſtrument of promoting his glory.

If we would have comfort amidſt troubles, reproaches, ſuſpicions, and ſlanders, we muſt ſeek for the rejoicing in the teſtimony of our conſcience. Being indeed upright in our profeſſed repentance, and faith in Chriſt and his atoning blood: being careful to ſerve the Lord in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, according to our places in his church and in the community; and having our converſation in the world, not by fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God; we may greatly exult in ſuch evidences of our acceptance in Chriſt, and our adoption into God's family; and may take this comfort as an abundant counterpoiſe to every calumny, and even as a ſure anticipation of the favourable ſentence of our Judge, in the great day of account. Yet we may expect to be ſuſpected, and cenſured, even by thoſe perſons to whom, and in thoſe actions, in which we have acted moſt conſcientiouſly. Sometimes ſimplicity and godly ſincerity

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BUT I determined this with myſelf, that I would not come again to you in heavineſs.

2 For if I make you ſorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the ſame which is made ſorry by me?

3 And I wrote this ſame unto you, leſt when I came I ſhould have ſorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice: having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

4 For out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye ſhould be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

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may require that line of conduct, which, to ſuperficial, or prejudiced obſervers may have a contrary appearance: and ſometimes a man may be deemed inconſtant, becauſe he will not go the whole length of a party, and coincide with them in their follies, miſtakes and ſins. However, we ſhould leave our characters in the Lord's hands; only uſing proper means to clear them, when the credit of the goſpel, or our uſefulneſs call for it. Miniſters, and the people who have profited by their labours, ſhould now rejoice in each other; as they may expect to do at the laſt day. Whatever interferes with this reciprocal joy and affection ſhould be guarded againſt; and believers ſhould be careful not to grieve by neglect and unkindneſs, thoſe faithful friends to whom, under God, they owe their eternal ſalvation; and who are concerned for their beſt welfare with all the tenderneſs of affectionate parents: and miniſters ſhould deſire to viſit their beloved people, not only for the comfort of their company, but that they may have ſtill further benefit from them. It is very unjuſt, and uncandid to aſcribe every alteration in a man's purpoſe, or conduct, to lightneſs, inſtability, duplicity, or carnal policy; eſpecially when his general character bears another ſtamp, and there may be good reaſons for the change, that hath taken place. If we are thus unjuſtly cenſured, or ſuſpected, we muſt make our appeal to God: yet it behoves us to be ſteady, and conſtant in our conduct, and profeſſion, as far as we can; that we may avoid the appearance of evil. This is peculiarly incumbent on the preachers of the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, the AMEN, the true and faithful Witneſs; in whom all the promiſes of God are given, and confirmed, in the moſt ſtedfaſt and unchangeable manner, “to the glory of God by us.” What He hath already done, leaves no room for us to doubt of the exact performance of every promiſe to all believers: His word, covenant, and diſpenſations are ſo ordered, as to give encouragement to the weakeſt faith. We may not only ſay, “hath he ſpoken, and will he “not do it?” Hath he interpoſed with an oath, and will he now fail thoſe, that flee for refuge to lay hold on this hope, ſet before them? But “he hath not ſpared his own Son;” and will he not with him freely give us all things? Yet unbelief excludes men from the bleſſing; and many believers come ſhort of the covenant, becauſe they are diſtruſtful, and of little faith. If then we have been eſtabliſhed in Chriſt, with theſe ancient believers, it is God that hath done this great thing for us: the ſacred unction of his grace; the ſeal and earneſt of his Spirit; and thoſe holy tempers, and gracious fruits, which attend our confidence and conſolations, ſecure us from deluſion in ſo important a matter, and diſtinguiſh this genuine experience, from all the joys of hypocrites, enthuſiaſts and apoſtates. We ſhould never call God to witneſs, except on important occaſions, and in the moſt ſolemn manner. His record will be on our ſouls, either to juſtify or condemn us: He will not hold thoſe guiltleſs, who take his name in vain; and we ought ſo to act, that in all ordinary caſes; our yea yea, nay nay, may be ſufficient to enſure credit to our teſtimony. If the apoſtle did not exerciſe dominion over the faith of chriſtians; we ſhould by no means call men maſter, or father, or implicitly ſubmit to their deciſions and aſſertions; nor ſhould we ever attempt to lord it in this manner over any part of God's heritage. We ought to remember, that miniſters are helpers of the joy of believers; and we ſhould ſeek their increaſing comfort with prudent and perſevering tenderneſs, and affection. Yet as chriſtians ſtand by faith only, and all their joys muſt flow from the vigorous, uninterrupted, and authorized exerciſe of that leading principle; ſo every thing that tends to weaken, miſlead, and ſubvert the faith of profeſſed chriſtians, muſt be watched againſt, and oppoſed. Sometimes therefore genuine love, and a wiſe deſire of helping the joy of believers, may dictate ſharp rebukes, and decided cenſures of thoſe, who would deceive and corrupt them. However, it is beſt to uſe more lenient meaſures, as far as there is a proſpect of ſucceſs; and to avoid even the appearance of ſeverity, if it can be done, conſiſtent with prudence and faithfulneſs.

N O T E S.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtle had fully purpoſed to go to Corinth, when he could properly do it: but he had alſo determined in himſelf, that he would not, if it could be avoided, make this intended viſit, till he could go with comfort to himſelf and them. He expected, that he ſhould prevail by his epiſtles, for the expulſion of ſuch as remained refractory, and the recovery of thoſe, that had been drawn aſide: and then he might be able to go among them without that heavineſs and diſtreſs of mind; which he muſt have felt, if he had been conſtrained to re-eſtabliſh his authority by cenſures, and

5 But if any have cauſed grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

6 Sufficient to ſuch a man *is* this puniſhment, which *was inflicted* of many.

7 So that contrariwiſe ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, leſs perhaps ſuch a one ſhould be ſwallowed up with over much ſorrow.

8 Wherefore I beſeech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him.

9 For to this end alſo did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* alſo: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your ſakes *forgave I it*, in the perſon of Chriſt;

11 Leſt Satan ſhould get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Chriſt's goſpel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

13 I had no reſt in my ſpirit, becauſe I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

14 Now thanks *be* unto God, which al-

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puniſhments. When he had before viſited Corinth, he had received and communicated joy: and he was not willing to come again in a ſorrowful manner. For if he grieved them, who was there to make him joyful; Except thoſe, whom he had thus made ſorrowful? Even his ſteady friends muſt have ſhared the ſorrow, if he had been forced to exerciſe ſeverity: and ſo his journey muſt have been diſtreſſing to them and to him. He had therefore written before, and he now wrote again, in order that the abuſes prevailing among them might be redreſſed: leſt he ſhould receive ſorrow from the very perſons, in whoſe holy and comfortable walking, he ought to have had rejoicing: and he was confident that they would approve of this plan, as he would not doubt, but his joy was the joy of them all in general. No doubt the apoſtle knew, that this rule admitted of ſome exceptions; but it was kind and prudent in him to expreſs his favourable opinion of the Corinthians in general; and to repreſent the diſaffected party to be ſo ſmall, as not to bear any proportion to his friends and adherents. He had indeed written the former epiſtle, eſpecially thoſe parts of it, which contained rebukes, in great affliction, and conſtrained by the anguiſh of his heart at hearing ſuch things concerning them; and he had wept abundantly at the painful neceſſity impoſed upon him: yet he had not intended by it to cauſe them needleſs grief; but rather to convince them of his more abundant love to them, by performing ſo ſelf-denying and diſtreſſing an act of chriſtian friendſhip, even contrary to their inclinations, and at the hazard of incurring their diſpleaſure.

V. 5—11.] (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. v.) The crime of the inceſtuous Corinthian, and the connivance of the church, had peculiarly troubled the apoſtle: but he admitted that he had borne only a part of this grief, as many of them had ſhared it with him. This he mentioned, that he might not charge too much criminality on them, or be ſuppoſed to intimate, that they had all been culpable in that tranſaction. As to the offender himſelf; let the rebuke, and excommunication, which had been inflicted on him by many of them, ſuffice for his puniſhment: it appeared to have had a ſalutary effect; and therefore, inſtead of further ſeverity, they ought to forgive, and encourage him; leſt over-much ſorrow ſhould unfit him for his duty, or give ſatan an opportunity of tempting him to hard thoughts of God and religion, to apoſtacy, or even to deſpair, which might ſwallow him up, and occaſion his ruin. He would therefore now intreat for, as he before proteſted againſt him: and he beſought them to confirm their love to the offender, by reſtoring him to their communion, and ſympathizing in his ſorrow; that he might be aſſured their cenſures had proceeded from the ſame friendly diſpoſition. Indeed the apoſtle had written to them ſo decidedly on this ſubject, in order to make trial of their prompt obedience to his apoſtolical authority; and their conduct had ſatisfied them, that they were diſpoſed to regard it in all things. He was therefore confident of their diſcretion in ſuch matters: and ready, not only in this, but in ſimilar inſtances, to concur with them in receiving again into their communion, as penitent, and pardoned, thoſe, who had been laid under the cenſures of the church: this he would do for their benefit, in the preſence, and as repreſenting the perſon, and acting by the authority of Chriſt, (*Matt.* c. xvi. v. 19. *John*, c. xx. v. 23.) He was alſo more deſirous of thus concurring in the reconciliation of the offender, leſt ſatan, their ſubtle adverſary, ſhould obtain ſome advantage by their delay; either by tempting the offender to deſpondency; by bringing an evil report on chriſtians, as rigorous and unforgiving; by diſcouraging other offenders, deterring men from embracing the goſpel, exciting further diviſions in the church, or otherwiſe preventing the ſucceſs of his miniſtry. For he was not ignorant of the manifold devices of that enemy; and by what varied machinations he endeavoured to deceive, and prejudice men's minds, and to diſturb the peace of the church. It is obſervable, that the apoſtle ſcrupulouſly avoided *naming* this ſcandalous offender.

V. 12—13.[After Paul had been driven from Epheſus, he went to Troas in his way to Macedonia; intending to ſtay a ſhort time in that city to preach the goſpel; of which a favourable opportunity preſented itſelf. (Notes, &c. *Acts*, c. xx. v. 1, 2.) But not meeting Titus there, according to his expectation, and having received no tidings from Corinth; his mind was ſo diſcompoſed about the affairs of that church; that he could not comfortably ways cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh:

16 To the one *we are* the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other the ſavour of life unto life. And who *is* ſufficient for theſe things?

17 For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God: but as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt.

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continue at Troas; but haſtened into Macedonia, to meet Titus, which he accordingly did, (c. vii.) and his report had determined him to write this ſecond epiſtle, and then to proceed leiſurely through the churches of Macedonia, before he viſited Corinth.

V. 14—17.] The happy turn which was given to the affairs of the Corinthians; the confidence that the apoſtle entertained of ſucceſs in that undertaking, and his uſefulneſs in other places, cauſed him to break forth in thankfulneſs to God, amidſt his difficulties and diſtreſſes. He had indeed ſharp conflicts to ſuſtain; but the Lord gave him ſuch multiplied victories, that he went from city to city, as a triumphant conqueror in the cauſe of Chriſt! And, as in triumphs abundance of odours were uſed, ſo the name and ſalvation of Jeſus, (as ointment poured out,) was a ſweet odour diffuſed by him in every place: ſo that he, and his fellow labourers, were pleaſing and acceptable to God, by their teſtimony to Chriſt, and through his merits, as a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour; not only in reſpect of thoſe, who were ſaved by their means, but alſo in thoſe who periſhed through unbelief; as in both caſes God was glorified in and by their preaching. To the one indeed their doctrine was an occaſion of aggravated condemnation, through the depraved ſtate of their hearts, and their enmity to, or abuſe of it; even as coſtly odours are ſometimes pernicious and fatal to diſeaſed perſons: and to the other their doctrine was as a delightful odour, that exhilerates the ſpirits, renews health, and prolongs life: for loving, and embracing the ſalutary meſſages, they found it to be unto life and ſalvation. But as ſuch important conſequences were connected with their ſacred miniſtry; and as faithfulneſs alone could render it acceptable and honourable to God, or profitable to men; who of the human race could of himſelf be ſufficient for ſuch a ſervice? Or who would dare to engage in it without trembling? (c. iii. v. 5, 6.) This, obliquely hinted at the ſelf-ſufficiency of the Corinthian teachers: but they were more immediately intended, when he ſpake of *many*, who ſophiſticated the word of God: as diſhoneſt vintners do their wine; when they preſerve ſomething of the colour and taſte, but dilute, or mix it up with other liquids, which weaken it, prevent its efficacy, or render it pernicious, in order to enhance their profits. Thus, theſe teachers preſerved ſome important truths in their preaching, to render it more ſpecious: but they corrupted it by human inventions, philoſophical conjectures, or looſe opinions; till it became inefficacious, or even pernicious: to the ſouls of men: this they did, to pay court to the prejudices, and inclinations of their followers; that they might eſtabliſh their own influence, and gratify their avarice and ambition. But the apoſtle was conſcious that he was not actuated by ſuch principles, nor left to adopt and propagate ſuch deluſions: on the contrary, in the moſt entire ſincerity and ſimplicity; as ſent of God, and ſerving him; as influenced by his grace, and as acting in his ſight; he ſpake of Chriſt and his ſalvation in every place; without at all conſulting his own intereſt; or the inclinations of his hearers, except in order to their profit.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould always give pain reluctantly, even when it muſt be done: for if we are properly diſpoſed we ſhall ſhare the heavineſs and ſorrow, that we occaſion. It is a common caſe for faithful miniſters to have ſorrow from thoſe, of whom they ought to rejoice; and to be deprived of comfort even from the ſeals of their miniſtry, through the neceſſity they are under of making them ſorrowful: whereas their joy ought to be the joy of all their people. That part of an affectionate miniſter's work, which gives moſt offence, is often performed by him with great affliction and anguiſh of heart, and with many tears: ſo far is he from intending to grieve his beloved people, that he does violence to his own feelings, and ventures their diſpleaſure, from his abundant affection to them; and that he may even againſt their will, preſerve them, if poſſible, from the dangers, to which the artifices of deceivers, and their own inexperience expoſe them. Such miniſters will be careful not to over-charge their people, and not to condemn them harſhly, or indiſcriminately: they do not want to magnify their own trials, or to multiply their complaints: they would have no cenſure employed, or continued in-force, without evident neceſſity: they will ſhew kindneſs, and ſpeak comfort to the penitent; and take pleaſure in reſtoring the moſt grievous offenders in the ſpirit of meekneſs, when it can be done conſiſtently with the honour of the goſpel, and the purity of the church: and they will exhort others to aſſure them of their love, when ſalutary rebukes or diſcipline have had their proper effect. Though no man hath a right to exerciſe dominion over the faith of his brethren; yet as far as miniſters act according to the commandments of Chriſt, they are authorized to expect obedience from the people; and they may ſometimes properly make trial of it: yet they ſhould always be ready to expreſs a forgiving diſpoſition; and when church cenſures, miniſterial rebukes, or the reconciliation of offenders are regulated according to the word of Chriſt, and as in his preſence, they will be as valid, as if he had been preſent in perſon to ratify them.

We ſhould always be upon our guard, leſt ſatan get an advantage againſt us: that ſubtle enemy knows how to avail himſelf of our miſtakes, whether of ill-timed lenity, or needleſs ſeverity: he buoys up men with preſumption, or puſhes them to deſpair: he repreſents profeſſors, as licentious, or as over ſtrict, as appearances

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Appealing to the converſion of the Corinthians, as the atteſtation of Chriſt to his miniſtry; aſcribing all his ſufficiency to God; and ſhewing the ſuperior glory of the goſpel above that of the law, 1---11. 2d. Declaring that his plainneſs of ſpeech correſponded to the miniſtry he had received; pointing out the obſcurity of the old diſpenſation, and the blindneſs of the unbelieving Jews; and deſcribing the liberty, and progreſſive holineſs, which ſprang from faith in Chriſt, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, 12---18.

DO we begin again to commend ourſelves? or need we, as ſome *others*, epiſtles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

2 Ye are our epiſtle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

3 *Foraſmuch as ye are* manifeſtly declared to be the epiſtle of Chriſt miniſtered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of ſtone, but in fleſhy tables of the heart.

4 And ſuch truſt have we through Chriſt to God-ward:

5 Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to

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vary; he raiſes contradictory ſlanders to prejudice men againſt the truth, or to deſtroy the peace of the church. We ſhould therefore ſtudy, by attention to the ſcriptures, by careful obſervation, by watching our own experiences, by conferring with our brethren, and by fervent prayer, to get acquainted with his devices, that we may counteract them. It is perhaps impoſſible in the preſent ſtate to ſeparate fervent, active zeal, from an over-anxious ſolicitude: and though we muſt not yield to any thing, that takes us off from our preſent work; yet it may ſometimes be profitable for us to recollect, that even Paul could have no reſt in his ſpirit, in preaching at Troas, through his earneſt deſire to learn the ſtate of the Corinthian church. However, if our hearts be right with God, our diſquietudes will iſſue in thankſgivings; our conflicts in victories and triumphs: and the labours of the faithful miniſter, will be accepted and graciouſly rewarded of God, whether his hearers be ſaved or periſh. But how dreadful is the caſe of numbers, to whom the bleſſed goſpel becomes the ſavour of death unto death: and the faithful and affectionate endeavours of miniſters for their ſalvation, ſerve only to ſeal, and aggravate their condemnation! This is a painful thought to ſuch ſervants of Chriſt: as they would gladly be the ſavour of life unto life, to all, that come within the ſound of their voice, or by any means are made acquainted with their doctrine. But how ſhould the conſideration of the conſequences, that muſt follow on our preaching, to ourſelves, and our hearers, make us ſhrink back as it were, under the conſciouſneſs of our unworthineſs, and inſufficiency? Eſpecially as ſo many ſtill corrupt the word of God to their own ruin, and that of their deluded followers! May we then enquire how the caſe is with us; may we carefully watch ourſelves in this matter; and ſeek the teſtimony of our conſciences, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that "as of ſincerity, as of God, in the ſight "of God, ſo ſpeak we in Chriſt:" may the Lord ſend forth many ſuch miniſters into his church, and ſtop the mouths of all falſe teachers; and may all chriſtians learn to diſtinguiſh between faithful ſhepherds, and all kinds of wolves and foxes in ſheep's clothing!

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—3.] The opponents of the apoſtle at Corinth would be ready to cenſure the foregoing declaration, as another inſtance of his commending himſelf; of which they pretended his former epiſtle contained ſome examples: but could they ſuſpect him of being actuated by ſuch motives? Did he, or his friends need ſuch a teſtimony to their character? Was there any occaſion for other churches to give them recommendatory letters to the Corinthians? Or that the Corinthians ſhould thus teſtify to their character for the ſatisfaction of other churches? This indeed was the caſe of ſome, who had crept in among them with an ambiguous character and miſſion; and who wanted, and received ſuch recommendations: but the apoſtle had no need of them. As the Corinthians themſelves were his epiſtle of commendation; it was written in *their* hearts, (as many copies read it,) and legible in their lives; ſo that men of every nation and language might read and underſtand the import of it. Or he ſo valued this teſtimonial, and ſo loved them as the ſeals of his miniſtry, that he had this epiſtle, as it were, engraven in *his* heart alſo. For they were manifeſtly declared to all men, to be Chriſt's epiſtle recommending his miniſtry; which he had employed him in framing; which was not written with ink on paper; but by the Spirit of the living God: nor yet, engraven, as the law was, by the finger of God on tables of ſtone, but on fleſhly tables of the heart; their hearts having been ſoftened, humbled, and prepared to receive this divine impreſſion, by the new creating power of the Holy Spirit. As the apoſtle therefore firmly believed them to be true chriſtians; ſo they could not doubt but he was the apoſtle of Chriſt: their converſion ſufficiently recommended him and his doctrine, and he needed no other teſtimonial.

V. 4—6.] Theſe conſiderations gave the apoſtle ſuch confidence through Chriſt, in his cauſe, and in thoſe things which pertained to God; that he ſpake to them in that bold manner of himſelf, and of his miniſtry, which they cenſured. Not that he, or his aſſociates, profeſſed any ſufficiency for ſo important a truſt and work, as of themſelves, or by any natural wiſdom, ability, or good diſpoſition above other men: they could not execute their miniſtry faithfully or ſucceſsfully, if left to themſelves; they could not think a good thought, without divine grace; they made no eſtimation of themſelves in this great concern; but allowed, and were deeply ſenſible, that all their ſufficiency was of God. He indeed had made them able, ſkillful, faithful, and ſucceſsful miniſthink any thing as of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency *is* of God;

6 Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the new teſtament; not of the letter, but of the ſpirit; for the letter killeth, but the ſpirit giveth life.

7 But if the miniſtration of death, written *and* engraven in ſtones, was glorious, ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly behold the face of Moſes for the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was to be done away;

8 How ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious?

9 For if the miniſtration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the miniſtration of righteouſneſs exceed in glory.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth.

11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

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ters of the New Teſtament, or covenant, which was made with believers, through the blood of Chriſt, and enſured to them all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings: and, whilſt they gave Him all the glory, they could not but be conſcious of what he had done for, and by them; nor might they ſhun to ſpeak with authority and deciſion in his cauſe. For they had not been the miniſters of a mere letter, but of a doctrine that was accompanied by the operation of the Holy Spirit, to render it efficacious: for the mere letter would have proved an occaſion of condemnation and death to the hearers; but the Spirit gave life and ſalvation to them, through the goſpel. This is generally underſtood reſtrictively of the legal and evangelical diſpenſations contraſted with each other; and the context ſeems to require this interpretation: yet it is not altogether ſatisfactory; for the legal diſpenſation was not a killing letter to all, that were under it; nor is the goſpel in all caſes attended by the life giving Spirit. But then the legal diſpenſation derived all its efficacy from the goſpel to which it referred; and after the publication of chriſtianity it became altogether a killing letter to thoſe, who cleaved to it. Whilſt the goſpel was the miniſtration of the Spirit, and the only doctrine, through which life and ſalvation were communicated to ſinners. Probably ſome of the Corinthians, and even of their teachers, were diſpoſed to *judaize*, though this were not the predominant error: however, the apoſtle guarded his doctrine on every ſide.

V. 7—11.] The Corinthians undervalued the apoſtle's authority, as the miniſter of Chriſt: but he here ſhewed them, how far the miniſtry of the New Teſtament excelled that of the old diſpenſation. The moral law alone was written and engraven in ſtones; and it was properly the miniſtration of death and condemnation, by leaving every tranſgreſſor under the curſe denounced by it: but the unbelieving Jews turned the whole Moſaic diſpenſation into a mere covenant of works, to their own condemnation. Both the holy, juſt, and good law, and the legal diſpenſation, as connected with, and introductory to the goſpel, were glorious: the whole had the ſtamp of divinity upon it, and was expreſſive of the juſtice, holineſs, and truth of God. As an emblem of this, the face of Moſes, when he came down from the mount, with the tables of the law, and the ratification of that covenant, ſhone in ſuch a manner, that the Iſraelites could not ſtedfaſtly look at it; which cauſed him to wear a vail in their preſence. Yet this repreſented the glory of that diſpenſation, that was to be aboliſhed by the introduction of the new covenant in Chriſt. If then the miniſtry of that diſpenſation, which conſidered apart from the goſpel, could only leave men under the ſentence of death, temporal and eternal, was ſo glorious, and imparted ſuch honour to Moſes: how could it be ſuppoſed, that the miniſtry of the New Teſtament, through which eſpecially the ſanctifying Spirit was given to ſinners, as the ſeal and earneſt of eternal life, ſhould not be glorious, and honourable to thoſe entruſted with it? If that miniſtry which in itſelf tended only to condemnation, contained ſuch a diſplay of the divine glory, as rendered the exerciſe of it ſo honourable: how ſhould not that miniſtry, by which condemned ſinners are taught the way of righteouſneſs, by faith in Chriſt: and which contains ſo full and complete a diſcovery of the glory and harmony of God's perfections, confer far greater honour on the apoſtles, who were employed to preach it to the world? Indeed, the glory of the law, and that of the legal diſpenſation, were ſo eclipſed by the excellent glory of the goſpel; as *in this reſpect* to be comparatively nothing: and after the publication of chriſtianity, the Moſaic diſpenſation had loſt all its *reflected* glory, and divine authority, and was become a lifeleſs letter and form to thoſe, who rejected Chriſt. If then that, which was intended to be temporary, and at length to be aboliſhed, had been glorious, when Moſes promulgated it: much more muſt the goſpel, which is intended to continue till the end of the world, as the laſt and moſt complete diſcovery of the divine truth and will, be glorious in itſelf, and honourable to thoſe, who were entruſted to reveal it to mankind. From this argument it is generally concluded, that the falſe teachers at Corinth *judaized*: but it hath before appeared, that their leading errors were of a different nature: though ſome might alſo be prone to run into that extreme. However, the apoſtle ſeems to have principally intended to magnify his office; and to ſhew from the example of Moſes, (with which they were no doubt acquainted,) that the miniſtry of the New Teſtament was honourable, in proportion to the ſuperior glory of that diſpenſation: and that he, as immediately entruſted with the important ſtewardſhip of the divine myſteries, as an inſpired apoſtle, and as faithful in this ſervice, had a right to demand reſpect, and deference to his authority; which his opponents, whoever they were, refuſed him, and inſtructed their partizans to do the ſame.

12 Seeing then that we have ſuch hope, we uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech:

13 And not as Moſes, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly look to the end of that which is aboliſhed:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the ſame vail untaken away in the reading of the old teſtament; which *vail* is done away in Chriſt.

15 But even unto this day, when Moſes is read, the vail is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheleſs when it ſhall turn to the Lord, the vail ſhall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

V. 12—16.] Having this hope, and confidence, (v. 4—6,) that he was made of God an able miniſter of this glorious diſpenſation, by which the gift of righteouſneſs, and the life-giving Spirit were conferred on men; the apoſtle uſed great plainneſs, liberty, and boldneſs of ſpeech: declaring without reſerve the whole counſel of God, and faithfully reproving what was amiſs, as one that had authority, and ſufficiency from God. His doctrine was not hid in obſcurity or ambiguity, or under types and ſhadows, as that of Moſes had been; of which the vail on his face was itſelf a type and ſhadow. As this covering concealed the luſtre of his countenance: ſo the obſcurity of his diſpenſation concealed its real glory; and the Iſraelites were unable to look ſtedfaſtly, to Chriſt, as the great end, ſcope, and ſubſtance, of thoſe ceremonies, which were ſhortly to be aboliſhed. Even believers had only indiſtinct, and tranſient glimpſes of that glorious object: and unbelievers looked no further, than the outward inſtitution, except as they expected a temporal deliverer and king. Thus their minds were generally blinded by pride, prejudice, and carnal luſts; which formed a vail over their hearts, in addition to that, which was thrown over the Moſaic law: and this vail remained to cloſe their minds againſt the truth, even after the light of the goſpel had ſhewn the real import of the legal ceremonies: ſo that, when the Jews read the Old Teſtament, the vail upon their hearts prevented them from underſtanding its true meaning, or deriving any ſpiritual benefit from it. For the vail is only done away in Chriſt; his doctrine tends to remove it from the written word: but faith in, and union with Him, by the ſupply of his Spirit, muſt remove it from the heart, and enable the Believer to perceive the ſpiritual meaning of the types, prophecies, and promiſes of the whole ſcripture. For want of this the Jews at that time, (and their awful caſe is the ſame to this day,) had a vail upon their hearts, when the law of Moſes was read among them; nor could all their diligence, attention, or attachment to it, enable them to underſtand it, in a ſaving manner. But when any individuals among them, were turned to the Lord Jeſus, by a living faith; this vail was removed from their minds: as it will be the caſe reſpecting the nation in general; when they ſhall, according as it is predicted, turn to, and believe in their long-rejected Meſſiah. (Notes &c. *Exod.* c. xxxiv. v. 29—35.)

V. 17, 18.] It appears therefore from the preceding argument, that the Lord Jeſus is that quickening Spirit, which gives life to the letter of the ſcriptures, and to the ſouls of believers: without him doctrines, promiſes, ordinances and commandments are a mere careaſe of religion; the power and life of which wholly depends on their relation to his perſon, mediation, and grace: and without faith in, and grace from him, all knowledge, profeſſion, attendance on ordinances, or external obedience, conſtitute a mere dead form of godlineſs; in both reſpects he is, as it were, the ſoul, that animates the body, and gives activity, energy, and value to every part of it. This union with Chriſt is effected by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit: and where this divine Agent, proceeding from the Father, and the Son, and One with them, inhabits the heart; there is true liberty. He gives freedom from ſin and ſatan, from condemnation, and ſervile principles, from the love of the world, and the fear of men: he enables the believer to find liberty in willing obedience, and in ſpiritually worſhipping God; and he gives him confidence and boldneſs in his conduct among men, without regarding their cenſures and frowns, or courting their friendſhip or applauſe; from conſcious integrity, and ſatisfaction of the Lord's acceptance. Thus all chriſtians, (as well as the apoſtle, and other faithful miniſters,) in proportion to their degree of faith, and grace; being enlightened by the Spirit of the Lord, and delivered from the vail of unbelief and ſin, behold with open face, as in a mirrour, by faith exerciſed on divine revelation, the glory of God in the Perſon and work of his Son: and this glory, beaming upon their ſouls with transforming efficacy, (as opake objects reflect the rays of the ſun, and ſo become in a meaſure luminous;) they are thereby gradually changed into his image of righteouſneſs, purity, truth and love; growing more and more like their beloved Saviour in judgment, diſpoſition, affections and conduct, from one degree of this glorious holineſs to another; even as by the work "of the Spirit "of the Lord," or "*the Lord the Spirit*," by which he new creates the ſoul; and according to the meaſure, in which he diſcovers the glory of God in Chriſt and enables a man to behold it with open face, and fixed admiration. 'Till at length the work will be perfected, when the view of faith, as in a mirrour, ſhall be changed for immediate and perfect viſion. (*Pſ.* xc. v. 17. *John*, c. xvi. v. 14, 15.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Even the appearance of ſelf-commendation, and courting human applauſe is painful to the humble and ſpiritual mind: though the proud and carnal often make no ſcruple of ſuch oſtentation, but take delight in it. The converſio of ſinners, and their ſubſequent holy lives, are the miniſter's beſt letter of recommendation: if this be evident,

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1ſt. An account of the perſevering faithfulneſs of the apoſtle's miniſtry; of the influence of ſatan in blinding mens minds againſt the goſpel; and of that divine illumination by which its glory is diſcerned, 1--6. *2d. The trials, amidſt which, and the ſupports, proſpects, hopes, and motives, by which the apoſtle, and other faithful miniſters, perſevered in their work without fainting, &c.* 7---18.

THEREFORE ſeeing we have this miniſtry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2 But have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifeſtation of the truth commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.

3 But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of

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and abundant, he will generally want no other teſtimonial among real Chriſtians, to whom his uſefulneſs is known. For this is manifeſtly declared, and fully underſtood to be Chriſt's own atteſtation to their miniſtry; which he hath penned, by the Spirit of the living God upon the hearts of his people, and made legible in their lives and actions. Profeſſors of goſpel truth ſhould therefore remember, that their tempers and conduct are ſuppoſed to form an exhibition of the tendency of that doctrine and miniſtry, on which they attend. Indeed, the ſtamp of much profeſſion, is a looſe practice, ſelf-confidence, boaſting, loquacity, cenſoriouſneſs, a diſputatious temper, bitterneſs, and clamour: this epiſtle often ſhews under what ſort of a miniſtry it was penned; though it leaves the reader in doubt, whether Chriſt had any part in it, or whether an enemy alone was concerned about it. But many who attend on the moſt faithful, practical, diſtinguiſhing preachers exhibit ſuch an epiſtle, (ſo to ſpeak,) to the peruſal of the church, as hath evident marks of ſpuriouſneſs in it: though many will charge all the blame on the doctrine and miniſtry, which they thus diſgrace. But when profeſſed Chriſtians act conſiſtently, obeying the commands, and copying the example of their Lord, they honour and recommend the goſpel, and their preachers; and are inſtrumental in bringing others alſo to attend on the truth, without prejudice.

Succeſs in this bleſſed work ſhould inſpire our minds with confidence to God-ward: yet we ſhould always humbly recollect and acknowledge, that we are not ſufficient of ourſelves, to think any thing as of ourſelves: that our whole dependence muſt be upon the Lord, and that the whole glory belongs to him alone. It is indeed a very great honour to be made able miniſters of the New Teſtament: but we may not conclude ourſelves to be ſuch, in the ſenſe, that the apoſtle meant: yet by imbibing his principles, copying his example, and adhering to his doctrine, we may hope that the Lord will, in an inferior degree, qualify us for the ſame honourable ſervice. Even the New Teſtament will be a killing letter, if exhibited as a mere ſyſtem and form, without a dependence on the Spirit of God to give a quickening energy to it: yet it is only by, and with the bleſſed doctrine of God our Saviour, that the Spirit is given to ſinful man. The holy law, though excellent and glorious in itſelf, can only be held forth, as the miniſtration of death and condemnation to fallen man: but juſtifying righteouſneſs, and ſanctifying grace come from Jeſus Chriſt, and by the miniſtry of the goſpel. This gracious revelation ſo far exceeds in glory the holy law itſelf; that it even ſeems to eclipſe it, as the noon-day ſun does the glimmering ſtars. Much more then, does the clear light, and glory of the goſpel exceed thoſe of all preceding diſpenſations. May chriſtians then learn to value the faithful miniſtry of the goſpel; and encourage their preachers to uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech, ſuited to the doctrine, with which they are entruſted! may we read the ſcriptures with continual prayer, to have the vail removed from our hearts, that we may diſcover, and ſtedfaſtly behold the Lord Jeſus, as the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every believer; that ſo we may profit even by thoſe things, which are now aboliſhed. May we pray alſo in behalf of them, whoſe minds are ſtill blinded by pride, prejudice, and unbelief; eſpecially for the poor Jews, who are preſerved a living demonſtration of the truth of the ſcriptures; though themſelves utterly acquainted with their ſpiritual import! May they ſpeedily be turned to the Lord, and the vail be taken from their hearts! May we always remember, that the Lord Jeſus is the life and ſoul, as it were, of the ſcriptures, and of all true religion: that being One with him, by faith, and his indwelling Spirit, we enjoy true liberty in God's ſervice; and that beholding with open face, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into his image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit. This transformation of the ſoul into conformity to Chriſt is the proper evidence and teſt of ſpiritual illumination; and without a meaſure of it, all ſuppoſed diſcoveries and revelations are mere deluſion, and enthuſiaſm. May then all, who are called miniſters, have the eyes of their underſtanding enlightened to behold in this manner, the glorious object of our faith, hope, love, and imitation; and point him out to others, with the ſame efficacy on their ſouls alſo: that ſo the triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, may be glorified in all, and by all, now and for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtle and his fellow labourers having ſuch a glorious and excellent miniſtry entruſted to them, as had been deſcribed; and being ſenſible of the abundant mercy, that had been ſhewn to them in their converſion, acceptance, and employment in this work; did not faint, or draw back in a diſhonourable manner, becauſe of the difficulties, and ſufferings, which they had to encounter. But they renounced with abhorrence all thoſe artful contrivances, by

Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus' ſake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.

7 But we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

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which the prieſts of falſe religions, or corrupt teachers of chriſtianity, impoſed on their followers, and ſerved their own diſhonourable and diſhoneſt purpoſes, and concealed the ſecret crimes. They did not proceed in their work with craftineſs, or duplicity, profeſſing one thing, and aiming at another, or covering avarice and ambition under high pretenſions to zeal and ſanctity. Nor did they model their doctrine in a deceitful manner, to ſuit the prejudices and inclinations of men, for their own ſelfiſh ends; by keeping back profitable truths, or making ſuch additions, and alterations as might render it leſs offenſive; or by uſing ambiguous and obſcure language, that their meaning might not be clearly apprehended. On the contrary, they endeavoured to ſet divine truth before their hearers, in the moſt manifeſt, and convincing light; that ſo their doctrine, miniſtry, and conduct might be commended to every man's conſcience; that every one might perceive the truth and importance of their meſſage, and be ſenſible that their intereſt and duty both required them to attend to it: and this they did, as in the ſight of God, the ever-preſent Witneſs, and Judge of the thoughts, and intents of their hearts. But if after all, the goſpel, which they preached ſo plainly, was covered with a vail, (as the Moſaic law had been;) if its truth, nature, glory, and preciouſneſs were hidden from any of its hearers; it was evident that ſuch perſons were yet in their loſt eſtate, as condemned ſinners, and in the moſt imminent danger of final perdition: as the vail muſt be upon their hearts, through the prevalence of pride, prejudice and ungodly luſts. For ſatan, the god of this world, whom all unconverted men worſhip and ſerve, in one way or other, prevailed to blind the underſtandings of many, *in*, or *among* perſons of this deſcription; namely, ſuch as heard the goſpel, and diſbelieved it, through love of ſin and pride of heart: that ſo the light of that goſpel, which exhibits ſo clearly the glory of Chriſt, as the Image of God, repreſenting and diſplaying all divine perfections harmoniouſly exerciſed, in his character and ſalvation, might not ſhine upon, or within them. Vaſt multitudes of ſatan's ſubjects are kept from hearing the goſpel: others hear, and for a time are blinded by the tempter to oppoſe or reject it: his grand deſign is, at any rate, or by any means to keep out this transforming light; but many, who for a ſeaſon were blinded, have been at length converted. However, among the number of unbelievers he is permitted to blind many to their perdition; and this was peculiarly to be expected by thoſe, who cloſed their eyes to this light, when apoſtles were the preachers, and their doctrine was confirmed by evident and multiplied miracles. (c. iii. v. 14. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 15—19 2 *Theſ.* c ii. v. 9—12.)

V. 5, 6.] The peculiarity of the apoſtle's miniſtry, and that of his faithful aſſociates was this: they preached not themſelves; they did not ſeek to exalt, or enrich themſelves; they aſpired not after authority, reputation, or any ſecular pre-eminence: but they preached Chriſt Jeſus, as their great ſubject, in reſpect of his Perſon, and ſalvation; they endeavoured to exalt and glorify him; they declared him to be the Lord of the church, and the Lord of all; and they called on men to accept of his ſalvation, ſubmit to his authority, and become his obedient ſervants. But, as to themſelves, they not only were fellow ſubjects to the common Lord of all chriſtians; but they preached, that they were the willing ſervants of the church, for Chriſt's ſake; that they ought readily to labour, venture, ſuffer, and ſubmit to the deepeſt debaſement, in doing good to men, as far as Chriſt's glory could be advanced by it, or his love required it of them. This their zeal to glorify their beloved Lord, made them earneſt to be underſtood in their preaching; which ought to have recommended them to all chriſtians, in proportion, as it excited the enmity, and oppoſition of ſatan, and his ſervants. They were induced, and enabled to act in this manner, by what they had themſelves experienced; for they too might have been blinded by the god of this world, and for a time were in an awful ſtate of oppoſition to the light of the glorious goſpel: but at length, "*that* GOD," who, in the creation of the world, "commanded light to ſpring "forth out of darkneſs," had, of his ſovereign mercy effected a ſimilar change in their ſouls, where ignorance, error, ſin, and miſery before prevailed. By his new-creating Spirit he had removed all obſtacles, and let the light of divine truth ſhine into their hearts; having prepared the underſtanding to admit, and the heart to love the doctrine of the goſpel: thus had He given them the illumination of that knowledge of the divine glory, which faith perceives in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; in his perſon, miracles, character, righteouſneſs, atonement, and mediation; and which, being thus ſtedfaſtly beheld with open face, as in a mirrour, transforms the ſoul into the glorious image of God, therein exhibited. The apoſtle ſeems eſpecially to have adverted to his own extraordinary converſion: yet he evidently meant to include that of all other faithful miniſters, and true believers; which is ſimilar in its nature and effects, and wrought by the ſame divine power; though it be not attended by the ſame circumſtances. Satan blinds men's minds, leſt the light of the goſpel ſhould make known to them the glory of Chriſt: but God enlightens the minds of his choſen people, that they may behold that glory: ſo that this ſeems the grand diſtinction between thoſe, whom ſatan blinds, and thoſe whom God the Spirit illuminates, (c. iii. v. 18. *Gen.* c. i v. 2, 3. *Acts*, c xxvi. v. 18.)

V. 7. *But*, &c.] This treaſure, (even the light of the "knowledge of the glory, in the face of Chriſt," and that important miniſtry, which related to it,) was, as it were depoſited in earthen veſſels, (Notes, &c. *Judg.* c.

8 *We are* troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; *we are* perplexed, but not in deſpair;

9 Perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jeſus, that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jeſus' ſake, that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

13 We having the ſame ſpirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken; we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak;

14 Knowing that he which raiſed up the Lord Jeſus ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent *us* with you.

15 For all things *are* for your ſakes, that the abundant grace might through the thankſgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cauſe we faint not; but though our outward man periſh, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but

vii. v. 16—22.) Even the apoſtles and moſt eminent evangeliſts were ſinners by nature and practice: their bodies were frail and mortal, as thoſe of other men; liable to the ſame infirmities, ſuſceptible of pain and ſuffering, and eaſily worn down by fatigue and hardſhip, or pinched with hunger and cold: nor were their minds leſs ſuſceptible of fear, ſorrow, anxiety and diſquietude, than thoſe of others. They were alſo liable to many defects, and impediments, and deſtitute of thoſe accompliſhments, which the world generally admires: they had no wealth or authority; they made no ſhew of ſuperior genius, learning, or eloquence; nay they were not delivered from the effects of in-dwelling ſin. So far therefore were they from being ſuch illuſtrious perſons, as attract general admiration; that they were treated, as the filth of the world: and whilſt their infirmities ſometimes rendered them leſs acceptable, even to the churches; their ſtripes, and impriſonments, &c, increaſed the contempt, with which the proud and ſelfwiſe beheld them. This was appointed of God for moſt wiſe, important purpoſes. He could have commiſſioned angels to proclaim the glorious doctrine of the goſpel; or he could have put this treaſure into more ſplendid veſſels, by ſending the moſt eminent and admired of the ſons of men to inſtruct the nations: but his plan was, that the ſuperior energy of the goſpel, and the wonderful effects produced by it, ſhould evidently appear to be wholly owing to the excellency of his power, as working by that deſpiſed doctrine; and not at all to be aſcribed to the ſuperior endowments of the inſtruments that he employed. For this end he choſe mean, brittle veſſels, by which way to convey this treaſure to mankind; that his power might be glorified in their preſervation, and in the bleſſed change wrought by their miniſtry.

V. 8—12.] It was very ſuitable to the apoſtle's deſign of re-eſtabliſhing himſelf in the affections of the Corinthians, to remind them of his ſufferings, and ſupports in that miniſtry, from which they had received ſuch unſpeakable advantage. He, and other faithful miniſters, were "troubled on every ſide," in every place, from perſons of every deſcription, and with all kinds of afflictions: yet were they not diſtreſſed, or ſtraitened, as men who had no way of eſcape, or relief. They were "perplexed" in their difficulties, about what courſe they ſhould take, or how they ſhould endure amidſt ſuch multiplied trials: yet they were not left to deſpair of help and comfort. They were perſecuted, wherever they went: yet the Lord did not forſake them, or permit their enemies to prevail againſt them. Nay, they were even caſt down in the conflict with temptation and perſecution: yet they were not deſtroyed; but were enabled to riſe up again, and to renew the fight, without any material damage to themſelves or their cauſe. Thus they carried about with them in their bodies, the dying of the Lord Jeſus; in thoſe bruiſes, wounds, and ſtripes, which they received for his ſake, and from ſuch men as had crucified Him: that ſo, the life of Jeſus, as riſen and glorified, might be evidently proved, by the protection, deliverances, ſupports and conſolations afforded to them; whereby they were enabled to proceed with conſtancy and fortitude in their miniſtry, amidſt ſuch complicated dangers and ſufferings. For whilſt ſome of their brethren had ſealed their teſtimony with their blood; they, who ſtill lived, were continually delivered to death, in the perſecutions, which every where met them: that ſo the power of their ever-living Saviour might be manifeſted, in ſtill preſerving their mortal fleſh in life, and fitneſs for ſervice. So that death was, as it were, continually at work on them, by the hardſhips they endured, in conformity to the death of Chriſt: but life was wrought in the ſouls of the Corinthians, by means of their ſufferings: as they were not only exempted from perſecutions, but were made partakers of ſpiritual and eternal life, by their miniſtry: and did it then become them, to add to their trials, by their neglect and diſaffection!

V. 13—18.] The apoſtle and his fellow ſufferers perſevered in their faithful miniſtry; becauſe they were actuated by the ſame ſpirit of faith, which the Pſalmiſt had expreſſed (*Pſ.* cxvi. v. 10:) they believed moſt firmly the doctrines, which they preached; and therefore nothing could induce them to conceal, retract, or corrupt them. In the daily expectation, and anticipation of martyrdom; they were fully aſſured, that God would raiſe their mangled bodies from the grave, by the powerful work of Jeſus, even as he had raiſed him from the dead: and that he would thus preſent them with all thoſe, to

for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;
18 While we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen *are* temporal; but the things which are not ſeen *are* eternal.

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whom their labours had been bleſſed, before his glorious throne, as the objects of his love, whom he at length had made perfect in glory and felicity. They alſo underſtood, that all their ſufferings, as well as all their miniſterial ſufficiency, were intended to ſubſerve the Lord's purpoſes of love to their brethren; (as indeed all things were managed as might beſt promote their eternal good:) that the abundant mercy and grace vouchſafed to them; might excite many to thank God for the benefit received by their means; and thus might conduce to his glory alſo. With theſe proſpects, and hopes, they were preſerved from fainting, or declining the dangers and difficulties attending on their miniſtry. For "though their outward man periſhed," their bodies were worn out by fatigue, and ſufferings, and their lives deſtroyed by repeated violences: yet their "inward man," or their regenerate ſouls, daily renewed the vigour of their faith, hope, love, patience &c.; and were renewed more and more into the holy image of God. They therefore conſidered their trials as "light affliction," which ought ſcarce to be mentioned; being as nothing when compared with the end, which they had in view: and the continuance of their ſufferings, (though for many years,) was but for a moment, when contraſted with eternity. Moreover they knew, by faith and experience, that theſe afflictions were working out for them an increaſe of future, and eternal felicity; both as means, by which their ſouls were rendered more capable of ſpiritual enjoyment; and as the Lord would graciouſly and abundantly recompenſe thoſe ſufferings, which they endured for his ſake. The words here uſed are far more emphatical, than the tranſlation of them. There is a repetition of the word *hyperbole*; by which is generally meant a perſon's exceeding the limits of exact truth, in any animated deſcription, or narration: but in the ſubject, on which the apoſtle ſpake, the boldeſt figures of ſpeech muſt come ſhort of the mark. If a man proceeded from one apparent *hyperbole* to another, and accumulated the moſt energetic terms as much as poſſible; he could not fully expreſs the real excellency of that glory, honour, and immortality, in which the believer's ſufferings would aſſuredly iſſue. Compared with it, all temporal afflictions were levity itſelf; and earthly proſperity, mere vanity and emptineſs, unſubſtantial, and worthleſs. This glory was ſubſtantial, weighty, durable, exceeding deſcription, and imagination; and human language laboured in vain to convey any ſuitable ideas of it. It would even have been an inſupportable weight to them, until their bodies and ſouls were prepared by Omnipotence to ſuſtain it. It was "a weight of glory," a fulneſs of God; a meaſure of knowledge, holineſs, dignity, and felicity, in his favour, preſence, and according to his glorious excellency and beauty; adequate to whatever they ſhould be made capable of poſſeſſing and enjoying; and all this would be unchangeable and eternal. In this proſpect the apoſtle and his brethren, diſregarded viſible, and ſenſible objects; they *aimed not* at worldly honours and advantages, they looked not at them with eſtimation or deſire; but by faith they beheld, and in hope they aimed at inviſible glories as their great object: being aſſured, that all viſible, and ſenſible things, whether pleaſant or painful, the good, or the evil things of the world, were temporal, and would ſpeedily be terminated; whereas the unſeen objects which faith realizes, were eternal; whether the final happineſs of believers, or the final miſery of the wicked, were intended: and this gave ſuch an incomparable importance in their judgment to unſeen things; that nothing elſe ſeemed worthy of their deſires, or of their fears.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They are not meet for the ſacred miniſtry of the new teſtament, who do not expect the ſalvation of their own ſouls, from the free mercy of God, through Jeſus Chriſt. If we have received this mercy, or have a prevailing hope in it; we ſhould not faint under any tribulations, whilſt we are employed to recommend it to our fellow ſinners. Indeed, the grace of God will teach ſuch miniſters "to renounce the hidden things of diſhoneſty"; they will not walk in craftineſs, nor handle the "word of God deceitfully:" and if any profeſs to have received mercy, who are thus artfully impoſing on men for their own credit or profit; they are certainly as much deceived by ſatan, as others can be by them. For the true miniſter of Chriſt muſt avoid all appearances of duplicity; he muſt pay court to no man's paſſions, nor connive at his vices: but he ought, in the moſt perſpicuous, and intelligible manner, to declare, and apply the truth, and ſo to commend himſelf to every man's conſcience, as in the ſight of God. If the goſpel, when thus preached be hid from the hearers; it is evident, that they are ſtill in the way of deſtruction: and they have reaſon to dread the conſequences of their obſtinate unbelief; as it is among ſuch perſons eſpecially, that ſatan, that arch-apoſtate, the uſurping god of this world, is permitted finally to blind and harden numbers to their ruin. His great object is to keep men in the dark; particularly to keep out of their minds, "the light of the "goſpel of the glory of Chriſt:" he therefore ſpares no pains to keep men at a diſtance from the goſpel; or by various prejudices to ſet them againſt it; or by manifold corruptions to deſtroy its efficacy. His grand oppoſition is always made to the perſonal, and mediatorial glory of Chriſt: for he knows, that no other knowledge, or religious obſervances will ſanctify or ſave thoſe, on whom this divine light doth not ſhine; and that none can periſh, who are illuminated by it. But though many are blinded, the miniſter muſt go on with his work: he muſt not preach himſelf, either as the ſubject, or the object of his diſcourſes; but he muſt preach Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; dwelling on his love and ſalvation as his favourite theme; and ſeeking his glory, as the great end of his labours: and inſtead of aſpiring to pre-eminence and authority, he ſhould willingly be the ſervant of the diſciples of Chriſt, for his ſake, and ſtoop to any thing, that may promote their good. In-

CHAP. V.

Contains the apoſtle, 1*ſt. Shewing that the hope, a deſire of heavenly glory, with the proſpect of a future judgment, rendered him courageous, and diligent in his miniſtry,* 1---11. 2*d. Declaring his reaſons for thus earneſtly commending his miniſtry; and that the love of Chriſt was the conſtraining principle of his conduct,* 12---16. 3*d. Speaking of the believer's new creation, and reconciliation to God through the atonement of Chriſt; and of miniſters, as ambaſſadors to ſinners, to beſeech them to accept of this reconciliation,* 17---21.

FOR we know that if our earthly houſe of *this* tabernacle were diſſolved, we

deed, this will be the diſpoſition of all thoſe, into whoſe hearts God hath ſhined by his new creating Spirit, to give them "the light of his glory, in the face of Jeſus "Chriſt." In proportion to the degree of our ſpiritual illumination, we ſhall reflect the image of Chriſt, even as he is to us the image of the inviſible God; and we ſhall learn lowlineſs, ſelf-denial, and love from that admired pattern. But without this illumination the ſoul will remain a dark, confuſed, and deformed chaos, when ſcience hath done its utmoſt; nor can that knowledge of God, and of Chriſt, which is eternal life, be obtained in any other way. (*John*, c. xvii. v. 3.)

But the Lord puts this treaſure of heavenly truth into mean earthen veſſels: he often employs perſons of ſuch infirm bodies, moderate abilities, or low rank in ſociety; as worldly policy would reject and deſpiſe: for, whatever inſtrument be ſelected, he will make it appear, that the "excellency of the power," by which the goſpel is made ſucceſsful, is of God, and not of men." He therefore uſes various methods to convince his moſt uſeful ſervants of their weakneſs and inſufficiency; and ſometimes he makes their infirmities viſible to others, that they may not give them undue honour and reſpect. Theſe earthen pitchers are very brittle: but the rich treaſure they contain is often moſt manifeſt, when they are moſt expoſed; and when they are broken to pieces, it is ſometimes more abundantly communicated, than it had been before. In one way or other both chriſtians and miniſters muſt be troubled; and ſometimes it will be on every ſide. Yet faith and grace will preſerve them from deep diſtreſs. They may be perplexed by various difficulties and diſcouragements; yet they will be preſerved from utter deſpair; the Lord will not forſake them in their perſecutions and temptations: and even when caſt down by their enemies, they ſhall not be deſtroyed; for He will lift them up again, and enable them to renew the combat. But the troubles, and ſins of ungodly men, as well as their temporal proſperity, will iſſue in everlaſting darkneſs and deſpair. It is indeed a great honour, though painful to nature, always to bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jeſus, by ſuffering for his ſake, and after his example, from the contempt and enmity of this evil world: and he will ſhew his life and power, by ſupporting and comforting thoſe, who are thus tried, and expoſed in his cauſe. Indeed, if we by faith, and the crucifixion of the fleſh, are intereſted in, and conformed to our dying Redeemer; we ſhall, in hope, comfort, holineſs of life, and conſtancy in his ſervice, abundantly manifeſt his power and truth, as riſen and glorified: and as far as we reſemble him, we ſhall be willing for death to work in us, that life may be given to others by our means. But nothing can be done in this matter, without the ſame ſpirit of faith, which animated the ancient prophets, apoſtles, and martyrs of Jeſus: we ſhall be timid, heſitating, and wavering in our teſtimony, unleſs we can ſay, "I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken." But when we are fully aſſured of the truth, importance and excellency of the goſpel; nothing can durably prevail with us to retract, alter, or even conceal the great doctrines, which we are called to preach, or profeſs. Nor does true religion require us to neglect our real intereſt: it aſſures us, that He who raiſed up the Lord Jeſus, will alſo raiſe up all his faithful followers, and preſent them before the aſſembled world, as thoſe, who have honoured him, and whom he will honour. Knowing therefore, that all things are working together for good to thoſe who love God; giving diligence to obtain the aſſurance that we are of this number; and being animated by the hope, that our labours, and trials will conduce to the benefit of our brethren, and the glory of the Lord; we ſhall not faint in our work and warfare: even when our bodies waſte away by diſeaſe, wear out by labour, grow feeble through old age, or are about to periſh by perſecution and death; the ſoul may be renewed, and grow more vigorous and holy day by day; and more ripe for the enjoyment of heavenly felicity. But if the apoſtle could call his heavy, and long continued trials, "light affliction, and but for a moment;" what muſt our trifling difficulties appear in the eſtimate of faith and grace? How ſhameful then is it, that we ſhould complain, or deſpond under them? What powerful ſupports and conſolations muſt there be in the hope and earneſt of heaven, beyond what we have hitherto experienced! May we then ſeek to have all our light and momentary afflictions ſanctified to us; that by promoting our humility, ſpirituality, and admiring love of God our Saviour, they may work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! We know not indeed what we ſhall be, but the unutterable nature of the felicity, which we are encouraged to expect, ſhould enhance our value for it! That muſt be little, which human language can expreſs, or human imagination conceive. But the joys of heaven will be immenſe, and everlaſting. On the other hand, what muſt be the weight of that miſery reſerved for the wicked, concerning which the ſcriptures uſe ſuch energetic language; when all the ſufferings, that man is here expoſed to, are light and momentary, according to the judgment of the inſpired writers? Let us then look off from the things which are ſeen: let us ceaſe to ſeek for worldly advantages, or to fear preſent diſtreſſes: let us take warning to flee from the wrath to come, and give diligence to enſure future felicity; for the things, which are ſeen are temporal, but the things, which are not ſeen are eternal.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtle, continuing the have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earneſtly deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven:

3 If ſo be that being clothed we ſhall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing *is* God, who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of the Spirit.

6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by ſight:)

8 We are confident, *I ſay*, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that whether preſent or abſent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

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argument of the preceding chapter, ſtated, that he, and other faithful miniſters, endured perſecution, from the aſſurance of a far happier ſtate, whenever they ſhould be cut off by death. The body might be deemed "an "earthly houſe," in which the ſoul dwelt on earth, and which would ſoon return to the duſt, whence it was taken: yet it was rather a tabernacle, the unſettled and precarious abode of a few days, than a ſtated reſidence. This houſe, or tabernacle was about to be taken down, and the materials of it to be diſſolved; but when that change ſhould take place, the ſoul being diſlodged from a mean, moldering tenement, which always wanted repairs, and had been a conſtant ſource of trouble, ſorrow, temptation and ſin; would immediately have a building of God, an habitation far ſuperior to all, that ever was made with hands; a bleſſed manſion in the heavens, where God diſplays his glorious preſence, and where light, purity, and felicity are found in full perfection: and this manſion would continue to all eternity. As the apoſtle ſpake of what was to follow immediately upon the diſſolution of the body by death; he muſt be ſuppoſed to mean the ſtate of the immortal ſoul, before, as well as after the reſurrection; for the language is figurative, and muſt not be confined by a too literal interpretation. In this proſpect, he and his brethren, groaned earneſtly, deſiring to be delivered from their preſent troubles, and to be clothed with that glory, felicity, and immortality, which might be conſidered as the garment, as well as the manſion of the bleſſed inhabitants of heaven. This, he ſeems to have longed for without paſſing through death, if it might have been ſo. However he knew, that as they ſhould be thus arrayed, they would not be found naked or deſtitute, when they left this world, and all its poſſeſſions and accommodations; nor would they experience trouble, want, ſhame: or any inconvenience for evermore. This then muſt be a moſt deſirable change: for whilſt they were in the frail tabernacle of the body, they groaned, being burdened with manifold trials, temptations, and difficulties, from which they longed to be releaſed. Not that they deſired to be unclothed, by putting off the body at death, merely in order to be rid of its incumbrance: the proſpect of that diſſolution was not in itſelf pleaſing to them; but they would rather have been "clothed upon," by being taken immediately to heaven, as Enoch and Elijah were, that ſo mortality might at once have been ſwallowed up, and loſt in life and immortality; yet the proſpect of the conſequences of death, and the hope of a future reſurrection reconciled them even to the pangs of the ſeparating ſtroke.

V. 5—8.] That change of the judgment, diſpoſition, and affections, by which the apoſtle, and his brethren, had been wrought, and faſhioned into a fitneſs for their perilous, and ſuffering employments; and to that willingneſs to die for Chriſt's ſake, in the aſſurance of going to enjoy felicity in his favour, was the work of God himſelf, and could have been effected by no other agent. They had alſo received the earneſt of the Spirit, in his ſanctifying joys, and conſolations; ſo that they could not poſſibly be deceived in this matter (Note, c. i. v. 22.) Therefore, they were always confident of the divine favour, and courageous in their work, though expoſed to the daily peril of a violent death: for they well knew, that whilſt they *ſojourned* in the body, they muſt be excluded from the immediate preſence of the Lord Jeſus, as pilgrims in a diſtant land. For they then lived and laboured by faith in him, as inviſibly preſent with, and taking care of them; which afforded them ſupport and encouragement ſuited to their preſent ſtate: yet it differed very much from that intuitive viſion of his glory and felicity in his immediate preſence, which was the object of their hopes and deſires. However, faith inſpired them with confidence and courage, as they were ſatisfied that whenever their bodies ſhould be worn out by labours, or endure martyrdom; their ſouls being diſlodged from that tenement, would immediately be admitted into the preſence of their beloved Lord. This is deciſive concerning the felicity to be enjoyed by the ſouls of believers, when *abſent from the body:* and alſo that they will poſſeſs their happineſs in the very place where Jeſus diſplays his glorious preſence, and not elſewhere, as ſome have imagined.

V. 9—12.] In this hope the apoſtle, and his fellow-labourers were *ambitious*, (ſo the word properly ſignifies,) not of the honours and applauſe of the world; but of acceptance with the Lord, in reſpect of their perſons, miniſtry, and labours; though they ſhould be unac-

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſuade men; but we are made manifeſt unto God; and I truſt alſo are made manifeſt in your conſciences.

12 For we commend not ourſelves again unto you, but give you occaſion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have ſomewhat to *anſwer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13 For whether we be beſide ourſelves, *it is* to God: or whether we be ſober, *it is* for your cauſe.

14 For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us; becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the fleſh: yea though we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

17 Therefore if any man *be* in Chriſt, *he is*

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ceptable to mankind, or even to their brethren: that ſo they might be ſupported by the comforts, and conſciouſneſs of his approbation, during their ſojourning in the body, whilſt abſent from him; and that when they ſhould quit the body, they might be welcomed by him, as good and faithful ſervants, and be admitted to the joy of their Lord. For they were aſſured that *they*, *their hearers*, and *all men* without exception, *muſt*, neceſſarily, whether they would or not; *appear*, or be made manifeſt, in the whole of their true characters, with all the ſecrets of their hearts, and lives; before the ſolemn and deciſive *tribunal* of Chriſt, the righteous, impartial, holy, heart-ſearching, omnipotent Judge; who now called on them to truſt in, and obey him as a divine Saviour, but who would ſurely take vengeance on all, who rejected, or abuſed his ſalvation. At this ſolemn period, every individual, ſhall *receive*, the appointed recompence of his deeds, according to the things done, whilſt he ſojourned in the body, or *by*, and through the body, whether they were good, or evil; without any reſpect of perſons, or regard to profeſſion, or other diſtinctions. So that the juſtified believer, who, from love to Chriſt, hath done good, uprightly and faithfully, will receive an abundant, and gracious recompence of his believing, though imperfect ſervices: but the profligate, the infidel, the Phariſee, the hypocrite and apoſtate; with all kinds of impenitent tranſgreſſors, will be puniſhed according to the number and aggravation of their crimes. Knowing therefore what a terrible vengeance the Lord would then execute on the workers of iniquity, the apoſtle, and his brethren uſed every kind of argument and perſuaſion to induce men of every nation and deſcription, to believe in the Lord Jeſus, and to act conſiſtent with the character of his diſciples. In this their earneſt endeavour, the motives, and intentions of their hearts were manifeſt to God, and they were confident of his gracious approbation: and whatever the prejudices and paſſions of ſome at Corinth might ſuggeſt; they were confident, that in their conſciences they could not but be convinced, that they acted with integrity, zeal, and faithful affection to their ſouls. Not that they needed, or intended again to commend *themſelves* to their favour, from ſelfiſh, or vain glorious motives: but they thus ſuggeſted ſuch things, as were proper to be oppoſed to the cenſures and ſuſpicions of their falſe teachers; and gave them occaſion to glory in the diſintereſted labours, and patient ſufferings of their faithful miniſters; and ſo to anſwer the boaſtings of thoſe ambitious men, who gloried in appearance, as if very zealous in the cauſe of Chriſt, and greatly attached to the Corinthians; but who were not really what they profeſſed, and whoſe hearts diſſented from, and as it were belyed the language of their mouths.

V. 13—16] The great earneſtneſs of the apoſtle to rectify the diſorders of Corinth, and to re-eſtabliſh his authority among them; his lively affections; and his exceſſive labours amidſt ſufferings and dangers, gave his adverſaries occaſion to repreſent him as beſide himſelf, and tranſported by a vehement zeal beyond all the dictates of reaſon and ſobriety. (2 *Kings*, c. ix. v. 11. *Mark*, c. iii. v. 21. *John*, c. x. v. 20. *Acts*, c. xxvi. v. 24, 25.) But whatever in his conduct had given them this opinion of him, it was wholly owing to his zeal for the honour of God, and his truth; and to his earneſt deſire to approve himſelf faithful in his cauſe: and when at other times he ſeemed to ſome of them to act with great moderation and candour; and to debate matters with them with coolneſs and ſobriety; it was wholly from a regard to their welfare, and a deſire to recover them from dangerous errors; in order to which he employed every method, which he could deviſe, without regarding their cenſures, or any perſonal conſequences. For in this, as well as other things, the love of Chriſt conſtrained him and other faithful miniſters, and real chriſtians. That love, which Jeſus had manifeſted towards ſinners, in the whole of his undertaking and purchaſed ſalvation; and to believers in calling them to partake of this ineſtimable bleſſing; had excited in their hearts ſuch reciprocal love and gratitude to him, as conſtrained, and carried them on with invincible energy, in every ſervice, by which they could glorify his name, or promote his cauſe: nor could other fears, hopes, affections, or intereſts ſtop their progreſs, when actuated by this moſt powerful principle. For in this matter, they judged decidedly, that if Jeſus died as an atoning Sacrifice for all his people, even for all, that ſhould ever believe in him; then were all men dead, as under condemnation, enſlaved to ſin, and utterly devoid, of power to deliver themſelves; otherwiſe he needed not to have died for them, or in their ſtead: and that he died, as a common ſacrifice for the ſins of all men, or men of every nation and deſcription; that when, through the preaching of his goſpel to ſinners, any of them were quickened and pardoned, and ſo paſſed from death to life; they ſhould from that memorable period, no longer live according to their carnal in-a new creature: old things are paſſed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and hath given to us the miniſtry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him *to be* ſin for us, who knew no ſin; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.

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clinations, or to ſeek their own intereſt, reputation, indulgence, or advancement, as they had formerly done; but ſhould devote themſelves, and all their powers, to do the will of their Redeemer, to promote his glory, and to recommend his goſpel; ſeeing he had died for them, and riſen again, to be their Lord, and King. Being therefore under ſuch obligations, influenced by ſuch motives, and encouraged by ſuch hopes and aſſurances of aſſiſtance; they were powerfully impelled to diſregard all contrary, and interfering objects, that they might ſhew their love of their moſt gracious Lord and Saviour. So that when this change had taken place, and theſe principles were matured; they "knew "no man after the fleſh;" they had no reſpect to men's perſons, becauſe of their nation, ſect, rank, or perſonal attachment to them, when their obedience to Chriſt was concerned: they could not accommodate their doctrine or conduct to the humours of men, from any worldly principles, or becauſe of outward connexion with, or obligations to them. Nay, they did not now regard their external relation to Chriſt himſelf, as being of the ſame nation with him, or otherwiſe acquainted with him. Even ſuch of the apoſtles, and evangeliſts, as had perſonally known, or been nearly related to him; did in this reſpect diſregard that external tye: when it came in competition with their union with him by faith, and their obedience to him as his ſervants and miniſters. So that they could not warp their doctrine, or deviate from their inſtructions, to pleaſe the Jews, or the neareſt relatives of Chriſt; any more than out of reſpect to their own friends, or to the philoſophers, and princes of the Gentiles. Many ſuppoſe that the apoſtle here referred to the Jewiſh converts, who were diſpleaſed with him for admitting the Gentiles into the church, and being ſo earneſt for their converſion; which they deemed a kind of madneſs: (v. 13:) but the Corinthians were chiefly gentile converts, and they ſeem not to have been generally diſpoſed to *judaize*.

V. 17—21] The judgment, experience, and principles which the apoſtle had ſtated, were not to be deemed peculiar to himſelf; but as the ſtandard of genuine chriſtianity: therefore, if any man, whether Jew, or Gentile, was in Chriſt, as a juſtified believer, he was alſo a new creature, or a new creation of God. (c. iv. v. 6.) By ſpiritual illumination, and it's invariable effects, a new judgment had been produced, with new principles, inclinations, affections, thoughts, purpoſes, and diſpoſitions; from which, new words and actions muſt proceed. Thus, old deſires, intentions, projects, expectations, connexions, ſatisfactions &c, were paſſed away, and ſuperſeded; for behold, by the marvellous operation of divine grace, all things were become new! So that the man experienced new hopes, fears, joys, ſorrows, deſires, averſions, imaginations, and tempers; he learned to ſpeak a new language, to chooſe new companions, to aim at new objects, and to attend to new employments. Every thing now was caſt into a new mold, received a new impreſſion, and took a new direction from the knowledge of God, from faith in, and love to Chriſt; humiliation for, and hatred of ſin, and the deſire of holineſs, and the hope of eternal life. As this change was wrought by the power, and according to the purpoſe of God, ſo it bare on it the ſtamp of his holy image, and led to a proper temper of mind, and conduct towards him. Thus he had reconciled the apoſtle and his brethren to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, the great Mediator: and having pardoned their rebellions, ſubdued their enmity, and ſhed abroad his love in their hearts; he had entruſted to them "the miniſtry of reconciliation:" that from gratitude to him, zeal for his glory, and benevolence to their fellow ſinners; they might ſpend their future lives in earneſt, and unwearied endeavours, to bring others to partake of the ſame mercy, and to devote themſelves in love to the ſervice of their reconciled God. The ſubſtance of this miniſtry was, "that God was in Chriſt," manifeſted in the fleſh; as the fulneſs of the Deity dwelt in, and was diſplayed by the human nature, through the incarnation of the eternal Word and Son of God, who was equal to, and one with the Father: that ſo being united to man's nature, he might reconcile the world unto himſelf, by his atonement, mediation, and grace: and that ſinners throughout the earth, might thus be encouraged to hope in his mercy, and taught by his grace to love his holy character, law, worſhip, and ſervice; to which their carnal minds had before been enmity. When therefore, ſinners were brought to him, as "in Chriſt reconciling the "world to himſelf," in humble faith; he no more imputed any of their treſpaſſes unto them, but blotted them out by a free forgiveneſs, without any reſpect to their nation, or previous character. This word, or doctrine, of reconciliation he had committed to thoſe, who had once been enemies, but who had thus been reconciled. So that they were now commiſſioned as ambaſſadors for Chriſt, to go, in his name, and by his authority, to declare theſe encouraging truths to ſinners throughout all the earth. And not only were they inſtructed to command them to repent, and believe the goſpel, and to exhort, perſuade, and encourage them to hope in the rich mercy of God through Jeſus Chriſt; but God did, as it were, beſeech them by their miniſtry, as the ambaſſadors of Chriſt; and they, in Chriſt's ſtead, moſt earneſtly intreated them, not to reject ſuch aſtoniſhing love,

CHAP. VI.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Earneſtly exhorting ſinners to ſeek ſalvation without delay; and ſhewing how he, and his brethren approved their miniſtry to mankind, 1---10. *2d. Expreſſing his great affection for the Corinthians; deſiring them to enlarge their hearts towards him; warning them againſt connexions with unbelievers; and ſetting before them the promiſes of God by the goſpel,* 11---18.

but to repent, ſubmit to God, accept of his ſalvation, and be reconciled to him, as his worſhippers, friends, and children. For to aſſure them, that he was really willing to be thus reconciled to all, who accepted of this moſt condeſcending invitation, He, "even God the Father," "had made Him," his incarnate Son, "who knew no ſin," but was moſt perfectly holy, and righteous, "to be ſin," or a ſin-offering, "for us," who deſerved the utmoſt ſeverity of his vengeance. So that this holy and divine Saviour, being perfectly willing to ſuffer as a ſacrifice, was dealt with, as if he had been altogether a ſinner, or ſin in the abſtract: that thus God's hatred of ſin, and his determination to puniſh it, being ſo wonderfully diſplayed; he might honourably pardon every believer, and make him "the righteouſneſs of God *in Chriſt*:" dealing with him as if he had been perfectly righteous, or righteouſneſs itſelf; yea as "the righteouſneſs of God in Chriſt:" as a far nobler, and more excellent righteouſneſs was thus made his for juſtification, than any mere creature could ever have performed. This verſe contains moſt concluſive arguments, in proof of the vicarious ſufferings of Chriſt, as the real, and ſatisfactory atonement to divine juſtice for our ſins: of the imputation of his perfect righteouſneſs to believers, as their title to eternal life; and of his real Deity, whoſe righteouſneſs becomes their's by virtue of their union with him. Perhaps ſtronger language cannot be uſed, in declaring theſe doctrines, by thoſe, who moſt zealouſly contend for them. The apoſtle doubtleſs ſpake primarily of himſelf, and his fellow-labourers, as Chriſt's ambaſſadors: yet, as all faithful miniſters are entruſted with the ſame meſſage, and by the ſame authority; ſo they too are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, though to a ſmaller number of their fellow ſinners. Some of the Corinthian profeſſors of chriſtianity were ſuppoſed by Paul to be unconverted, and unreconciled to God; and he might have them in view, when he ſpake of God's beſeeching ſinners by his miniſters, &c. But he was evidently giving an account of his commiſſion, and general miniſtry, through the nations of the earth: wherever he came he addreſſed ſinners in this pathetic and earneſt manner; and whilſt he prayed them, in Chriſt's ſtead to be reconciled to God; it was, as if God himſelf had beſought them to lay aſide their enmity, and accept of his mercy: and this change of the language, "ambaſſadors for *Chriſt*," "*God* beſeeches you; we pray you *in Chriſt's* ſtead, &c," ſhews how familiar it was to the apoſtle to conſider his divine Maſter, as One with the Father, in eſſence, Deity and authority.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is moſt animating for us to know, amidſt our pains, ſufferings, temptations, conflicts, and proſpects of mortality, that whenever we die, we ſhall enter into the heavens, and be admitted to an unſpeakable felicity: but our aſſurance, or prevailing hope of this muſt be proportioned to the evidence of our converſion. It is not worth our while to be very ſolicitous about, or indulgent to this clay cottage, in which the ſoul is now meanly and incommodiouſly lodged, or rather impriſoned becauſe of tranſgreſſion. We ſhould not be troubled to feel it, as it were, ſhake, or to perceive the tokens of its approaching diſſolution. We muſt not expect much eaſe or ſatisfaction in this earthly houſe of our tabernacle: but we ſhould look forward in hopes of "a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Whilſt we groan earneſtly, deſiring admiſſion into this bleſſed manſion; let us ſeek to be more and more clothed upon, with the robes of righteouſneſs and ſalvation: that we may be ſure, that we ſhall not be found naked, when diſlodged from the body. If in the mean time we groan being burdened with manifold tribulations and temptations; or if we feel a reluctance to be ſtripped by the cold and rough hands of death, and could rather wiſh to paſs to heaven ſome other way, "that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life:' it may encourage us to recollect that even apoſtles experienced the ſame troubles, and knew ſomething of the ſame reluctance. But if the deſire of having done with ſin and ſorrow, and eſpecially of beholding face to face our beloved Redeemer, hath given us, in a meaſure, a victory over our fears, and made us willing even to be abſent from the body, that we may be preſent with the Lord: we ſhould remember that it is God himſelf, who hath wrought our hearts into this ſpiritual, and holy diſpoſition; and that theſe deſires and affections are indeed the earneſt of the Spirit, and the firſt-fruits of our eternal happineſs. This ſhould excite us to an unremitted courage and confidence in our work, whatever dangers may obſtruct our courſe: whilſt abſent from the Lord, we may by faith walk with him, and derive ſupport and conſolation from him; for thus we may ſee him that is inviſible, and realize thoſe objects, that are unſeen. Whatever haſtens the believer's departure from the body, ſhortens alſo his paſſage to the preſence of his Lord, where is fulneſs of joy for evermore. Whilſt others therefore labour for worldly riches, and are ambitious of the honour that cometh from man: let us aſpire after the glory of being accepted of Chriſt, in all our ſervices during life, and of being received into his joy, when we leave the world. As we muſt all appear without diſguiſe before his judgment-ſeat: let us beware of hypocriſy, and be impartial in judging ourſelves: and eſpecially let us carefully acquaint ourſelves with him, as our Saviour, who will ſhortly be manifeſted as our Judge: that by his grace we may henceforth do thoſe good things, which he will recompenſe as the fruits and evidences of ſaving faith, in that ſolemn, deciſive day. This expectation ſhould alſo render miniſters unwearied, and faithful in their work: and knowing what a tremendous day it will be to all the workers of iniquity; they ſhould be the more earneſt and affectionate in their perſuaſions, and warnings to ſinners to ſeek ſalvation before it be too late. Happy

WE then *as* workers together *with him*, beſeech *you* alſo that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2 (For he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccoured thee: behold, now *is* the

are they, who are warranted to appeal to God, in reſpect of their faithfulneſs and zeal in this good work; and even to the conſciences of thoſe, who are offended with their plain-dealing. This latter may ſometimes be neceſſary; though men may cenſure it, as ſelf-commendation: and it is often uſeful to ſuggeſt to their people ſuch things, as are proper to be ſpoken in defence of the truth, and in behalf of faithful preachers; that they may know how to anſwer the cavils and boaſtings of ſuch, as glory in appearance, but are not hearty in the cauſe of God.

If earneſtneſs to prevent the deluſion and deſtruction of our fellow ſinners, and in the great concerns of the eternal world, ſhould bring upon us the charge of being "beſide ourſelves:" we need only enquire, whether our conduct be warranted by the word of God, and ſprings from a regard to his authority and glory? And whether our moſt vehement affections, and addreſſes, as well as our more cool, and temperate reaſonings, are indeed intended to promote the ſalvation of ſouls? If this be the caſe, we may venture to diſregard the contumely; and we ſhould pray for our revilers, that they may indeed *come to themſelves*, and be delivered from that real inſanity, with which all unbelievers are affected. If our judgment concerning our loſt eſtate as ſinners, and the love of Chriſt, as dying for our ſalvation, coincides with that of the apoſtle, we ſhall feel, in proportion to our faith and hope, the conſtraining influence of his love, powerfully exciting us to live to him, who died for us, and roſe again. But alas, many ſhew the worthleſſneſs of their profeſſed faith and love; by living to themſelves, and to the world! And our views are often ſo obſcure, our judgments ſo confuſed, and our love ſo feeble, that we need continually to lament that we live ſo little to the glory of our gracious Lord. All partialities from external relations or connexions, which tempt the miniſter to waver in his teſtimony, or the chriſtian in his obedience, are inconſiſtent with a proper regard to the Lord Jeſus: and in this ſenſe we ſhould henceforth know no man after the fleſh, whatever claim he may ſeem to have to our ſpecial regard. The juſtified believer is indeed a new creature in a new world: his new relation to Chriſt, to the church, and to heavenly things; together with his new obligations, intereſts, purſuits, principles, and ſatisfactions have ſuperſeded thoſe, that formerly prevailed: yea "old things have "paſſed away, behold, all things are become new." Even the ſame actions, that he formerly did, are now performed from new motives, and in a new manner; his attention to relative and ſocial duties, and his diligence in worldly buſineſs ſpring from new purpoſes, and receive a new direction. They, who know nothing of this new creation, are not in Chriſt, whatever they may think: and the more evidently it hath been experienced, the more clearly is a man's juſtification proved. But all theſe things are of God, and to him the whole glory belongs: even they, who are new creatures; yea even apoſtles and martyrs, who are now perfect ſpirits before the throne, were once ſinners, under condemnation, and enemies to God by wicked works. This enmity began wholly on man's part; but the reconciliation was entirely deviſed, revealed, and effected by his offended Sovereign. In the perſon of Emmanuel, in his mediation, and atonement, who was made ſin for us, though he knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him, the foundation of this bleſſed reconciliation was laid; for "God was in Chriſt, "reconciling the world unto himſelf." When the kings of the earth appoint ambaſſadors, they generally depute them to thoſe, who are of their own rank in ſociety; nor would they deign to ſend a ſolemn embaſſy to their own rebellious ſubjects, when vanquiſhed, diſarmed, and condemned. But the King of kings, and Lord of lords, appoints ambaſſadors from himſelf to us poor apoſtate worms, and helpleſs periſhing ſinners! Earthly princes ſelect perſons of dignity and eminence to repreſent their perſons, and act by their authority, on theſe important occaſions; but the Lord of glory deputes pardoned rebels, and reconciled enemies to go to their former aſſociates in rebellion, on this embaſſy of peace! The gracious propoſals, which they are inſtructed to make, and the encouraging terms, that they are commanded to uſe, are equally expreſſive of condeſcenſion, compaſſion, and good-will to men: for the Lord himſelf, who might juſtly, and could eaſily deſtroy them for ever, is pleaſed to beſeech them to be reconciled to him! This language of our God and Saviour, by his miniſters to his proud enemies, muſt appear wonderful beyond conception, to the holy inhabitants of heaven; yet the reception that it meets with, and the contempt, or diſdain, which it excites, muſt exceedingly increaſe their aſtoniſhment; and it will aſſuredly ſatisfy them concerning the propriety and equity, of puniſhing ſuch irreconcileable haters of God with everlaſting deſtruction from his preſence. However, let the ambaſſadors for Chriſt adhere to their inſtructions, whatever reception their intreaties, and invitations may meet with: let them magnify their office and endeavour to repreſent their Lord, by exhibiting his character in their example, as well as declaring his whole counſel: let them conform to the laws and cuſtoms of his kingdom, and not to thoſe of this evil world: let them neither fear the contempt or rage of men, whilſt in Chriſt's ſtead they pray them to be reconciled to God; nor yet ſeek to pleaſe men, or expect any recompence, ſave from their gracious Lord. On the other hand, let all, who hear the goſpel, remember that the faithful miniſter is the ambaſſador of Chriſt to them; ſent to treat with them concerning peace with, and reconciliation to God; and that his Lord will ſurely reſent and puniſh every inſult and injury offered to him, as if done to himſelf in Perſon. The refuſal of this proffered reconciliation will leave men the enemies of God for evermore: the removal of faithful miniſters from thoſe, who have ſlighted their meſſage, is the recall of an ambaſſaaccepted time; behold, now *is* the day of ſalvation.)

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the miniſtry be not blamed:

4 But in all *things* approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes,

5 In ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in faſtings;

6 By pureneſs, by knowledge, by longſuffering, by kindneſs, by the Holy Ghoſt, by love unfeigned,

7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left,

8 By honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true;

9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold we live; as chaſtened, and not killed;

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dor of peace, and the fore-runner of a declaration of war. Let ſinners then hear the voice of God in Chriſt, and by his miniſters, beſeeching them to be reconciled to him: let the trembling penitent rejoice in the aſſurance, that his application for peace with God will not be rejected: let profeſſors examine their intereſt in Chriſt the great Reconciler, by enquiring whether they are become the friends of God, his cauſe and his people: let miniſters not only warn men by the terror of the Lord, but beſeech them by his abundant mercies, to repent and turn unto him: and let believers conſider, whether God can now with-hold any good thing from them? Or whether they can venture, loſe, labour, or ſuffer too much for him, who gave his beloved Son to be the ſacrifice for their ſins, that they might be made the righteouſneſs of God in Him?

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1, 2.] The apoſtle and other faithful miniſters, as fellow labourers of God, and employed by him in his work of reconciling the world unto himſelf, joined their earneſt entreaties to the Corinthians alſo, as they had to others, that they would not "receive the grace of God in vain." The unſpeakable love of God to ſinners in the redemption by his Son, and in the appointment of the miniſtry of reconciliation; and the ſpecial *grace, or free favour* ſhewn to thoſe, whom he thus beſought to be reconciled to him, would be altogether in vain, as to thoſe of them, who neglected ſo great ſalvation, through unbelief and love of ſin. The apoſtle feared that this had hitherto been the caſe of ſome profeſſors of chriſtianity at Corinth; and doubtleſs many ſuch would read or hear his epiſtle; whom therefore he moſt earneſtly exhorted, and intreated not to render all the advantages ſet before them ineffectual to themſelves, by perſiſting in their unbelief: but that they would without delay, whilſt the word of God was faithfully preached to them, embrace the propoſals of mercy and grace therein ſet before them. For as Jehovah had aſſured the promiſed Meſſiah, according to the revelation made by the prophet, that he had heard him in an acceptable time, and ſuccoured him in a day of ſalvation, (Note &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xlix. v. 7, 8;) with a ſpecial reference to his interceſſion for the Gentiles, after his exaltation to his mediatorial throne: ſo the preſent ſeaſon might be conſidered by the Corinthians, "an accepted time, and a day of ſalvation," to all, who applied for an intereſt in the bleſſings of the Redeemer's kingdom. But if they refuſed the embaſſy of peace; they might expect to be ſpeedily puniſhed as the enemies of Chriſt. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. lv. v. 6, 7. *Prov.* c. i. v. 19—33. *Luke*, c. xiii. v. 25.)

V. 3—10.] Whilſt the apoſtle, and his fellow-labourers thus zealouſly fulfilled their embaſſy of peace; they behaved with the utmoſt circumſpection, that they might give no offence, or juſt cauſe of ſtumbling, in any thing; leſt their imprudence, or miſconduct ſhould cauſe their miniſtry to be blamed, and thus render it ineffectual. They therefore ſtudied, and were enabled, in all things to approve themſelves ſuch perſons, as the miniſters of a holy God, in ſo gracious and ſacred a ſervice, ought to be. This they did, "by much "patience," reſignation, conſtancy, and perſevering aſſiduity in their work; notwithſtanding the multiplied afflictions, they were expoſed to: nor were they diſcouraged, or induced to repine or deſpond by urgent neceſſities and perplexing difficulties, even about obtaining a bare ſubſiſtence; or by repeated ſcourgings and impriſonments, from both Jewiſh, and heathen magiſtrates; or by the tumultuous aſſaults of enraged mobs. But they patiently continued their labours, often ſpending the night, as well as the day, in unremitted toil; and adding religious faſtings to thoſe, which abſolute want impoſed on them. To this patience they were encouraged, by the pureneſs of their motives; and they approved themſelves as the miniſters of God, by the holineſs, temperance, and purity of their whole conduct: they alſo ſhewed themſelves competent to impart all kind of divine knowledge and inſtruction to the world; they meekly endured all injuries and inſults; not only without ſeeking revenge, but without remitting their endeavours of doing good to their enemies, and of ſhewing kindneſs to all men: they abounded in the fruits, and confirmed their doctrine by the miraculous gifts, of the Holy Spirit, and they exerciſed thoſe gifts, without oſtentation or ſelfiſhneſs, in unfeigned love to Chriſt, and the ſouls of men. They were alſo approved as the miniſters of God, by the word of truth, which they every where preached without any adulteration; and by that power of God, which rendered it effectual to the converſion of ſinners to Chriſt, and holineſs. They were alſo defended on every ſide by the compact armour, of ſtrict integrity, and an univerſal regard to the righteous commandments of God, from the pureſt evangelical principles. This fortified them againſt the aſſaults of carnal hope, and fear, againſt the frowns, and ſmiles of the world, and againſt every aſſault of the tempter. Thus they paſſed

10 As ſorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* poſſeſſing all things.

11 O *ye* Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

12 Ye are not ſtraitened in us, but ye are ſtraitened in your own bowels.

13 Now for a recompence in the ſame, (I ſpeak as unto *my* children,) be ye alſo enlarged.

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? and what communion hath light with darkneſs?

15 And what concord hath Chriſt with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you.

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.

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through honour, and diſhonour; without being elated by the diſtinction conferred on them, or depreſſed by the ignominy to which they were expoſed. The calumnies raiſed concerning them, and the commendations they received were alike incapable of drawing them aſide from their ſteady courſe. The world indeed treated them "as "deceivers," who impoſed their fictions on the credulous: yet they acted in all things as faithful men, and ſhewed to mankind the true way of ſalvation. The noble and haughty of the world either knew them not, or deſpiſed them as obſcure perſons; but they were well known to multitudes, as the inſtruments of good to their ſouls. They ſeemed continually to be expoſed to, or even enduring, the ſtroke of death: yet they ſtill lived by the marvellous power of God. They were chaſtened of Him, as in a ſtate of tuition; and he uſed the malice of their enemies as the rod of his ſalutary diſcipline: but they were not killed by it. They had conſtant calls to be ſorrowful, both on account of ſins and ſufferings: yet divine conſolations rendered them habitually chearful, and joyful in the Lord. Though poor and needy in this world, they were the inſtruments of God in making many rich unto eternal life: and whilſt they had no eſtates, or any property on earth; yet they actually poſſeſſed all things, by their relation to Chriſt, and their intereſt in the promiſes: and the whole univerſe, if they had been the proprietors of it, could have afforded them nothing more, as conducive to their real good, than what they actually enjoyed, and expected. Thus the whole of their temper and conduct, in the varied circumſtances, through which they paſſed, tended to ſhew, that their doctrine had a bleſſed effect upon their own ſouls; and rendered them holy, beneficent, uſeful, and happy men. The animation, and energy of expreſſion in this beautiful paſſage has been generally admired; and it ſhews how full the apoſtle's heart was of theſe holy affections; and how open and communicative in ſpeaking on ſuch intereſting topics.

V. 11—13.] The conſciouſneſs of integrity, and the glow of his affection to the Corinthians opened, as it were, the apoſtle's mouth, in this unreſerved declaration of his ſentiments, and principles; ſo that he was not careful about the conſtruction which ſome perſons might put upon his words: for his heart was enlarged with an earneſt deſire of communicating good to them. If then they derived no further advantage from his miniſtry, it would be wholly owing to themſelves. They were not ſtraitened in him, whom Chriſt had made both able and willing to be uſeful to them: but they were ſtraitened in their own bowels, through unkind ſuſpicions, groundleſs prejudices, and diſaffection. Now the whole recompence that he deſired for all his love to them, and his labours and ſufferings for their good; (for he conſidered and ſpake to them as his beloved children,) was; that they would be enlarged after his example, and open their hearts in love, to receive the ſalutary counſels, cautions, and exhortations, which he gave them in the character of a tender, and prudent father.

V. 14—18.] The apoſtle eſpecially intreated his beloved children, not to contract marriages, or form any intimate connexions with their unbelieving neighbours, to which carnal motives might induce them. For this would reſemble that unequal yoking of different animals, which the law of Moſes forbad; (*Deut.* c. xxii. v. 10;) and which would tend to make them uneaſy to each other. Thus if believers connected themſelves with unbelievers; their views, principles, purſuits, and ſatisfactions muſt be diſcordant. The believer would be retarded, and interrupted in, or drawn aſide from, his religious exerciſes, or his various duties in his family, in the church, and to mankind. And what cordial and comfortable intercourſe could be maintained between the righteouſneſs of the one, and the unrighteouſneſs of the other party? What fellowſhip could there be, in the moſt important matters, between the children of the light, and thoſe of darkneſs? What agreement could be expected between the ſervant of Chriſt, and one in whom Belial, (or Satan,) who had caſt off the yoke of obedience to God, abode, and wrought? And what part or ſhare could a believer take in the unhallowed purſuits and pleaſures of an unbeliever, who was a deſpiſer of the bleſſed goſpel of Chriſt? For righteouſneſs and unrighteouſneſs, light and darkneſs, Chriſt and Belial might as eaſily aſſociate in cordiality, as the believer, and the infidel: all intercourſe between them muſt be attended with reſtraint, diſguiſe, or jarring ſentiments. Such perſons would live

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Exhorting the Corinthians to holineſs, from the preceding promiſes, 1. *2d. Requiring them to receive him; and declaring his uprightneſs towards, and confidence in them,* 2---4. *3d. Expreſſing his joy in the good account which Titus had brought of them, and ſhewing the happy effects of that godly ſorrow, which his former epiſtle had produced in them,* 5---16.

in different elements; they would draw different ways, and counteract each other's purpoſes: ſo that the unbeliever muſt be a croſs, a ſnare, a clog, and a hindrance to the believer. In particular, what agreement could ſubſiſt, between the temple of God and idols? Would Jehovah endure to have theſe hated rivals placed even in his own temple? Now chriſtians were the temple of God, his ſpecial reſidence conſecrated by the Holy Ghoſt. For thus he has promiſed of old to believing Iſraelites, and with a view to the days of Chriſt; "that he would dwell "in them," or "take up his in-dwelling in them;" "and walk in them," as a man in his habitation, and ſo "be their God, &c." (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. xxvi. v. 11, 12. *Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 37, 38.) Let them therefore value this ſpecial relation to God; and as far as their relative and ſocial duties would permit, let them ſeparate from their heathen neighbours, and be careful to touch no unclean thing, or any thing related to idolatry or iniquity. (*Iſaiah*, c. lii. v. 11.) In this caſe they might be aſſured, that the Lord would graciouſly accept of them, and receive them into his ſpecial favour: yea that he would be in every reſpect a Father to them, and provide for, protect, comfort, enrich and bleſs them, as his ſons and daughters by regeneration, and adoption. This, the Lord Almighty, the omnipotent Ruler of the univerſe, had repeatedly intimated by the ancient prophets; and he now declared it more explicitly by his apoſtles, even in reſpect of the Gentiles. And what could they deſire more, to compenſate for all loſſes, than this moſt intimate relation to, and union with the Almighty God?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is the peculiar honour of faithful miniſters to concur moſt willingly in the great deſigns of the Lord, to labour in concert with him, and to join their ſincere intreaties with his condeſcending invitations, in beſeeching ſinners not to receive the grace of God in vain. But the gracious declaration of the goſpel, and all the abundant proviſion, which is made in Chriſt Jeſus for the ſalvation of ſinners; the labours of the moſt affectionate miniſters, yea, the invitations of God himſelf by them, are often rendered ineffectual to thoſe that hear them, through their negligence, contempt, enmity, pride, and love of ſin; ſave as they iſſue in their deeper condemnation. To prevent this fatal conſequence, as far as we are able, we ſhould warn, expoſtulate, perſuade, beſeech, and exhort men by every means that we can deviſe, to attend to this one thing needful. We ſhould ſhow them, that "*now* is the accepted time, and the day of ſalvation;" that the preſent day alone is theirs, the paſt is irrevocable, the future may find them in eternity: or their reaſon may fail them, the goſpel may be withdrawn, or God may determine to leave them to final obduracy. Through the interceſſion of the divine Saviour, whom the Father hath heard in the accepted time, and ſuccoured in the day of ſalvation, by carrying him through his ſufferings, and exalting him to his heavenly glory; we now enjoy a day of grace: let then all be careful to avail themſelves of it, whilſt the goſpel is ſounding in their ears, and perhaps the convincing Spirit is ſtriving with their conſciences. It is peculiarly incumbent on all who preach this great ſalvation, to give no offence in any thing, except by their faithfulneſs, that their miniſtry be not blamed; and in all things to approve themſelves, as the miniſters of God to mankind, who are ſent to ſhew them the way of eternal life. Patience under afflictions, conſtancy in neceſſities and diſtreſſes, perſeverance under perſecutions; aſſiduity in labours, watchings and faſtings; purity, knowledge, meekneſs, kindneſs, a ſpiritual mind, unfeigned love, ſound doctrine producing an evident change, by the power of God, in men's characters; diſintereſted, ſteady integrity, as an armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left; are proper atteſtations of the miniſters of God. Thus ſupported they may paſs through honour and diſhonour; they may go on unmoved amidſt evil report and good report: conſcious of truth and ſincerity, they may diſregard the accuſation of being deceivers: known and approved of God, and his people, they may be reconciled to obſcurity and contempt in the world; their dangers and deliverances, their chaſtenings and conſolations, their outward ſorrow and inward rejoicing, their poverty and uſefulneſs in enriching many; their contentment with, yea ſometimes almoſt without food, and raiment, and their intereſt in the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, may be contraſted with each other; and the whole of their conduct, circumſtances and labours, will concur to recommend their doctrine to mankind. But alas, how few of thoſe, who wear the garb of miniſters, anſwer this deſcription! How many are the exact reverſe of it! How often do even the preachers of the truth give ſuch offence by their evident, allowed and habitual miſconduct; that the miniſtry is blamed, and men are fatally prejudiced againſt the truth! And how common is it for us all to be drawn into ſuch improprieties of conduct, as prevent the uſefulneſs of our moſt earneſt exhortations! We ſhould therefore continually beſeech the Lord to eraſe every unfavourable impreſſion, which our paſt miſconduct may have made on men's minds; and to prepare us for ſerving him more unexceptionably for the future; that we may give up every worldly intereſt and indulgence, and be willing to labour and ſuffer in the cauſe of Chriſt: we ſhould ſeek to be made fruitful in good works, to be endued with pureneſs and knowledge, to be ſtrengthened in the exerciſe of long-ſuffering and kindneſs; to be armed with the whole armour of God, to rejoice in the midſt of tribulation; to be more deſirous of making others rich, than of avoiding poverty in our own circumſtances; to leave our character and concerns in the Lord's hands, and to count ourſelves to poſſeſs all things in his all-ſufficient favour, and precious promiſes.

Theſe things will give us confidence in addreſſing even thoſe, who have imbibed prejudices againſt us: our mouths will be opened in the cauſe of Chriſt, by the conſciouſneſs, that we only ſeek the good of the people, HAVING therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

3 I ſpeak not *this* to condemn *you:* for I have ſaid before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you.*

4 Great *is* my boldneſs of ſpeech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

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and not our own emolument, or reputation. We ſhall be more concerned, when they cloſe their minds againſt our ſalutary inſtructions, than when they refuſe to communicate to our neceſſities: and the moſt deſired recompence of our labour of love, will be their readineſs to receive the truth from our lips. It will eſpecially be near the heart of ſuch paſtors, to caution their beloved children in the goſpel, not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. The fatal effects of neglecting the ſcriptural precept in this matter are moſt evident. They, whoſe croſs it is to be thus connected, without their wilful fault, may expect peculiar conſolations under it: but when believers will thruſt themſelves into ſuch diſadvantageous circumſtances, contrary to theſe expreſs warnings of God's word, they may expect to feel much additional diſtreſs. Indeed all intimate connexions with unbelievers ſhould be avoided. There can be no profitable communion between ſuch contrary characters: the attempt of making a coalition between Chriſt, and belial, is unnatural and abominable; the kingdoms of righteouſneſs, and unrighteous, of light, and darkneſs, muſt wage perpetual war with each other: and we are moſt likely to do good to unbelievers, when we ſtand aloof from all other intercourſe with them, beſides that of duty, and compaſſion. If chriſtians indeed, we are the temples of the living God; what have we then to do any more with idols? Let us value our relation to him, and not profane it: let us admire his condeſcending promiſes of dwelling in, and walking in us poor ſinners, whom he hath reconciled to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt: let us earneſtly deſire to have his temple made, and kept pure, that we may have the comfort of his manifeſted preſence: let us beſeech him to be our God, and Portion, and to number us with his choſen people: let us come out from among the workers of iniquity, and ſeparate from all their vain and ſinful pleaſures and purſuits, and from all conformity to the corrupt cuſtoms and faſhions of this evil world: let us not touch any gain or indulgence that is ſpotted with ſin: let us remember that the world, though called chriſtian, ſtill lieth in wickedneſs, and is full of unclean things, which we muſt abhor. Let us aſſure ourſelves that the Lord will receive all, who come in his appointed way, and at his call; and that he will be a Father unto them, and take them for his children: and if it be ſo envied a privilege to be the ſon or daughter of ſome earthly potentate; who can expreſs the dignity and felicity of being the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty?

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *Having*, &c.] This verſe evidently connects with, and concludes, the ſubject of the former chapter. The promiſes which God had given them in the goſpel ought to excite them to aſpire after greater degrees of holineſs. All ſin is filthineſs in the judgment of God, becauſe of its contrariety to his holy nature, and law. All ſenſual luſts may be called "filthineſs of the "fleſh:" whilſt pride, envy, revenge. avarice, &c. may be intended by the "filthineſs of the ſpirit." Or the former may ſignify the outward expreſſion of ſin by the body, in word or deed, the latter it's inward workings in the imagination, and affections of the ſoul. Aſpiring after the acceptance, adoption, and communion with God, before mentioned; and depending on his promiſes of gracious aſſiſtance, they ought to cleanſe themſelves from all this filthineſs; conſtantly watching againſt all evil thoughts, affections, words and works; mortifying every corrupt propenſity, renouncing every ſinful intereſt or pleaſure, ſeeking for an increaſe of all ſpiritual diſpoſitions, and abounding in every good word and action: thus they ought to perfect holineſs, and to ſeek for entire conformity to God's holy image and law, from regard to his authority, a fear of his diſpleaſure, an habitual ſenſe of his holy, heart-ſearching preſence with them, and a reverential regard to his glory. Thus they ſhould perſevere in unremitted endeavours after perfect holineſs, as long as they lived; becauſe their higheſt attainments would leave them ſhort of that perfection. In this exhortation of his beloved Corinthians, the apoſtle joined himſelf; thereby intimating, that he too needed more perfect cleanſing from the filthineſs of ſin; and that he called on them to do nothing, but what he himſelf was continually attempting.

V. 2—4.] The apoſtle here returned to his more immediate purpoſe of re-eſtabliſhing his authority among the Corinthians. He called on them to receive him, and his brethren, as the ambaſſadors of Chriſt to them. They could have no reaſon for a contrary conduct; as they had injured no man in his perſon or connexions, corrupted no man's principles or morals, and defrauded no man in reſpect of his property. He ſpake not thus, as diſpoſed to condemn them of bringing ſuch charges againſt him: for he had ſo favourable an opinion of them in general, that they were moſt dear to his heart, as he had before intimated, (c. iii. v. 2;) and if other engagements would have permitted, he would willingly have ſpent, and ended the remnant of his days among them. Indeed he was ſo confident that they would ſubmit to his apoſtolical authority; that he addreſſed them with great freedom and boldneſs, not fearing but they would take it in good part; and he even gloried among his friends concerning their conduct in the late tranſactions: yea he was filled with ſuch comfort on that account, as abundantly counterbalanced all his trials.

V. 5—7.] After the apoſtle had paſſed from Troas

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our fleſh had no reſt, but we were troubled on every ſide; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

6 Nevertheleſs God, that comforteth thoſe that are caſt down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 And not by his coming only, but by the conſolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earneſt deſire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; ſo that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you ſorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the ſame epiſtle made you ſorry, though *it were* but for a ſeaſon.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made ſorry, but that ye ſorrowed to repentance: for ye were made ſorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation not to be repented of: but the ſorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold, this ſelf-ſame thing, that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourſelves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement deſire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourſelves to be clear in this matter.

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into Macedonia, (c. ii. v. 13,) he was ſo harraſſed with perſecution, that he had no reſt in his fleſh, or in reſpect of his outward circumſtances; and he was troubled on every ſide, becauſe the outward conflicts, which he ſuſtained with his enemies, concurred with much inward anxiety and apprehenſions about the Corinthians. But that God, whoſe peculiar character, prerogative, and delight it is, to comfort ſuch of his ſervants, as are dejected and diſcouraged, was pleaſed to comfort him by the arrival of Titus from Corinth. His ſafety and company were indeed ſources of ſatisfaction to him; but he was ſtill more rejoiced at the comfort which Titus had received from the behaviour of the Corinthians; and which he expreſſed, whilſt he repreſented to him their earneſt deſire to remedy all abuſes, their ſorrow for having diſhonoured the goſpel, and their fervent affection towards the apoſtle. So that his preſent joy was rendered the more abundant, even by means of the ſorrow that preceded it.

V. 8—11.] The apoſtle had made the Corinthians ſorrowful, by the plain reproofs contained in his former epiſtle: but he did not repent of this, though he had been full of ſolicitude about it. The ſuperintending inſpiration of the Holy Spirit did not ſuperſede the exerciſe of the underſtanding and faculties of the ſacred writers: and the apoſtle's exceſs of concern for the event ſeems to have rendered his mind uneaſy about ſome expreſſions, which he had uſed, leſt they ſhould counteract his deſign. This appears to have been his infirmity; and if he were induced *to repent* of having written ſo ſharply, as well as to have *an after carefulneſs* about it, we muſt not aſcribe it to things written, as if they had not been divinely inſpired; but to the apoſtle's imperfection, as not being fully ſanctified, or freed from temptations to an exceſs of anxiety, and ſolicitude. He perceived that his epiſtle had made them ſorry, as he expected it would, but it had been only for a ſhort ſpace: he therefore rejoiced; not in their ſorrow which pained him, but in their repentance, which had been effected thereby. For they had ſorrowed "*according to God,*" under the influence of his grace, with reference to his will and glory, and in dependence on his mercy: and this had been ordered, that they might receive damage from him in no reſpect, not even as the innocent occaſion of it. For that ſorrow, which was the effect of divine grace, and the fear of God tended directly to work repentance in the heart, and to render it humble, contrite, ſubmiſſive, afraid of puniſhment, dependent on mercy, diſpoſed to renounce and mortify every ſin, and to walk in newneſs of life; and this repentance was "unto ſalvation;" it was always connected with ſaving faith in Chriſt, and an intereſt in his atonement, &c; and thus enſured to the ſoul all the bleſſings of his covenant: ſo that no man need, or ever ſhould, repent of thus ſorrowing, and repenting. But the ſorrow of carnal men about worldly objects, being ſeparated from the fear, and love of God, and faith in his mercy, often drank up men's ſpirits, brake their proud rebellious hearts, drave them to ſuicide, or prompted them to the moſt deſperate wickedneſs; and ſo worked death, temporal and eternal. But it was evident that the ſorrow of the Corinthians had been "after a godly ſort," from their carefulneſs to rectify and amend what had been amiſs: from their deſire to ſhew, that their connivance at ſuch evils was not the effect of corrupt principles, but of inattention; that by thus clearing themſelves they might preſerve the credit of the goſpel: from their indignation at themſelves for having thus diſgraced their profeſſion: from their fear leſt any repetitions of ſuch evils ſhould take place; from their earneſt deſire of further degrees of purity; from their zeal for the honour of God, and the goſpel; and from their deſire, as it were, to revenge his cauſe on themſelves, by ſubmitting to any humiliations, or corrections, that were requiſite for the honour of the goſpel. So that in every thing they were now freed from further imputation in this affair. As this verſe relates to the conduct of a chriſtian ſociety, in particular circumſtances: ſo theſe ſeveral particulars can only be applied by accommodation to the repentance of an individual.

V. 12—16.] The apoſtle further aſſured them, that he had not written concerning the inceſtuous perſon, from a perſonal diſlike to him, or merely on his account in any reſpect; nor from regard to his father, who had been ſo groſſly wronged in this matter: but in order

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cauſe that hath done the wrong, nor for his cauſe that ſuffered wrong, but that our care for you in the ſight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, becauſe his ſpirit was refreſhed by you all.

14 For if I have boaſted any thing to him of you, I am not aſhamed; but as we ſpake all things to you in truth, even ſo our boaſting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilſt he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

to ſhew to them, as in the ſight of God, his attention to their ſpiritual intereſts. As his endeavours had therefore been made ſucceſsful, and had eventually iſſued in their comfort; ſo he ſhared their conſolations, as he had ſympathized in their ſorrows. It alſo increaſed his joy to ſee how joyful their conduct had rendered the pious heart of his beloved Titus. If then he had before ſpoken ſo confidently of them, that it ſeemed to be boaſting; he was not now aſhamed of it: for as his doctrine, and his profeſſed affection for them had been true; ſo this his boaſting of them to Titus had proved true alſo. And the love of Titus towards them was greatly increaſed; whilſt he remembered the obedience, which they all had ſhewn to the authority of the apoſtle, ſignified by him; and how they received him, even with a trembling fear, leſt they ſhould grieve him, or impreſs his mind unfavourably towards them. So that the apoſtle could now rejoice in the confidence he had in them, in all things. There was great addreſs in this part of the epiſtle: and his kind acceptance of what had been done, and the confidence he expreſſed in them, were well ſuited to excite them to a more entire reformation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The promiſes of God ſhould excite, and direct us in following after holineſs. His grace alone can efficaciouſly purify us: but it is our duty to uſe the means which he hath appointed, and depending on that grace, to ſearch out, caſt off, and cleanſe away all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, as abhorred of God, and all his people. Perfect holineſs ſhould be the object of our unremitting prayers, and endeavours: we ſhould follow after it, as in the preſence of God, and influenced by the fear of him; when no eye but his can poſſibly witneſs our conduct: and our lamented imperfections ſhould excite us the more diligently to go on unto perfection. If the ambaſſadors of Chriſt would be received in that character, they muſt be careful "to wrong no man, to corrupt no man, to defraud no "man:" and they who reject thoſe miniſters, whoſe conduct and doctrine are thus uncorrupt, will greatly offend him that ſent them. Yet we ſhould avoid all rigorous cenſures, and ſhew cordial love to the people, notwithſtanding their faults: we ſhould expreſs as much confidence in them, and ſpeak as favourably of them, as the caſe will admit: and when they ſhew a readineſs to remedy what hath grieved us, we ſhould deem it ſuch a comfort, as may render us xceeding joyful in all our tribulation. But we ought not to expect much reſt to our fleſh, in this evil world: and if fears within concur with oppoſition from without, to diſtreſs us; we only taſte of that cup, of which far better men have drank more abundantly. We cannot ſufficiently admire the compaſſion and condeſcenſion of our God, in revealing himſelf as the Comforter of thoſe that are caſt down! In all our dejections and perplexities therefore let us rely on Him, as our all-ſufficient helper. And ſeeing the time of our extreme diſtreſs is commonly that of his interpoſition, we ſhould endeavour to make it that of our moſt enlarged expectations. He works however, by ſecond cauſes and inſtruments: the converſe of ſome pious friend, or a good account of thoſe about whom we were anxious, or the affection of ſuch as we feared were alienated from us, are often ſources of relief and conſolation, in which the kindneſs of the Lord is to be acknowledged. Through anxiety about the event of his labours, the faithful miniſter may be tempted to repent of his beſt intended and moſt ſcriptural endeavours to do good. He may fear that he ſpake too decidedly, or ſharply, and ſo gave needleſs offence, or excited undue ſorrow; when he only performed the office of an affectionate reprover, under the influence of the Spirit of truth and love. Thus a man may be rendered uneaſy for having done his duty, and afraid of doing it on another occaſion. Indeed we ſhould be reluctant to cauſe ſorrow; (even as the ſkilful, and tender ſurgeon is averſe to give pain, though he finds it often neceſſary:) but we ſhould rejoice in bringing men to that godly ſorrow, which worketh repentance; as their grief will be tranſient, and the benefit eternal. The loſs of an earthly friend, the diſpleaſure of a powerful ſuperior, or other ſecular misfortunes, excite men's ſorrow, and they think they have cauſe to mourn: how then ſhould we be grieved for having offended our Creator, diſhonoured his name, incurred his frown, and deſerved eternal miſery? The objects of worldly ſorrow are trivial, its exerciſe is commonly unavailing, and its tendency is to death: we ſhould therefore be careful not to indulge it. Unleſs ſin be mourned over, as the cauſe of men's ſufferings, and God be regarded as the righteous and merciful Author of them: their ſorrow under afflictions and calamities tends to increaſing enmity, to diſtraction, deſpair, and blaſphemy. (*Rev.* c. xvi. v. 9—11.) We ſhould therefore endeavour to turn all our mourning into a religious channel, that we may ſorrow after a godly ſort. But even ſorrow about ſin and our eternal concerns, will be of no uſe to us; unleſs it worketh repentance in our hearts: and even repentance itſelf may be counterfeited, and ſo not "be unto ſalvation." Of all deceptions, this is moſt to be feared. A partial and ſuperficial repent-

CHAP. VIII.

Contains *1ſt. Exhortations to liberality towards the poor chriſtians in Judea, from the example of the Macedonians; from the love of Chriſt to ſinners; from the willingneſs that the Corinthians had before expreſſed; and from the acceptableneſs of ſuch ſervices,* 1---15. *2d. A commendation of Titus, and two other brethren employed in this buſineſs; with the reaſons of their appointment to it,* 16---24.

MOREOVER, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God beſtowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themſelves;

4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowſhip of the miniſtering to the ſaints.

5 And *this they did,* not as we hoped, but firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

6 Inſomuch that we deſired Titus, that as he had begun, ſo he would alſo finiſh in you the ſame grace alſo.

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ance; an unbelieving and hopeleſs repentance, like that of Judas; a phariſaical repentance, which is preſented as an atonement for ſin, and the rival of Chriſt's expiation; outward penances, mortifications and obſervances, with an unhumbled, and unrenewed heart; apparent contrition, without renouncing the favourite iniquity, or throwing back the wages of unrighteouſneſs: theſe, and other kinds of repentance, are not unto ſalvation, but muſt be repented of, either in this world, or for ever in hell. But deep humiliation before God, hatred of all ſin, attended by faith in the merits of Chriſt, a new heart, and a new life, conſtitute a repentance unto ſalvation never to be repented of: may the Lord beſtow it on every one of us! Sorrowing after this godly manner will work great carefulneſs and watchfulneſs in us, to amend our lives, and ſubdue every iniquity; we ſhall thereby be led to a ſerious endeavour to clear up the reality of our repentance to our own conſciences, and to all men: we ſhall feel an indignation at ourſelves for paſt tranſgreſſions, a fear of relapſing into ſin, a vehement deſire of forgiveneſs, and ſanctifying grace; a zeal for the honour of God, and a revenge, as it were, againſt thoſe luſts, which have excited us to offend him. When the faithful miniſter of Chriſt, (who hath warned the ſinner of his guilt, and danger, or reproved the inconſiſtent profeſſor, that his care of them in the ſight of God might be evidenced,) witneſſes ſuch fruits meet for repentance, he will be comforted in helping their comfort; he will rejoice in the joy of other believers on their account; he will exult in realizing the favourable hopes that he had entertained; he will encourage the abundant affection of others towards them; he will commend their prompt and circumſpect obedience; and rejoice to have confidence in them in all things.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—5.] The mention, which the apoſtle had made, of his confidence in the Corinthians, ſerved him for an introduction to the ſubject of the collection, that he was raiſing for the chriſtians in Judea; which takes up this and the following chapter. With much delicacy and propriety he brought this forward by *informing* them, as an article of intereſting intelligence, concerning the conduct of the churches at Philippi, Berea, Theſſalonica, &c, in Macedonia. In extolling the generoſity of theſe chriſtians he gave the glory "to the grace of God "beſtowed upon them;" the cauſe being thus manifeſted by the effect. Though they had been tried with great afflictions and perſecutions, by which their poverty had been much increaſed, yet the abundance of their joy in the Lord, and his ſalvation, had ſo enlarged their hearts in love to him, and his poor diſciples, whom they had not ſeen; that a large collection had been made amongſt them, and their deep poverty had illuſtrated the riches of their liberality. So that he teſtified in their behalf, that they were willing of themſelves, not only to do as much as was in their power, and even more than could have been expected from them; but that their inclinations were larger than their ability, and they would gladly have done more, if they could: and inſtead of wanting to be ſolicited, they had intreated him to accept of their ſubſcriptions, and to take a part in the charge of conveying them to Jeruſalem, and applying them to the intended purpoſes. In all this, they had even exceeded his hopes concerning them: for they firſt devoted themſelves to the Lord Jeſus, as his redeemed and peculiar people, zealous of good works; and then they gave themſelves up to the apoſtle, and his fellow-labourers, to be directed by them, in doing the will of God, and according to his appointment.

V. 6—9.] If the poor, and perſecuted Macedonians had exceeded all expectation, in the riches of their liberality; the proſperous, and affluent Corinthians would doubtleſs fully anſwer the apoſtle's hopes of them. When Titus had before been at Corinth, he had been encouraged to begin this good work among them; and Paul had therefore deſired him to go again and complete it. By "*this grace* "*alſo*" ſome underſtand the benefaction itſelf, as the word may ſignify the *free gift* of man, as well as that of God: yet it ſeems more conſonant to the apoſtle's language, to explain it of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit on their hearts; than of the gift itſelf, or *their act of grace* towards their brethren. As therefore the Corinthians abounded in all ſpiritual gifts, and in various chriſtian graces; they would doubtleſs "abound in this grace alſo;" and exceed other churches as much in the largeneſs of their contributions, as they did in affluence, or in faith, knowledge, &c. He did not ſpeak this, as a commandment how much they ought to give: but from the forwardneſs of their poorer brethren, he took occaſion to make trial of

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love to us, *ſee* that ye abound in this grace alſo.

8 I ſpeak not by commandment, but by occaſion of the forwardneſs of others, and to prove the ſincerity of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give *my* advice; for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but alſo to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readineſs to will, ſo *there may be* a performance alſo out of that which ye have.

12 For if there be firſt a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

13 For *I mean* not that other men be eaſed, and ye burdened:

14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a ſupply* for their want, that their abundance alſo may be *a ſupply* for your want: that there may be equality:

15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the ſame earneſt care into the heart of Titus for you.

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their ſincerity, in the love, which they profeſſed to Chriſt, and his people, which would, he truſted, be ſatisfactorily demonſtrated. For he was perſuaded, that they were ſpiritually, and experimentally acquainted with the aſtoniſhing grace and love of Chriſt to ſinners, "that though he "was rich" in all the glory, authority, ſufficiency and felicity of the God-head; yet "for their ſakes," who were in themſelves poor, guilty, polluted, and periſhing ſinners, "he had become poor," by aſſuming man's low nature, being born of a poor virgin, in a ſtable; living in poverty and affliction for many years on earth; and at length entirely impoveriſhing himſelf, as it were, to ranſom their ſouls by his ſacrifice on the croſs: all this he ſubmitted to moſt freely, in unſpeakable compaſſion and condeſcenſion, that they, by his poverty, might be made rich with all the bleſſings of ſalvation, unto everlaſting glory and felicity: and ſurely they could want no other argument to prevail with them, to part largely, and freely with their riches, for the relief and ſupport of his poor diſciples! Paul's judgment was, *that Jeſus was rich before he was poor*; and that it was voluntarily and graciouſly, that he became poor for our ſakes, &c: but as he was born in a ſtable, and was educated in poverty; as he was poor all his life, and only became rich after his death: ſo, if he were no more than a man, he certainly *was poor before he was rich, not rich before he was poor.* No wonder Socinians object to Paul's reaſonings; for doubtleſs they are diametrically oppoſite to their's, both in his premiſes, and his inferences from them.

V. 10—15.] In reſpect of this ſervice, to which the Corinthians muſt feel themſelves conſtrained by the love of Chriſt, the apoſtle only interpoſed with his advice: for it would be expedient to them, and conſiſtent with their profeſſion and character, to abound in this grace alſo, and evidently to copy that love, by which they were ſaved: eſpecially, as they had begun a year before, not only to depoſit money for this uſe, but to enter upon the ſervice with a willing, and fervent mind. It behoved them therefore to make no heſitation about performing it; that their actions might coincide with the promptitude of their former determinations. In doing this, let every one of them proportion his contribution to his circumſtances; for a ſmall ſum would be equally acceptable from a poorer perſon, as a larger from his more wealthy brother: and indeed, in every caſe, where a willing mind, to honour and obey Chriſt from humble love to him, was the principle of a man's actions; his ſervices would meet with a gracious acceptance; nor would more be expected from him, than what he was enabled to do. To expreſs, and evidence this willing mind the proportion, before recommended, would be neceſſary: yet it would not be proper to urge any man to exceed what he was thus diſpoſed to give; leſt, in vying with his brethren, he ſhould entrench upon other duties. Nor did the apoſtle mean to relieve the poor chriſtians in Judea, by burthening the Corinthians; or even to exact from them, and exempt other churches. He only deſired that ſome equality might be preſerved among brethren in Chriſt: and that, in order to this, the Corinthians ſhould on the preſent occaſion communicate from their abundance, to relieve the neceſſities of their afflicted brethren in Judea: and then, if a reverſe of condition ſhould take place, through perſecutions, or other calamities; the abundance of the Jewiſh converts, or of other churches, might be a fund for the ſupply of their neceſſities. Thus, one might help another after an equal manner; according as it was written concerning the Iſraelites, reſpecting the manna; which though collected in different quantities, being thus properly diſpenſed, was all uſed, without the redundance being waſted, or any of the congregation left deſtitute of a ſufficient ſupply. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xvi.)

V. 16—24.] The cordiality and diligence of Titus, in his attention to the Corinthians, as well as his zeal for the good work in hand, were put into his heart by the Lord, and the apoſtle heartily thanked him for this interpoſition in his favour. For Titus not only complied with his exhortation to return to Corinth, from regard to his authority; but he was more prompt and willing for that ſervice, than to need ſolicitation. The brother that was ſent with him, is generally ſuppoſed to have been Luke, whoſe praiſe was in all the churches, on account of the goſpel, that he had penned. This is probable, but not certain. This brother had been choſen by the churches of Macedonia

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have ſent with him the brother, whoſe praiſe *is* in the goſpel throughout all the churches;

19 And not *that* only, but who was alſo choſen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is adminiſtered by us to the glory of the ſame Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind:

20 Avoiding this, that no man ſhould blame us in this abundance which is adminiſtered by us:

21 Providing for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but alſo in the ſight of men.

22 And we have ſent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you,

23 Whether *any do enquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren *be enquired of, they are* the meſſengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Chriſt.

24 Wherefore ſhew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boaſting on your behalf.

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to travel with the apoſtle, as their meſſenger to Jeruſalem, with the contributions raiſed by them; which they were to diſpoſe of, (as the deacons did the donations of their ſeveral churches;) to the glory of Chriſt, the one Lord both of the Jewiſh and the Gentile converts; and as the evidence of their ready mind to ſuch good works, and to cultivate love with their Jewiſh brethren by reciprocal kindneſſes. This the apoſtle had propoſed, that he might avoid all cenſure and ſuſpicion of injuſtice, or partiality, in the diſpoſal of thoſe large ſums of money, which had been raiſed: and that he might, by a prudent foreſight, take care that his whole conduct ſhould appear honeſt, honourable, conſiſtent, and unexceptionable in the ſight of men; as well as really be ſo in the ſight of God. With Titus, and the beforementioned perſon, he had alſo ſent another of his brethren; whom he had frequently found diligent in other ſervices; but from him he expected extraordinary diligence, as he was animated by the confidence which the apoſtle had expreſſed in them. Some think that Apollos is here meant; but it is not probable; for he wanted no recommendations to the Corinthians: however it is immaterial to us. If then, any of them enquired who Titus was, that he ſhould take the lead in this buſineſs? (as the apoſtle's adverſaries would be like to do:) let them be anſwered, that he was Paul's partner in the ſacred miniſtry, who cordially united with him in all his deſigns; and who was particularly helpful to him in the affairs of Corinth. If the other brethren were enquired of; let it be ſaid, that they were the choſen meſſengers of the Macedonian churches, whoſe characters, zeal, and conduct in that important ſervice, made them an honour to the goſpel, and greatly inſtrumental to the glory of Chriſt. It therefore was proper that the Corinthians ſhould ſhew, in their liberality on the preſent occaſion, before theſe excellent perſons, and the churches whom they repreſented, the proof of their love to Chriſt; and that they deſerved thoſe warm commendations, which the apoſtle had beſtowed on them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

By aſcribing all *real* good works to the grace of God, we not only give the glory to Him, whoſe due it is; but we alſo ſhew men where their ſtrength lies, and enable humble believers to read the Lord's ſpecial love to them, in the fruits of their love to him, and to his people. Abundant ſpiritual joy, not only ſupports the ſoul under great trials of affliction, but it enlarges men's hearts in the work and labour of love: ſo that the depth of poverty in ſuch joyful chriſtians only ſerves to render more admirable the riches of their liberality: for they will do more than could have been conceived in their power, and will manifeſt a ſtill more enlarged good will. How different this from the conduct of thoſe, who will not concur in any expenſive good work, except they be teazed into it! The happy frame of mind before deſcribed muſt ſpring from an unreſerved ſurrender of ourſelves to the Lord, that we may henceforth live to his glory, as well as partake of his ſalvation; and then giving up ourſelves to the counſels of his faithful miniſters, as far as we are ſatisfied that they inſtruct us by the will of God. Remarkable examples of piety and charity ſhould be brought forward, in order to excite others to an holy emulation, eſpecially when their inferiority in circumſtance renders them leſs likely to be obſerved: and ſuch inſtances will commonly be found very efficacious to this end, amongſt thoſe, who are partakers of divine grace. They, whom God hath employed to begin, will commonly beſt carry on and finiſh his work of grace, *in* and *by* his people. They who abound in faith, knowledge, utterance, fervent affections, and attachment to godly miniſters, ſhould be exhorted to abound proportionably in liberality to their poor brethren. And occaſion ſhould be taken from the forwardneſs of ſome, to excite others to ſhew the *ſincerity* of their love; for nothing can evince this, except the fruits of love in good works to man for the Lord's ſake. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was not declared in kind words only; but though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor; that we through his poverty might be rich: and they who truly know, and experience the happy effects of his grace, will ſhew their love to him and his people by good works, as well as by a cheap profeſſion. But alas, we may eaſily eſtimate the degree, in which moſt of us know the grace of Chriſt; by conſidering how ſmall a proportion of our ſuperfluities we retrench, and how little we deny ourſelves, forego the proſpect of wealth, enduse

CHAP. IX.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Shewing wherefore he ſent Titus, &c, notwithſtanding his confidence in the Corinthians, 1---5. *2d. Encouraging their chearful liberality, and confidence in God; mentioning the manifold advantages of ſuch ſervices; and concluding with fervent thankſgivings,* 6---15.

FOR as touching the miniſtering to the ſaints, it is ſuperfluous for me to write to you:

2 For I know the forwardneſs of your mind, for which I boaſt of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago: and your zeal hath provoked very many.

3 Yet have I ſent the brethren, leſt our boaſting of you ſhould be in vain in this behalf; that, as I ſaid, ye may be ready:

4 Leſt haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we ſay not, ye) ſhould be aſhamed in this ſame confident boaſting.

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inconveniencies, and ſtoop to men of low eſtate, from love to his name! Doubtleſs this is the proper ſtandard of our ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt. In proportion to our views of his glory, we ſhall bear his image: and if this change were more fully effected, we ſhould embrace poverty, endure hardſhip, and even lay down our lives for the good of his people: when properly called to it; and at laſt we ſhould deem all this as nothing, when compared with our obligations to his infinite love. We may not enjoin the proportion, in which chriſtians ſhould communicate to the relief of the neceſſitous: yet we may adviſe them concerning what is becoming, and conſiſtent with their ability, profeſſion, and hopeful beginnings; that their readineſs to will may be manifeſted by the performance of it. But whilſt the wealthy muſt be charged to be ready to communicate; the poorer ſhould be encouraged to contribute their help alſo; yet without being urged to what may diſtreſs them: for if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted, &c. This is indeed an univerſal rule; the ſinner's willingneſs to repent, to believe in Chriſt, to love and obey him, and to do good to others for his ſake, ſprings from divine grace: without this principle, all external ſervices muſt be oſtentatious, and hypocritical: but where this is *firſt* produced, the *defective* attempts of the believer to glorify God will be accepted, and graciouſly rewarded, though in ſtrict juſtice they merit condemnation. We ſhould be careful to act impartially in promoting works of charity: one ſhould not be burthened to eaſe another, but equality and reciprocal help ſhould be aimed at. Even among the poor people in any pariſh, or congregation, the moſt diſtreſſed may be relieved by ſuch as are leſs ſtraitened, with what they can at preſent ſpare; and when they in their turn come to be ſtraitened, their brethren may concur to help them. Thus mutual love will be cemented; prayers and thankſgivings for each other will be multiplied; and though none may have any thing ſuperfluous, yet abſolute want may commonly be excluded. But upon a larger ſcale and where more wealthy perſons are concerned, greater effects may be produced: and the moſt proſperous may be exhorted to liberality, from the conſideration of the viciſſitude in human affairs: nor can riches be ſecured ſo effectually for the benefit of the poſſeſſor, as by thus lending them to the Lord. We ſhould love thoſe, who have an earneſt care for the welfare of the church, and we ought to be thankful to our benefactors: but the Lord, who put this into their hearts, ſhould be firſt acknowledged and adored. It is becoming to ſhew a readineſs for difficult and laborious ſervices, and even to render exhortations ſuperfluous by a willing mind: and it is proper to commend what is good in the moſt candid manner; for this is often the beſt method of exciting men to redoubled diligence. All our good works ſhould be referred to the glory of the Lord, and to be conſidered as the evidences of our ready mind to his ſervice. Whatever diſputes may have ariſen about rulers and officers in the church; it ſeems indiſputable, that men ſhould chooſe the perſons, who are to manage their charitable contributions; though they may be counſelled to ſelect thoſe, whoſe praiſe is in all the churches. When miniſters are in any way entruſted with large ſums of money; they ſhould be peculiarly careful to avoid all occaſion of ſuſpicion, or appearance of evil. It is indeed in the firſt place neceſſary to act uprightly in the ſight of God, but things honeſt in the ſight of men ſhould alſo be attended to, and circumſpectly provided for. The world is equally full of ſelfiſhneſs, and enmity to godlineſs: and ſuſpicions and ſlanders will be unavoidable without great prudence, as well as exact conſcientiouſneſs; whereas a clear character, as well as a pure conſcience, is requiſite to uſefulneſs. When approved, diligent, and faithful men are employed in ſervices evidently conducive to the benefit of mankind, and the glory of God; they are not only honoured of their brethren, but their character, conduct and uſefulneſs is "the glory of Chriſt," and his goſpel is recommended by them. It therefore behoves chriſtians, among whom they labour, to ſhew reſpect to them, and to ſhew before them, and the churches of Chriſt, the proof of their love, and of the expectations, that have been raiſed concerning them.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1—5.] The apoſtle deemed it ſuperfluous, and unneceſſary for him to write particularly on the duty and benefits of miniſtring from their ſubſtance to the neceſſities of the poor ſaints of God: as he took it for granted, that they were well inſtructed in this matter by their paſtors, and even taught of God himſelf thus to ſhew love to their brethren in Chriſt. (1 *Theſſ.* c. iv. v. 9, 10.) Moreover he knew that they were forward to concur in the preſent good work; and accordingly he had ſpoken of them with confidence to the Macedonians, declaring that the chriſtians in Achaia, (of which Corinth was the capital city,) had been ready with their ſubſcriptions the laſt year; and their zeal in ſo good a cauſe had quickened and excited many, that had before been remiſs. Yet he had ſent Titus, &c, to complete the deſign, leſt his boaſting of their readineſs ſhould be in vain, *in that reſpect:* for though he doubte

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5 Therefore I thought it neceſſary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before; that the ſame might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetouſneſs.

6 But this *I ſay,* he which ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap alſo ſparingly; and he which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purpoſeth in his heart, *ſo let him give;* not grudgingly, or of neceſſity: for God loveth a chearful giver.

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all ſufficiency in all *things,* may abound to every good work:

9 (As it is written, he hath diſperſed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteouſneſs remaineth for ever.

10 Now he that miniſtereth ſeed to the ſower both miniſter bread for *your* food, and multiply your ſeed ſown, and increaſe the fruits of your righteouſneſs;)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulneſs, which cauſeth through us thankſgiving to God.

12 For the adminiſtration of this ſervice not only ſupplieth the want of the ſaints, but is

not but they would contribute; yet he feared leſt they ſhould not be ready when he came. And in that caſe the Macedonians, who might accompany him, would witneſs this circumſtance; and this would put him to ſhame for having boaſted ſo confidently of them; which would alſo tend to their diſgrace, for having ſo diſappointed the expectations that had been formed of them, He had therefore judged it needful to deſire the brethren to go before him to make up their contributions, *of which mention had been made before,* both to them, and the Macedonians; that it might evidently appear to be *a bounty,* or benefaction willingly beſtowed, and not money extorted from them by importunity, as covetouſneſs exacts it from thoſe that are reluctant to give it. The word rendered *bounty* ſignifies *a bleſſing;* which may either intimate that it ſhould be given from gratitude, and as an act of praiſe and thankſgiving to God; or that it ſhould ſpring from love, and a diſpoſition to bleſs and do good to their brethren.

V. 6, 7.] The apoſtle would not preſcribe the proportion, which every one ought to give on this occaſion; nor would he write to them as one that aimed to extort their money from them: but he would ſay, that God would meaſure to them, according to their meaſure towards their poor brethren. The ſeed corn ſeems to be thrown away, yet this alone yields any increaſe: the prudent huſbandman will not therefore ſow ſparingly, or too ſmall a proportion; for he knows that in that caſe he muſt expect to reap ſparingly: but, when the ground is well prepared, it may be expected, that if he ſow liberally, he will receive a proportionable increaſe. Thus money given in charity ſeems to the carnal mind finally thrown away: but in fact, when given from proper principles, it is ſeed ſown, and the only part of a man's ſubſtance, from which a valuable increaſe can be expected. This therefore ought not to be ſown with a niggardly hand, or in a reluctant manner; for in that caſe a man will reap ſparingly. God in his providence will often croſs ſuch a man's undertakings, and keep him poor: the evidence of his converſion muſt be proportionably dubious: if he be a real chriſtian, his hope and conſolations will be ſcanty, according to his niggardly conduct towards his brethren; and his final recompence will be proportioned to the ſmall meaſure of his preſent fruitfulneſs. Whilſt he, who ſoweth plentifully, from gratitude to God, and love to man, will in every ſenſe reap a plentiful, and bountiful increaſe. (*Iſaiah,* c. lviii. v. 7—12.) Let then every one determine for himſelf how much he would ſpare from other expences, or deduct from his accumulated treaſure, to ſow in this fertile field, from which the word of God ènſured ſo large an increaſe: and let no man do it grudgingly, or of neceſſity, merely to keep up his character, or through the importunity of miniſters: for God loved the willing, chearful giver, and no other; as this was the effect and evidence of his grace, and ſo well-pleaſing to him through Jeſus Chriſt.

V. 8—11.] There could be no queſtion made, but the Lord would, in one way or other, make up to them what they expended in this good work: for he was able to make *every gift of his free favour* to abound to them; that ſo, having a ſufficiency of all things deſirable for themſelves, and families, and being enlarged in faith and love, they might have both a willing mind, and an ability for every good work. Thus the character and bleſſedneſs mentioned by the Pſalmiſt would be verified in them, (*Pſ.* cxii. v. 9:) and their acts of kindneſs to the poor, from love to Chriſt, would be accepted works of righteouſneſs, of which the benefit would remain with them for ever. The apoſtle therefore beſought God, who in his providence both ſupplied the huſbandman with ſeed, and mankind in general with food, from the increaſe of the field; that he would both provide for their wants, in proportion to their ſeed ſown in acts of charity; multiply to them the ability of ſowing more in the ſame manner; accompany it with a larger bleſſing to others; cauſe them to abound more and more in the fruits of righteouſneſs; and give them an increaſe of comfort in their own ſouls. That ſo being enriched in every reſpect, they might be enabled to all bountifulneſs, which would occaſion many to thank God on their behalf; and the apoſtle would then rejoice to be the inſtrument and means of ſuch an honourable and beneficial work.

V. 12—15.] The proper management of the ſervice, which was ſpoken of, by the liberal contribution of believers towards it, and the faithful and prudent application of the ſums thus raiſed, would not only relieve the neceſſities of the poor ſaints in Judea, to whoſe comfort they ought gladly to communicate; but it would alſo produce abundance of abundant alſo by many thankſgivings unto God;

13 Whiles by the experiment of this miniſtration they glorify God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the goſpel of Chriſt, and for *your* liberal diſtribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unſpeakable gift.

thankſgivings to God, both for the ſeaſonable ſupply given them, and for his grace beſtowed on the Gentile converts. Whilſt by this experience of their brotherly love, they would praiſe and glorify God, for bringing them to act ſo conſiſtent with their profeſſed ſubjection to the goſpel of Chriſt; and for exciting them to ſo liberal a diſtribution to them and all others. At the ſame time they would glorify God by their fervent prayers in their behalf; as they would exceedingly long to be acquainted with them, to make ſome return for their kindneſs, or to promote their increaſing holineſs and comfort; becauſe of their love to them, and admiration of the exceeding grace of God, by which ſo happy a change had been effected in their character and conduct. This laſt conſideration cauſed the apoſtle to break out in thanks to God for the unſpeakable grace of the goſpel, and gift of his Son to be the Saviour of ſinners; by whom idolatrous Gentiles had been thus brought to glorify him; a foundation had been laid for the mutual love of Jews and Gentiles, as members of one church and children of one family; and ſuch motives and encouragements, and ſuch an example had been afforded, to excite men to love and good works. The *fruits* of redemption and grace were not excluded from the apoſtle's mind on this occaſion; but doubtleſs Chriſt himſelf was principally intended by "the unſpeakable gift of "God."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The duty of miniſtering to the ſaint is ſo obvious, that it might be deemed ſuperfluous to exhort chriſtians to it. yet they are ſo apt to forget their principles and obligations, and the remains of unbelief and carnal ſelf-love war ſo powerfully againſt the conſtraining love of Chriſt, in their hearts; that it is often neceſſary "to ſtir up "their minds by way of remembrance." This is often done moſt effectually, by expreſſing a favourable opinion of, and high expectations from them; by commending the forwardneſs they have ſhewn on former occaſions, and the happy effects of their zeal on the conduct of others. When we have a good hope, that the perſons addreſſed are real believers; this will conſiſt with godly ſincerity, and may be conſidered as true wiſdom. It is very painful for miniſters to be compelled to retract, or excuſe the commendations, which their fervent love hath beſtowed on their people; and when other chriſtians witneſs their conduct to be inconſiſtent with their confident boaſting of them. Men ſhould be very careful not to ſhame, or grieve in this manner their faithful paſtors; as that will eventually tend to their own deeper diſgrace. Many an intended good work has been neglected, or rendered uſeleſs by delay: it is therefore proper to exhort thoſe to be prompt in doing, what they have ſhewn a willingneſs to engage in. Works of piety and charity ſhould flow ſpontaneouſly from the gratitude, and benevolence of a believing heart; and not need to be extorted by importunity. This ſavours of covetouſneſs; and it even puts thoſe who forward uſeful deſigns, to the painful neceſſity of employing a kind of covetouſneſs, in wringing money from thoſe who ought to give, but are reluctant to part with it. Yet the main benefit of every act of charity to man for the Lord's ſake, will redound to the giver. He ſows this good ſeed in a fruitful ſoil, and his bountifulneſs to man will aſſure him of the Lord's bountifulneſs to him. Whatever expences therefore be retrenched, or from whatever fund it be deducted; we ſhould not grudge, or be ſparing in this ſeed. It is ſpiritual policy for us to ſpend leſs on every kind of indulgence, and to lay by leſs for our families; that we give more to the needy for Chriſt's ſake: for this will be beſt ſecured, and moſt productive. Even perſons in low circumſtances may buy largely into theſe funds; if by various little ſavings, and ſelf-denials, they ſtudy to ſpare ſomething to relieve their diſtreſſed brethren. And if we had more faith and love, we ſhould waſte leſs on ourſelves, and ſow more in hope of a plentiful increaſe. With theſe truths before their eyes, men muſt be left to do, as they have purpoſed in their hearts: for they, who give in a grudging manner, and of neceſſity, have little reaſon to expect the acceptance of God, who loveth a chearful giver. Whilſt there are ſome, "who ſcatter, and "yet increaſe;" there are others "who with-hold more "than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty:" for God is able to make all grace to abound to thoſe, whoſe hearts are enlarged with kindneſs to their brethren: and we ſhould remember, that he gives us every thing far more *freely*, than we can give alms to a poor beggar. If he ſees it good for us, he can ſo proſper us, that having all ſufficiency in all things, we may abound unto every good work: and they, who from love to him, "ſcatter a-"broad and give to the poor," have a righteouſneſs that ſhall endure for ever. He can eaſily give us enough to uſe, and enough to diſperſe; that we may have more, ſow more, and reap more; and ſo increaſe the fruits of our righteouſneſs: that being enriched in every thing unto all bountifulneſs; we may be happy in ourſelves, bleſſings to others, and inſtruments of promoting his glory. For this ſervice, when prudently, and bountifully adminiſtered, is every way profitable. The Lord is pleaſed to try and purify many of his ſaints by poverty; and he proves others by employing them as his almoners. Their faithfulneſs and liberality in this ſervice not only ſupplieth the wants of his ſaints; but it abounds in a large revenue of praiſe and thankſgiving to God; it evinces the ſincerity of their own profeſſed ſubjection to the goſpel; it ſtirs up many to pray for, and long after them, and to admire, and glorify God for his exceeding grace in them, Thus they adorn the goſpel, animate the worſhip of believers, cement mutual love,

CHAP. X.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Vindicating his authority, and miniſtry, and ſhewing his determination to uſe ſeverity towards thoſe, who perſiſted in their diſobedience, 1---6. *2d. Comparing his labours and ſucceſs with the oſtentatious boaſtings, and ambitious intruſions of his oppoſers,* 7---18.

NOW I Paul myſelf beſeech you by the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt, who in preſence *am* baſe among you, but being abſent am bold toward you:

2 But I beſeech *you,* that I may not be bold when I am preſent with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold againſt ſome, which think of us as if we walked according to the fleſh.

3 For though we walk in the fleſh, we do not war after the fleſh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds;)

5 Caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt;

6 And having in a readineſs to revenge all diſobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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and derive abundant bleſſings unto their own ſouls. Whilſt therefore we thank the Lord for the unſpeakable gift of his Son, to be our gracious Redeemer; through whom we vile ſinners may perform ſuch honourable, and uſeful ſervices with aſſurance of acceptance, and abundant recompence: let us endeavour to copy the example of Chriſt, by being unwearied in doing good, and deeming it more bleſſed to give than to receive.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—6.] Having concluded other ſubjects, the apoſtle next began to ſpeak more directly againſt the falſe teachers, who oppoſed him at Corinth. Even he, Paul, whom they reviled and deſpiſed, as not daring to aſſert his authority among them, beſought them, by the meekneſs and gentleneſs, which Chriſt had exerciſed towards his enemies, and which he required of his people; that they would not force him in appearance to act contrary thereto. Some of them indeed repreſented him as mean-ſpirited and abject when he was preſent among them; for they diſdained his lowly appearance and unaſſuming deportment: yet being abſent he was bold towards them, and wrote as one, that was determined to vindicate, and exert his apoſtolical authority. Yet before matters came to this extremity he beſought them with all meekneſs and gentleneſs, not to conſtrain him to it; that he might not be bold, when he came again amongſt them, with that kind of confidence, wherewith he was determined to proceed againſt certain perſons, who ſuſpected and accuſed him of conducting himſelf with carnal policy, and aiming at ſecular advantages, in the execution of his ſacred miniſtry: in which charge they included his fellow-labourers alſo; and by ſuch miſrepreſentations they ſeduced the Corinthians from their attachment to him. But though they were liable to the manifold infirmities incident to the preſent mortal life, and were not exempt from imperfections, "*as walking in the fleſh,*" living in the body, and not being yet perfected in holineſs: yet they did not war againſt ſin and ſatan, or conflict with their numerous oppoſers, according to the maxims of carnal policy, with craft and diſſimulation, in dependence on their own wiſdom and ſtrength, or with an aim to their own intereſt, or honour. For the weapons, which they employed in this ſpiritual warfare, were not carnal; nor did they produce their effect by their own natural energy: but they were mighty, through God, whoſe power wrought by them, to demoliſh the ſtrong-holds of ſatan, by which he had maintained his empire of darkneſs, idolatry, and wickedneſs in the world. For the preaching of the goſpel, confirmed by miracles, and accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, pulled down theſe ſtrong-holds, diſperſed ſatan's garriſons, delivered his captives, and ſubverted his authority; by diffuſing the knowledge of God, of his commandments, and of his ſalvation amongſt mankind. Thus the miniſters of Chriſt went on, caſting down men's vain imaginations, proud ſpeculations, and carnal reaſonings: expoſing the falſhood and folly of that proud philoſophy, which led to ſcepticiſm and atheiſm; as well as of thoſe fables, which ſupported the ſtupid idolatry of the populace: and ſhewing alſo the worthleſſneſs of phariſaical forms and duties, and of every ſcheme of religion, which flattered men into a good opinion of themſelves. Thus their doctrine was made uſe of to caſt down every high thing, every ſelf-confident notion, every proud objection, or ambitious purpoſe; and all that ſelf-ſufficiency, impenitence, obſtinacy in rebellion, unbelief, and independence of ſpirit, which exalted themſelves in men's hearts againſt the humbling, holy knowledge, worſhip, and ſervice of God, and enſlaved them to idolatry, impiety, infidelity and vice. When theſe were caſt down, and a man was brought to the light of the knowledge of the "glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt;" (Notes, &c. c. iv. ver. 1—6:) and to the exerciſe of repentance and faith; he found every thought, imagination, reaſoning, affection, inclination, and purpoſe of his heart, captivated by love to his divine Saviour; and being thus conquered by grace, and held captive by love, he became, by a ſweet conſtraint, obedient to his teaching and command; and from his inmoſt ſoul he was thenceforth the willing ſubject of Chriſt, in all his ordinances and commandments. As no outward miracle could effect this change, without new-creating grace: ſo we are ſure, that the power of God *in the latter,* was principally intended by the apoſtle. Thus he, and his fellow-ſoldiers waged war againſt their oppoſers. By faithful preaching, diſintereſted labours, patient ſuffer-

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man truſt to himſelf that he is Chriſt's, let him of himſelf think this again, that, as he *is* Chriſt's, even ſo *are* we Chriſt's.

8 For though I ſhould boaſt ſomewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your deſtruction, I ſhould not be aſhamed:

9 That I may not ſeem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For *his* letters, ſay they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily preſence *is* weak, and *his* ſpeech contemptible.

11 Let ſuch an one think this, that, ſuch as we are in word by letters when we are abſent, ſuch *will we be* alſo in deed when we are preſent.

12 For we dare not make ourſelves of the number, or compare ourſelves with ſome that commend themſelves: but they meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves among themſelves, are not wiſe.

13 But we will not boaſt of things without *our* meaſure, but according to the meaſure of the rule which God hath diſtributed to us, a meaſure to reach even unto you.

14 For we ſtretch not ourſelves beyond *our meaſure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you alſo in *preaching* the goſpel of Chriſt:

15 Not boaſting of things without *our* meaſure, *that is*, of other mens labours; but having hope, when your faith is increaſed, that we ſhall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

16 To preach the goſpel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boaſt in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

ings, holy lives, and fervent prayers, they ſought to change their enemies into friends to them, and their divine Maſter: and thus they prevailed againſt ſatan, to the ſubverſion of his ſtrong-holds, and the revolt of his ſubjects. Yet the apoſtle had alſo another weapon to uſe on ſome occaſions, which too was mighty through God, to avenge his deſpiſed authority on ſome kinds of obſtinate oppoſers. He meant, and was in readineſs, by miraculous judgments, to avenge the cauſe of Chriſt on thoſe diſguiſed enemies, who perſiſted in their diſobedience; as he had on Elymas and others: but he waited to bring back ſuch, as had been deluded by them, to their former obedience; and to complete that work, before he uſed ſeverer methods.

V. 7—11.] Some of the Corinthians had been ſeduced into an ill opinion of Paul, on account of his mean figure, indigent circumſtances, and other exterior diſadvantages: but would they continue to look at, and regard ſuch outward appearances, which had no connexion with real excellency? Or would they value men on account of their plauſibility, and ſelf-confidence? If any man, who oppoſed him, were ever ſo confident, that he was a diſciple, and miniſter of Chriſt: yet let him reflect on the evidence there was, that Paul, and his brethren were ſo too: and then he would perceive, that he had no ground of ſelf-preference, or encouragement to oppoſe them. He might indeed have boaſted ſomething further of his apoſtolical authority, that the Lord, in his ſpecial favour had given him, for the edification of the church, and the ſalvation of ſouls, and not for their deſtruction; which he yet feared would be occaſioned by it in ſome inſtances, though contrary to its genuine tendency, and the uſe he had made of it. Nor could this claim of pre-eminence have made him aſhamed; as it was ſufficiently authenticated by his miracles, conduct, and ſucceſs in his miniſtry. Yet he did not chooſe to inſiſt on this topic, or to enlarge about his power to puniſh oppoſers: that he might not appear diſpoſed to terrify them by his epiſtles; as they might think him unable to fulfil his words, when preſent with them. For ſome of them ventured to ſay, that his epiſtles were written with much apparent weight of argument, and power of conviction; and contained the language of authority and firmneſs: but that his bodily preſence was weak and feeble, and his elocution contemptible. It is recorded that Paul was of low ſtature, and crooked: ſome add, that he had an impediment in his ſpeech, that his voice was ſhrill and unpleaſant, and his delivery ungraceful. However, his ſcrupulous rejection of the ſtudied ornaments of the Grecian eloquence, and his plain, modeſt, and unaffected addreſs, would render his ſpeech contemptible with many perſons; though his ſubject were ever ſo judiciouſly diſcuſſed, and his delivery every way ſuitable to the occaſion: and the very meanneſs of his apparel would render his appearance deſpiſed by numbers. But he warned ſuch a one, as ventured to ſpeak thus of him, to expect, that he would act as decidedly, when he arrived at Corinth, as he now wrote; and that he would ſhew them that he was able to aſſume a firmer tone, and act with more authority and ſharpneſs when he ſaw occaſion.

V. 12—16.] The favourers of the falſe teachers might deem it preſumption in Paul to rank himſelf with ſuch wiſe, eminent and eloquent men, as they were! But he aſſured them, that he could not conſcientiouſly copy their example of oſtentatious boaſtings, and ſelf-commendation: for they, by meaſuring themſelves and their endowments and performances, with their own erroneous judgment of excellency, and with thoſe of each other, and thus comparing themſelves with ſuch men as they were;

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

18 For not he that commendeth himſelf is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

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without bringing their characters, gifts, and miniſtry to the proper ſtandard, plainly proved that they were defective in wiſdom, and out of the way of attaining it. But the apoſtle, and his aſſiſtants would not boaſt of their qualifications or ſervices in ſuch a vague, and unmeaſureable manner; but would ſpeak of them, with reference to the true ſtandard, even that rule, or line, which marked out the ſervices, to which the providence and commandment of the Lord had called them. This meaſure, as it reſpected Paul, the apoſtle of the Gentiles, had reached even as far as Corinth. For he had not ſtretched himſelf beyond his commiſſion; or left his work in other places, from haſte to come to them, though not within the line of his duty; as the falſe teachers had done: but proceeding regularly in his work of preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles, he had at length come to them: and had been the firſt that taught them the way of ſalvation. So that he did not boaſt of interfering with ſervices, which lay beyond the line of his preſent duty, or ſeek the credit of other men's labours, as their falſe teachers had done, by intruding amongſt, and perverting them. On the other hand he hoped, when their faith was increaſed, even by means of theſe events; that he ſhould be ſo magnified, and helped forward by them, as to proceed with abundant ſucceſs, to preach the goſpel in other parts of the Peloponneſus, or even in more remote regions: according to his rule of labouring for the converſion of the Gentiles, without interfering with the duty marked out to other men, or boaſting of things made ready to his hand, as if he had actually performed them.

V. 17—18.] Though the apoſtle was thus conſtrained to ſpeak of his own labours, and ſucceſs: yet he muſt remind the Corinthians, that every man, who gloried, ought to glory in the Lord Jeſus, as his whole ſalvation; and as the giver of all his hopes, grace, endowments, and uſefulneſs; and to whom all the honour of them was due. If a man could not thus glory in the Lord; all the reſt muſt be vain-glory, and iſſue in his ſhame and miſery: for that man was not to be conſidered as approved, in reſpect of his profeſſion, or miniſtry, who could ſpeak eloquently and plauſibly in his own commendation; but he, to whoſe faithfulneſs the Lord himſelf bare teſtimony, and whoſe ſervices he commended, by employing him, as his inſtrument for good to many ſouls, and by giving him the gracious earneſts of final acceptance and commendation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who meet with unjuſt and ungrateful uſage from ſuch as they are labouring to do good to, ſhould frequently meditate on the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt. As he was reviled and deſpiſed by thoſe whom he came to ſave, none ſhould wonder or be diſcouraged at meeting with ſimilar contradiction of ſinners, in the ſame labour of love; they ſhould endeavour to go on patiently and quietly, after his example, and to overcome evil with good; and even when conſtrained by duty to reprove and correct, or to exerciſe authority with firmneſs and ſharpneſs; they ſhould do it with reluctancy, ſhew a deſire to avoid the painful neceſſity, and manifeſt a loving and forgiving ſpirit in the midſt of it; that all may ſee how dear the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt are to them. Miniſters ſhould be careful to avoid all appearance, and to obviate all ſuſpicion of walking according to the fleſh: and they, who falſly accuſe them of ſo doing, will expoſe themſelves to the diſpleaſure of God. Though encompaſſed with infirmities and temptations, and ſubject to manifold imperfections, the ſervants of Chriſt are engaged in a warfare, which cannot be waged "after the fleſh." Human wiſdom, affected eloquence, diſſimulation, compulſion, angry diſputations, ſlanders, revilings, &c. are carnal weapons; and however powerful they may ſeem, they will be found uſeleſs in this war; and tend rather to fortify and garriſon ſatan's ſtrong holds, than to pull them down. For ſucceſs againſt the kingdom of darkneſs muſt be expected, "not from might, or power; but from the Spirit of God." The appointed means, however feeble they appear to unbelief, will be "mighty through God:" at his command, the walls of Jericho fell down at the blaſt of the trumpets, far more ſpeedily and entirely, than any engines of war could have demoliſhed them. (Notes, &c. *Joſh.* c. 6.) And the preaching of the croſs, by men of faith and prayer, hath always been moſt fatal to the ſtrong holds of idolatry, infidelity, impiety, and wickedneſs. Men may, if they can, give energy to means of their own inventing: but ſatan derides their puny efforts, and takes them captive at his will. For God works by his own appointments; by his power the enemy is driven from his fortifications; men's imaginations are caſt down, their reaſonings and objections ſilenced, their pride abaſed, their illuſions diſſipated; the knowledge of God finds admiſſion into the heart; reverential fear, repentance, humility, faith, love and gratitude follow; and the whole ſoul, with all its faculties and operations, is at length captivated to the obedience of Chriſt. But whilſt he thus makes his people willing in the day of his power, and gradually perfects them in obedience and the beauties of holineſs; he is in readineſs to avenge the diſobedience of the impenitent and unbelieving, eſpecially that of hypocrites and falſe teachers, who corrupt the church and diſhonour his name.

It is peculiarly unſuitable to the character of chriſtians to judge of men, or look upon things after the outward appearance: as if learning, eloquence, affluence, a graceful perſon, and addreſs, or elegant attire were evidences of a man's holineſs and heavenly wiſdom, or the ſeal of Chriſt to his miniſterial character! Or as if the want of ſuch embelliſhments proved a man not to be an eminent chriſtian, or an able, faithful miniſter of the lowly Saviour! Even Paul was baſe in the judgment of ſome conceited and accompliſhed Corinthians! And though "his letters were weighty and powerful, yet "his bodily preſence was weak, and his ſpeech contemptible!" And ſatan's emiſſaries far excelled him in theſe exterior recommendations! This ſhould ſuffice to

CHAP. XI.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Excuſing his apparent ſelf-commendation, as the reſult of godly jealouſy over the Corinthians, &c, 1---4. *2d. Shewing the reaſon of his perſevering diſintereſtedneſs, in his miniſtry among them; and declaring his oppoſers to be deceivers, and miniſters of ſatan,* 5---11. *3d. Again excuſing his apparent boaſting; and enlarging on his privileges, dangers, difficulties, ſufferings, deliverances, &c,* 12---33.

WOULD to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me.

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealouſy; for I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent *you as* a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.

3 But I fear, leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtlety, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jeſus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another Spirit, which ye have not received, or another goſpel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him.*

5 For I ſuppoſe I was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles.

6 But though *I be* rude in ſpeech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifeſt among you in all things.

7 Have I committed an offence in abaſ-

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teach us not to judge of gold merely by its glitter, in which tinſel often exceeds it; but to bring it to the balance and weigh it. When profeſſors, or preachers are ſo confident that they belong to Chriſt; that they can hardly allow others to do the ſame, who cannot wholly coincide in their views, or approve their conduct; and when they treat the moſt approved characters with ſupercilious contempt and revilings; their very confidence ſhould excite our ſuſpicions, as it far more accords to that of "the deceitful workers" at Corinth, than to that of St. Paul, and his fellow labourers; which was modeſt, humble, and candid. The great apoſtle of the Gentiles, when conſtrained to mention the authority, which the Lord had given him for edification, and not for deſtruction, and which he uſed in ſo excellent a manner, and with ſuch bleſſed ſucceſs; ſpake of it with reſerve, leſt he ſhould ſeem to boaſt, or to threaten. Whereas ſome men ſeem out of their element, when they are not boaſting of themſelves, and menacing divine judgments on all who oppoſe them; as if they would terrify every one in ſilence and ſubmiſſion to them! But let us not dare to make ourſelves of that number, or to compare ourſelves with thoſe, who thus commend themſelves: let us leave them to expoſe their own want of wiſdom, humility, and charity; by meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and all other men by their own ſtandard; by boaſting of themſelves without meaſure, neceſſity, or decency; by intruding into other men's labours, glorying in things made ready to their hands, and neglecting their own work, that they may ſpoil that of other men. But let us humbly compare ourſelves with the word of God, and the example of prophets and apoſtles; let us meaſure ourſelves by the rule of our duty, the obligations conferred upon us, and the work aſſigned us; let us be diligent, and ſtudy to be quiet, and mind our own buſineſs, though in an obſcure ſituation: let us be thankful for ſucceſs, according to the meaſure and rule, which God hath diſtributed to us, whether called to preach the goſpel, or to ſerve Chriſt in any other way; without meddling in other men's labours, or boaſting in ſervices performed by them: let us hope for the increaſe of their faith and grace, who have moſt failed in their duty to us: let us be zealous and bold, in a humble, patient, prudent, loving, and ſelf-denying manner: let us rather be deſirous of doing abundant good, than acquiring great reputation: let us remember to glory in the Lord our ſalvation, and in all other things, only as evidences of his love, or as means of promoting his glory: and inſtead of commending ourſelves, or ſeeking the praiſe of men; let us deſire, and aſpire after that honour, which cometh from God only.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—6.] The apoſtle allowed, that in general, ſelf-commendation implied folly: yet the caſe required it of him at that time, and his zeal for the honour of Chriſt, as well as his love to their ſouls, rendered him an exception to ordinary rules. He therefore wiſhed and prayed, that they might be able to bear with him a little in what they would deem *his folly:* however, he muſt venture all conſequences, and they muſt bear with him, whether they approved, or diſapproved of it. For he was jealous over them, with a mixture of fervent love, and anxious ſolicitude for their welfare, which ſprang from zeal for the glory of God, and regard to his authority. He had ſolicited and obtained their conſent, to that ſacred and bleſſed union with Chriſt, which might be called their eſpouſals to the One Bridegroom and Huſband of the church; to whom alone their devoted, faithful, and obedient affection belonged, and from whom all their felicity was to be expected. He therefore feared every thing, which tended to alienate, weaken, and divide their attachment to him; or pollute them either in body or mind: as his ambition was to preſent them to Chriſt at laſt, holy, unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight; as a chaſte virgin is preſented to her intended huſband, when the marriage is completed. But he feared, leſt by any means, their falſe teachers ſhould draw them aſide from their ſimple dependence on, and love and obedience to, Chriſt, into a falſe confidence, carnal affections, or diſobedience; leſt they ſhould be deluded ing myſelf that ye might be exalted, becauſe I have preached to you the goſpel of God freely?

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you ſervice.

9 And when I was preſent with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia ſupplied: and in all *things* I have kept myſelf from being burdenſome unto you, and *ſo* will I keep *myſelf*.

10 As the truth of Chriſt is in me, no man ſhall ſtop me of this boaſting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? becauſe I love you not? God knoweth.

12 But what I do, that will I do, that I may cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

13 For ſuch *are* falſe apoſtles, deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himſelf is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his miniſters alſo be transformed as the miniſters of

from that purity of doctrine, that ſpiritual frame of mind, and that honourable conduct, which became this high relation: even as Eve in Eden was beguiled by ſatan in the form of a ſerpent, to ſeek happineſs in departure from, and diſobedience to, God; being deceived by his ſpecious and ſubtle pretences and inſinuations. They were expoſed to this danger from thoſe, who puffed them up with an idea of their extraordinary knowledge; and ſeduced them by artful reaſonings to ſeek liberty and pleaſure in other things, beſides obeying, and walking with God. Indeed, if any man could poſſibly have preached another Jeſus, a more gracious and precious Saviour, than Paul had declared to them; or could have conferred on them another Spirit, whoſe gifts and influences were more excellent than thoſe, which the Holy Spirit, received through Paul's miniſtry, had beſtowed on them: or in ſhort, if another, and more ſuitable goſpel had been preached, than that, which they had embraced; there might have been ſome reaſon for their bearing with, or even preferring their new teachers. But the contrary was manifeſt: for, whatever they might think, he was conſcious, that he was in no reſpect inferior to any of the apoſtles, without excepting Peter, or John, who ſeemed to be the chiefeſt of them: he might, therefore, well be confident that their new teachers could add nothing important to the inſtructions, which he had given them. He had indeed appeared amongſt them to be "rude in ſpeech," as a vulgar perſon of ordinary education, ignorant of, and careleſs about the rules of eloquence; (which might be the caſe, though his diſcourſes were replete with natural pathos, and ſound argument:) yet he had ſhewn himſelf competent in knowledge, to inſtruct them in every part of chriſtianity. Nay they had fully proved him, in every particular; and they were ſo well acquainted with his principles and conduct, that they muſt be ſenſible their new teachers could not make any ſubſtantial improvement upon them.

V. 7—12.] The chief diſtinction, between their new teachers, and Paul, reſpected what they had received from, and not what they had imparted to, them. And would they then be offended with him, becauſe he had abaſed himſelf, by working for his maintenance, and ſubmitting to many ſelf-denials, in order to their exaltation to the privileges of God's people, by preaching the goſpel to them without putting them to any expence? Indeed he had done this leſt he ſhould prejudice their minds; and he might in ſome ſenſe be ſaid even to have robbed other churches, by receiving money of them for his ſubſiſtence, whilſt he was labouring for the benefit of the Corinthians. And when he had really been in want among them, he neither ceaſed from his work, through diſcouragement, as an indolent perſon; nor yet did he put them to any change: but the chriſtians from Macedonia, eſpecially from Philippi, ſupplied him, with what was abſolutely neceſſary. (*Phil.* c. iv. ver. 10—19.) Thus in all things he had kept himſelf from being burdenſome to them; and he had ſeen cauſe to determine, that he would continue to do ſo: and as ſurely, as he preached the truth of Chriſt, in a faithful and experimental manner, he was reſolved, that no man, by intreaties, arguments, or reproaches, ſhould ever take from him this ground of glorying; and that he would receive nothing towards his maintenance from any man, through all the regions of Achaia. If the reaſon of this purpoſe were demanded; or if any man ſhould impute it to his want of love: he would appeal to God; who well knew his tender affection for them. But indeed he was reſolved to proceed in his preſent conduct, that he might deprive thoſe of the occaſion of ſlandering him, who were ready to ſeize on every handle againſt him; and to ſet them a good example, that in reſpect of zeal for the honour of Chriſt, and love of the church, in which they gloried; they might be ſhewn in what manner to make good their pretenſions; and learn that the ſelf-denial, and diſintereſtedneſs of the apoſtle a far more unequivocal evidence of zeal and affection, than their plauſible harangues were joined with a ſelfiſh and domineering conduct.

V. 13—15.] It was not however, to be expected, that the perſons to whom he referred, would be, in this reſpect, found like him: as there were indeed ſpurious apoſtles, who falſly pretended to be ſent by Chriſt; in this and other things working deceitfully, acting with duplicity, and varniſhing over their hypocriſy, and ſelfiſh intentions by ſpecious profeſſions; (c. iv. ver. 2:) ſo that their ſtyle, manner, and conduct were a mimickry of thoſe of the true apoſtles; though the tendency of their miniſtry was, to diſhonour God, and to deceive ſouls. Nor was it to be wondered at, righteouſneſs; whoſe end ſhall be according to their works.

16 I ſay again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwiſe, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boaſt myſelf a little.

17 That which I ſpeak, I ſpeak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were fooliſhly, in this confidence of boaſting.

18 Seeing that many glory after the fleſh, I will glory alſo.

19 For ye ſuffer fools gladly, ſeeing ye *yourſelves* are wiſe.

20 For ye ſuffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himſelf, if a man ſmite you on the face.

21 I ſpeak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit, whereinſoever any is bold, (I ſpeak fooliſhly,) I am bold alſo.

22 Are they Hebrews? ſo *am* I. Are they Iſraelites? ſo *am* I. Are they the ſeed of Abraham? ſo *am* I.

23 Are they miniſters of Chriſt? (I ſpeak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *ſtripes* ſave one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered ſhipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderneſs,

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that ſuch wicked and miſchievous men ſhould be thus ſpecious in their appearance and pretenſions: for even ſatan, their maſter, could diſguiſe himſelf, and tempt men in the form of an holy angel, a meſſenger from the world of light, inſtead of appearing as the prince of darkneſs. He can delude men with profeſſions of extraordinary illumination, high affections, evangelical views, revelations, impreſſions, ſingular ſanctity, deadneſs to the world, auſterity, ſublimity of devotion, &c; that ſo he may undermine or diſgrace the holy religion of Chriſt, hurry men into extremes and extravagancies, lead them to neglect the plain rule of the written word, and turn them into wild enthuſiaſts, viſionaries, antinomians, or ſuperſtitious formaliſts. It was therefore no wonder, nor any thing great or difficult, that his miniſters ſhould be transformed, and aſſume the appearance of the miniſters of righteouſneſs; that by them this great deceiver might impoſe on men to their deſtruction: for if they appeared openly, as oppoſers of the goſpel, and patrons of vice and impiety, they would do far leſs miſchief; even as villains do moſt harm, when diſguiſed as, and reputed to be, honeſt men. But whatever ſuch men's profeſſions might be, and however they were admired and applauded: yet their end would not accord to their popularity, confidence, eloquence, or ſentiments; but it would be according to their works, their conduct in the ſight of God, and the effect of their principles among men.

V. 16—20.] Having thus openly decided againſt thoſe, who perſiſted in oppoſing his authority at Corinth; the apoſtle again returned to his ſubject. He deſired that no man would eſteem him to be a fool, or an imprudent, vain-glorious man, for what he ſaid in his own behalf, when the importance of the occaſion demanded it of him: yet, if they would form ſo unfavourable a concluſion concerning him; let them at leaſt receive him in that character, whilſt he boaſted himſelf, for a ſhort time, of thoſe things, wherein he was diſtinguiſhed: for he ſought their good, and not his own credit, in what he ſaid. He did not indeed ſpeak on this occaſion, according to the general precepts or example of the Lord, or what was proper to be imitated by them; nor was it any immediate revelations that he was about to declare: but he followed that ſame confidence of boaſting, which their conduct had impoſed upon him, and the example of ſome among them ſeemed to authorize; though they would perhaps deem it fooliſh in him to do it. However, as many of them, both the deceivers and deceived, had got into this habit of glorying, he would glory alſo; but on other ground, and in another manner; and that he might counteract the pernicious tendency of their vain confidence. They indeed were uſed to ſuffer ſuch perſons as acted thus fooliſhly, and to rejoice becauſe they themſelves poſſeſſed ſuch ſuperior wiſdom! And they might therefore the better bear with him, if he were judged to act fooliſhly! Yet they had not ſhewn their wiſdom very much in their toleration of their falſe teachers: for they endured it without complaint, at leaſt without being undeceived, if any one of them brought them into an abject dependence on him, and enſlaved their conſciences to his unwarranted impoſitions: if he devoured their ſubſtance, (as the Phariſees did the widows' houſes,) by exorbitant demands under ſpecious pretexts; if he took large ſums from them, by way of preſents, or ſubſcriptions; if he exalted himſelf as ſome abſolute ruler over them, and behaved in the moſt inſolent and oſtentatious manner; nay, if he even ſmote them on the face, as treating them with contempt and diſdain in his furious paſſion, by any ſimilar outrage. Doubtleſs, this refers to facts, known to the apoſtles, in which the violent, litigious, ambitious, ſelfiſh temper of theſe falſe apoſtles had been evident to all men: yet they were ſtill allowed to retain their influence, through the faſcination of their eloquence, confidence, and crafty management of their deluded admirers!

V. 21—30.] What preceded, was ſpoken with reference to the reproaches that theſe deceivers had caſt upon Paul and his friends; as if he had been weak and timid in his conduct among them. They aſcribed his modeſty, meek-

in perils in the ſea, *in* perils among falſe brethren;

27 In wearineſs and painfulneſs, in watchings often, in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold and nakedneſs.

28 Beſide thoſe things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30 If I muſt needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is bleſſed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

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neſs, and ſelf-abaſement, to a want of courage, and a conſciouſneſs that he had no apoſtolical authority, or no power to enforce it. Yet, whereinſoever any man was bold, as a chriſtian, a miniſter, or an apoſtle, he was bold alſo; though in avowing this, he did what on other occaſions would be fooliſh. Commentators generally ſuppoſe that in what follows, he meant to compare himſelf with the falſe teachers at Corinth; and they ground ſeveral inferences on this ſuppoſition: yet I apprehend that the whole paſſage will appear far more natural and animated, if we underſtand it with reference to "the chiefeſt of the apoſtles," (ver. 5;) and in that caſe his repeated excuſes, or retractions of his glorying, as fooliſh though neceſſary, appear to have a far greater propriety. Indeed it was a ſmall matter for him to ſhew, that he was ſuperior to "the miniſters of ſatan," whom he had juſt condemned: but in order to eſtabliſh his apoſtolical authority, he muſt ſhew, that he was not "a whit behind the chiefeſt apoſtles:" and in fact he here proves, that he laboured and ſuffered more abundantly than they all; (1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 10.) Poſſibly ſome of the falſe teachers were Hebrews, and not Helleniſt Jews; nor proſelytes, but deſcended from the renowned patriarchs, Iſrael and Abraham. However, this ſeems to have been the caſe of all the apoſtles: nor was Paul beneath them in this reſpect; though his birth at Tarſus might give ſome perſons cauſe to conclude that he was. But the perſons to whom he alluded, were not miniſters of Chriſt, but of ſatan; nor would he have even ſeemed to ſpeak fooliſhly, in magnifying his office, and declaring that he was more than they: but it had this appearance when he proceeded to ſhew, that in ſome reſpect he was more diſtinguiſhed as the miniſter of Chriſt, than any other even among the apoſtles: not becauſe of any ſuperior authority, abilities, miraculous powers, zeal, or holineſs; but by his more abundant labours and ſufferings, in which he evidently, far exceeded all other miniſters of Chriſt then on earth. Whereas, the falſe apoſtles had laboured very little, and inſtead of ſuffering at all for the goſpel, they probably had riſen to eminence, affluence and authority, by means of it. At the ſame time, by thus ſhewing himſelf *in theſe things* to be even diſtinguiſhed above the other apoſtles, he tacitly pointed out to them, in what true pre-eminence conſiſted; and by the contraſt, made it appear, that thoſe things, in which their falſe teachers gloried, were indeed their ſhame. (*Matt.* xx. v. 25—28.) Though the other apoſtles had been ſcourged and impriſoned for Chriſt's ſake; yet he had endured this pain and diſgrace more frequently than they, and had been in danger of death on more occaſions. The Jews had ſcourged him five times with the utmoſt ſeverity, of which their law and cuſtom allowed: for they were forbidden to exceed forty ſtripes, and for fear of a miſtake, they always confined themſelves to thirty-nine. (*Deut.* c. xxv. v. 3.) He had alſo been thrice ſcourged by the command of the Roman magiſtrates, though contrary to their law. He had once been ſtoned and left for dead. (*Acts*, c. xiv. v. 19.) but had been miraculouſly reſtored to life. He had thrice been wrecked in his different voyages, and at one time he continued a night and day in the ſea, upon a part of the wreck, in extreme cold, ſuffering and peril. This was previous to his voyage to Rome, when he was again wrecked; and many of his other ſufferings were ſubſequent to the writing of this epiſtle. He often journeyed from one region to another, amidſt many hardſhips and perils: ſometimes his life had been endangered in paſſing the rivers, or other deep waters that lay in his way; ſometimes by robbers, who attempted to plunder him: frequently the Jews aſſaulted him, being enraged by his preaching to the Gentiles; then the Gentiles attempted to ſlay him, becauſe his doctrine undermined their idolatry: when he was in any city, his life was in danger from the violence of the mob, or the iniquity of the rulers; in paſſing deſerts, the wild beaſts, or wicked men, who infeſted them, expoſed him to equal peril: when croſſing the ſea, he was in danger of pirates and tempeſts; and even when among profeſſed chriſtians, he was in peril from falſe brethren. Thus his life was ſpent in wearineſs, pain and ſuffering, his inceſſant toil in preaching the goſpel, converſing with the people from houſe to houſe, penning his epiſtles, earning his bread, and attending to his devotions, frequently forced him to paſs the night without reſt: often was he expoſed to hunger and thirſt through extreme indigence; and when he had food, his labours and religious duties led him to abſtain from it; and as he was expoſed to cold from the inclemency of the weather, and want of proper accommodations; ſo he often had not ſuitable and decent raiment to cover him, when he was called to appear in public! Yet he ſtill perſevered without fainting, in his work of faith and labour of love. And beſides *theſe things*, which were without, and mainly related to his bodily ſufferings: his mind was alſo worn down by a multiplicity of affairs, which came upon him daily with the violence of an armed multitude, by the care of all the churches of the Gentiles, planted by him and others: this lay upon him, filled him with conſtant ſolicitude, and employed him perpetually in forming and executing plans to promote their peace and proſperity, to counteract the deſigns of falſe teachers, and to order all their concerns for the beſt. And in this he was ſo cordially engaged, that he was even attentive to the caſe of individuals; ſo that he might aſk, what ſingle chriſ-

32 In Damaſcus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damaſcenes with a garriſon, deſirous to apprehend me:

33 And through a window in a baſket was I let down by the wall, and eſcaped his hands.

tian in all their congregations was reported to him to be weak in the faith and liable to be diſcouraged, with whom he did not ſympathize, as weak alſo? Or, who was ſtumbled, or turned aſide, and he was not fired with zeal to recover him, and with an holy indignation againſt thoſe who occaſioned this evil? As they had made it neceſſary for him to glory, ſo he had taken care, in glorying, not to expatiate on his gifts, or the honours he had received; but on thoſe things which ſhewed his expoſed, deſpiſed, and ſuffering condition; the infirmities of his body and mind; his continual need of divine ſupport; his perſecutions, reproaches, and deliverances, and ſuch things as implied his weakneſs, and the power of Chriſt that reſted on him. Nor did he in this at all enlarge, as was apt to be the caſe with thoſe that gloried: for the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus, to whom the glory and praiſe belonged of all done in, by, and for him, &c. was witneſs that he lied not in any particular, or in any meaſure.

V. 32, 33.] The event here mentioned took place ſoon after the apoſtle entered upon his miniſtry, and was a ſpecimen of what he had ever ſince been expoſed to. We know nothing more of it, than what is here recorded, and in a paſſage, that hath been already conſidered. (*Acts*, c. ix. v. 23—25.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Miniſters muſt, on ſome occaſions, ſubmit to the imputation of folly, rather than neglect the welfare of men's ſouls: and when their hearers think their conduct, in particular caſes, to be indiſcreet, they ſhould bear with them; eſpecially if it ſeem to ſpring from an exceſs of zeal. They may perhaps be jealous over their people, with ſuch an affectionate earneſtneſs, as carries them beyond ordinary rules, or perſonal conſiderations; whilſt they apprehend that they are in danger of being by any means corrupted from the ſimplicity of Chriſt: and that conduct, which ſome cenſure, may be the effect of true godlineſs, and a vigour of grace ſuperior to that of other men. Their great employment and object ſhould be, to promote the eſpouſals of ſouls to Chriſt; and to preſerve thoſe, who appear to be thus eſpouſed, from being corrupted in their principles, ſpirit, or conduct; that they may preſent them, as a chaſte virgin unto Chriſt. This will excite in them a jealous fear, leſt ſatan, who by his ſubtlety, beguiled Eve in paradiſe, ſhould deceive them alſo. For he hath agents of all deſcriptions, who are continually at work to impoſe upon the unſtable, and unwary. If then the faithful miniſter ſeem too ſuſpicious, and fearful, and become troubleſome by his watchfulneſs and warnings; he ſhould yet be borne with, though it may be allowed to be his infirmity. When profeſſors are about to leave thoſe paſtors, by whom they ſeem to have been eſpouſed to Chriſt; they ought to enquire whether their new favourites, can preach another Jeſus, another Sanctifier, or another goſpel, than they have already received? If not, they ſhould not endure ſuch men, as without ſufficient cauſe, would alienate them from the inſtruments of God in their converſion. They need not wonder if ſome confident perſons repreſent their faithful paſtors as low, and legal preachers, who are deſtitute of erudition, eloquence and power; or are in ſome reſpects exceptionable, or erroneous: there were not wanting deceivers, who confidently ſaid ſuch things of Paul himſelf! Yet indeed it is far better to be rude in ſpeech, but not in ſpiritual and experimental knowledge; and to be manifeſted throughly in all things, as walking conſiſtent with the goſpel: than to be admired by thouſands for excellency of ſpeech; and to be lifted up in pride, peſter the church with damnable hereſies and furious contentions, and diſgrace the goſpel by malignant tempers, and an unholy life! So injudicious are many chriſtians, that high confidence, and the language of importance and authority, will often go further, than the moſt humble, modeſt, meek, unaſſuming, and diſintereſted deportment! The miniſter, who is content to be poor, to fare hard, to be abaſed, or to earn his bread, that he may exalt others, by freely preaching the goſpel to them, is often conſigned to neglect, as if guilty of ſome great offence. Whilſt others, who aſſume a magiſterial tone, and exalt themſelves, are admitted to that conſequence which they arrogate to themſelves; provided they have popular abilities, whatever their character in other reſpects may be. Yet it is in reality an honour to endure want, without ceaſing to labour, or deſiring to become chargeable, where it might prejudice men againſt the goſpel. On ſome occaſions a man ſhould determine not to be deprived of this glorying; eſpecially if he ever ſee it expedient to mention it. Thus the appearance of evil may be avoided, the mouths of gain-ſayers may be ſtopped, an edifying example may be exhibited, and a contraſt made to the conduct of mercenary deceivers. However, it muſt be done in love and humility, and as in the preſence of God: and it may often be proper to ſhew, that it does not reſult from pride, by receiving the kindneſs of others with grateful acknowledgments, where the ſame reaſons do not operate. It often happens in this way, that miniſters, as it were, receive wages from one ſet of people to do ſervice for another: and ſometimes the poorer are at the expence of maintaining thoſe, that preach to the rich. But the miniſter need not ſcruple this, as if "he robbed other churches:" it reflects no diſhonour on him, provided he only requires a decent ſubſiſtence; and it will redound to the credit and profit of thoſe, who thus ſupply him: yet when the richer profeſſors know this to be the caſe, they are not *juſt*, if they do not ſeek to bear the burden themſelves; nor *generous* if they do not copy ſo noble an example.

Whatever fair ſhew, deceivers may make, they will not often be found like faithful miniſters in this reſpect. Such ſervices ſuit not falſe apoſtles, and deceitful workers, To labour without either credit or profit, from pure love to Chriſt and the ſouls of men, is a part of the apoſtolical character and office, for which they have little inclination. We need not wonder, at any plauſibility of ſuch deceivers, or any attractive form, which

CHAP. XII.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Speaking of his extraordinary viſions, &c; and of his humiliations, and his conduct under them, &c, 1---10. *2d. Shewing that his apoſtleſhip had been fully proved; and that he ought to have been commended by the Corinthians,* 11---13. *3d. Declaring his intention of viſiting them, and his determination to receive nothing from them; avowing his fervent love of them; and ſhewing that Titus, &c, had acted in the ſame diſintereſted manner,* 14---19. *4th. Expreſſing his fears, that he ſhould be forced to uſe ſeverity towards ſeveral impenitent offenders,* 20---21.

IT is not expedient for me doubtleſs to glory. I will come to viſions and revelations of the Lord.

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they aſſume, to ſeduce men from the ſimplicity of Chriſt; as ſatan is continually transformed into an angel of light, that under the moſt ſpecious pretences he may fill the earth with infidelity, hereſy, and ungodlineſs: and under the maſk of philoſophy, morality, extraordinary ſanctity, or new revelations, he does far more miſchief, than by tempting men to groſs enormities. No wonder that ſome of his miniſters, pretending to be the miniſters of righteouſneſs, are very zealous *againſt good works,* in an undiſtinguiſhing manner: for if their end were to be, according to their abilities, confidence, or notions, their hope would be far better, than it can be, when it muſt be "according to their works." If then they could indeed vacate the law of God, the rule of duty, and the ſtandard of ſin, and holineſs; they would ſecure an important point: but they will find it in full force at the day of judgment; the believer's works, as evidential of his faith and love, will be tried and approved by it; and they, who have habitually done evil, under the profeſſion of the goſpel, will be condemned by it as hypocrites. But there is an equal danger on the other ſide, and it ſerves ſatan's purpoſes *nearly* as well, to ſet up good works againſt the merits of Chriſt, and ſalvation by faith and grace. In ſhort he will allow his miniſters to preach either law or goſpel apart: but the law, as eſtabliſhed by faith in Chriſt's righteouſneſs and atonement, and the participation of his Spirit, is the bane of every falſe ſyſtem, and detects ſatan, however transformed into an angel of light.

We have great reaſon for thankfulneſs, that the apoſtle was conſtrained, though with ſo many retractations, to boaſt himſelf a little: for whatever he might fear, or his enemies might ſay, his confidence in boaſting hath thrown ſuch light upon his miniſtry, character and hiſtory, as will be inſtructive to the church unto the end of the world. Doubtleſs the Holy Spirit guided his pen; though he ſeemed not to ſpeak "after the Lord;" for he did not glory in a carnal, a proud, or a falſe manner, as many do. Had the Corinthians been as wiſe as they thought themſelves; he would have had no occaſion to apologize to them for his conduct: for he wanted not thoſe indulgences, which they granted to their falſe teachers. Indeed, if faithful miniſters, who flatter not, and pay no court to any man's paſſions, ſhould attempt to treat their people, as ſome do, who for their own ends, are in ſuch things, more complaiſant; it would not be endured. It is aſtoniſhing to ſee how ſuch men bring their followers into bondage; how they devour, and take of them; how they inſult and reproach them, as well as others; and yet how all this is borne with, excuſed, or palliated! For their doctrine ſuits the lives and conſciences of their hearers, and their example encourages them to ſimilar conduct towards others. Sometimes it becomes neceſſary to take notice of the reproaches of ſuch men: but never to imitate their ſpirit or conduct. But what mere man ever united ſuch, and ſo many grounds of glorying as the apoſtle? How does it fill our minds with aſtoniſhment, to meditate on this brief enumeration of his labours, hardſhips, perils and ſufferings, during a long courſe of years! Of his patience, perſeverance, diligence, chearfulneſs, and uſefulneſs, in the midſt of them! And of his attentive care of, and fervent affection towards all the churches, and every individual believer! Next to the hiſtory of Chriſt, the dangers, perſecutions, cruelty and treachery, which this moſt excellent, and uſeful ſervant of God, every where, and from all ſorts of perſons met with; and the unkindneſs even of his own converts, form the ſevereſt ſtricture on the folly and wickedneſs of mankind, that ever was publiſhed. We may here ſee what are the chief preferments in the true church of Chriſt: and we may enquire, whether on ſuch terms we ſhould be willing to be "not a whit behind the very "chiefeſt apoſtles?" In this glaſs our utmoſt diligence and ſervices appear too minute to be noticed! And our difficulties and trials can ſcarce be perceived: the proſpect may well ſhame us out of our boaſtings, and complaints; and lead us to enquire whether we be really engaged in the ſpiritual warfare, or have only the name of Chriſt's ſoldiers? Here we may ſtudy patience, fortitude, meekneſs, and perſeverance in well-doing; and to truſt in God to protect, deliver and comfort us, in every poſſible ſuffering, or danger. Here we may learn to think leſs of our own eaſe, intereſt, indulgence, or reputation, and more of the great concerns of godlineſs; and to ſympathize with the lighter ſorrows of our brethren, even when more heavily afflicted ourſelves: here we may look, till poverty, reproach, hunger, thirſt, watchings, faſtings, cold, nakedneſs, ſtripes, and impriſonment, appear honourable, and even ſpecial privileges, when ſuſtained in a good cauſe, and with a conſtant mind. Here we may learn to be content with food and raiment, thankful for mean and ſcanty proviſions, indifferent about all worldly things, ardently deſirous of doing good to others, and animated with the hope of ſucceſs in this work, notwithſtanding our manifold infirmities. Theſe we ſhould eſpecially look at, if we are ever conſtrained to glory: we ſhould ever keep in view our obligations to the Lord, from whom all our diſtinctions are received; we ſhould ſtrictly adhere to truth, as in his preſence; and we ſhould refer all to his glory, as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is bleſſed for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—6.] The peculiarity of the a-

2 I knew a man in Chriſt about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) ſuch an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew ſuch a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 Of ſuch an one will I glory: yet of myſelf I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would deſire to glory, I ſhall not be a fool; for I will ſay the truth: but *now* I forbear, leſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſeeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me.

7 And leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the fleſh, the meſſenger of Satan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure.

8 For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.

11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been com-

poſtle's circumſtances rendered that conduct neceſſary, which otherwiſe would not have been expedient: he would therefore proceed to ſpeak of thoſe viſions of the divine glory, and revelation of heavenly things, with which he had been favoured. It is probable that the falſe teachers at Corinth made high pretenſions in ſuch matters; and inſinuated that Paul was not diſtinguiſhed by them, as the other apoſtles were. In mentioning that viſion, which he thought proper to ſelect, as a ſpecimen of the favours of this ſort conferred upon him, he modeſtly ſpake of himſelf in the third perſon; for there can be no doubt, but he meant himſelf. He knew a man in Chriſt, (that is a believer,) who fourteen years before had a moſt extraordinary viſion. Whether he was in the body or not, at that time, God alone knew: but his outward ſenſes were entirely cloſed, and his whole perception was by his mental powers: but whether heavenly things were brought down to him, ſo to ſpeak, as his body lay entranced, (as often was the caſe with the ancient prophets;) or whether his ſoul was diſlodged from the body for the time, and actually taken up into heaven; or whether he was taken up in body and ſoul together, he knew not. This language evidently proves, that the apoſtle firmly believed the ſoul to be diſtinct from the body, and capable of perception, activity and enjoyment, in a ſtate of ſeparation. However, this man was ſuddenly caught up into the third, or the higheſt heaven; above the lower region of the air, and the ſtarry heavens, to the place, where the Lord immediately reveals his preſence and glory, and receives the adoration of his heavenly hoſts. Yea, this man, with whom he was ſo intimately acquainted, was taken up into Paradiſe, the place of felicity, of which Eden was the type; and there heard ſuch words, as man could not ſpeak, if he might, and as it would have been unlawful to ſpeak if he could; it being the purpoſe of God, that the diſcoveries made of himſelf in that glorious world, ſhould not be more fully declared on earth, than they had been. Many approved commentators ſuppoſe theſe to have been two diſtinct viſions; that Paradiſe is a different place from the third heavens; and that in the latter, he ſaw Jeſus at the right hand of the Father; and in the former he converſed with departed ſaints. But as the happineſs of the "ſpirits of juſt "men made perfect," conſiſts in being "preſent with "the Lord," (c. v. ver. 8:) ſo there ſeems to be no ſcriptural ground for this diſtinction. Though the language be varied, yet only one viſion appears to be intended: but in that one viſion he doubtleſs had an abundance of revelations. Of this man, who was ſo highly favoured, at leaſt equally with any of the ancient prophets, he would glory; though in himſelf, as to any thing that was properly his own, he would not glory, except in his infirmities. For though, in his preſent circumſtances, he was deſirous of glorying in ſuch matters, and of mentioning other viſions, that had been made to him: yet he ſhould not act fooliſhly; as he could do it with perfect truth; (which probably was not the caſe with their falſe teachers.) However, he would forbear ſpeaking further on that ſubject; leſt ſome of his friends ſhould think more highly of him than his manifeſt conduct and miniſtry authorized; and ſhould thus be tempted to honour him too much, and perhaps to undervalue other faithful miniſters in the compariſon.

V. 7—10.] The apoſtle would not have them forget, that he was a poor ſinner, wholly dependent on mercy and grace, amidſt all his honourable diſtinctions: ſo that his extraordinary, and multiplied revelations, proving an incentive to ſpiritual pride, were ſoon followed by as remarkable trials. What he ſaw in the third heavens was in its own nature of an humbling tendency; (*Job*, c. xlii. v. 5, 6. *Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 1—5:) yet when he came among his brethren, he would be apt to think, (however otherwiſe abaſed,) that none of them had ſeen, or heard what he had, or been favoured with ſuch viſions of God, as this, in the third heavens: thus it was about to prove an occaſion of pride and ſelf-preference, which mended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles, though I be nothing.

12 Truly the ſigns of an apoſtle were wrought among you in all patience, in ſigns, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myſelf was not burdenſome to you? forgive me this wrong.

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdenſome to you: for I ſeek not your's, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved.

16 But be it ſo, I did not burden you: ne-

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might have induced a long train of evil conſequences. But his gracious Lord, perceiving his danger, counteracted theſe effects, by "giving him a thorn in the "fleſh, &c." This expreſſion hath almoſt occaſioned the commentators as much trouble, as the trial itſelf gave the apoſtle: but had it ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, that our curioſity ſhould be fully gratified in this reſpect, He would have led him to an explicit mention of it: and this general ſtatement is far more ſuited for our edification, than if the particular trial had been ſpecified. A thorn fixed, and rankling in the fleſh, would give great and conſtant pain: and ſome particular trials of the apoſtle, which began, or were augmented, after this remarkable viſion, cauſed ſuch continual uneaſineſs to his mind. Probably theſe aroſe from the perſonal defects, of which he was conſcious, and which perhaps were increaſed by his viſions. Theſe might give ſome of his enemies, eſpecially the falſe apoſtles, who were miniſters or meſſengers of ſatan, a colour for reviling and deriding him; they ſeemed to obſtruct his uſefulneſs, and continually reminded him of his weakneſs and inability to do any thing as of himſelf; they were exceedingly uneaſy and mortifying to him; and doubtleſs they gave ſatan and his angels, an opportunity of tempting him to impatience, and diſcouraging him in his work; as well as of exciting carnal men to inſult and injure him. Being thus conſtantly harraſſed and buffetted, he thrice beſought the Lord Jeſus, that this thorn in the fleſh might be removed from him; (as Jeſus had thrice beſought his Father, that "the cup might paſs from "him;") and that the meſſenger of ſatan might be compelled to depart: ſuppoſing, that otherwiſe he ſhould not be able to go on with his miniſtry. This, I think, proves, that he did not mean his perſecutions, but thoſe infirmities, which emboldened his enemies. (*Gal.* c. iv. v. 13, 14.) But the Lord did not ſee good to grant his ſervant's requeſt: as he knew that this ſharp trial was needful to keep him humble, and even to illuſtrate the power of his own grace. He was therefore pleaſed to continue him under it; but at the ſame time to aſſure him, by immediate revelation, that his grace ſhould certainly be communicated to him in that meaſure, which would be ſufficient, to ſupport and comfort him under the affliction, and to enable him to fulfil his miniſtry notwithſtanding it. As his power had its moſt perfect work, and appeared moſt illuſtrious, by means of the weakneſs of thoſe, who were enabled by it to bear, and perform ſuch things, as in themſelves they were conſciouſly, and evidently fit for; thus his mnid had been compoſed; and he was enabled with inward joy to glory in his mortifying infirmities; in order that it might be the more undeniable that the power of Chriſt over ſhadowed, ſurrounded, and reſted upon him: ſeeing he was evidently made very ſucceſsful in his extenſive and important work, though he ſeemed to be diſqualified for it, and ſo placed in ſuch circumſtances, as to render it impoſſible he ſhould proceed. Thus Chriſt's omnipotence was glorified through Paul's weakneſs; and this made him even "*well pleaſed*" with his infirmities, and the reproaches, &c, to which he was expoſed for Chriſt's ſake: eſpecially, as he found that in proportion as he was weak in his own eſtimation, and that of other men; he was led more entirely to depend on Chriſt for ſtrength, and ſo was actually made ſtrong to bear ſufferings, to reſiſt temptations, and to perform the ſervices to which he was called. This paſſage contains the moſt expreſs example of praying to Chriſt, and of confiding in, and glorfying him, as the ſource of grace, and power. (Note, *Pſ.* cxlvi. v. 3. *Jer.* c. xvii. v. 5, 6.)

V. 11—13.] Every topic unavoidably led the apoſtle to ſhew the Lord's ſpecial favour towards Him, even in his moſt humiliating trials. But, if they deemed him to become a fool in glorying, they had compelled him: for they ought ſtrenuouſly to have ſtood up in defence of his character and miniſtry, when attacked by their falſe teachers: as he was in no reſpect inferior to the chiefeſt apoſtles; though he was nothing, in himſelf, or compared with his Lord; though his credit was of no conſequence, when conſidered apart from the glory of Chriſt; and as he was greatly diſeſteemed, and willing to be ſtill more abaſed, that Chriſt might be glorified. Yet in fact, the ſpecial ſigns, and miracles, which diſtinguiſhed the apoſtles, had been wrought among them, (connected with great patience and perſeverance amidſt difficulties, and perſecutions;) eſpecially in conferring on them alſo miraculous powers: nor was there any thing, in which they were leſs favoured, than other churches; except that he had never burdened them about a maintenance. If any of them would cenſure him, and complain of this as a wrong done them; he muſt crave forgiveneſs of it: though he had done it from a regard to their good.

V. 14, 15.] The apoſtle had thrice purpoſed to come to Corinth: but had twice been diſappointed; however, the third time he fully expected, that he ſhould viſit them: and he had reſolved to put them to no expence on his own account when he came; for he ſought not to ſhare their poſſeſſions, but to ſave their ſouls. As therefore children were not expected to lay up money, as a

verthelefs, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I ſent unto you?

18 I deſired Titus, and with *him* I ſent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the ſame ſpirit? *walked we* not in the ſame ſteps?

19 Again, think ye that we excuſe ourſelves unto you? we ſpeak before God in Chriſt: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

20 For I fear, leſt, when I come, I ſhall not find you ſuch as I would, and *that* I ſhall be found unto you ſuch as ye would not: leſt *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, ſtrifes, backbitings, whiſperings, ſwellings, tumults:

21 *And* leſt, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I ſhall bewail many which have ſinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanneſs and fornication and laſciviouſneſs which they have committed.

future ſupply for their parents; but the parents for their children: ſo he had determined to do whatever he could to enrich them, without accepting of any other return, than their grateful affection. Nay, he was even willing to ſpend his time, talents, health and ſtrength among them; yea to be ſpent, and worn out in his labours for their good; even though the more abundantly and fervently he loved them, the leſs they loved him, and the more neglect and contempt they expreſſed towards him. A more excellent frame of mind can ſcarce be conceived, than what is deſcribed in theſe emphatical words.

V. 16—21.] Some of the oppoſers at Corinth would be ready to anſwer, that though it was ſo, that the apoſtle did not openly burthen them; yet being an artful man, he craftily drew them in, by various pretences; and ſo obtained larger ſums of them in an under-hand manner, than would have ſufficed for his maintenance. But could they mention any man, whom he had ſent among them, by whom he had made a gain of them? Had not Titus and others acted in the ſame diſintereſted manner that he had done? And would ſome of them ſtill pretend, that they only excuſed themſelves from ſiniſter views? To this he would anſwer that he ſpake before God, as revealing himſelf in Chriſt: and that he did all things in ſubſerviency to their edification, who were dearly beloved by him, notwithſtanding all their unkindneſs. For he ſtill apprehended, that when he viſited them, he ſhould not find the church in that pure ſtate, that he deſired; and that they would not find him ſo gentle among them, as they would have him to be: leſt he ſhould meet with violent contentions, bitter envyings, mutual wrath and ſtrife, and reciprocal ſlanders, ſuſpicions, and ſurmiſes: whilſt ſome would ſwell with pride, ambition, and diſdain, or attempt to excite tumults againſt him, or thoſe in the church, who were not of their party. So that he feared leſt his viſit, (like the thorn in his fleſh,) would rather be a trial to him, and a cauſe of humiliation and dejection, than of comfort: and that he ſhould have to bewail the caſe of many, who had not repented of their enormities. Theſe laſt verſes ſhew us to what dreadful exceſſes the looſe, and ſelf-conceited teachers had drawn aſide their deluded followers! And that the inceſtuous perſon, who had been brought to repentance, was but one, of a conſiderable number, who had committed crimes of the ſame nature; and who perſiſted ſo obſtinately in them, that there was a danger leſt they ſhould unite againſt the apoſtle's authority when he came among them; and ſo conſtrain him to uſe great ſeverity!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we cannot avoid ſpeaking ſuch things of ourſelves, as may ſeem to imply boaſting; we ſhould uſe every method of rendering it conſiſtent with modeſty and humility. Thoſe things, which are ſeen and heard in the heaven of heavens, are ſo far above our preſent conceptions, that the moſt eminent believers could not ſuſtain the view of them; except they were caſt into ſuch an extacy as not to know whether they are in the body, or out of the body: nor can human language make the reſult of ſuch viſions intelligible to mortal ears. Whilſt this teaches us to enlarge our expectations of the glory, that ſhall be revealed; it ſhould alſo render us contented with our more ordinary method of learning the truth and will of God. For the heart even of the beſt of men hath in it the remains of pride; and even viſions and revelations of the Lord may occaſion ſelf-exaltation. When this is the caſe with thoſe, whom he loveth, ſome "thorn in the fleſh" will be ſurely given them, and ſome meſſenger of ſatan let looſe to buffet them; whilſt the falſe viſions of deluded enthuſiaſts tend only to pride, without any counterpoiſe. But how ſurpriſing is it, that *nature* ſhould, as it were, learn pride in heaven, and *grace* ſhould be taught humility, even by ſatan and his meſſengers! However painful the proceſs may be, the wiſe chriſtian will be thankful to be kept from being exalted above meaſure; and he will be more ready to ſpeak of his ſins and follies, than of his extraordinary diſcoveries and conſolations; as he will not deſire, that any man ſhould think of him above what he ſeeth him to be. Whatever there is in a man's experience, whether of outward trials, or of inward conflicts and temptations, which tends to counterbalance more flattering diſpenſations, and to mortify his pride; he may very properly conſider it as a "thorn in the "fleſh," &c, given to him to prevent worſe conſequences. And it is eſpecially matter of gratitude, when this prevention is effected, without his being left to commit actual ſin, or to diſhonour the goſpel. When we are buffetted of ſatan, we ſhould apply to him, who ſuffered being tempted, that he might be able to ſuccour

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1ſt. Warnings to the impenitent, exhortations to ſelf-examination, declarations of love, &c, 1--10. *2d. Concluding exhortations, ſalutations, and benedictions,* 11---14.

THIS *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witneſſes ſhall every word be eſtabliſhed.

2 I told you before, and foretel you, as if I were preſent, the ſecond time; and being abſent now I write to them which heretofore have ſinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not ſpare:

3 Since ye ſeek a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you:

4 For though he was crucified through weakneſs, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we alſo are weak in him, but we ſhall live with him by the power of God toward you.

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thoſe that are tempted: and we ſhould be frequent, as well as inſtant, in beſeeching him, that thoſe temptations and trials may depart, which appear to impede our uſefulneſs, or to endanger the credit of our profeſſion. Yet we muſt be careful not to conclude that our prayers are rejected, when the deſired deliverance is delayed: he may ſee thoſe conflicts ſalutary, which we deem ruinous. His wiſdom muſt be truſted, as well as his truth and love; and when we ſtrive againſt ſin, bear up under diſcouragements, and attend to our duty, in dependence on him; we may reſt ſatisfied "that his grace will be ſufficient for us, and that his ſtrength will be made perfect in our weakneſs." He frequently anſwers prayer by reconciling our minds to an humiliating trial; and by increaſing our ſtrength for that conflict, which we were deſirous of declining: and ſometimes chriſtians have ſuch views of his glory, and ſuch confidence in his grace, that they can moſt gladly glory in their infirmities, aſſured, that his power will reſt upon, and be honoured in and by, them. Thus a man may even take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, neceſſities, perſecutions and diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: and though we may not have arrived at this vigour of faith and love; yet if we have indeed believed, we have alſo found, that when we moſt felt our own weakneſs, we were peculiarly ſtrong in the Lord; and when we began to think ourſelves ſtrong, we have been left to diſcover, and perhaps to expoſe, our own weakneſs.

They, who do not give proper commendation to ſuch, as have faithfully laboured for their good; but prefer every new voice to that of their own paſtors, often compel them to glory, and then perhaps cenſure them for it. But whatever the Lord may give, or do by us, we are nothing in ourſelves, but ſin and folly: ſo that the deepeſt ſelf-abaſement and ſelf-renunciation not only conſiſt with the conſciouſneſs of the Lord's ſpecial goodneſs towards us, but are intimately connected with it. It is a great thing for miniſters to ſay before God, and to their people, "we ſeek not *your's* but *you.*" Alas in what numerous inſtances muſt the words be tranſpoſed, in order to be true; as the preachers ſeek only the property, and not the ſalvation of their hearers! But the more diſintereſted our labours, the more apoſtolical they are: it is generally deſireable to avoid being burdenſome to our congregations; for many more will readily forgive us this wrong, than the very appearance of being mercenary. Indeed we ſhould, as far as we can, imitate the conduct of affectionate parents, who ſeek to enrich, and not to be enriched by their children. But how hard is it gladly to ſpend, and be ſpent for thoſe, who make unkind returns; and who ſeem to love thoſe leaſt, who moſt love them? We are ſoon vanquiſhed in conteſts of this kind; and may hence infer, how far ſhort we are of Paul's meaſure of grace, who yet long after this confeſſed that he had not already attained; (*Phil.* c. iii. v. 12, 13;) and may learn to pray for an increaſe of faith, love and patience. However, no excellency of ſpirit or conduct can ſilence calumny: and if we were even as holy as Paul, ſome would repreſent us to be crafty men, who took others by guile. It is well, when we can diſprove ſuch ſlanders; and when fellow-labourers walk in the ſame ſpirit and ſteps: but we ſhould not be too anxious to excuſe ourſelves, being ſatisfied with a clear conſcience towards God; yet we ſhould do all things for the edification of our brethren, and the recovery of ſuch as have been drawn aſide. But how can miniſters be expected to be ſuch as their people deſire; when the people act ſo contrary to what they have been taught? Or when they witneſs ſo many contentions, envies, ſlanders, whiſperings, boaſtings and tumults to grieve and humble them, and diſgrace the goſpel? Alas, they are often caſt down, and ſent to bewail the crimes of thoſe, whom they fondly hoped would be a comfort to them: and they are frequently humbled, or diſtreſſed on account of their own miſtakes, or infirmities, which they fear have tended to prevent their uſefulneſs! But how grievous is it, that ſuch evils ſhould prevail among the profeſſors of the goſpel: and that we ſhould ſtill have to lament over many, who have ſinned, and have not repented of the uncleanneſs, and fornication, and laſciviouſneſs, which they have committed! Yet we need not wonder, or deſpond on this account; for it was ſo even in the apoſtles days. But whilſt we add that "the enemy hath done "this;" we may alſo obſerve, that it was by means of looſe, antinomian, and ſelf-conceited teachers.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—4.] (c. xii. v. 14.) As the law had preſcribed, that two or three witneſſes ſhould teſtify againſt an accuſed perſon previous to his condemnation; (*Deut.* c. xix. v. 15:) ſo the repeated warnings of the apoſtle of his purpoſes to come, and inflict puniſhment on the impenitent offenders at Corinth, would, as it were teſtify againſt them, and make way for thoſe judgments. Or when at length he did come, he would proceed againſt them according to that law, or the rule laid down by Chriſt for his diſciples. (*Matt.* c.

5 Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownſelves. Know ye not your ownſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?

6 But I truſt that ye ſhall know that we are not reprobates.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we ſhould appear approved, but that ye ſhould do that which is honeſt though we be as reprobates.

8 For we can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are ſtrong: and this alſo we wiſh, *even* your perfection.

10 Therefore I write theſe things being abſent, leſt being preſent I ſhould uſe ſharpneſs, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to deſtruction.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you.

12 Greet one another with an holy kiſs.

13 All the ſaints ſalute you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, *be* with you all. Amen.

xviii. v. 15—20.) In the former epiſtle he had before told them of his purpoſe: in the preceding part of this epiſtle, he had again warned them, as if preſent with them; and here again at the concluſion, being yet abſent, and giving them a little longer ſpace to repent, he now wrote to aſſure them, who had already ſinned, and continued untractable, and to all others, who might countenance them, that *if*, or *when* he came again, he would not ſpare the offenders, nor appear ſo timid and weak, as they before concluded him to be: eſpecially as ſome of them boldly demanded further proof of Chriſt's ſpeaking by him, as his apoſtle; though this had already been confirmed by no feeble evidence, but by his mighty power working *in*, and *among* them, in various ways. For though Jeſus was crucified, as if he had been only a weak, and helpleſs man, and was deſpiſed as unable to ſave himſelf: yet he was raiſed from the dead, and lived in glory, through the power of God, to put all enemies under his feet: and in like manner the apoſtle and his brethren, appeared weak and deſpicable, as related to, and being made like him; and the power, which they ſpake of, ſeemed to be dead, becauſe they did not exerciſe it; yet they were aſſured that it would revive, and that they ſhould be evidently quickened, and endued with the power of God, exerted in their behalf towards the diſobedient Corinthians, by inflicting miraculous judgments upon them.

V. 5—10.] Inſtead of preſumptuouſly judging the apoſtle, and demanding his credentials; it behoved the perſons concerned, and indeed all of them, to examine themſelves, whether they really "were in the faith," or not; whether they had indeed more than a formal profeſſion, and a dead faith. Let them then prove their tempers, conduct, experience, &c, by the ſtandard of God's word, as gold is aſſayed, or tried by the touchſtone; for he feared that many of them were ſelf-deceived in this important concern; after all their boaſting of their knowledge, would they continue ignorant of themſelves, of their own ſtate, character, and hearts? Or that Jeſus Chriſt was indeed in them, by the influence, graces, and in-dwelling of his Spirit, by his image renewed on their ſouls; by his kingdom ſet up in their hearts; and by poſſeſſing their ſupreme love, and affection? Unleſs they were to that day ſuch profeſſors, as would at laſt be diſapproved, and rejected, as the droſs is by the refiner. Some indeed might retort the charge, or caution; but the apoſtle truſted, that he and his helpers would not be found amongſt thoſe, whom the Lord diſapproved, and that this would ſhortly be known by them all. But he prayed for them, that they might do no more evil, but repent of what they had done: not that he, and his friends ſhould appear approved, by the ſubmiſſion of all parties to his authority; but that they might do what was right, and becoming them, even though it ſhould occaſion him to be diſapproved and cenſured: or even to be thought deſtitute of apoſtolical authority, becauſe he had no occaſion given him of exerciſing it. For indeed he and his brethren could do nothing, in the uſe of theſe miraculous powers, againſt the truth of the goſpel, being only empowered by them to defend the truth. But he loved their ſouls more than his own reputation: and therefore he ſhould be glad to be weak in this reſpect, by their ſtrength of faith and grace, depriving him of all opportunity of diſplaying his power: and indeed the great wiſh of his heart was for their perfect re-eſtabliſhment in the faith and holineſs of the goſpel; as a man is perfectly recovered from a dangerous malady, or from the breaking or diſlocation of his bones. Therefore he wrote theſe things, before he came to Corinth, that they might have time for this complete recovery; leſt contrary to his inclination, he ſhould be compelled to uſe ſharpneſs, according to his apoſtolical power, which the Lord had entruſted to him; that in the uſe of it he might promote the edification of believers, and bring ſinners to repentance, and ſo prevent their final deſtruction.

V. 11—14.] The apoſtle at length cloſed this moſt inſtructive epiſtle, with his friendly ſalutations, or deſires of their preſent and future welfare: exhorting them to be perfect, ſincere, entire, eſtabliſhed in the faith, and completely the diſciples of Chriſt; exciting them to be joyful in the Lord, and of good courage amidſt all their temptations; calling on them to lay aſide their contentions, that they might all be of one heart and

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judgment, delight in, and attend to the ſame things, and live together in peace; and aſſuring them that in this way, the God of love and peace, the ſource and pattern of love and peace, would manifeſt his preſence among them, and bleſs them. And as a token of their mutual forgiveneſs and love, let them ſalute each other with an holy kiſs. He aſſured them, that all the ſaints where he then was, deſired affectionately to ſalute them: and finally he deſired that the free favour, mercy and ſalvation of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the ſpecial love of God the Father to them as the objects of his choice, and his adopted children; and the participation of all the gifts, graces, and conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, might be with them all. That ſo all bleſſings from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, in whoſe One name, they had been baptized, might really be conferred on, and conſtantly enjoyed by all of them, without exception; to the glory of the three Perſons in the ſacred Trinity, according to the parts, which they ſuſtain in the great work of man's redemption.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All rigorous meaſures ſhould be preceded by as long patience, and as many warnings, as the caſe will admit of; and with caution and deliberation, upon ſure grounds, and with firmneſs of mind. They, who will not be convinced by the abundant evidences already afforded, that Chriſt ſpeaketh in, and by, his faithful miniſters, will at length experience a very awful demonſtration of it. They cannot appear more weak and deſpicable in the eyes of carnal men, than Jeſus did to the chief prieſts, when he hung upon the croſs: yet he liveth, and exerciſeth all power in heaven and earth; and when he ſhall come to judgment, every denunciation of vengeance uttered by his ſervants according to his word, will be found to be quick and powerful for the condemnation of deſpiſers. We ſhould therefore diligently and impartially examine ourſelves whether we are in the faith; and, inſtead of imagining, that it is *always unbelief to doubt of our acceptance*; or adopting ſo ambiguous and deluſory a principle, as *that faith is evidential of itſelf, needs no other proof, and compriſes aſſurance in its eſſence*; we ſhould daily bring the whole of our faith, hope, experience, confidence, comforts, affections, words and works, to be aſſayed by the touchſtone of the ſcriptures; that we may get well acquainted with ourſelves, obtain an aſſurance that will not ſhrink from inveſtigation, and poſſeſs that "hope, which maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the "love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy "Ghoſt." For unleſs Jeſus Chriſt be in us, by his Spirit, his image, and the governing power of his love, our faith is dead, and we are as yet diſapproved by our Judge. Whilſt miniſters give theſe warnings, they ſhould alſo look well to themſelves; that they may have a good hope, that they ſhall not thus be rejected: but in general they, who are moſt preſumptuous in judging others, have moſt reaſon to ſuſpect and examine themſelves.

We ſhould earneſtly pray to God for thoſe, whom we caution, that they may "ceaſe to do evil, and learn to "do well;" though their good conduct, "as becometh "the goſpel of Chriſt," ſhould expoſe us to cenſure for our ſuſpicions of them; or even bring our own characters into doubt. We ſhould be glad, for others to be ſtrong in the grace of Chriſt; though that ſhould be the means of expoſing our weakneſs: and we ſhould long for the perfection of knowledge, holineſs and comfort, in behalf of thoſe, who have imbibed a ſtrong diſlike to us; even if this ſhould proportionably confirm, and increaſe men's prejudices againſt ourſelves. In ſhort, all our intereſts, and feelings, except our preſent holineſs, and future felicity, ſhould be deſpiſed, when they come in competition with the honour of Chriſt, and the proſperity of his church. The miraculous powers of the apoſtles could not be uſed, againſt the truth, but only in its defence: yet abilities, gifts, authority, and influence, may be employed againſt the cauſe of Chriſt, and the edification of his people, yea to the deſtruction of the poſſeſſors, and of others with them: we ſhould then pray for grace to preſerve us from ſuch abuſe, and to enable us to make a proper improvement of all our talents. If we would have the God of peace and love to be with us for our ſpiritual advantage and conſolation; we ſhould ſtudy to be ſtedfaſt in, and to act conſiſtently with the faith of Chriſt, to be united in heart and ſoul with all our brethren; and to follow peace with all men. Then we may hope that "the grace of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, "the love of God the Father, and the communion of "the Holy Spirit, will be with us all": that through us "glory may be to the Father, the Son and the Holy "Ghoſt; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever "ſhall be, world without end, Amen," And what more can we deſire for ourſelves, or our brethren, than this frequently repeated apoſtolical benediction? May we then at all times, when theſe words are in our lips, or ſpoken in our hearing, ſo enter into the meaning of them with fervent affections, and enlarged deſires and expectations; that the bleſſings implied in them may be upon us, and all our fellow-worſhippers, now and for evermore! Amen.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the GALATIANS.

The apoſtle having founded ſeveral churches in the region of Galatia, belonging to the Leſſer Aſia, (Acts, c. xvi. v. 6. c. xviii. v. 23;) *was called thence to other places: and immediately certain Judaizing teachers came among them, undermining his apoſtolical authority, leading them to wrong views of juſtification, and bringing them into bondage to the Moſaic law. The apoſtle, having intelligence of this grievous defection, wrote this epiſtle to them; in which he* *he vindicated his authority; ſtated and argued for the doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt; warned them of the danger of obſerving, and relying on the Moſaic ceremonies; called on them to aſſert their chriſtian liberty, but warned them not to abuſe it; and then concluded with ſeveral experimental obſervations, practical exhortations, cautions, and ſalutations. The Apocryphal Poſtſcript dates this epiſtle from Rome: but it is conjectured by the beſt judges to have been written ſome time before the apoſtle went to that city; probably before his ſecond progreſs through Galatia, and perhaps during his reſidence at Corinth,* (Acts, c. xviii.)

CHAP. I.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Aſſerting his divine appointment to that office, ſaluting the churches, and praiſing God, 1---5. *2d. Sharply reproving the Galatians for ſo ſoon turning aſide to a falſe goſpel; and denouncing an awful curſe on all that preached any other doctrine, than what they had received from him,* 6---10. *3d. Declaring that he had his inſtructions from Chriſt; and ſpeaking of his conduct before, and after his converſion,* 11---24.

PAUL, an apoſtle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead;)

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

4 Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

6 I marvel that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him, that called you into the grace of Chriſt, unto another goſpel:

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—5.] The Judaizing teachers in Galatia ſeem to have expreſſly denied Paul to be an apoſtle; or at leaſt, that he was equal to Peter, and other apoſtles. He therefore began his epiſtle by calling himſelf an apoſtle, and declaring that he was not ſent forth by any human authority, nor yet by the intervention of any man; "but by Jeſus Chriſt, and by God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead." That as Chriſt received his mediatorial kingdom from the Father; ſo Paul received his apoſtleſhip from Chriſt, and from God the Father by him: and though he was not appointed to that office, previous to the death of Jeſus, as moſt of the other apoſtles were; yet his authority was equally valid, being perſonally conferred on him by his *riſen* Lord and Saviour. Ananias baptized Paul; but he was not inſtrumental either in appointing him to, or inſtructing him for, the apoſtleſhip. With him, all the brethren, whether miniſters, or private chriſtians, among whom he then reſided, joined in this epiſtle; as concurring in the doctrines, &c, contained therein. It was addreſſed "to "the churches of Galatia," or the ſeveral congregations of profeſſed chriſtians, which had been collected in that province: but as they had departed from the faith, in the fundamental article of juſtification; the apoſtle did not call them, "Saints;" for he ſtood in doubt of them. After his uſual ſalutation, he added that Jeſus "gave him"ſelf" a willing, and ſufficient ſacrifice for the ſins of his people, "that he might deliver them," from the condemnation, pollution, ſpirit, maxims, faſhions, and conduct of "this preſent evil world," according "to "the will," and appointment "of God our Father;" to whom the whole glory ought to be, and would be referred for ever. This deliverance could not be effected conſiſtent with the glory of God, except by the redemption of Chriſt, and the acceptance, reconciliation, and grace that are through, and from, Him; and therefore if the Galatians renounced their dependence on his merits, they muſt continue enſlaved to this preſent evil world, and be condemned with it; as no outward forms or obſervances could deliver them from, or give them the victory over it, (1 *John*, c. v. ver. 4, 5.) Some indeed interpret the words, which we render "this preſent evil "world," of the Moſaic diſpenſation; which was then become a mere carnal ſyſtem, connected with the love and ſpirit of the world, the fear of men, bondage to ſin, and expoſedneſs to condemnation. But the preceding explanation ſeems more extenſive, and natural.

V. 6—10] It is remarkable, that the apoſtle addreſſed the Galatians very differently than he afterwards did the Corinthians. We have ſeen that he uſed the utmoſt caution, and the moſt delicate, and conſummate management in undermining the influence, and counteracting the deluſions of the falſe teachers at Corinth: but he attacked the error of the Galatians in a direct and open manner, without any circumlocution. The Corinthians had indeed built hay ſtraw and ſtubble upon the good foundation; but the Galatians were attempting to lay a wrong foundation: the former "might be ſaved as "by fire," notwithſtanding their errors and abuſes; but

7 Which is not another; but there be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed.

9 As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again. If any *man* preach any other goſpel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.

10 For do I now perſuade men, or God? or do I ſeek to pleaſe men? for if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt.

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the

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the latter muſt periſh, unleſs they were recovered from their infatuation. In the former caſe the errors had been introduced more plauſibly, and diffuſed their baleful influence more gradually: the tares were ſo mingled with the wheat, that they could not be plucked up by a rough hand, without the greateſt danger; and much caution was requiſite, leſt ſatan ſhould get ſtill further advantages againſt them. But in Galatia the error was ſimple, and fundamental; it was a virtual renunciation of the goſpel, and deſtructive in its very nature. The perſons, who propagated the “other goſpel” in Galatia, were as determined enemies to true chriſtianity, as the falſe apoſtles at Corinth, and more evidently ſo: but they were not equal to them in ingenuity, the detection of their error lay within a ſmall compaſs, their example was of a moſt dangerous tendency, their progreſs was like to be very rapid, unleſs effectually checked: and therefore the apoſtle opened his ſubject, in the language of aſtoniſhment at the conduct of the Galatians. He had been employed to call them by his miniſtry “into the grace of Chriſt,” or a profeſſed dependence for acceptance on the free mercy of God, by the merits and ſacrifice of Chriſt, and through faith in Him: he had clearly and fully inſtructed them in this important ſubject, and confirmed it by miracles, and the gifts of the Spirit, conferred on them; and they had appeared cordially to embrace this ſalvation: he could not therefore but be ſurpriſed, that they ſhould ſo ſoon be induced to diſclaim his miniſtry, and renounce his doctrine, by turning to another goſpel! For their new opinions were entirely incompatible with the true goſpel. As it was more evident at firſt ſight, that the Galatians had been removed from Paul's miniſtry and doctrine, than it was that they had renounced chriſtianity; and as he ſtood in doubt whether they had been inwardly and efficaciouſly called into the grace of Chriſt: ſo I apprehend we are rather to underſtand him to ſpeak, of the inſtrument of their outward calling, than of the Agent in effectual vocation. Indeed their new ſcheme was not another goſpel, nor any goſpel at all, but a moſt fatal deluſion, concluding all under condemnation, who were given up to it. This, Paul hoped would not be their caſe; as the immediate blame was to be caſt on certain perſons, whoſe aim was to trouble, perplex, and miſlead the minds of the Gentiles converts; and to pervert the goſpel of Chriſt, out of a blind and proud zeal for the abrogated Moſaic diſpenſation. They no doubt, appeared to the unſtable and unwary Galatians to be well-meaning perſons, and to ſpeak very plauſibly concerning obedience to the law, as joined with faith in Chriſt, in order to juſtification: but he muſt in the ſtrongeſt and plaineſt terms declare, that whoever preached any goſpel contrary to, or different from, that, which he had preached to them, and they had received; he would be, and ought to be accurſed; as one that remained under the curſe of the law, and kept others under it, and as acting in direct oppoſition to Chriſt, and the glory of God in his ſalvation. Nay, this would be, yea, let it be, the caſe, even if He, or any of the apoſtles ſhould depart from their former doctrine, and endeavour to eſtabliſh any other foundation for a ſinner's hope, than they had done. Nay, if it were poſſible for an angel of light to come from heaven, and to preach a doctrine, contrary to the free juſtification of a ſinner by faith in the merits of Chriſt alone: he muſt at that moment become an apoſtate ſpirit, a rebel againſt God, an enemy to Chriſt, and accurſed in himſelf. So that abilities, morality, plauſibility, or even miracles were not to be regarded in this caſe. Nor let this be conſidered as the language of intemperate zeal: for he would repeat it with ſolemnity, and again denounce accurſed, by his apoſtolical authority, every one, who thus attempted to lay ſo falſe a foundation; that they might learn to dread and abhor thoſe deluſions, which they had unwarily encouraged. For could they ſuppoſe, that after ſo many years of labour, and ſuffering, in the cauſe of Chriſt, he only meant to perſuade men to adopt his own private ſentiments; inſtead of pleading the cauſe of God, and approving himſelf to him? Or did he at length ſeek to pleaſe men, and to ingratiate himſelf with them? Indeed if this had been his object, he ſhould never have entered upon, or ſo long continued in the ſervice of Chriſt: and if in ſo fundamental a doctrine he accommodated his diſcourſe to the pride and prejudices of men's hearts; he could not act as the ſervant of Chriſt; who cannot be pleaſed with thoſe things, that ſuit the carnal minds, and worldly wiſdom of men. As the apoſtle became all things to all men, that he might pleaſe them for their edification; and as he even tolerated difference of ſentiment and conduct, in various inſtances reſpecting the Moſaic law: ſo we muſt conclude, that this deciſive language only related to that fundamental doctrine, of which he was about to treat; or to ſuch others, as are of ſimilar evidence, and importance. It does not behove us to uſe the ſame authoritative language, or to denounce anathemas on thoſe, who differ from us: yet we may properly ſhew men, how evidently the apoſtle's words conclude thoſe under the curſe, who teach ſinners to rely for juſtification, in any meaſure or degree, upon any thing, except the righteouſneſs and atonement of Chriſt.

V. 11—24.] The reaſon of the awful denunciation, which the apoſtle had made, was contained in the aſſurance that “his goſpel was not after man,” neither of human invention, or ſuited to the diſpoſitions and opinions of mankind. For he had not received it from any goſpel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

13 For ye have heard of my converſation in time paſt in the Jews' religion, how that beyond meaſure I perſecuted the church of God, and waſted it:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jeruſalem to them which were apoſtles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damaſcus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jeruſalem to ſee Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But other of the apoſtles ſaw I none, ſave James the Lord's brother.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Chriſt:

23 But they had heard only, That he which perſecuted us in times paſt now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed;

24 And they glorified God in me.

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human teaching, but it was immediately revealed to him by Jeſus Chriſt. This might be evinced by facts: for they had often heard of his character and conduct in former years, when he profeſſed the Jews religion; and how his bigotted zeal had induced him to exceed the meaſure of all other oppoſers, in his furious perſecution of the church; which he waſted, as a wolf doth the ſheep, or as a victorious army plunders, and deſtroys the city, they have taken. He had alſo been well inſtructed in the religion of the Jews, and had made greater proficiency in his ſtudies, than moſt of thoſe, who were his equals in age, rank, andeducation; as well as far exceeded them in zeal for the traditions of the elders, along with the law of Moſes. It could not therefore be ſuppoſed, that he ſhould all at once, and contrary to all his intereſts, both embrace chriſtianity, and afterwards preach it to the Gentiles, without regarding the Jews religion; unleſs ſome adequate cauſe had intervened to produce the extraordinary change. But indeed, it had pleaſed God, (who had choſen him to be an apoſtle, even from his mother's womb, and had by his purpoſe ſet him apart for that ſervice;) (*Jer.* c. i. v. 5;) to call him by his efficacious grace, unto the knowledge, and faith of the goſpel; and thus of his mere mercy to reconcile him unto himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt: and along with the outward extraordinary circumſtances of his converſion, it had alſo pleaſed God, to reveal his Son, in the glory of his Perſon and ſalvation to his underſtanding and heart; to diſplay his power, love and grace in the converſion of ſo furious and prejudiced an enemy; that *in* and *by* him, he might make his name more widely known on earth, by ſending him as an apoſtle to preach Chriſt to the Gentiles: (*Acts*, c. xxvi. v. 17, 18.) When this gracious change had taken place, he immediately prepared for obedience, without conſulting with men, or conferring with the dictates of his own natural reaſon, about the conſequences of his conduct, to his intereſt, credit, eaſe, or life itſelf. Nor did he even go up to Jeruſalem to receive inſtructions, or to obtain a commiſſion from thoſe, that had been apoſtles, before his extraordinary converſion, and appointment, to that ſervice: but he proceeded to exerciſe his miniſtry without delay, and went into Arabia for that purpoſe. Afterwards he preached at Damaſcus, till he was driven thence by perſecution. At length after three years he went to Jeruſalem, to viſit Peter as a brother in Chriſt; but neither he, nor James attempted to add any thing to the inſtructions, or authority, that he had received from the Lord: and for the entire truth of all that he had ſtated, he ſolemnly appealed to God. After a ſhort time he left Jeruſalem to preach in other places; and the other churches in Judea did not ſo much as know him perſonally: but the account of his wonderful converſion excited them to adore the power and grace of God towards ſo terrible a perſecutor; and to bleſs his name for ſo great a deliverance vouchſafed to his afflicted church. (Notes, &c. *Acts*, c. ix. v. 1—31.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All authority, or ability to preach the goſpel muſt come from Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who hath raiſed him from the dead. Indeed men are commonly employed as inſtruments in qualifying and ordaining miniſters; but without the grace, teaching, and unction of the Spirit of Chriſt, all the reſt muſt prove ineffectual. We ſhould pray for "grace, and peace from "God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," in behalf of thoſe, of whom we doubt, whether they be true Saints. The love of Chriſt in giving himſelf for our ſins, and the hopes and motives which his redemption inſpires, are effectual to deliver the believer from this preſent world, as well as from the wrath to come. This was intended by the divine Redeemer; it accords

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Proving his divine miſſion, by what paſſed betwixt him, and the other apoſtles at Jeruſalem, 1---10. *2d. Declaring how he publicly oppoſed Peter at Antioch, for* judaizing; *with his ſtatement of the doctrine of juſtification, and his own experience in that reſpect,* 11---21.

THEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jeruſalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* alſo.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that goſpel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to

to the will of God, and is requiſite for the diſplay of his glory: and the conſciouſneſs of being thus delivered from, and made victorious over, the love of the world, and the fear of men; and enabled to refuſe conformity to this evil world, and to live a ſpiritual and heavenly life on earth, forms the proper evidence of juſtification by the merits of Chriſt, and through faith in him: yet numbers of profeſſors have no conception of, or inclination for this part of ſalvation! But being not delivered from this preſent evil world, by the ſanctification of the Spirit, it is preſumptuous in them to expect exemption from it's condemnation by the blood of Jeſus. It is truly aſtoniſhing how ſoon hopeful converts are often removed from the miniſtry of thoſe, by whom they were firſt called to the grace of Chriſt; and induced to embrace other goſpels, either more flattering to their ſelf-righteous pride, or more favourable to their luſts! Yet theſe are not goſpel at all, but the devices of ſatan, to deceive the unſtable, to trouble the injudicious, and to pervert the goſpel of Chriſt. Whilſt we inſiſt upon it, that every kind and degree of Antinomianiſm eventually tends to diſhonour Chriſt, and deſtroy true religion; we muſt alſo ſtrenuouſly declare, that all dependence on good works, real or ſuppoſed, for juſtification, is ſtill more fatal to the individuals who perſiſt in it, after the truth has been fully, and repeatedly ſet before them. No wonder that the preachers of morality and good works, as the foundation for men's hopes of acceptance, or in any degree conducive to a ſinner's juſtification, are ſo evidently unſucceſsful in their attempts to make men virtuous: for if they had apoſtolical endowments, yea angelic capacities, eloquence, and purity: yet they, their whole ſyſtem, and all who cleave to it lie under the awful, and explicit curſe of God, which muſt blaſt all their labours, and finally ruin their ſouls, unleſs they are previouſly convinced of their fatal miſtake. Whilſt we therefore are zealous in preaching, and practiſing good works, *for evangelical purpoſes*; let us be even ſtill more careful, if poſſible, not to put them in the place of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and not to advance any thing, which may betray others into ſo dreadful a deluſion: and inſtead of preſumptuouſly applying the apoſtle's words to thoſe, who differ from us in leſſer matters; or in any other way, than by a general declaration of the truth: let us for ourſelves keep at the utmoſt diſtance from this terrible anathema, and caution all men againſt thoſe, who thus pervert the goſpel of Chriſt. In ſo important a cauſe, we muſt not regard the friendſhip, or fear the frowns of men; nor ſeek their favour, by the perſuaſive words of human wiſdom; but we ſhould be ſatisfied with deſiring the acceptance: and bleſſing of God in our endeavours to vindicate his truth. Indeed none are the ſervants of Chriſt, who ſeek *to pleaſe men*, as their object; and few, who actually pleaſe men in general, give ſufficient evidence that they honeſtly, and faithfully ſerve Chriſt: for how can he be pleaſed with that teſtimony, and conduct, which is acceptable to carnal men, in whom the god of this world dwells, and works? Miniſters therefore ſhould be careful not to receive, or preach a carnalized goſpel; and not to reſt in human teaching; but to ſtudy the written revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, and to pray continually for the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

The converſation of many eminent chriſtians and miniſters, was once moſt contrary to the truth, and grace of the goſpel. Zealous Phariſees, and furious perſecutors have been made monuments of the Redeemer's power and love: and though their apparent profiting before their converſion only tended to their greater condemnation; yet it hath afterwards been over-ruled for the glory of God, and their more abundant uſefulneſs. The Lord ſuffers many, whom he hath choſen for his work, to proceed in oppoſition to him for many years: but when he calls them by his grace, and reveals the glory and preciouſneſs of Chriſt to their ſouls; their enmity is ſubdued, their luſts dethroned, their hearts changed, and they willingly devote themſelves to his ſervice. When his command is concerned, they will not confer with fleſh and blood, but will renounce all worldly proſpects, and venture all conſequences for his ſake. And though in ordinary caſes it would be preſumptuous for new converts, or young miniſters to diſregard the counſels of ſuch, as have been long employed in the work of Chriſt: yet that love to Chriſt, and the ſouls of men, which renders them ſuperior to lucrative conſiderations, and ready to endure hardſhips, in order to ſpread the goſpel, is a good evidence, that the Lord is preparing them for future uſefulneſs. In ſpeaking of the Lord's dealings with us, and the ſervices for which he hath enabled us; we ſhould ſcrupulouſly adhere to the truth, as in the ſight of God: and when they, who oppoſed, and would have deſtroyed the faith, are brought to embrace, and preach it; we are all called upon to glorify God on their behalf, though they be unknown by face to us.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—5.] It ſeems moſt obvious to compute the fourteen years here mentioned, from the apoſtle's former journey to Jeruſalem, (c. i. v. 18;) though many date them from his converſion, which ſcarce allows ſufficient time for all the events which took place, before this later journey. (Notes, &c. *Acts*, c. xv.) By the direction of God, who immediately revealed himſelf to the apoſtle, or ſome other, on this occaſion; he and Barnabas went to Jeruſalem about that very queſtion, which was now pending between him and the Galatians: and this was the only inſtance, in which there them which were of reputation, leſt by any means I ſhould run, or had run, in vain.

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumciſed:

4 And that becauſe of falſe brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out our liberty which we have in Chriſt Jeſus, that they might bring us into bondage:

5 To whom we gave place by ſubjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the goſpel might continue with you.

6 But of thoſe who ſeemed to be ſomewhat, whatſoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's perſon: for they who ſeemed *to be ſomewhat* in conference added nothing to me:

7 But contrariwiſe, when they ſaw that the goſpel of the uncircumciſion was committed unto me, as *the goſpel* of the circumciſion *was* unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apoſtleſhip of the circumciſion, the ſame was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who ſeemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowſhip; that we *ſhould go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumciſion.

10 Only *they would* that we ſhould remember the poor; the ſame which I alſo was forward to do.

11 But when Peter was came to Antioch,

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had been any appearance of inferiority in him to the other apoſtles. At that time he fully declared the whole of his goſpel among the Gentiles, to the apoſtles and other eminent perſons at Jeruſalem: but he did this privately; leſt if he had openly avowed it to the whole church, the ſtrong prejudices of the multitude againſt him, and the Gentiles, and for the Moſaic law, ſhould have excited ſuch commotions, and led to ſuch meaſures, as might have tended to prevent his future uſefulneſs, and ſubvert the churches, which he had already planted. It would at length be fully known both, that he admitted the Gentiles into the church without circumciſion, and that he did not conſider the Moſaic law as binding on the conſciences even of the Jewiſh converts: but as his object was to obtain the ſanction of the church at Jeruſalem to his doctrine, in order to ſilence the Judaizing teachers: ſo it was very prudent to open the buſineſs privately to the apoſtles, &c; that being propoſed, and ſupported by them, it might come before the other elders, with more weight, than Paul himſelf could have given it, in ſuch a prejudiced audience. However, though he uſed this precaution, yet he would not conſent that Titus ſhould be circumciſed, contrary to his judgment and inclination: and it is probable, that he took that excellent Gentile convert with him on purpoſe, that in the caſe of one, on whom he could depend, he might ſhew his ſtedfaſtneſs to his principles, upon ſo critical an occaſion. (Note, *Acts*, c. xvi. v. 3.) For both his journey to Jeruſalem, and his conduct there, eſpecially in reſpect of Titus, were intended to counteract the deſigns of the falſe brethren, the pretended chriſtians, who had in an underhand manner got admiſſion into the church at Antioch; and who came as ſpies to obſerve the degree of liberty which the Gentile converts, and even thoſe of the Jews, uſed, in reſpect of the Moſaic law, according to the truth and will of Chriſt; in order that they might bring the Gentiles into bondage to the legal ceremonies, as well as oblige the apoſtle, &c. to be more obſervant of them. But though he was always diſpoſed to make allowance for men's prejudices, and to deal gently with weak conſciences, in order to promote the goſpel, (1 *Cor.* c. ix. v. 19—23.) Yet he would not give place at all, by way of ſubjection to the law, which they impoſed it on men's conſciences, and repreſented it as neceſſary to ſalvation. But he ſtrenuouſly oppoſed all ſuch attempts, in order that the truth of the goſpel might remain in the Gentile churches, which theſe Jewiſh teachers were labouring to pervert, and corrupt.

V. 6—10.] The falſe brethren diſparaged Paul, as if no account were to be made of him; but Peter, James and John *ſeemed* to be ſomewhat in their eſtimation, in order that by uſing their names, they might the more ſucceſsfully oppoſe the truth. But Paul declared, that it was no matter to him what they or others were, as to their endowments, authority, reputation, &c: for God did not thus partially accept of men's perſons, or determine right and wrong, truth and falſhood, by ſuch rules. However, therefore he loved and honoured them as brethren, he would not put them in Chriſt's ſtead, or acknowledge that they had any authority over him: nor indeed, when he conferred with them, had they added any thing to his knowledge of the goſpel, or his authority to preach it, or even to his ſpiritual gifts and miraculous powers. On the contrary, inſtead of pretending to any thing of this kind, they were convinced that Chriſt had immediately appointed him to be his principal miniſter, in preaching the goſpel among the Gentiles; even as Peter was the leading perſon in the work carrying on among the Jews: and had qualified him as fully, and wrought by him as mightily in the one caſe, as he had by Peter in the other. So that theſe three apoſtles, who ſeemed to many perſons to be the only pillars on whom every thing depended, ſaw and acknowledged the grace of God beſtowed on him; and allowed of him and Barnabas, as fellow-labourers, of equal authority and ability with themſelves; being ſatisfied that they ſhould labour principally among the Gentiles, whilſt themſelves would at preſent continue among the Jews. Only, conſidering the low condition of the Jewiſh converts, and the expences they had incurred ſoon after the day of Pentecoſt; they deſired them to remember, and raiſe ſome contributions for, *their* poor.

I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion.

13 And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation.

14 But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter before *them* all, if thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews; why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We *who are* Jews by nature, and not ſinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.

17 But if while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt, we ourſelves alſo are found ſinners, *is* therefore Chriſt the miniſter of ſin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I deſtroyed, I make myſelf a tranſgreſſor.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

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among the Gentile converts; which Paul was very ready to do, notwithſtanding their prejudices againſt him. The event of this conference in other reſpects was well known.

V. 11—16.] The wiſdom of God, in permitting the tranſaction here recorded, is very conſpicuous: for it demonſtrably proves the pope's pretended infallibility and ſupremacy, as derived from Peter, nobody can tell in what manner, to be the moſt groundleſs fiction imaginable; and it tends exceedingly to eſtabliſh the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone. After the decree of the council at Jeruſalem, Peter on ſome account went down to Antioch; and, knowing that the Moſaic law was no longer obligatory on the conſcience, he ſcrupled not to eat and converſe freely with the Gentiles: yet when ſome Jewiſh converts came from James to him on ſome meſſage, he ſeparated from, and appeared ſhy of, the Gentiles, leſt he ſhould incur the cenſure of the Jews. Thus he ſhewed more fear of man, than regard to the truth of the goſpel; he confirmed the prejudices of the Jewiſh converts, and ſtrengthened the hands of the Judaizing teachers; he weakened the influence of Paul and other miniſters; he ſet an example of diſſimulation, which was followed by the other Jews, and which even ſeduced Barnabas himſelf; and he threw additional hindrances in the way of the converſion of the Gentiles. This ſufficiently proved him to be both fallible and ſinful, in himſelf; though he was guided by the Spirit of God to deliver the goſpel to mankind free from error or corrupt mixture. However as he was ſo evidently blameable, Paul, though probably a much younger man, and called to the apoſtleſhip long after him, deemed himſelf bound openly to withſtand him. A private remonſtrance would not ſuffice on ſo public and important an occaſion: and he did not ſatisfy himſelf with ſpeaking againſt him behind his back. But he took this opportunity, in the preſence of the whole church, to expoſtulate with him concerning his diſingenuous conduct: demanding of him how it was that he, being a Jew, ſhould in many reſpects, and on many occaſions, live like the Gentiles, without obſerving the Moſaic law; and yet ſhould inconſiſtently uſe the influence of his example, to induce and even to compel the Gentile converts to ſubmit to circumciſion, and obey that law? For they, who were *naturally* of the ſtock of Iſrael, and thus had been born and educated Jews; and who had formerly been ſtrictly obſervant of the Moſaic law, and not idolatrous ſinners like the Gentiles: being at length fully convinced, that a man could not be juſtified before God by his own obedience to the law, in any ſenſe; (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. iii;) but that this bleſſing muſt be obtained by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt: even they had renounced all dependence upon the law, and fled to Chriſt by faith, that they might be juſtified in him alone, without the works of the law, &c. Why then ſhould Peter, and other Jewiſh converts, draw the attention of the Gentiles to the legal ceremonies, and intimate to them, that they were not fully brought into the church of Chriſt, because they did not ſubmit to them: when this ſerved to ſanction thoſe teachers, who inſtructed them to depend upon them in part at leaſt for juſtification? Whereas they well knew, that by the works of the law, no fleſh could be juſtified before God. The occaſion of this declaration was doubtleſs taken from the ceremonial law: but the argument, as it reſpects juſtification, is equally concluſive againſt all dependance on the works of the moral law, as abſolutely inconſiſtent with the goſpel-method of juſtification.

V. 17—21.] It is not agreed whether the apoſtle's addreſs to Peter continues to the end of the chapter; or where it terminates, if it doth not: but the doctrine is juſt the ſame, however this may be decided. If then, whilſt the apoſtles or Jewiſh converts renounced their legal confidence, and ſought to be juſtified by Chriſt; it ſhould at length be found that they were yet in their ſins, through the inſufficiency of his merits to juſtify them; except they returned back to the law, and taught others to do the ſame: it would follow, that Chriſt was the miniſter of ſin; and the goſpel the miniſtration of condemnation, inſtead of the miniſtration of the Spirit, and of righteouſneſs? But God forbid, that ſuch things ſhould be ſpoken of Chriſt, and his goſpel. This appears to be the meaning of the verſe, as it

20 I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

21 I do not fruſtrate the grace of God: for if righteouſneſs *come* by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.

ſtands connected in the apoſtle's argument: though at firſt ſight it ſeems rather to relate to the ſins, which are found in thoſe, who profeſs to be juſtified by Chriſt. Theſe are not to be charged upon the doctrine, or upon the inſufficiency of his grace to ſanctify them; as if he were the miniſter of ſin, and allowed men to continue in it; or as if there was any need to go back to the law on that account. Theſe ſuppoſitions are not to be admitted; for ſuch perſons are either not true believers, or they are not living by faith in a proper manner. In this view it connects with the apoſtle's experience in the ſubſequent verſes. However, the former interpretation is moſt approved, though the verſe is allowed to be peculiarly difficult. If then the Jewiſh chriſtians ſhould return back to a dependance on the law for juſtification; they would vainly attempt to erect again that old building, which they had deſtroyed in order to make Chriſt their foundation. (*Rom.* c. x. v. 1—4.) And this would again bring them under condemnation as tranſgreſſors; and leave their ſins both unpardoned and unſubdued. However, this was very different from the apoſtle's own experience in this matter: for through his knowledge of the ſtrictneſs, extent, ſpirituality, excellency and ſanction of the moral law; as well as of the typical import of the ceremonies; he was become dead to the law; he expected no help from it in the matter of juſtification; he was divorced from it as a legal covenant, that he might be united to Chriſt by faith; the union betwixt him and the law, *in this ſenſe*, was finally diſſolved, as the marriage-relation by death. He hoped and feared nothing from it; any more than a dead man from his friends, or his enemies. But the effect of this was not a careleſs, lawleſs life: on the contrary, this was neceſſary, in order that he might live to God, be accepted of, and devoted to him, through the motives, encouragements, and grace of the goſpel. Indeed he was even crucified with Chriſt, the demands of the law on him had been anſwered by his Surety, in his obedience unto the death upon the croſs; and his union with Chriſt had made him die to all legal dependances, as well as to the love and friendſhip of the world, the delights and intereſts of ſin; and all thoſe carnal principles, from which his former activity aroſe. Nevertheleſs he lived in a new and evangelical hope, by the communication of a divine life to his ſoul, by new capacities of enjoyment, and new motives and principles of action. Yet it was not ſo much he that lived, as Chriſt who lived in him, by his Spirit, and his power, love, and grace, regulating and ſpiritualizing his judgment and affections, transforming him into his own image, and employing him as the inſtrument of his glory. So that the life, which he then lived in the body, ſurrounded with worldly objects, was not conducted upon carnal principles, or by a regard to external things, but by faith in the Son of God; as he depended on him for all, and aimed to do all according to his will, and in ſubſerviency to his glory. And to this he was influenced by the conſideration that this glorious Saviour loved him when a bitter perſecutor, and had given himſelf a ſacrifice for his ſins. So that, though he neglected no acceptable obedience, and declined no ſelf-denying ſervice; yet he did all his duties from ſuch principles and for ſuch purpoſes, that he did not fruſtrate or ſet aſide the grace of God, by attempting in any meaſure to juſtify himſelf by his works; being fully aſſured, that if righteouſneſs could have been obtained by any of man's obedience to the law, conſiſtent with the glory of God, then Chriſt had died without any neceſſity, and to no purpoſe. As therefore no chriſtian could ſuppoſe, that ſo ſtupendous a plan was formed and executed, without any occaſion for it: ſo it muſt alſo be concluded that righteouſneſs could in no degree be obtained by a ſinner, on account of his obedience to the law. This holds equally true of the moral, as of the ceremonial law. It was of ſmall moment whether men obſerved the latter or not, except as they depended on it: and the concluding part of the apoſtle's argument related to the moral law, equally at leaſt with the ceremonial.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we ſimply depend upon God to ſucceed our labours; we ſhould uſe every prudent precaution to obviate miſapprehenſions, and to counteract the deſigns of oppoſers; "leſt by any means we ſhould run in vain:" and this may commonly be connected with decided firmneſs in important caſes. Falſe brethren and teachers are generally brought in unawares: we muſt expect ſpies in our congregations, who come on purpoſe to find ſomething to cavil at, or object to; in order to deprive us of our chriſtian liberty, by bringing us into bondage to legal terrors, or human impoſitions; or through extravagant notions of liberty, to keep men in ſlavery to ſin and ſatan. We muſt not give place, in ſuch matters, by way of ſubjection, in any meaſure; leſt the truth of the goſpel ſhould be obſcured, or diſgraced. Falſe brethren often pretend an undue regard to ſome miniſters; who are of eſtabliſhed reputation, in order to run down others of equal ability and faithfulneſs, whoſe line of duty requires them to proceed in ſomewhat a different manner. But they ſhould be ſhewn, "that God accepteth no man's "perſon;" and that all the ſervants are as nothing, in compariſon of their common Lord; who will never approve of thoſe, who call man maſter upon earth, that they may diſparage their fellow-workers. It matters not to us who ſaid or did ſuch and ſuch things; but merely what was ſaid and done; and whether it accorded to the word of God, or not. Oftentimes thoſe miniſters, whom captious or injudicious profeſſors magnify againſt others, in conference add nothing to them; nor indeed do they materially differ from them; except as the different deſcriptions of men, among whom they labour, induce them to conduct their work with ſome apparent variation. Frequently they ſee that God hath called them to, fitted them for, and proſpered them in, their different ſpheres of uſefulneſs; and are mutually deſirous, by love and good offices, to ſtrengthen each other's hands; whilſt many ignorantly ſuppoſe, or maliciouſly pretend, that

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Sharply reproving the Galatians for departing from that doctrine, which had been ſo fully preached, and confirmed to them, 1---5. *2d. Proving his doctrine of juſtification from the example of Abraham; from the teſtimony of ſcripture; from the tenor and curſe of the law; from the redemption of Chriſt; and from the Abrahamic covenant, which the law could not diſannul,* 6---18. *3d. Shewing the ſubſerviency of the law to the covenant of grace; and that all believers in Chriſt are the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, &c,* 19---29.

O Fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you.

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?

4 Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.

5 He therefore that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

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they are oppoſing each other. However, we ſhould all be forward to remember the poor, even when they are prejudiced againſt us.

But the fear of man bringeth a ſnare; and we need not wonder to ſee pious perſons aſhamed, or afraid openly to countenance thoſe, whom they inwardly favour; or boldly to avow themſelves on controverted points, when their opinions are unpopular: for even Peter was induced thus to prevaricate! But an apoſtle, or the chiefeſt of the apoſtles, who thus walked not uprightly, according to the goſpel, is to be blamed, and ought to be withſtood to his face, when the matter is evident and important: for the more eminent he is, the greater miſchief will follow from the example; ſo that even other diſtinguiſhed perſons will be carried away by ſuch a ſanctioned diſſimulation: and public offences muſt be publicly reproved; that the evil may be effectually counteracted. We muſt ceaſe from man, and know no one after the fleſh, if we would follow the Lord fully: for verily every man in his beſt eſtate is altogether vanity; Chriſt is the only infallible Head of his church, and all pretenders to this title on earth are antichriſts; and they, who cannot endure to be blamed, or to acknowledge themſelves miſtaken, are of a very unchriſtian temper. Men are ſeldom aware of the magnitude, or fatal conſequences of their errors or carnal compliances: yet they ſhould be fairly pointed out to them, that they may be put upon their guard. Whatever be our nation, religious profeſſion, education, or outward character: yet if we are real, and eſtabliſhed chriſtians, we know that "by the works "of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified:" this conviction hath led us to believe in, and rely on Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith in him: and whilſt we adhere to this principle, all our worſhip and obedience will be entirely diſregarded, as to our juſtification, and be wholly performed from other motives, and to other purpoſes. We ſhould even make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin; if we ſhould ſuppoſe that his merits were inſufficient to juſtify the believer: even as others make him the miniſter of ſin, by allowing themſelves in diſobedience, from a preſumptuous confidence of being juſtified by his righteouſneſs; and ſo ſaved, without being ſanctified. But there is no occaſion "to build again the things, which we de-"ſtroyed," in order to avoid ſuch abuſes; for the attempt of "eſtabliſhing our own righteouſneſs," is as inconſiſtent with ſanctification, as with juſtification. The believer, through the law, is become "dead to the law," not that he may continue in ſin, but that "he may live "unto God," (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. vi. vii;) and the more ſimply he relies on Chriſt for every thing, the more devotedly does he walk before Him in all his ordinances, and commandments. He is crucified with Chriſt to the world and ſin, as well as to all legal dependances; he is united with, and conformed to him; he, as it were, riſes, lives, and aſcends with him; yea Chriſt lives, and reigns in him; and he lives here on earth by faith in the Son of God, which worketh by love, induceth obedience, and effects a progreſſive transformation into his holy image: and this proportionably enables him to uſe the language of full aſſurance, and to ſay "he loved me, "and gave himſelf for me." Thus he neither abuſes nor "fruſtrates the grace of God:" for this propoſition, "that if righteouſneſs come by the law, then Chriſt is "dead in vain," is the bane of all ſelf-juſtifying ſchemes, however refined, or ingenious they be: and all, who cleave to them, would certainly have deemed this language, to be rant and enthuſiaſm, if the apoſtle had not uſed it as his own experience; and if it had firſt been ſpoken by ſome zealous modern defender of the doctrine of grace, againſt the objections of legaliſts, and the perverſions of Antinomians.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—5.] Having authenticated his miniſtry and doctrine by the ſtatement of facts; the apoſtle proceeded more directly to argue the point with the Galatians; whom he ſharply reproved, as deſtitute of wiſdom and underſtanding, in thus unaccountably turning away from the truth of Chriſt. He demanded therefore who had faſcinated them by the ſorcery of their inſidious inſinuations; and induced them to refuſe obedience to the truth, which required them to ſeek juſtification by faith in Chriſt alone? For it certainly could be owing to nothing leſs than a bewitchery *for them* to ſeek it by the works of the law; ſeeing the goſpel had been ſo fully explained, and earneſtly enforced upon them; and all things relating to the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the need, motive, intenſeneſs, and benefit of them, had been ſet before them, in ſo pathetic, affectionate, and lively a manner, by the preaching of the goſpel, and the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper; that Jeſus Chriſt had, as it

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs.

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham.

8 And the ſcripture, foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, *ſaying*, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed.

9 So then they which be of faith are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curſe: for it is written, curſed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But that no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God, *it is* evident: for, the juſt ſhall live by faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them ſhall live in them.

13 Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, Curſed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt;

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were, been evidently ſet forth, as crucified before their eyes, and in the midſt of them. And could it have been imagined, that the impreſſions, which ſeemed to be thereby made upon their minds, were now utterly eraſed? However, the argument might be reduced to a very compendious deciſion; he only deſired to know from them, whether they had received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, by the laying on of the hands of thoſe preachers, who proſelyted them to the Jewiſh law; or from him, who brought them the joyful report of free ſalvation by faith in Chriſt? As they muſt know, that they received theſe gifts by him, and not by their legal teachers; could they be ſo abſurd, as to ſuppoſe, that they had indeed begun to worſhip and ſerve God, in a ſpiritual manner, by the preaching of a doctrine warranted by the Holy Ghoſt: but that the work had been left imperfect, and was now to be completed by teachers, who poſſeſſed no miraculous powers, and only inſtructed them in mere external ordinances, a bodily exerciſe, of which carnal men were as capable, as the moſt ſpiritual man on earth! They had endured many perſecutions, eſpecially from the Jews: and would they at length prove their profeſſion of chriſtianity to be vain, and loſe all the benefit of their ſufferings, by renouncing the grace of the goſpel to rely in part at leaſt on legal obſervances? The apoſtle hoped that it would not yet be thus in vain: but it certainly muſt be ſo, unleſs they could be recovered from their fatal miſtake. He muſt therefore again demand of them, whether the ſupply of the Spirit, and miraculous powers had been given them from the Lord, by means of the preachers of legal obſervances, or by the miniſters of the goſpel? This open appeal to the Galatians, who were under the influence of ſuch as oppoſed the apoſtle's authority, is a ſtrong demonſtration, that theſe gifts were actually communicated to them by his miniſtry. The abruptneſs, and repetitions of his queſtions prove that his mind was greatly agitated by their miſconduct, and ſhew how important he deemed their miſtake; and we cannot doubt but that he regarded all their profeſſion, and ſufferings to have been altogether in vain, in caſe they perſiſted in it. This is of vaſt importance in the argument-for ſubmiſſion to the ceremonial law, though burdenſome, would not have been a renunciation of the goſpel, if it had not implied a dependance on their own works, inſtead of Chriſt's merits; and this dependance muſt be equally incompatible with the grace of the goſpel, even when the obedience itſelf is neceſſary from other motives, and for other purpoſes.

V. 6—14.] (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xv. v. 6. *Rom.* c. iv.) The example of Abraham was enough to determine, that they were his children, and intereſted in the bleſſings promiſed to him, who expected juſtification by faith only: and the Holy Spirit, who inſpired the penmen of the ſcriptures, foreſeeing the calling of the Gentiles, and their juſtification by faith in Chriſt, preached the goſpel to Abraham in few words, when it was ſaid, "In thee "ſhall all nations be bleſſed: that is, "by virtue of "their relation to the promiſed ſeed, which ſhall deſcend "from thee, ſinners of all nations ſhall, by faith be made "completely happy in the favour of God, and the en"joyment of everlaſting life." So then, they, who ſought acceptance in this way of believing, were bleſſed, after the example of believing Abraham. But as many as were induced to ſeek acceptance by their own obedience to the works of the law; and all, who in any way remained under that covenant, abode under the curſe; according to the teſtimony of the law itſelf. (Note, &c. *Deut.* c. xxvii. v. 26.) This follows a variety of curſes denounced againſt tranſgreſſors of the moral law; which ſhews that that was principally referred to. Indeed the legal diſpenſation, conſidered as a covenant of works, was intended: believers were always under a covenant of grace, by faith in the Saviour, as ſhadowed forth in the legal ſacrifices, &c: unbelievers always made the whole a complex covenant of works; and the nation of Iſrael was under the Sinai covenant, in reſpect of the land of Canaan, and their peculiar privileges. But after the promulgation of the goſpel, the whole become entirely a covenant of works, even as much as that of Adam: and under ſuch a covenant, in one form or other, all men continue, as the rational and accountable creatures of God: and being tranſgreſſors of his law, even according to their own obſcure notions of it; they are expoſed to, and remain under the curſe and wrath of God, unleſs or until they believe in Chriſt. But as the apoſtle was arguing with *Judaizers:* ſo he led their attention to the written law itſelf; which could not confer the bleſſing, but muſt denounce the curſe upon them; as they had not "confirmed," or "continued" from the beginning of their lives, "in all things, written in the law," ſo as to per-that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith.

15 Brethren, I ſpeak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man diſannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham, and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many: but as of one, And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt.

17 And this I ſay, *That* the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promiſe: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promiſe.

19 Wherefore then *ſerveth* the law? It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the Seed ſhould come to whom the promiſe was made: *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one.

21 *Is* the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law.

22 But the ſcripture hath concluded all

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form a perfect "obedience to them." It was therefore evident at the firſt glance, that no man could be juſtified by a law, that peremptorily demanded this abſolute, and ſinleſs perfection; which no mere man ever yet rendered to it: but it was further evident, as God had declared another way of juſtification, and eternal life: (Note, &c. *Hab.* c. ii. v. 4. *Rom.* c. i. v. 17:) and the way of faith, by which alone the moſt righteous of our fallen race can live before God, is perfectly diſtinct from, yea oppoſite to that of the law, which never propoſes life, but upon the terms of perfect obedience. (Note, *Lev.* c. xviii. v. 5. *Matt.* c. xix. v. 17—22. *Mark,* c. xii. v. 28—34. *Luke,* c. x. v. 25—29. *Rom.* c. x. v. 5, 6.) Every one therefore, who hath not performed this condition, is under a curſe: but Chriſt hath redeemed his people from that curſe of the law, having been willingly made a curſe in their ſtead. For, as it was God's purpoſe thus to deliver men from wrath, by the ignominious and agonizing ſufferings of his beloved Son upon the croſs, and all the puniſhment, which he then endured: ſo he declared that kind of puniſhment to be accurſed, and an emblem of his moſt dreadful vengeance; when it was written, "curſed is every one, that hangeth "on a tree;" (*Deut.* c. xxi. v. 23:) that ſo, when the holy and divine Saviour was ſuſpended on the croſs; it might appear, that he endured the curſe of the law in our ſtead. Thus the way was opened, for the bleſſing of Abraham, even the righteouſneſs of faith, friendſhip with God, &c, to be conſerred, not only on the Jews, but on the Gentiles alſo, through Chriſt, and by faith in him; and that they too might receive the promiſed gifts and graces of the Spirit by faith, to ſeal to them the truth of the goſpel, and their own free juſtification. (Note, &c. *Acts,* c. ii. v. 14—21.) It is evident, that the apoſtle ſuppoſed the Gentiles to have been under the curſe of the law, as well as the Jews, but in another form; elſe they had not needed this redemption and juſtification.

V. 15—18.] The apoſtle proceeded to ground another argument upon the caſe of Abraham. Speaking of the high concerns of God's dealing with his creatures, after the manner of men's dealing with each other; he reminded the Galatians, that even a covenant between two men, when fully ratified, could not be diſannulled, or have any new conditions added to it, without the expreſs conſent of both parties. Now the formal ratification of the covenant with Abraham, and it's expreſs promiſes to him and his Seed, were long before the Moſaic law; and could not therefore be altered, or diſannulled by it. Not did the Lord include all the deſcendants of Abraham in theſe promiſes, as ſo many diſtinct kinds of ſeed: but they were limited to him, and *his Seed,* in the ſingular number, which implied that Chriſt was principally meant, and others only as related to him. (*Gen.* c. xii. v. 3. c. xxii. v. 18. c. xxvi. v. 4.) So that the unbelieving deſcendants of Jacob were no more intereſted in them, than the poſterity of Iſhmael and Eſau: whilſt all believers, though of Gentile extraction, being one with Chriſt, were included in the Abrahamic covenant, without any concern in the Moſaic law, or the Sinai covenant. Now this covenant confirmed with Abraham, in reſpect of Chriſt and his ſalvation, the law, which was not given till 450 years after the calling of Abraham, could not diſannul, that the promiſe ſhould be rendered of none effect, (*Exod.* c. xii. v. 40, 41.) For if the inheritance of heaven, (which was typified by that of Canaan,) had depended on the law, and men's perſonal obedience to it; it could no more have been ſecured to believers by the promiſe, as it was given to Abraham; and the new conditions added to his covenant, would virtually have diſannulled it.

V. 19—22.] If then the promiſes were made to Abraham, and all believers in him, without any dependance on the law; wherefore did the law ſerve? And wherefore was it at all promulgated? To this objection the apoſtle anſwered, that it was added to the covenant with Abraham, and ſubſerved the accompliſhment of it in various particulars, previous to the coming of Chriſt; though it made no alteration, as to the manner of a ſinner's acceptance. The whole ſyſtem ſerved, becauſe of tranſgreſſions, to reſtrain the nation of Iſrael from univerſal idolatry and wickedneſs, and to preſerve the worſhip of God among them till the coming of Chriſt: the moral law was uſeful to convince men of ſin, to ſhew under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our ſchool-maſter *to bring us* unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a ſchool-maſter.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

27 For as many of you as have been bap-

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them their need of repentance, of mercy, and of a Saviour: the ceremonial law ſhadowed forth the way of acceptance and holineſs, and believers were thus enabled to maintain communion with God, by faith in the promiſed Meſſiah. And matters were intended to continue in this ſtate, till the coming of that Seed of Abraham, to whom eſpecially the promiſes had reſpect; and the law was promulgated and formed into a national covenant at Mount Sinai, by the miniſtration of angels, and by the intervention of Moſes, as a typical Mediator. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xix. xx. xxiv.) But it was well known that a Mediator was not appointed to act merely in behalf of one party in any covenant, but of two at leaſt: whereas only one party in the Abrahamic covenant was preſent when the law was given; even God himſelf: for the nation of Iſrael was not the other contracting party in the Abrahamic covenant; unbelievers among them had no ſhare in the principal bleſſings of it; and all believers in every age and nation were concerned in it, by virtue of their union with the Seed, to whom the promiſe was made. So that Moſes might mediate another covenant between God, and Iſrael: but he was not authorized to alter or diſannul the Abrahamic covenant; which therefore continued in force with all believers, after the giving of the law, and exactly upon the ſame terms as before. This does not prove, that Chriſt was not preſent as Jehovah, and the great Agent in the giving of the law: but only that he acted in his legiſlative, and not in his mediatorial character, as repreſenting the whole body of believers. If this were then the caſe, it might further be enquired, whether the law was contrary to the promiſes of God, and their accompliſhment, to thoſe, who lived under that diſpenſation? To this the apoſtle anſwered, “God forbid, let that thought be rejected with abhorrence.” The Sinai covenant was diſtinct from the Abrahamic; the moral law, as the ſtandard of duty, from the goſpel, the foundation of a ſinner's hope; and the ſhadows of the ceremonies, from Chriſt the ſubſtance: but they were not contrary to each other, when properly underſtood. Nay the law, in every ſenſe ſubſerved the promiſes, and the performance of them, to believers: it was good in itſelf, and for the ends purpoſed by it; but it was never intended to give life to ſinners. For if there had been ſuch a law given, as could have anſwered this end, verily righteouſneſs, or juſtification unto life, would have been by the law; and the whole plan of redemption by Chriſt would have been ſuperfluous. But whether the Moſaic diſpenſation, as unconnected with the goſpel; or the moral precepts and ſanctions, or the ceremonies, were conſidered; or any other part of the Old Teſtament was duly attended to; its uniform tenor concluded all men, of every nation, or character under ſin; under the guilt of their actual tranſgreſſions, and the power of their evil propenſities, as in a ſtrong priſon, from which no law could give them deliverance: and this was intended to recommend the goſpel, that the promiſe of pardon, righteouſneſs, liberty, grace, and eternal life, by faith in the promiſed Saviour, might be freely performed to all believers; whilſt all others muſt be left under the condemnation, and the power of ſin, without any poſſible way of eſcape. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. i, ii, iii.)

V. 23—25.] Before the great Object and Author of faith was come, and the doctrine of faith fully declared, the nation of Iſrael, the viſible church, was kept under the legal diſpenſation; and not only were unbelievers ſhut up under the curſe of the law, as at other times; but even believers were held in a ſtate of comparative darkneſs, and bondage. Through the promiſes and ceremonies they received a meaſure of light and encouragement; and thus they looked forward to that brighter day which was predicted: whilſt the nation at large was ſhut up by the inſtitutions, ſanctions, &c, of the law, and ſo reſtrained from total apoſtacy, till the coming of Chriſt, and the full revelation of the doctrine of faith. So that the church, conſidered as a complex body, was in a ſtate of pupilage and minority, under the old diſpenſation; and the law ſerved as a pedagogue, or tutor, to inſtruct it in the introductory leſſons of religious knowledge, by many hard taſks, and burdenſome reſtraints, impoſed with much ſalutary ſeverity. Thus it was tutored, that Chriſt and his ſalvation might be the more welcome; and that the very rigour of the law might bring men to Him, that they might be juſtified by faith. But when the great Object, and doctrine of faith were publicly introduced; the church was no longer to continue under ſo rigorous a ſchool-maſter; but was to be admitted to a nobler liberty, and inſtructed in a more open, and enlarged manner. As therefore children are glad to be releaſed from the taſks, confinement, and diſcipline of a ſchool; ſo believers ſhould welcome the liberty and privileges of the goſpel: and it was abſurd for them, to be fondly attached to their former ſtate of confinement, and the yoke of the legal diſpenſation. This admits of an obvious accommodation to the believer's experience, and the firſt uſe of the moral law, in bringing men to Chriſt; but the other is the evident ſcope of the apoſtle's argument.

V. 26—29.] Even the Gentile converts were made at once the children of God, by faith in Chriſt, and admitted to the full privilege of that high relation, by an intereſt in his atonement and righteouſneſs. For as many of them as had been baptized, according to Chriſt's aptized into Chriſt have put on Chriſt.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.

29 And if ye *be* Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.

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pointment, and thus admitted into his church; if indeed they were, what this profeſſion implied, had put on Chriſt as their robe of righteouſneſs. "God now looking on them, there appears nothing but Chriſt; they "are as it were covered all over with him, as a man is "with the clothes, that he hath put on: and hence in "the next verſe it is ſaid; they are all one in Chriſt "Jeſus, as if there were but that one perſon," (Locke.) Thenceforth all other diſtinctions vaniſh; they are all members of the myſtical body of Chriſt, and entitled to all its bleſſings, without any need of the Moſaic law. So that if the Galatians did indeed belong to Chriſt, by faith, and the participation of his Spirit; they were become the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, and heirs of all the bleſſings covenanted to him; and had therefore no need of being proſelyted to the Jewiſh law, or concerned in the abrogated Sinai covenant.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The faithful preaching of the goſpel ſo exhibits Chriſt crucified, as the great Object of the ſinners faith, hope, and admiring gratitude; and ſo ſhews the nature, glory, and precioufneſs of his vicarious ſufferings, from love to our ſouls; that he is, as it were, evidently ſet forth before men's eyes, as dying upon the croſs for their ſins. But how ſmall a portion of the preaching in Chriſtendom anſwers this deſcription, or tends thus to excite men's affections towards the gracious Redeemer, need not be told! Alas, who hath infatuated and bewitched men's minds, that they ſhould ſo generally turn away from this fundamental doctrine, to liſten to metaphyſical ſubtleties, moral harangues, or wild enthuſiaſtical reveries? It is plain, that the god of this world, by various inſtruments, who mutually deſpiſe each other, hath blinded men's eyes, leſt the goſpel of the glory of Chriſt ſhould ſhine into them, and they ſhould learn to truſt in a crucified Saviour "God manifeſted in the fleſh." But we muſt obſerve with ſtill greater grief and aſtoniſhment the folly of numbers, who have often heard the goſpel moſt faithfully and pathetically preached; and yet have at length been faſcinated by ſubtle deceivers, to refuſe obedience to the truth! We cannot indeed appeal to miracles, and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit: but we may boldly demand, where the fruits of the Spirit are moſt evidently brought forth? whether among thoſe, who preach juſtification by the works of the law, or thoſe who preach the doctrine of faith? They, who have begun to fear God, to ſeek mercy, to pray, and to renounce ſin, under the preaching of the goſpel, muſt be very fooliſh, if they think to make further proficiency by returning to legal dependances, or reſting on carnal and external obſervances. It is grievous to ſee thoſe, who have gone through ſharp convictions, and even perſecutions, for attending on the goſpel, afterwards turning aſide, and giving cauſe to fear, that they have ſuffered ſo many things in vain: and indeed any affliction endured, without profit derived from it, ſhould be conſidered as a cauſe for ſorrow and humiliation.

Let us then be followers of thoſe, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes, and have obtained a good report: and let us ſtudy the Object, nature, and effects of Abraham's faith. They, who partake of his faith ſhall ſurely inherit his bleſſing; and if we can aſcertain, that this is our caſe, we may be ſure of ſharing all his privileges. But who can, in any other way, eſcape the curſe of the holy law? Who hath continued in all things written therein to do them? Who dare demand life on this ground? Let us learn to diſtinguiſh accurately in this matter: the law is not of faith: every law of God, and every legal covenant muſt be perfectly diſtinct from the covenant of promiſe, through faith in Jeſus Chriſt: and if we confound theſe things, we ſhall find a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing. The redemption of all, who ever were, or ſhall be, ſaved, was paid by the great Surety of the new covenant, when he was made a curſe for us, and bare our ſins in his own body on the tree: but the ſufferings of this holy One of God more loudly warn ſinners to flee from the wrath to come, than all the terrors of Sinai, or the curſes of the law itſelf: for how can it be expected, that God will ſpare any man, to whom ſin is imputed, ſeeing he ſpared not his own Son, when our ſins were charged upon him? Yet doth he, at the ſame time, as from the croſs, moſt freely beſeech ſinners to take refuge in him; and with accents of the tendereſt love, invites even the Gentiles to accept of the bleſſing of Abraham, and to ſeek for the promiſe of the Spirit by faith in him. No ſubſequent tranſactions, or external alterations, can diſannul or add to that covenant, which engages eternal life to every believer: that promiſe cannot be made of none effect. Yet let us not think, that the law was given in vain: the legal covenant, and the ceremonies have anſwered their end, and being fulfilled in Chriſt, are no more in force: yet are they ſtill replete with inſtruction to believers; though a better covenant is made with them, through that great Mediator, whom all the angels of God worſhip. But, as the law of Moſes was never againſt the promiſes of God to Abraham and his ſeed, but ſerved as a ſchoolmaſter, to bring the church to Chriſt for juſtification by faith: ſo it would be moſt abſurd to ſuppoſe that the holy, juſt, and good law of God, the univerſal ſtandard of duty, is contrary to the goſpel of Chriſt; as it is in every way ſubſervient to it, when properly underſtood, and uſed. If any law could have been given to fallen man, which could have given eternal life; this muſt have been it; and then righteouſneſs had been by the law: but inſtead of this, it brings in the whole world guilty before God, and ſhuts up every man under ſin, without hope, or remedy from any other quarter, than the goſpel: whilſt the excellency of it's precepts demonſtrates the juſtice of the ſinner's condemnation. Here Chriſt finds tranſgreſſors: and the promiſe of eternal life is freely

CHAP. IV.

Contains the apoſtle 1*ſt. Shewing the ſuperior privileges of the church, under the goſpel; and the abſurdity, and danger of the Gentiles ſubmitting to the legal inſtitutions,* 1---11. 2*d. Tenderly expoſtulating with the Galatians, about their alienation from him, to whom they had ſhewn ſuch reciprocal affection; and aſcribing it to the artifices of their falſe teachers,* 12---20. 3*d. Illuſtrating the two covenants by the allegory of Sarah, and Hagar,* 21---31.

NOW I ſay, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be lord of all.

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even ſo we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law;

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.

6 And becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,

7 Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon; and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.

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given by him to all that believe. Moſt men continue ſhut up in this dark dungeon, in love with their chains; being blinded, intoxicated, and lulled aſleep by ſatan, through worldly pleaſures, intereſts, and purſuits. But the awakened ſinner diſcovers his dreadful condition; and the more he examines, or labours to eſcape, the fuller conviction he receives, that he cannot effect his own deliverance: then he feels that the mercy and grace of God form his only hope, though perhaps he is ſtill unacquainted with the method of ſalvation: however, he is ſhut up to the faith, that will ſhortly be revealed to him. The precepts and ſanction of the law urge him on to duty, and reſtrain him from ſin, even whilſt they diſcourage his heart, and fill him with terrors; and thus by a kind and uſeful ſeverity the law is made uſe of by the convincing Spirit, to ſhew the ſinner his need of Chriſt, and to bring him to rely on his merits, that he may be juſtified by faith. Then he ceaſes to be under the tuition of the law, as a ſchool maſter, and to be alarmed by its terrors, (except as he lives beneath his privileges:) yet the precept becomes, by the teaching of the Spirit of Chriſt, his guide in the delightful path of evangelical obedience, his beloved rule of duty, and his ſtandard of daily ſelf-examination; and in this uſe of it he learns continually to depend more ſimply on the Saviour's merits; and it puts energy into his prayers, and endears the promiſes to his ſoul. Thus we become the children of God by faith in Chriſt, and being baptized into him by the converting grace of the Holy Spirit, we put on Chriſt, and ſtand accepted in him; and all, who thus belong to Him, and are one with him, are the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promiſe. But no outward forms, or profeſſion can enſure theſe bleſſings; for if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—7.] The argument and illuſtration of the preceding chapter are here continued. The heir of a large eſtate, whilſt in a ſtate of childhood, is excluded from the poſſeſſion; and kept in ſubjection to guardians and tutors, who thwart his inclinations, lay reſtraints upon him, and taſk, yea even correct him, as if he were a ſervant; though in fact he be the Proprietor of the whole inheritance: and this continues till the time appointed by his Father, in his will, or otherwiſe, for his being of age, and put in poſſeſſion of the eſtate. Thus the church was held in a ſtate of apparent bondage under the Moſaic law, till the coming of Chriſt, as being in it's childhood, and under tuition. Theſe obſervances are called "the elements of this world;" they taught the ſimpleſt rudiments of religious knowledge, as the alphabet contains the firſt principles of ſcience: the burdenſome external ceremonies of that diſpenſation were ſuited to the ideas of worldly men, and ſimilar to the rites of other nations; rather than adequate means of ſpiritual worſhip, or ſuited to thoſe, who were matured in ſpiritual judgment and affections. The ſplendid temple, the prieſts in their ſacred veſtments, the multiplied ſacrifices and religious feſtivals, &c; when their typical meaning and uſe were neglected, were greatly coincident with the groſs apprehenſions of carnal men concerning God, and his worſhip. This had been the abuſe, which unbelievers had always made of them; and even believers were held in comparative darkneſs and bondage by ſo many external and burdenſome obſervances. But when the fulneſs of time was arrived, for the coming of the Meſſiah, which God had choſen in his purpoſe, and appointed by prophecy; and which the ſtate of the Jewiſh nation, and of mankind in general, ſhewed to be peculiarly ſuitable for the introduction of a new, and more enlarged diſpenſation: then God had ſent forth his own Son, One with him in the divine nature, to become manifeſt in the fleſh; aſſuming our nature into perſonal union with the Deity, by his miraculous conception in the womb of the virgin; that he might be made of a woman, and be emphatically *her ſeed*, (*Gen.* c. iii. v. 15,) as receiving his human fleſh of her ſubſtance. Thus he was alſo made under the law, by being born of a Jeweſs, and circumciſed; that ſo being under it, as a covenant of works, he might, as the Surety of the church, in every way anſwer its full demand. This was done voluntarily, without any previous obligation, ſave that of love: as the Son of God he was not bound to be ſubject to any law; as a perfectly holy man, he was not bound to be under the ceremonial law, which in every thing implied man's ſinfulneſs. But he was pleaſed for

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.

12 Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are:* ye have not injured me at all.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the fleſh I preached the goſpel unto you at the firſt.

14 And my temptation which was in my fleſh ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Chriſt Jeſus.

15 Where is then the bleſſedneſs ye ſpake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

more than thirty years to tabernacle here on earth, in perfect obedience to the whole law: and at length to give himſelf as a ſpotleſs ſacrifice of infinite value, to redeem ſinners from the curſe of the broken law, and to redeem the church from the ceremonial law; which was a kind of bond given for future payment by the Surety, of the debt due to divine juſtice for the ſins of thoſe, who had obtained forgiveneſs by faith in the promiſed Saviour. That inſtead of the yoke of ceremonial obedience, and that ſlaviſh ſpirit, which in many caſes it inſpired; believers might receive, and openly poſſeſs the adoption of children; and have the liberty and privileges of adults, inſtead of the reſtraints, and rigorous ſubjection of minors. And becauſe this was the ſtate of Gentile, as well as Jewiſh, converts, God had ſent forth the Holy Spirit, as given through, and by, his Son, to quicken, ſeal, and comfort them as his beloved children; enabling, and encouraging them with filial love and confidence, to call upon him as their Father, of whatever nation they were. (Note, *Rom.* c. viii. v. 14—17.) Seeing therefore the apoſtle hoped that this was the caſe of many Galatians, (for he addreſſed them individually:) ſo every ſuch perſon was no longer a ſervant, to worſhip and obey God from ſlaviſh fear, or mercenary hope; but a child of God, and an heir of heaven through Chriſt, to walk with him in love, and filial reverence and confidence.

V. 8—11.] The preceding argument proved, that even Jewiſh converts were redeemed from the yoke of the ceremonial law, as well as from the curſe of the legal covenant: how abſurd then would it be for the Gentiles to have recourſe to that abrogated ſyſtem! The Galatians had formerly been ignorant of the One living and true God, and had then performed religious ſervice to mere creatures, or imaginary beings, which *by nature* were not gods: and their external obſervances might accord very well to ſuch objects of worſhip. But having at length been brought to the knowledge of God, by their converſion to chriſtianity; or rather having been thus known, and owned by Him, through the ſpiritual gifts beſtowed on them; how could they think of turning again to ſuch carnal ſervices, as they had forſaken; as if deſirous of being in bondage to them? The Jewiſh ceremonies were mere rudiments of religious knowledge, ſuited to the childhood of the church: and they were, in themſelves, weak and inefficacious, low and poor; and thus, incapable of communicating ſpiritual riches to mankind: after the coming of the Meſſiah, they loſt all their uſe and obligation; they became as worthleſs even as the ſuperſtitions of Paganiſm, and when put in the place of Chriſt, they were equally inconſiſtent with true religion. In this ſenſe only could the Galatians be ſaid "to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, &c;" for they had not before been under the ceremonial law: but after their deliverance from idolatry, they were about to ſubſtitute the abrogated Jewiſh ceremonial in the place of their heathen ſuperſtitions; and to bring themſelves into bondage to Judaizing teachers, and phariſaical traditions, after having been emancipated from the Pagan prieſts. Their obſervation of Jewiſh ſabbaths, new-moons, feſtivals, and ſabbatical years, had the appearance of an apoſtacy to Judaiſm; ſo that the apoſtle was afraid that they would totally depart from the faith, and that his labours for their eternal ſalvation would be in vain.

V. 12—16.] The apoſtle, yet deſirous of conſidering the Galatians as his brethren in Chriſt, affectionately intreated them to be as he was; of one mind with him reſpecting juſtification, and the Moſaic law, as well as united to him in love: for "he was as they were;" though he had been zealous for the law, (as they were become!) yet he now truſted only in Chriſt; and put no more confidence in the law, than if he had been a Gentile: and he had a cordial affection for them. He did not charge them with having at all injured him; though they had wronged themſelves in departing from his doctrine. They remembered his firſt coming among them; when his perſonal infirmities ſeemed to unfit him for preaching the goſpel to them, or likely to render his miniſtry unacceptable: yet he was enabled to proceed with his work, though greatly tried and tempted to diſcouragement by it. However, they had not deſpiſed him on that account, nor rejected his teſtimony: but ſeeing that his doctrine was confirmed by ſuch undeniable proofs, and feeling its energy on their conſciences; they received him, though thus infirm and tempted, even as if he had been an angel ſent from God, or as if Chriſt himſelf had come in perſon to preach to them. (Note, &c. 2 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 7—10) Doubtleſs the apoſtle here ſpake of "his thorn in the fleſh;" which muſt therefore have been ſome perceivable infirmity, that expoſed him to inward temptations, and to the contempt of his enemies. *What was then* the felicity of which they ſpake, as com

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth?

17 They zealouſly affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

18 But *it is* good to be zealouſly affected alway in *a* good *thing*, and not only when I am preſent with you.

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Chriſt be formed in you;

20 I deſire to be preſent with you now, and to change my voice; for I ſtand in doubt of you.

21 Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free-woman.

23 But he *who was* of the bond-woman was born after the fleſh; but he of the free-woman *was* by promiſe.

24 Which things are an allegory: for theſe are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But Jeruſalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, Rejoice *thou* barren that beareſt not; break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not: for the deſolate hath many more children, than ſhe which hath an huſband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe.

29 But as then, he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even ſo *it is* now.

30 Nevertheleſs what ſaith the ſcripture? Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon: for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of a free-woman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

municated by the hope and comforts of the goſpel! Or what was now become of that bleſſedneſs, that they muſt needs have recourſe to the legal covenant, which could only enſlave and condemn them? Their inward ſatisfaction in Chriſt had at that time ſo inſpired them with love to his miniſter; that he could teſtify for their willingneſs even to have plucked out their own eyes, and to have given them to him; if this could poſſibly have removed his infirmities, or have conduced to his benefit. And was he ſo ſoon become their enemy, the object of their averſion and reſentment? If ſo, it was only becauſe he had perſiſted in telling them the truth, both in reſpect of the way of ſalvation, and of their perilous deviation from it.

V. 17—20.] The judaizing teachers ſhewed great attention to the Galatians, and expreſſed the moſt zealous affection for them; but this did not ariſe from proper principles, nor was it expreſſed in a proper manner. Yea, they would even exclude them from the liberty and ſalvation of Chriſt, in order to confirm them in a blind attachment to their doctrine. Some copies read, "they "would exclude us;" they wanted to alienate them from the apoſtle, that they might poſſeſs an undivided authority over them, from carnal motives. But inſtead of ſuch warm affections towards theſe deceivers; it was good for the Galatians to be conſtantly zealous in a good thing, even for the truth and cauſe of pure chriſtianity; and not only whilſt he continued among them, as had been the caſe with many of them. Yet he would conſider them as his dear children, though in a ſtate of infantile imbecillity: and as he had laboured and ſuffered, in earneſtly ſeeking their converſion from idolatry; ſo he might be ſaid "a ſecond "time to travail in birth" for them: he was as earneſt for their recovery from their preſent deluſion, as he had been for their converſion from idolatry; his heart was even filled with anguiſh from his anxiety about them; and he ſuffered pangs like thoſe of a travailing woman, which ſeemed as if they muſt continue, till "Chriſt was formed "in them," in proof, that they had put on Chriſt for their robe of righteouſneſs: for their legal obſervances were no more like the genuine holineſs and obedience of true believers; than their legal dependance reſembled the faith of God's elect. He therefore longed to be with them, that he might labour for, and witneſs this happy change; and that he might alter his words of reproof, for thoſe of encouragement and commendation; or change his voice, as different circumſtances and characters required, which could not ſo well be done in an epiſtle: as he ſtood in doubt of them, whether they had been truly converted or no; and was anxious to know what the event of their preſent deluſions would be.

V. 21—31.] As many of them abſurdly deſired to be under the law of Moſes, from a miſtaken interpretation of the Old Teſtament; ſo the apoſtle demanded of them, whether they did not obſerve what was written in the law, or in the books of Moſes? For the hiſtory of Abraham contained an apt emblem of the two covenants. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xvi. xxi.) Iſhmael was born of Hagar, in the ordinary courſe of nature, and in conſequence of a carnal project: but Iſaac was born of Sarah, a free-woman the wife of Abraham, by the miraculous performance of God's promiſe, when ſhe was naturally paſt child-bearing. Theſe things were an intended allegory of the Sinai

CHAP. V.

Contains exhortations 1ſt. To ſtand faſt in the liberty of the goſpel, to beware of abuſing it, and to ſerve one another in love. 1---5. *2d. To walk in the Spirit, and not according to the fleſh; with an enumeration of the works of the fleſh, and the fruits of the Spirit,* 16---26.

covenant, and that, made with Abraham in Chriſt for the benefit of all believers. That part of the nation of Iſrael, which were not under the covenant of Abraham by faith, were indeed outwardly a part of Abraham's family, and of the viſible church; but, like Iſhmael, they were born in ſervitude, all their obedience was of a ſlaviſh nature, and their privileges external and carnal: nor could the legal covenant deliver them from this ſtate. For in this allegory, Hagar the bond-woman, was the emblem of mount Sinai in the deſerts of Arabia, which country was afterwards peopled by her deſcendants. From that mountain the law was given, and there the legal covenant was ratified: it therefore correſponded to Jeruſalem and its inhabitants, as they were the outward worſhippers of God, in the ordinances performed at the temple in that city; for as far as they continued under the legal covenant, they were mere ſlaves, and not the true children of God; and all that rejected Chriſt muſt continue under that covenant. But the heavenly Jeruſalem, the true church, as coming from above, eſpouſed to Chriſt, and repreſented by Sarah, is in a ſtate of freedom; and this church is the mother of all true believers, who are born of the Spirit. And that this church ſhould mainly conſiſt of Gentile converts, had long before been figuratively predicted. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. liv.) Believers therefore, whether Jews or Gentiles, like Iſaac, were the children of promiſe; they were not only brought into the church, as deſcended from Abraham, or proſelyted to an external profeſſion; but they were ſupernaturally made a part of the true ſeed of Abraham, in virtue of the promiſe made to him, "that in his Seed ſhould all the nations of the earth be bleſſed." But as Iſhmael, a ſlave by birth, and in no wiſe entitled to the inheritance, had mocked and perſecuted Iſaac, who was miraculouſly born of Sarah, according to the promiſe, to be Abraham's heir: ſo the Jews, who continued voluntarily in bondage under the legal covenant, at that time perſecuted the chriſtians, who were born of the Spirit, as Abraham's ſeed, according to the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt; and to whom alone true liberty and the inheritance belonged. Nevertheleſs, as they read in the ſcripture, that God himſelf had commanded Hagar and Iſhmael to be ſent away from Abraham's family, that the ſon of the bond-woman might not ſhare the inheritance with Iſaac; even ſo the Jewiſh nation would ſoon be caſt out of the church; and all who continued under the legal covenant would be excluded from the heavenly inheritance. If then the excluſive privileges of all believers were ſuch, by the covenant of grace: what an abſurdity was it for the Gentile converts, to deſire to be under the law, which could not deliver the unbelieving Jews from bondage and condemnation! We ſhould not perhaps have diſcovered this allegory in the hiſtory of Sarah and Hagar, if the apoſtle had not ſhewn us it; and much ſobriety and diſcretion ſhould be uſed in thus applying ſcripture narrations: yet this tranſaction was ſo remarkable, the coincidence ſo exact, and the illuſtrarion ſo inſtructive; that we cannot doubt but it originally was intended by the Holy Spirit as an allegory and type of thoſe things, to which the inſpired apoſtle referred it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we are thankful for deliverance from "the elements of this world," by the light, liberty, and privileges of the goſpel: we ſhould chearfully ſubmit to the reſtraints and corrections of our heavenly Father, in this our ſtate of education for perfect felicity; and patiently wait the time appointed by him for our admiſſion to it: and we ought to delight in the eaſy yoke of our Redeemer, whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom. For who can enough admire the condeſcending compaſſion of the Son of God, in "being made of a woman, and made under the law," that by obedience unto the death upon the croſs, he might redeem us wretched rebels from every fatal curſe, and galling yoke, and ſlaviſh terror: that ſo we might receive the adoption of children; and the Spirit of adoption, emboldening us to walk with, and worſhip God as our Father, and to rejoice in the hope of his everlaſting felicity! May this filial temper and conduct ever evince our adoption! And may the Holy Spirit thus witneſs with our ſpirits, that we are the children and heirs of God! Once we knew not God; and though outward circumſtances kept moſt of us from groſs idolatry; yet we idolized the world, and ſought our happineſs from it. If then we now ſo know God in Chriſt, as to reverence, love, truſt in, and obey him; it is the effect of his knowledge of us, as the objects of his choice, and owning us as ranſomed by the blood of his Son. What then have we to do any more with worldly idols? What occaſion for ſuperſtitions and human inventions, as if we deſired to be ſtill in bondage? Surely all thoſe things muſt be weak and beggarly elements, which God hath no where required of us! And though chriſtians may "obſerve a day to the Lord:" yet an evident value for, and attachment to ſuch things, may well induce a fear concerning men's ſpiritual ſtate: and it ſhould always be remembered, that if miniſters loſe their faithful labours, their hearers loſe their precious ſouls. Idolatry conſiſts in worſhipping what *by nature is no God:* ſurely then the worſhip of ſaints and angels is turning again to heatheniſm; and every ſcriptural example of worſhip rendered to Chriſt, demonſtrates that he is *by nature* God over all, bleſſed for evermore.

Miniſters ought, as much as poſſible, to wave their perſonal complaints againſt their people; and to ſhew more fear leſt they ſhould injure themſelves, than leſt they ſhould behave amiſs to them. It behoves us, when we think ourſelves unkindly treated, to recollect the inſtances in which we experienced the candour and affection of our hearers; and when they overlooked thoſe infirmities which we feared would have occaſioned the rejection of our meſſage. We may alſo remind them, when they ſeem about to turn aſide, of thoſe melting ſeaſons, when they welcomed the meſſage delivered by ſuch poor worms, as if an angel, or even Chriſt himſelf had ſpoken to them; and when their hearts

STAND faſt therefore in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.

3 For I teſtify again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Chriſt is become of no effect unto you whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith.

6 For in Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion; but faith which worketh by love.

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were ſo full of bleſſedneſs, that they ſcarce knew how, ſufficiently to expreſs their gratitude to the inſtruments of their hopes and conſolations! Contraſting theſe happy ſeaſons, with that coldneſs and diſaffection, which ſometimes follow without any apparent reaſon; we may with efficacy enquire what is become of their bleſſedneſs? And whether we are become their enemies, becauſe we tell them the truth? Alas, this is often the caſe, not only with mere profeſſors, but even with miſguided believers; when for a time they are ſeduced by thoſe, who zealouſly affect them, but not well; who would alienate them from their faithful paſtors, to attach them to themſelves; or who would even hazard their ſouls, to promote their own credit, or that of their ſect. At ſuch times, the moſt affectionate warnings, and ſcriptural arguments, often give offence, and only increaſe alienation. This is a moſt trying ſituation to the faithful miniſter. He cannot ceaſe to feel for, and long after, his deluded children. Though he could bear to loſe their affections, he cannot be willing that they ſhould loſe their ſouls: he muſt remind them that their zealous affections ſhould be towards more ſubſtantial good, than new notions, and new teachers; and this, as in the ſight of God, and not merely in the preſence of their miniſters. Thus many know experimentally the apoſtle's meaning when he ſaid, "that he travailed in birth again" of his ſpiritual children, till "Chriſt was formed in them;" as the anguiſh on account of thoſe, whom they hoped were converted, hath been greater than their earneſtneſs for their converſion: and their prayers and endeavours have been more fervent, as fearing "leſt their laſt ſtate ſhould be worſe than the firſt." Nothing is ſo ſure a proof of a ſinner's juſtification, as "Chriſt formed in him," by the renewal of the Holy Spirit: nor can this be hoped for, whilſt men depend on the law for acceptance with God. The faithful miniſter deſires to change his voice of reproof, for that of commendation; and not only to inſtruct, but to ſpeak confidently of thoſe, concerning whom he ſtands in doubt

They, who deſire to be under the law, ſhould hear what the law ſays to them: and this would in every caſe teach them to flee from it to the grace of the goſpel. For not only is it found in allegories and types, but in the plaineſt language imaginable; the two covenants, that from Sinai, and that of Chriſt, are perfectly diſtinct, and even of oppoſite tendency to thoſe who now are under them. They, who are born of the fleſh, whether of Jewiſh or chriſtian parents, and have only a legal dependance, whether on circumciſion, baptiſm, or any perſonal obedience whatſoever, or even on creeds, or ſects, &c, are under the covenant of works, mere Iſhmaelites, bond-ſlaves, citizens of the earthly Jeruſalem, and under condemnation. But they, who are born of the Spirit, and ſo believe in Chriſt, truſting only in his merits and grace, are the children of the promiſe, and of the heavenly Jeruſalem; they poſſeſs true liberty, and are the heirs of everlaſting felicity. Millions have already been thus born of God in the Gentile world, which once lay deſolate: and we ſhould pray, that ſuch places as ſtill continue barren, may ſpeedily produce more converts, than have yet been made in the moſt flouriſhing churches. If indeed we are the children of promiſe, and heirs of the inheritance; we need not wonder that carnal Iſhmaels mock and perſecute us: ſo it hath been, and ſo it will be. Nevertheleſs, let us reſt our ſouls on the ſcripture, and by an evangelical hope, and a chearful obedience, let us ſhew that we are the children of God, that we walk at liberty, and that our converſation and treaſure are indeed in heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—6.] As Chriſt had called the Galatians by his goſpel, to partake of full liberty from condemnation, and the ceremonial law, as well as from ſin and Satan: ſo the apoſtle exhorted them to ſtand faſt in that liberty, whatever efforts were uſed to deprive them of it; and not to ſuffer the judaizing teachers to entangle them in a yoke of bondage under the ceremonial law, and the legal covenant; which would reduce them again into as abject a ſlavery, as when they were in their Gentile ſtate. For as Chriſt's apoſtle, who had firſt preached the goſpel to them, he ſolemnly aſſured them, that if they ſubmitted to circumciſion, as neceſſary to their juſtification, they would derive no benefit from Chriſt, and his covenant; or from his righteouſneſs, atonement, and mediation. For he again teſtified to every individual among them, who ſhould be circumciſed from ſuch motives, that he thereby became a debtor to keep the whole law of God, and liable to condemnation for every failure in his obedience to it. Certainly therefore Chriſt would not benefit him, who brought himſelf under this obligation, by ſeeking to be juſtified on account of his own obedience to the law: as that attempt was in fact a renunciation of the doctrine of grace, a forfeiture of their hopes of benefit from the mercy and free favour of God, and a kind of voluntary divorcing themſelves from Chriſt. For circumciſion, in ſuch circumſtances, would be a deliberate renunciation of Chriſt's covenant, for that of the law: whereas all true chriſtians, whether Jews or Gentiles, being taught by the Holy Spirit, waited for eternal life, the proper reward of righteouſneſs, and the object of their hope, as the gift of God by faith in Chriſt; and not for the ſake of their own works in any degree. They not only deemed themſelves pardoned, and juſtified by faith in Chriſt, in reſpect of the paſt, and

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye ſhould not obey the truth?

8 This perſuaſion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwiſe minded: but he that troubleth you ſhall bear his judgment, whoſoever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion, why do I yet ſuffer perſecution? then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *uſe* not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word *even* in this; thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.

16 *This* I ſay then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh.

17 For the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are

preſent: but they had the ſame expectation for the future, and waited for the day of judgment, expecting to be accounted righteous only by faith in Chriſt, and thus entitled to the heavenly inheritance. For according to the new covenant, and in reſpect of thoſe, who were members of the chriſtian church; neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion were of any avail: the Jewiſh convert might obſerve the legal ceremonies, or he might aſſert his liberty from them; the Gentile might utterly diſregard them, or from motives of expediency, he might be circumciſed, (as Timothy had been;) and pay ſome attention to them; provided he deemed them not obligatory on his conſcience, and placed no dependance on them. But theſe things were of no avail *in Chriſt Jeſus:* Faith alone united the ſinner to him, and intereſted him in his whole ſalvation: whilſt this living, and juſtifying faith was diſtinguiſhed from a dead faith, by being an operative, active principle; and eſpecially as it always worked by love to Chriſt, his cauſe, and his people: by love to God, and to man for his ſake. Thus a ſimple dependance on Chriſt's merits, and an evangelical obedience to his commandments are at once ſecured: and the fruits of that love, by which faith worketh, will be adduced at the day of judgment, as evidences to prove believers entitled to the heavenly inheritance. (*Matt*, c. xxv. v. 31—46.) After what the apoſtle had before ſaid, (v. 2—4,) this concluſion fully proves, that he did not oppoſe their obſervance of the ceremonial law, as evil in itſelf: but as their legal dependance on it was wholly incompatible with the goſpel method of juſtification. (*Rom.* c. ii. v. 6.)

V. 7—12.] When the goſpel had firſt been received by the Galatians, they ſeemed in a very promiſing manner, to run the race ſet before them; profeſſing, and apparently exerciſing that faith, which worketh by love, and obeying Chriſt from evangelical principles. But they were now evidently hindered, and turned aſide from this obedience of faith and love, to ceremonial obſervances; from legal principles. But who were they, that had thus *driven them back* from Chriſt's way into theſe new and unauthorized paths? This perſuaſion of the neceſſity of circumciſion, &c, certainly did not come from the apoſtle, who had called them to the grace of Chriſt; nor was it from the Holy Spirit, the Agent in the ſinner's converſion. In fact a few *Judaizers* had crept in among them, who being leavened with pride, bigotry, and enmity to the pure goſpel of Chriſt, had leavened them alſo with a ſimilar ſpirit; and it's baleful influence was rapidly diffuſing itſelf through all their churches, and would have moſt fatal effects unleſs it were counteracted. Yet, (notwithſtanding his fears concerning them,) reflecting on the manner, in which they had received his doctrine, and truſting in the Lord Jeſus, he had a confidence in them, that they would recover from the temporary faſcination, and become entirely of his judgment upon the ſubject. Then the ringleader of the defection, or any other perſon, who had perverted them, (of whatever conſequence he had ſeemed to be,) would be juſtly cenſured by them, and bear that judgment from them, which was proper; as aſſuredly he would from God, unleſs he were brought to repentance. Indeed it had been craftily and maliciouſly inſinuated, that the apoſtle himſelf, on ſome occaſions preached the neceſſity of circumciſion, when it tended to increaſe his influence: (and for this his candid allowance to men's prejudices, when it could be ſafely done, and the circumciſion of Timothy, might give the handle;) but if this had been his practice, why did he every where meet with ſuch furious perſecution from the Jews? For in that caſe the offence of the croſs of Chriſt would have in a great meaſure ceaſed. Had he proſelyted the Gentiles to the Moſaic law, and taught juſtification by it; the Jews would have connived at his regard to Jeſus of Nazareth, being gratified in their proud ſelf-preference, and in the increaſing number of thoſe, who obſerved the law. But his preaching Chriſt as the only ſalvation of ſinners, his diſregard to the law, his doctrine of juſtification, which left all unbelievers under condemnation without any diſtinction, and his ſucceſs among the Gentiles, every where exaſperated the Jews againſt him. As then this inſinuation was notoriouſly falſe; ſo he ardently wiſhed, that the perſons, who thus troubled them, and employed ſuch manifeſt deceits for that purpoſe, were cut off by excommunication from their ſociety; and ſo kept from doing them any further miſchief.

V. 13—18.] The apoſtle again reminded them, that they had been called unto liberty, and ought not to en-

contrary the one to the other: ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are *theſe*; adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told *you* in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.

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dure thoſe, who wanted to bring them into bondage. But at the ſame time one caution was to be obſerved: only let them be careful not to run into licentiouſneſs, or to take occaſion from their liberty to indulge the inclinations of corrupt nature. "Faith working by love" would indeed, as far as it had influence, lead them to ſerve, and worſhip God as his children: and their love to their brethren, and to all men for Chriſt's ſake, and after his example, ought to make them willing ſervants to each other, and induce them to give up their own inclinations and indulgence, to do all good to them, as far as in their power; without doing any one harm, in his perſon, connexions, property, reputation, or peace of mind. For the whole moral law contained no more in all its requirements, than was implied in that "love," by which faith worked: eſpecially the whole of their duty to one another was ſummed up in the ſingle precept of "loving "their neighbour as themſelves," (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. xix. v. 18. *Rom.* c. xiii. v. 8—10:) and this ſtill continued their rule of duty, though they were delivered from the law as a covenant. But if, on the contrary, they indulged their ſelfiſhneſs, pride, and anger, by dividing into parties, and quarrelling with each other, as if they would bite and devour one another: they might expect to be left by the God of peace and love, to be the inſtruments of each others preſent miſery, or future deſtruction. To prevent theſe ruinous conſequences to themſelves, and the churches among them; the apoſtle called on them "to walk *in*, or *by* the Spirit;" according to his holy guidance, in dependance on his influences, and with conſtant prayer for them: this would effectually prevent them from fulfilling the luſts or deſires of the fleſh, or that evil nature, with which they were born. (*John*, c. iii. v. 6. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 1—9.) For the fleſh, the old man, luſteth in direct oppoſition to the deſires of the new nature in the regenerate, as well as to the dictates of the Holy Spirit: and the Spirit, in both ſenſes, oppoſeth the corrupt deſires of the fleſh, by holy affections, and inclinations. Theſe are therefore directly contrary to each other: ſo that believers *do not*, and cannot do, the things, which they would. They are not ſo holy as they long to be; nor yet, though at liberty from the covenant of works, do they indulge thoſe corrupt inclinations, which ſtill riſe up in their hearts, and cauſe them much trouble and uneaſineſs. Thus they are engaged in perpetual conflict; in which they earneſtly deſire that grace may obtain a complete and ſpeedy victory. And they, who thus give themſelves up to be led by the holy Spirit, are not under the law, as a covenant of works, nor expoſed to its lawful curſe for every failure in their obedience: and their hatred of ſin, and deſires after holineſs, according to the perfect rule of God's commandments, is the evidence that they are intereſted in the ſalvation of the goſpel, (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. vii. vi c. viii. v. 10—17.)

V. 19—21.] The apoſtle next ſhewed more particularly the difference between the fleſh, and the ſpirit, by their contrary effects. The works of the fleſh were manifeſt to every one, who conſidered the conduct of unconverted men, and the ſtate of the world in general. Several of the ſins here ſpecified, as the works of the fleſh, have no connection with the bodily appetites: which proves, that we are not to underſtand, by "*fleſh* "*and ſpirit*," *the animal part of man, as diſtinguiſhed from the intellectual; but the whole of our fallen nature, as oppoſed to the new nature communicated by regeneration, and the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit acting upon it.* We need not conſider every particular in this catalogue: a few may require obſervation. Idolatry is "a work of "the fleſh;" as it ſprings from man's carnal enmity to the holy character, worſhip and ſervice of God; in whoſe ſtead he deifies imaginary beings more congenial to himſelf, and worſhips them in a manner more ſuited to his pride and luſts. Witchcraft, (implying all kind of ſorcery, charms, divinations, incantations, fortune-telling, and attempted or pretended intercourſe with evil ſpirits,) is a work of the fleſh, as it reſults from man's carnal diſlike of entire ſubmiſſion to, and dependance on God, and his deſire of ſeeking help and information from other quarters: by both theſe men virtually worſhip the devil. Emulations, or "zeal," ſeems in this connexion to ſignify that ambition of pre-eminence, and thirſt for glory, which excite men to vie with one another, and eagerly to aſpire after diſtinction, according to the nature of their objects, and purſuits. Poets, orators, hiſtorians, philoſophers, moraliſts, and all men, who do not attend to the Bible, deem this the nobleſt principle of human activity: yet it ſprings from mere pride and ſelfiſhneſs, and is nearly allied to envy. When the object of emulation is evil, its effects are dreadful: when the object is good, man's glory is ſacrilegiouſly ſubſtituted in the place of the glory of God; and this thirſt for human applauſe has cauſed more horrible violations of the law of love, and done more to deſolate the earth, than the groſſeſt ſenſuality ever did. Hereſies are called works of the fleſh: pride, ambition, avarice, or other carnal affections, induce men to pervert the truth of God's word; and eſpouſing ſome pernicious error, to ſeek diſtinction by propagating it. Hence ariſe contentions, ſeparations, and the moſt fatal effects to individuals, and to the church. Theſe were therefore joined by the apoſtle with adulteries, drunkenneſs, envy, revellings, ſeditions, and even murders, as equally the reſult of a carnal heart, and marks of unregeneracy. Many more he might have mentioned:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith,

23 Meekneſs, temperance: againſt ſuch there is no law.

24 And they that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be deſirous of vain glory provoking one another, envying one another.

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but theſe and ſuch like would certainly exclude men from heaven, if perſiſted in; as the apoſtle had formerly declared to them, and now again forewarned them.

V. 22—26.] The ſubſequent holy diſpoſitions, and the conduct reſulting from them, are not ſo much the works of the believer, as "the fruits of the Spirit," dwelling in, and working by the new nature, which he hath produced in him. Love of God and man, a joyful frame of mind in God's ſervice and ſalvation; a peaceful conſcience and ſubmiſſive will leading to a peaceable conduct towards man; a diſpoſition to bear injuries and affronts without ſeeking revenge, or expreſſing reſentment; a mild, unaſſuming, inoffenſive deportment, united with beneficence and philanthropy: truth, ſincerity, fidelity, and integrity to man, ſpringing from faith in, and faithfulneſs to God; a humble, teachable, unambitious temper and demeanour; and an evident moderation about earthly objects, and in reſpect of every animal indulgence. Theſe, and ſuch like are the fruits of the Spirit; and againſt them there is no law;" for they are exactly what the moral law requires of us (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii.) So that obedience to the law as a rule, with delight, and ſatisfaction, and earneſt deſires after more exact conformity, is the apoſtolical evidence of deliverance from the law as a covenant of works. And they, who really belong to Chriſt as juſtified believers, have actually crucified the fleſh, with all its corrupt affections, and rebellious inclinations. The carnal nature, the old man, is dethroned, condemned, hated, oppoſed, weakened, and wounded: his death is determined, though the execution be lingering, and only to be effected by a continued courſe of ſelf-denial; and though it ſtill ſtruggles for life, liberty, and even victory: which perpetuates the believers conflict, and prevents his complete holineſs. But, ſays the apoſtle, if we live in, or by the Spirit, as regenerate perſons; let us alſo walk in the Spirit, and order our daily converſation according to his holy influence, and in dependance on his guidance: eſpecially in mortifying the carnal deſires of vain glory, and human applauſe, and refraining from whatever may tend to exaſperate the minds of other men; or manifeſt an envy of their gifts, reputation, or proſperity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt ſo many are ſtruggling for, or arguing about perſonal and political liberty, as the greateſt of earthly bleſſings; let us aſpire after, and ſtand faſt in the liberty, which Chriſt beſtows: that walking before God with the humble, and obedient confidence of children; we may ſtedfaſtly reject every yoke of bondage, with which ſatan, or wicked men may attempt to entangle us. Eſpecially we ſhould regard the apoſtle's warnings to keep clear of all dependance on our own works for juſtification; as in that caſe Chriſt will profit us nothing. It is to be feared, that many deceive themſelves in this matter: they imagine that the merits of Chriſt will make up for their deficiencies; but their real dependance is placed on their own morality, devotions, or ſuperſtitions. But the divine Saviour will bring us to give him the whole honour of our juſtification; or he will leave us wholly to ſtand or fall by our own righteouſneſs: and every man, who truſts to his own works, becomes a debtor to do the whole law: Chriſt becomes of none effect to him: he virtually renounces the covenant of grace, and muſt expect to be dealt with according to the rigour of the covenant of works. May we then keep at a diſtance from this fatal rock, and be of that number, who through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith! For the danger of old lay not in circumciſion; as that, and uncircumciſion were alike immaterial in themſelves; even as many external forms and obſervances now are: but faith working by love forms the eſſence of his religion. Without this all elſe is worthleſs; and compared with it other things are of ſmall value. Yet many, who ſeemed to run well in this evangelical race, have been hindered from obeying the truth, by thoſe, that puzzled them with refined notions, or laboured to proſelyte them to ſome new ſect or form: ſo that, inſtead of "the work of faith, and labour "of love, and patience of hope," they have turned aſide to vain jangling, and zeal for trifling diſtinctions, and the ſhibboleths of a party. This perſuaſion, that religion conſiſts in ſuch matters, accords not with the doctrine of apoſtles, nor is it from the converting grace of the Spirit. Yet when a little of this leaven gets into hopeful congregations, it is apt to diffuſe itſelf through the whole lump. Its firſt beginnings ſhould therefore be ſtrenuouſly oppoſed: and they, who would thus unſettle, and pervert others, ſhould be cenſured by their brethren, or even cut off from their communion: and certainly they, who perſiſt in diſturbing and dividing the church of Chriſt, muſt at laſt bear their judgment, whoſoever they be.

Whilſt we ſtedfaſtly maintain the pure goſpel of a crucified Saviour, whatever offence may be taken, or perſecution endured by means of it; we ſhould be equally watchful againſt thoſe, who make their liberty an occaſion for the fleſh, and of indulging their ſelfiſh paſſions. By love, we ſhould become the willing ſervants of one another, and of all men; and in loving our neighbours as ourſelves, according to the requirement of the holy commandment in the law, we ſhall moſt effectually promote our own comfort, and the happineſs of families, churches and communities. But a houſe divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand; and when profeſſors, inſtead of the gentleneſs of lambs and doves, become like ſavage beaſts of prey, in biting and devouring one another; we need not wonder, that they are conſumed one of another. Alas, how hath ſatan prevailed in this way againſt the church of Chriſt!

CHAP. VI.

Contains 1ſt. Exhortations to meek, humble and active love; to provide for miniſters, and to do good to all men, in expectation of reaping as every one hath ſowed, 1---10. 2d. A contraſt between the glorying of the Judaizing teachers, and that of the apoſtle; with a concluding exhortation, and prayer, 11---18.

BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs; conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.

2 Bear ye one anothers burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.

3 For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another.

5 For every man ſhall bear his own burden.

6 Let him that is taught in the word com-

What cruel perſecutions, and fierce controverſies have ariſen among profeſſed chriſtians! How many hopeful proſpects have thus been clouded, and flouriſhing churches ruin'd! So that the nominal kingdom of the Prince of peace, has become a ſcene of contention and diſcord! But all this would be prevented, if we "walked in the "Spirit;" we ſhould not then fulfil the luſts of the fleſh; for though the moſt eminent chriſtians do not attain to all, that they deſire and aim at: yet they, who are led by the Spirit, do habitually oppoſe and mortify thoſe ſinful workings, which they cannot wholly extirpate. And let us remember that "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, "ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, and envyings," are as much the works of the fleſh, as adulteries, fornications, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, or any ſenſual exceſs; and that they will as certainly exclude men from heaven, whatever profeſſion of religion they make; nay though religion in its pureſt form be the pretence, ſubject, or occaſion of their malignant paſſions. But though the apoſtle hath repeatedly, and plainly forewarned us, that they who do ſuch things, as are here mentioned, or others of a ſimilar nature, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God: yet what numbers of profeſſed chriſtians live habitually in the groſſeſt of them; and notwithſtanding their adultery, fornication, ſhameful uncleanneſs, or ſecret laſciviouſneſs, ſtill hope for heaven, in neglect of evangelical repentance and faith? Nor can the moſt idolatrous covetouſneſs, the moſt exorbitant pride, ambition and emulation, the moſt notorious malice, wrath, hatred, envy; or even them urder, committed in revengeful duels, deprive them of their preſumptuous confidence. For he that believeth not, hath made God a liar. Nay ſome even attempt to revive the worſhip of ſatan, in various divinations, and prognoſtications, who would nevertheleſs be offended to be denied the name of chriſtians! Many alſo, who are zealous for the apoſtle's doctrine of juſtification, and ſuppoſe themſelves not to be *under the law*; are ſo far from being led by the Spirit, that they are evidently and habitually fulfilling the luſts of the fleſh! Though the feeble remonſtrances of a conſcience, not totally callous, deceive them into an imagination that they are engaged in the conflict of the fleſh and ſpirit! But let us never forget, that they, who are not under the law for condemnation, are led by the Spirit into the love of its precepts, and an earneſt deſire to obey them. If we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, as here deſcribed, in our habitual temper and conduct; we can have no objection to the daily examination of ourſelves by the ſtandard of ſin and holineſs; that our love, &c, may be exerciſed in knowledge, and in all judgment; for againſt ſuch things there is no law. They, who are Chriſt's, (and all others, however diſtinguiſhed, belong to ſatan's kingdom,) have crucified the fleſh with it's affections and luſts. Yet the imperfection of our attainments leaves room both for perſonal humiliation, and mutual exhortations. If then we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit; watching againſt ſpiritual pride and vain-glory; not provoking or envying one another, but following after love, and ſeeking to bring forth more abundantly thoſe good fruits, which are through Jeſus Chriſt to the praiſe and glory of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—5.] The apoſtle having concluded the argumentative part of the epiſtle, added ſome more particular admonitions, before he cloſed it. If any brother were ſurpriſed into the commiſſion of ſin, through unwatchfulneſs, and temptation, and contrary to the habitual tenor of his conduct; the more ſpiritual of them, who were moſt matured in judgment and experience, were to beſtow pains to bring him to repentance, and to give him proper counſel and encouragement; in a meek and compaſſionate ſpirit, that he might be reſtored like a diſlocated limb to its place: and not to treat him with harſh rebukes or diſdainful neglect. For each of them ſeverally ought to conſider himſelf, and his own weakneſs and frailty: as he too might be tempted and overcome; and then he would need that meekneſs and ſympathy, which he had refuſed his offending brother. Thus they ought not only to bear with, and forgive one another's infirmities; but, as fellow-travellers, to carry each other's burdens; whilſt the ſtronger brother denied himſelf in order to ſupport, comfort, and aſſiſt the weak, the tempted and afflicted; that ſo they might fulfil the commandment, which Chriſt repeatedly gave his diſciples, "to love one another;" and which indeed was the ſubſtance of *his law* for their conduct towards their brethren. But if on the contrary any of them thought himſelf more wiſe, ſtrong, or eminent than the reſt, on account of his gifts, or reputation, and ſo truſted in himſelf, and deſpiſed others; when in fact he was nothing in the ſchool of Chriſt, having not learned the firſt leſſon of his religion: he was under a ſad deluſion, and was in fact his own deceiver. To prevent this fatal miſtake, it behoved every individual to prove his own work by the touch-ſtone of God's municate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.

8 For he that ſoweth to his fleſh ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.

11 Ye ſee how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

12 As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, they conſtrain you to be circumciſed; only leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt.

13 For neither they themſelves who are circumciſed keep the law; but deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your fleſh.

14 But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me:

word, that he might diſcover whether his habitual conduct, and the motives of it accorded to the principles, experience, and character of the true believer: that ſo, inſtead of arrogantly condemning others, or glorying in others, and their attachment to, or opinion of him: he might find cauſe of rejoicing and humble glorying in himſelf, and in the atteſtation of the ſanctifying Spirit to his faith in Chriſt. For every man muſt at laſt ſtand or fall, not according to the ſect he belonged to, or the judgment of men reſpecting him; but according to his real character in the ſight of God. So that, if any of them were deluded into fatal errors, by their falſe teachers: every one muſt bear the burden of his own guilt; nor would the condemnation of the deceiver exculpate him, who allowed himſelf to be deceived by him.

V. 6—10.] As the Lord had appointed the office of the miniſtry, for the converſion of ſinners, and the edification of believers: ſo the apoſtle exhorted the Galatians to contribute to the comfortable maintenance of their ſtated paſtors, who inſtructed them from the word of God; communicating to them a proportion of their temporal good things, according to their ability. In this, and all ſuch matters, they muſt be careful not to be deceived by their own hearts, by ſatan, or by their falſe teachers: for however they might excuſe themſelves, or impoſe upon men; and then deride their ſimplicity and credulity; yet God was not to be thus deceived, or mocked with falſe pretences: and notwithſtanding all he had taught them concerning juſtification; it was moſt certain, that every man would at length reap an harveſt correſpondent to what he ſowed. He that ſowed to the fleſh, by continuing to fulfil its luſts, and to indulge his ſelfiſh and ſenſual deſires, under the profeſſion of the goſpel, would only reap the corruptible things of this world, and at length periſh himſelf, as unregenerate, and having no inheritance in heaven. But the man, who ſowed to the ſpirit, and under the influences of the Holy Ghoſt, exerciſed daily repentance, faith in Chriſt, love to him and his brethren, and other chriſtian graces; would not only here reap the earneſt and firſt-fruits of inward conſolations; but would at length inherit everlaſting life, as trained up for it by the ſanctification of the holy Spirit; and as receiving for Chriſt's ſake, a proportionable gracious recompence of all his diſintereſted and faithful ſervices. Let then none of them grow weary of doing well, in dependance on Chriſt, and for the honour of his goſpel, whatever conflicts, diſappointments, perſecutions, or temptations they met with: for in due ſeaſon, in the time of harveſt, they would ſurely reap an abundant increaſe of all their labours, ſelf-denial, and expence; if they ſhewed the ſincerity of their faith and love by continuing to the end, without fainting, or wearying in the work of the Lord. Whilſt therefore their lives were continued, and opportunities afforded them; they ought to make it their great buſineſs, and deem it their chief pleaſure, honour, and advantage, to be doing good, according to their ability, to men of every deſcription; but eſpecially to thoſe, who were their brethren in the family of God, by faith in Chriſt; however they might be diſtinguiſhed.

V. 11—16.] The words here rendered, "*how large* "*a letter*," are ſuppoſed by many perſons to ſignify, "*with what kind of letters*," referring to the apoſtle's want of ſkill in writing the Greek language. He had beſtowed great pains to pen this epiſtle with his own hand, either becauſe he had not an amanuenſis with him, or did not chooſe to make uſe of one: and the very formation of the letters might convince them of his love for, and anxiety about them. There were profeſſed teachers of chriſtianity, who wanted to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, or in reſpect of external matters, by forming a coalition between the Jewiſh religion, and that of Jeſus. Theſe were ſo earneſt in urging the Gentiles to be circumciſed, that they might be ſaid even to compel them to it; as they would take no denial, and exhauſted all their eloquence and ingenuity to overcome their reluctance to it. But notwithſtanding their bigotry, they would not have been ſo earneſt in this manner, if they could otherwiſe have poſſeſſed their influence in for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with your ſpirit. Amen.

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the chriſtian church, without expoſing themſelves to perſecution for profeſſing faith in Chriſt and his croſs. For not only did the Jews hate and perſecute thoſe, who preached the goſpel to the Gentiles, without regarding the Moſaic law: but the heathen rulers alſo, who tolerated the Jews, and ſuch chriſtians as obſerved the law, were inveterate againſt the Gentile chriſtians, and deemed them an upſtart ſect, dangerous to the civil government. This crafty and ſelfiſh aim of the judaizing teachers, of advancing themſelves to conſideration in the chriſtian church, without expoſing themſelves to perſecution, induced them to be very zealous in proſelyting the Gentiles to the Moſaic law: but they were not equally ſtrict in their own obſervance of it: They were not only negligent of the moral precepts: but probably, on one pretence or other, diſpenſed with themſelves and one another, in reſpect of the more burdenſome, and expenſive of the ceremonial inſtitutions. So that it was evident they only deſired the Gentiles to be circumciſed, that they might glory in having induced ſuch numbers to bear in their fleſh this mark of being proſelyted. Not only as this placed them at the head of a chriſtian ſect; but alſo as it tended to procure them favour and reputation with the Jewiſh rulers and others, on account of their zeal for the law. But the apoſtle added, with a noble diſdain of ſuch baſe motives, "God forbid that I ſhould glory, &c:" he would not boaſt of, or value himſelf upon any thing, that he had received, attained to, or performed; either before, or ſince his converſion; except in his dependance on the ignominious ſufferings, and death of Chriſt upon the croſs, as a ſacrifice for his ſins, and in the hopes, comforts, and bleſſings, which he thence had derived. In this indeed he greatly gloried; and his view of the croſs of Chriſt, and of the obligations, motives, and inſtructions connected with it, had crucified the world to him, and him to the world: "So that he viewed the "world as little impreſſed by all its charms, as a ſpecta"tor would be, by any thing that had been graceful in "the countenance of a crucified perſon, when he beholds "it blackened in the agonies of death; and was no "more affected by the objects around him, than one "that is expiring would be ſtruck with any of thoſe "proſpects, which his dying eyes might view from the "croſs, on which he was ſuſpended." (Doddridge.) So that he diſdained the friendſhip, riches, honours, and pleaſures of the world, and diſregarded its reproach and hatred, as he would have done thoſe of a crucified malefactor; ſeeing in the croſs of Chriſt the condemnation of all unbelievers without diſtinction: and the love of all things of a worldly nature was crucified by his view of God's holineſs, the evil of ſin, the wickedneſs of man, and the importance of eternity, which the croſs of Chriſt exhibited; and by that grace, which he died to purchaſe for him. To ſhew forth the love of his crucified Lord, to point him out to ſinners, to honour him in his own conduct, and to teach others to love, and glorify him: this was the great buſineſs of his life, and all elſe was comparatively beneath his notice. This raiſed him above all regard to circumciſion or uncircumciſion; aſſured that a new creation to the Image of Chriſt, as evidential of faith in him, was the great diſtinction between one man and another; (Notes, &c. 2 *Cor.* c. v. ver. 17—20:) and to all men, Jewiſh or Gentile converts, who walked with God, as in Chriſt new creatures, glorying in his croſs only, and crucified by it to the world, he deſired that mercy and peace might abound; even to the true Iſrael of God, which was very diſtinct from the outward Iſrael.

V. 17, 18.] As what had been written was abundantly ſufficient to ſatiſfy all humble enquiries; the apoſtle deſired that he might not thenceforth be troubled and diſquieted by ſuch diſputations: they ought not thus to add to his ſufferings; for he already bare in his body the marks and ſcars of the wounds, which he had received in the cauſe of Chriſt; and which he deemed far more honourable, than the external badge of circumciſion. This ought to have endeared him to them, as he expoſed himſelf to ſuch perſecutions for their good. He therefore deſired that the grace, and free favour of Chriſt might be with their inmoſt ſouls, to comfort, eſtabliſh, and ſanctify them; and then he knew, that they would be more affectionate to him, and leſs attached to mere externals.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is a great difference between thoſe who live in ſin, and thoſe who are overtaken with a fault; to which the beſt of men are liable. The reality, and degree of our ſpirituality ſhould be evidenced by tender, and compaſſionate endeavours to reſtore the fallen and confirm the weak, in the ſpirit of meekneſs; as conſcious that we too are liable to be tempted, and have need of humble watchfulneſs and conſtant dependance upon God. Our chriſtian liberty is enjoyed in proportion as we fulfil the law of Chriſt, in loving the brethren, and bearing one another's burdens, with compaſſion and ſelf-denial. But alas, many think themſelves to be ſomething, when they are nothing, and ſo deceive themſelves. Let us then prove our own work; and ſeek rejoicing in the aſſurance of our own converſion, and not in the opinion of others concerning us: ſeeing that "every man muſt "bear his own burden." They, who love the goſpel, and are taught according to the word of God, will not grudge the faithful miniſter a proportion[*] of their good things: they may in this and other matters impoſe on others, as well as deceive themſelves; but God will not be trifled with. As the preſent is our ſeed time for eternity; let us examine what we are now ſowing? And what our harveſt is likely to prove? If hitherto any have ſown to the fleſh, and is afraid that of the fleſh he ſhall reap corruption: let him begin, in the exerciſe of repentance, faith and prayer, to ſow to the Spirit, that he may at length reap everlaſting life. And let none of us, who have begun thus to ſow to the Spirit, grow weary in well doing: aſſured that in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap if we faint not. Not only do thoſe, who have no root in themſelves, loſe all their labour about religion,

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by drawing back in the time of temptation: but even believers often loſe much of the comfort and uſefulneſs, that they were in the way for, by fainting in part through diſappointment, and want of zeal and patience. Let us then watch againſt this: remembering that we are Chriſt's ſervants, whoſe work it is, as we have opportunity to do good to all men, eſpecially to the houſehold of faith. But there have always been profeſſors and teachers, that deſired to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, to render religion ſubſervient to worldly projects, and to eſcape the croſs. Such men will commonly be more zealous to make proſelytes to a party, than converts to Chriſt; that they may glory in the numbers that are attached to them. But the conſiſtent chriſtian is nobly diſdainful of ſuch low aims: he only glories in the croſs of Chriſt, as the foundation of all his hopes: and this faith in a crucified Saviour crucifies the world to him, and him unto the world; as he deſires to live no longer to himſelf, but to him who died for him, and roſe again. Thus he overcomes the love of worldly objects, and is reconciled to hardſhips, poverty, reproach and hatred for his Lord's ſake. If we then, are in Chriſt new creatures: we have the kernel and the ſubſtance of religion, and may leave others to quarrel about the ſhell, or the ſhadow of it. Yet we ſhould deſire that mercy and peace may be upon all, who walk according to this rule, and upon the whole Iſrael of God. Though they are peculiarly blameable, who trouble and grieve thoſe ſoldiers of Chriſt, who bear in their bodies the ſcars of the wounds, they have received in fighting the good fight: yet we ſhould not wonder, if our moſt diſintereſted and ſelf-denying labours meet with this recompence alone, from thoſe, whom we have moſt loved. And we muſt ſtill pray, that the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be with their ſpirits, as well as expoſtulate with them concerning their miſconduct.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the EPHESIANS.

We have before conſidered the ſucceſsful miniſtry of the apoſtle in the renowned, but licentious city of Epheſus; and his ſolemn charge to the elders of the church, which was there collected; (*Notes &c.* Acts, c. xix. xx.) *Some years after, he wrote this epiſtle to them during his impriſonment at Rome; to eſtabliſh them in the great doctrines of the goſpel, to guard them againſt errors, to excite them to a holy converſation, and to animate them in their chriſtian warfare. This epiſtle, and the two that follow it, which were alſo written during his impriſonment, are remarkable for a peculiar pathos, and ardour; and theſe are generally aſcribed to the extraordinary conſolations enjoyed by the apoſtle, during his ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake: However, his mind was doubtleſs enlarged to a remarkable degree, in writing to thoſe, whom he had no occaſion to rebuke, and as he was not under the neceſſity of engaging in controverſy; but entire confidence of affection took place of that caution, reſerve, or ſharpneſs, which were requiſite in the three preceding epiſtles. Some have conjectured that this epiſtle was intended as a kind of circular letter to the other churches of Aſia, as well as to the Epheſians; eſpecially to that of Laodicea:* (Col. c. iv. v. 16.) *But this ſeems to be deſtitute of ſufficient proof. However, it is replete with inſtruction, doctrinal experimental and practical, ſuited to ſerious and attentive readers of every age and nation.*

Anno Domini 64. *Anno Domini* 64.

CHAP. I.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Addreſſing and ſaluting the Epheſians, 1, 2. *2d. Bleſſing God for his mercies to them and other believers; according to his eternal purpoſe, in conſequence of their election, through the redemption in Chriſt, by calling them into his family, and ſealing their adoption with the earneſt of the Holy Ghoſt,* 2---14. *3d. Praying for their further illumination, and deeper experience of the grace and comforts connected with it; according to the power ſhewn in the reſurrection and exaltation of Chriſt, &c,* 15---23.

PAUL, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, to the ſaints which are at Epheſus, and to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus:

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1, 2.] (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. i. v. 1—7. 1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 1—3. 2 *Cor.* c. i. v. 1, 2.) By "faithful in Chriſt Jeſus," the apoſtle might mean either "believers in Chriſt;" or ſuch as approved themſelves to be his faithful ſoldiers, ſervants, and ſtewards. Some have ſuppoſed, that the expreſſion was intended to include other believers, as well as the ſaints in Epheſus:

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3 Bleſſed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly *places* in Chriſt:

4 According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will,

6 To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved:

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wiſdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf:

10 That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs

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but it may be rendered, "*even* the faithful in Chriſt "Jeſus."

V. 3—8.] The following twelve verſes, properly ſpeaking, form one period. The apoſtle's mind was ſo full of his ſubject, that he was not very exact about his ſtyle: and this renders a double degree of attention requiſite in the reader, who would fully enter into his meaning: however we ſhall the better underſtand his argument and doctrine, by conſidering the paſſage in a more detached manner. Reflecting on the great things, which God had done for him, and by him, eſpecially among the Gentiles, the apoſtle brake out into the moſt rapturous praiſes and thankſgivings unto God on that account. He could do no other than *ſpeak well* concerning the God and Father of the Lord Jeſus, and celebrate the praiſes of his name, who had *done ſo well, and graciouſly* by his believing people, and conferred on them all ſpiritual bleſſings, that could be deſired, or enjoyed, in reſpect *of heavenly things*, and as the earneſt of heavenly felicity; by giving his Son Jeſus Chriſt for them, and by calling them to believe in him: or, by exalting Chriſt, as their Surety, Advocate, and Fore-runner, into the heavenly places, God had at once, as it were, conferred all ſpiritual bleſſings on every believer, as united unto, and intereſted in Him. This accorded to, and reſulted from, his choice of them, in Chriſt, and as given to Him, even "before the foundation of the world;" not becauſe he foreſaw they would be of themſelves more holy than others of their fallen race; but that they ſhould be made holy, by their ſeparation from ſin, their conſecration unto God, and the ſanctification of the Spirit, in conſequence of their election in Chriſt. Thus he purpoſed to render them "blameleſs before him, in love;" not only in reſpect of their complete juſtification in Chriſt; but by their preſent integrity and ſincerity in the profeſſed love of Chriſt, each other and all men; by their blameleſs walk before God, in all his ordinances and commandments; and at length by their being perfected in holy love, and heavenly felicity. For He had predeſtinated, or fore-ordained them, to be adopted as his children by faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and to be openly admitted to the privileges of that high relation to Himſelf, notwithſtanding their original and actual ſinfulneſs. In doing this according to his ſovereign will and pleaſure, he intended to exhibit the glory of his rich, free, and diſtinguiſhing grace, in the moſt illuſtrious manner; that they and others might celebrate the praiſes of it for ever: as by that glorious grace, he had made them, polluted ſinners both of the Jews and Gentiles, accepted in his beloved Son; and the "righteouſneſs of God in Him:" ſo that as the Father was well-pleaſed in his beloved Son; ſo was he alſo well pleaſed with them for his ſake. Or they were "*highly favoured in him*," as a word of the ſame import is elſewhere rendered. (*Luke*, c. i. v. 28.) For though in themſelves they had been condemned criminals, enſlaved, and impriſoned under the curſe of the law, and the power of ſin and ſatan, without any poſſibility of delivering themſelves: yet Chriſt had paid a complete ranſom for their ſouls, when he ſhed his blood on the croſs; and having been brought into a ſtate of union with him by faith; they had obtained a complete redemption; their ſins having been fully pardoned and their ſouls ſet at liberty from the fetters and dungeon of their former wretched condition. This deliverance accorded to the unſpeakable abundance of God's free mercy and grace: his love appointed this method of redemption, provided the Redeemer, ſpared not his own Son, brought them to hear and embrace this ſalvation, freely pardoned all their ſins, gave liberty to their captive ſouls, ſupplied all their wants, and inveſted them with the richeſt variety of privileges and bleſſings. In the exerciſe of ſuch aſtoniſhing grace, in ſo abundant a manner, the Lord had alſo acted with all wiſdom and prudent counſel: for whereas, mercy to criminals, often gives encouragement to crimes, and diſgraces or weakens the hands of government; this method of grace was ſo wiſely ordered, that it ſhewed ſin in all its odiouſneſs, and deſert of vengeance; exhibited the divine juſtice and holineſs in the moſt tremendous glory; harmonized all the attributes of God, furniſhed the moſt effectual motives to the believer's future obedience; and tended directly to ſubvert ſatan's empire of ungodlineſs and iniquity. So that the wiſdom of God never ſhone ſo bright in the view of all holy Intelligences, as in this diſplay of the riches of his glorious grace.

V. 9—12] The bleſſings before-mentioned were communicated to believers, by the Lord's making known to them the myſtery of his ſovereign will, reſpecting the method of redemption and ſalvation; and the admiſſion of ſinners into his family by faith in Chriſt, whether they were Jews or Gentiles: all theſe arrangements had been of times he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, *even* in him:

11 In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of Him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will:

12 That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt.

13 In whom ye alſo *truſted* after that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation; in whom alſo after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe,

14 Which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, unto the praiſe of his glory.

15 Wherefore I alſo, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jeſus, and love unto all the ſaints;

16 Ceaſe not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints,

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21 Far above all principality, and power,

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made, "according to his good pleaſure, which he had "purpoſed in himſelf;" for as he adviſed with no counſellor, ſo he gave no account of his holy, wiſe, and righteous appointments. Having revealed theſe things to the apoſtles, and by them to the church; his divine teaching had led whom he pleaſed to ſee the glory of thoſe truths, which others were left to blaſpheme. Thus were they made to know the myſtery of his will; and to underſtand, that in the diſpenſation, which at length in the fulneſs of times, had been introduced, the Lord meant to gather together, as into one kingdom or family, in, by, and under the rule of his Son, all things in heaven and earth. So that, not only Jews and Gentiles were to become one church; not only were the ſaints, who had before gone to heaven, to be conſidered as one body with believers on earth: but even holy angels and all the inhabitants of heaven, as confirmed in Chriſt, and his worſhippers and ſubjects, would form one kingdom with redeemed ſinners, and join with them in adoration, love, and obedience. By virtue of their relation to, and union with Chriſt, the apoſtle, and the Jewiſh converts had obtained a ſhare in this glorious inheritance; having been predeſtinated according to the decree, and ſovereign appointment of that glorious God, who carried on his work of creation, providence, and redemption, according to thoſe wiſe counſels, and that perfect plan, which he hath ſeen good to form. And whilſt moſt of their countrymen had been left to judicial blindneſs and unbelief, to be monuments of God's awful juſtice; they had been ſelected "for the "praiſe of his glory," by being brought to truſt in Chriſt for ſalvation, by the power of divine grace, and as the firſt-fruits of the chriſtian church; though in themſelves as deſerving of wrath, as their unbelieving Jewiſh brethren.

V. 13, 14.] In like manner, the Gentile converts, eſpecially thoſe at Epheſus, had been ſelected "to the "praiſe of the divine glory," by being brought to believe and hope in Chriſt; when the word of truth, the glad tidings which propoſed ſalvation to them, had been preached among them: in whom "*after they had believed*," or "*believing*," they had been ſealed by the Holy Spirit, who had been promiſed by the ancient prophets, and by Chriſt before his aſcenſion into heaven. This cannot excluſively be explained of miraculous powers; for theſe were not the earneſt, pledge, and foretaſte of heaven; as this ſeal is declared to have been; for many unſanctified perſons have exerciſed miraculous powers. But the ſanctifying, and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit ſeal believers as the children of God, and heirs of heaven; they are the firſt-fruits of that holy felicity, and they impreſs the holy image of God upon their ſouls. (Note, 2 *Cor.* c. i. v. 21, 22.) Thus they were preſerved, ſupported, and comforted, during their time of trial and ſuffering in life, and death; until they ſhould at laſt be put in full poſſeſſion of that complete redemption, which Chriſt had enſured to his *purchaſed people:* or until the inheritance, which ſin had forfeited, but which Chriſt had purchaſed for them, ſhould be, ſo to ſpeak, fully reſcued from the hands of their enemies, and they ſhould be put in complete poſſeſſion of it at the reſurrection of the dead; to be for ever monuments erected "to the praiſe of the "glory of God." All theſe things are ſo evidently diſtinguiſhing of true chriſtians, and ſo inapplicable to collective bodies of profeſſors; that we muſt conclude the apoſtle ſpake of election as perſonal, and gratuitous; and of effectual vocation, as inſeparably connected with eternal life: and learned men need far more ingenuity, than hath yet been employed in the argument, to make the apoſtle's words ſpeak any other language, conſiſtent with the rules of grammar, and of common ſenſe. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 28—39. c. ix. xi.)

V. 15—23.] The apoſtle had for ſome time witneſſed the conduct of the Epheſians: but having been abſent from them about five years, he had again heard of their faith in Chriſt, and love to all his ſaints; which excited him without ceaſing to thank God for his grace and mercy and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* Head over all *things* to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.

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towards them, and animated him in praying for them expreſsly by name, in all his ſecret and ſocial prayers. Eſpecially he intreated the God, whom the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as man, had worſhipped and obeyed, even the glorious Father, the great Author of all that glory, which is viſible in the whole univerſe, that he would ſtill more abundantly communicate to them the Holy Spirit, from whoſe influence all divine wiſdom was derived to men, and who revealed to the hearts of believers the certainty, nature and glory of thoſe truths, which by prophets and apoſtles he had revealed to the church. That ſo every vail of prejudice, pride and ſin being removed, they might more completely know God in Chriſt, and more confidently acknowledge their relation to him; that the eyes of their minds being divinely illuminated, they might underſtand more clearly, and experience more deeply, the value of that object of their hope, to which God had called them by his goſpel; and perceive what riches of grace, conſolation, and ſpiritual bleſſings were compriſed in that glory which conſtituted the inheritance conferred on his ſaints; or the rich abundance and revenue of glory, which the Lord would derive from his ſaints, as his choſen inheritance. And that they might perceive what exceeding greatneſs of divine power had been exerted in their converſion to the faith, and was ſtill engaged to uphold, ſtrengthen, and defend them, to perfect their new creation, and to complete their redemption from ſatan, ſin, and death: according to the operation of that mighty power, which was put forth in the reſurrection and exaltation of Chriſt. It is remarkable that the apoſtle ſeems here, ſtudiouſly to have exhauſted the utmoſt vigour of the Greek language to expreſs, by a beautiful accumulation of energetic words, the omnipotence of God as effecting the believer's converſion and ſalvation, in continuing, as it were, that exertion of it, by which the Redeemer was raiſed from the dead. For in conſequence of Chriſt's reſurrection, he had been exalted in the human nature to the Father's right-hand, upon the mediatorial throne, in heavenly places, far above all creatures, however dignified; not only above the princes of the earth; not only as the conqueror and deſtroyer of the powers of darkneſs; but even far above the hierarchies of heaven, however diſtinguiſhed as principalities, powers, &c; yea above every name, that ever was or will be celebrated on earth or in heaven; either during the continuance of this world, or that which is to come. And as all creatures were ſubjected to his government; ſo all enemies were virtually put under his feet; ſeeing he hath power and authority to cruſh them as he pleaſes; and will continue to do this in the proper ſeaſons, till the laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed. (Note, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 24—28.) Having thus exalted the riſen Saviour, the Father hath given Him, to be the Head, or abſolute and univerſal Governor of the world, for the benefit of the church: ſo that all his power and authority are exerciſed in ſubſerviency to his purpoſes of grace, and to effectuate his redemption in the final ſalvation of his purchaſed people. For his church is his body, he is the Head of life, influence and authority to the whole company of believers, as united to him; and they are dear to, and taken care of by him, as the members of his body: ſo that He, in whom all fulneſs dwells, is not complete in his mediatorial character, except in the preſervation and full ſalvation of his whole myſtical body: and whilſt he fills heaven and earth with his glory, fills his ordinances with his power and gracious preſence, and dwells in every believer by his Spirit of life, purity and love; he condeſcends to deem them eſſential to his own fulneſs of glory; even as every member of the body is to the completeneſs of the human nature.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Faith in, and faithfulneſs to Chriſt, unite to form the character of his ſaints: and to the ſovereign will of God we wholly owe it, if we are either true believers or miniſters. God our Father from whom, and the Lord Jeſus through whom, grace and peace are given to ſinful men, are to be adored and praiſed for all thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings, which we are, or hope to be bleſſed with. The appointment of the eternal Son of the Father to be the Surety for fallen man, in the divine foreknowledge, even before the foundation of the world, is the ſource of all the hopes and comforts of thoſe who "were choſen in him, that they ſhould "be holy and without blame before him in love." For perſonal holineſs was provided for, in every part of the counſels of God, reſpecting man's ſalvation. And the renewal of our hearts to the divine image, and a blameleſs walk before God in the love of him, and of our brethren, are the proper evidence that we were predeſtinated, and have been called of God to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will. For when this purpoſe of God hath begun to take effect, by our being made accepted in his beloved Son, in whom we obtain redemption through faith in his blood, even the forgiveneſs of our ſins, according to the riches of his grace: then as the children of God, who is love, we bear his image and become followers of him. Thus the change wrought, as well as the mercy ſhewn, are "to the praiſe of the glory of his grace:" the reconciled and adopted ſinner gives all the praiſe of his ſalvation to his gracious Father; his actions (as well as his lips) declare the praiſes of the divine mercy: and it appears evident that adorable wiſdom and prudence conjoined with unſpeakable grace, in forming and executing the holy plan of man's free ſalvation. Theſe myſteries of his will muſt have been for ever hidden from us, if God himſelf had not made them known to us by his written word, his preached goſpel, and his Spirit of truth. Thus in every reſpect he diſpenſes his bleſſings according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf: if in executing his grand deſign of "gathering together in one, all things in Chriſt, both "which are in heaven and in earth," he hath brought us to ſeek and obtain an inheritance among his redeemed people; we muſt allow, that we were "predeſtinated accord-

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. Man's loſt eſtate by nature as dead in ſin, and his recovery by grace, through faith in Chriſt, 1---10. *2d. The peculiar diſadvantages of the Gentiles; and their peculiar obligations to the grace of the goſpel, for the bleſſed change effected in their ſtate and character,* 11---22.

AND you *hath he quickened,* who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins;

2 Wherein in times paſt ye walked according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience;

3 Among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

“ing to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.” He ſent the word of truth, the goſpel of ſalvation to us, whilſt others were left in darkneſs; he quickened us, when others were left dead in ſin; he enabled us to truſt in Chriſt, as well as ſealed our pardon by his ſanctifying Spirit, as the earneſt of our future glorious inheritance. We need not wonder that proud and ungodly men deride, and diſpute againſt theſe humbling and ſpiritual myſteries: nor is it deſirable that they ſhould embrace them as a ſcheme of doctrine in a carnal mind. But that humble and ſpiritual believers, who allow their own hearts to be as evil in themſelves, as thoſe of their moſt ungodly neighbours, ſhould be afraid of tracing back their preſent experience of divine grace, to the ſovereign purpoſe and free electing love of God in Chriſt; that in giving him the whole glory of having made them to differ, they may alſo poſſeſs a ground of aſſurance, that he will perfect his good work in their ſouls; this I ſay is matter of ſurpriſe to thoſe, who find ſuch animation and encouragement from the glorious retroſpect and proſpect.

However, if any, who appear to have faith in the Lord Jeſus, and love to all the ſaints, are dazzled by theſe ſublime myſteries: their more eſtabliſhed brethren ſhould not forget, who made them to differ; and inſtead of raſh judgments and violent diſputations, (which are peculiarly unſuitable on this ſubject); they ſhould thank God for what he hath done for them, and make mention of them without ceaſing in their prayers. Indeed we all need to pray for ourſelves and each other “to the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory,” for a larger communication of the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. We ſhould do far more in this way towards bringing believers to be of one mind and judgment, than by multiplied diſputations: “for a man can receive nothing,” after all our arguments, “except it be given him from above:” and high confidence on one ſide of the queſtion commonly begets the ſame on the other ſide, with all its hateful conſequences. But if we diſputed leſs, and prayed more with, and for, each other; the eyes of our underſtandings being enlightened, we ſhould daily ſee more and more, what is the hope of our calling, and the riches of the divine glory, in the inheritance of his ſaints. And when moſt ſenſible of our weakneſs and the power of our enemies, we ſhall moſt perceive and experience the greatneſs of that mighty power which hath effected our converſion, and is engaged to perfect our ſalvation. For the reſurrection and exaltation of Chriſt; his univerſal and ſovereign authority, and almighty power, were all intended for our benefit, if we are indeed the members of his myſtical body the church; which is the fulneſs of him who filleth all in all. The immenſity of this love and condeſcenſion, and the vaſtneſs of our privileges, ſhould excite our enlarged expectations; our unſpeakable obligations, if duly apprehended, will conſtrain us by love to live to our Redeemer's glory; and thus our humble, holy, and chearful lives will vindicate our doctrine from the calumnies of thoſe, that ſpeak evil of ſuch things as they underſtand not.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—3.] The Almighty power of God, which raiſed Chriſt from the dead, (c. i. v. 20;) had alſo raiſed to ſpiritual life the Epheſians, who had been dead in ſin: for the words “hath he quickened” ſeem to have been very properly ſupplied by our tranſlators. Death in treſpaſſes and ſins implies an utter incapacity for ſpiritual employments, and ſatisfactions; a deſtitution of all deſire after that felicity, which holy creatures enjoy in the favour, and ſervice of God; and a total inability of worſhipping and obeying him, with love, and delight: even as a dead man is utterly incapable of the buſineſs or pleaſures of life. The employments and enjoyments of animal nature, and even thoſe of a rational being are within the capacities of a man, who is dead in ſin: but he has no reliſh for, or deſire of ſpiritual pleaſures. He may be an epicure, or a philoſopher; but he cannot find ſatisfaction in the peculiar employments of a ſaint. For he muſt be carnal; and the carnal mind is enmity, death, and oppoſition to the holy law of God. Such a man therefore muſt be an apoſtate, and an idolater, who ſeeks happineſs in the creature more than the Creator: and he can only live to tranſgreſs, to purſue carnal things, to corrupt himſelf and others, and to aggravate his condemnation as a tranſgreſſor of God's law. In ſuch ſins and treſpaſſes the Epheſians had habitually walked; and had gone about under an accumulating load of guilt, and the power of their evil propenſities, without any concern about the conſequences. In this they had proceeded according to the cuſtoms, faſhions and maxims “of this preſent evil world,” (*Gal.* c. i. v. 4:) they did like their neighbours, and like other men all over the earth: even according to the example, temptations, and deſires of ſatan the god and prince of this world; that arch-apoſtate and rebel, who hath the ſeat of his empire in the air, and there exerts his power and influence. Therein he, and the legions of fallen angels, which are ſubordinate to him, continually abide, and wait their opportunity of tempting men to ſin, by removing from their minds good

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt, (by grace ye are ſaved :

6 And hath raiſed *us* up together, and made *us* ſit together in heavenly *places* in Chriſt Jeſus;)

7 That in the ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindneſs toward us through Chriſt Jeſus.

8 For by grace are ye ſaved through faith; and that not of yourſelves ; *it is* the gift of God.

9 Not of works leſt any man ſhould boaſt.

10 For we are his workmanſhip, created in

thoughts, and ſerious impreſſions, and ſuggeſting others of a contrary tendency. Thus ſatan maintains his dominion ; and men in general copy his example of rebellion, enmity, and contemptuous defiance of God ; of pride, ambition, envy, malice, deceit, murder, and deſtruction ; or they gratify his malignity by deſtroying themſelves and each other through groſs ſenſualities ; or his ambition by their idolatry, impiety, and infidelity. Thus the Epheſians had walked, according to that ſpirit, which ſtill worked in the children of diſobedience, or in thoſe, who continued in unbelief, and rebellion againſt God. Or, as it may be more literally rendered, " according " to the prince of that ſpirit, which now worketh, &c;" ſatan is the author and ruler of that proud, carnal and impious ſpirit or diſpoſition, which is in ungodly men : his temptations firſt produced it in human nature ; and he works upon it, by the agency of evil ſpirits, to inſtigate it to all wickedneſs in thought, word, and deed : thus he rules in man's heart ; he poſſeſſes, as it were, all unbelievers ; and he inſpires with wit and ingenuity the advocates for vice, impiety and infidelity, by whom he maintains his empire in the world. But not only were the idolatrous Epheſians thus dead in ſin, and under the power of ſatan : but the apoſtle, and all other chriſtians then on earth, had in times paſt their converſation among them, as alienated from God, and diſobedient to him, though not in groſs idolatry. So that they lived " in " the luſts of their fleſh," or according to the deſires of their carnal hearts ; gratifying their animal appetites in ſenſual wickedneſs ; or the proud, covetous, ambitious, and malignant tempers of their minds, as conſtitution, cuſtom, or education ſwayed them, without any proper regard to the authority, will, glory, or favour of God. So that the Jews, as well as the Gentiles ; and the chriſtians as well as thoſe, who remained unconverted, were " by nature" dead in ſin, " and children of wrath," one as well as another : for being born of Adam's fallen race, averſe to good, and prone to evil ; they were alike, in the temper of their hearts, and the conduct of their lives, deſerving of, and meet for, the wrath of God. Great pains have been employed to explain away this deciſive teſtimony, by confining it to the caſe of the idolatrous Gentiles, and by arguing, that *nature*, may ſignify *cuſtom* or *habitual practice :* that ſo baptized perſons, or nominal chriſtians might not be included in it ; and that the offenſive doctrine of original ſin might not be proved by it. But they, who with immenſe erudition, labour, and ingenuity, have ſpent themſelves in this vain attempt, have been evidently baffled in the critical argument by men of far inferior learning ; ſo that they ſeem nearly ſilenced. At the ſame time ſtubborn facts prove that men called chriſtians are " dead in ſin," &c, as much as the Gentiles were ; and that the children of believers are as prone to evil, and averſe to good, as thoſe of idolaters : nor can any man ſuppoſe that worldly luſts are more excuſable in chriſtians, than in heathens. The change of perſon, " among whom *we all*, &c," ſufficiently proves that the apoſtle meant to include the whole chriſtian church, as having once been dead in ſin, &c. The word rendered " *by nature*," ſeems never to have been uſed for any other cuſtoms, than ſuch as reſulted from *innate* propenſities : and the whole tenor of the ſcripture, as well as the experience and confeſſions of the moſt pious perſons that ever lived, confirm our interpretation, and expreſſly contradict that more flattering one, which it hath been attempted to ſubſtitute in its place.

V. 4—10.] Even when the apoſtle, and his fellow-chriſtians were dead in ſin, incapable of helping themſelves, and hateful in the ſight of God ; he loved them with an exceeding great love : not for any thing which he ſaw, or foreſaw in them, but becauſe " he was rich " in mercy," and delighted in the moſt abundant and illuſtrious exerciſe of it. Having therefore loved them, and given his own Son to die for their ſins, and raiſed him as their Surety from the dead ; the ſame immenſely free mercy influenced Him to raiſe them from the death of ſin, by a continuation of the ſame powerful operation. Thus he quickened them together with Chriſt, in virtue of his reſurrection, with life communicated from him, and by the Holy Spirit. So that they were ſaved wholly by unmerited grace ; whether their election, redemption, or converſion were conſidered. Being thus raiſed to a new life, in conformity to their riſen Lord ; they in Him their Head, Repreſentative, and Surety, were made to ſit in heavenly places : their future glory was enſured by Chriſt's aſcenſion and exaltation, and their union with Him ; and their treaſures, hearts and hopes were already in heaven with Chriſt their life. (*Rom.* c. v, vi. *Col.* c. iii. v. 1—3.) This whole plan had been formed and executed, that in " ages to come," in future generations *and future worlds*, the Lord might diſplay the exceeding riches and abundance of his grace, by the aſtoniſhing kindneſs ſhewn to ſuch mean vile ſinners, in, and by Chriſt Jeſus : that ſo men and angels, and all created Intelligences to eternity might behold, admire, and adore his glorious mercy and love, in theſe tranſactions. He would therefore repeat, and enlarge upon the hint before given ; that " they were ſaved by grace, " they were as *ſaved perſons* brought into a ſtate of full ſecurity by the mere mercy of God, through faith in Chriſt : And even this faith, which effected their relation to him, was not

Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.

11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time paſt Gentiles in the fleſh, who are called Uncircumciſion by that which is called the Circumciſion in the fleſh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.

13 But now in Chriſt Jeſus ye who ſometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.

14 For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

15 Having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himſelf of twain one new man, *ſo* making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby;

17 And came, and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have acceſs by one Spirit to the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more ſtrangers

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of themſelves; their proud and carnal minds having been utterly averſe to the humbling and ſpiritual doctrine: but it was the free gift of God to them, the effect of their being quickened by his power. Thus their pride and enmity were ſubdued, and they were brought to believe the goſpel, and truſt in Chriſt. This ſalvation therefore was in no degree or way of works of any kind; that ſo, no man ſhould have any ground of boaſting, that he did of himſelf contribute any thing to his own happineſs, or of glorying over his neighbour. (Notes &c. *Rom.* c. iii. v. 19—28. 1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 29—31.) For though believers differed greatly from other men, and from their former ſelves; yet this was the effect of a divine power exerted upon them; they were the workmanſhip of God, who in Chriſt had wrought a real new creation upon their ſouls, giving new principles, or propenſities to their ſeveral faculties, and a new direction to their affections, and deſires. Thus they were brought to love, and do good works, as a part of their ſalvation, not as the cauſe of it: for as it was God's purpoſe, that his redeemed people ſhould habitually walk in good works from their converſion, till they finiſhed their courſe; ſo he had before prepared them to do this, by a new creation: and their holy lives were the effect, evidence, and recommendation of their being ſaved by grace.

V. 11—13.] Having ſpoken of the general ſtate of fallen man, and the ſalvation of all believers by mere grace; the apoſtle next proceeded to ſhew the Gentile convert, the peculiarities of their caſe, which had placed them further out of the way of mercy, than the Jews had been. He would have them to remember, that they had not only been dead in ſin, but "Gentiles in the "fleſh," as to their outward ſtate, their groſs idolatries, immoralities, and ſenſuality: ſo that they had been called the Uncircumciſion, in contempt and averſion, as polluted, and out of covenant with God, even by the Jews, who had only the outward circumciſion in the fleſh, of man's operation, without the true circumciſion of the heart. At that time, they were in every ſenſe without, or ſeparate from, Chriſt: being aliens from the common wealth of Iſrael, and its peculiar immunities, as the viſible church of God, in which his ordinances were adminiſtered, his oracles depoſited, and the expectation of a Meſſiah maintained. They had alſo been ſtrangers to the Abrahamic covenant, to that made with Iſrael at Sinai, to the covenant of royalty, and that of the prieſthood; in all which the Meſſiah was the great bleſſing, that was promiſed. So that, whatever notions they might have of a future ſtate, they had nothing on which to ground any hope of acceptance and happineſs in it; and all their expectations of that kind were mere preſumption: and whatever demons, idols, or imaginary beings they pretended to worſhip; they were indeed atheiſts, as to the only true God, and as to the effect of their fables or ſpeculations upon their conduct "in the world;" which was the ſame, or as bad, as it would have been, if they all had been avowed atheiſts: ſeeing that their abominable idolatry led them into more immorality, than it reſtrained them from; beſides the impiety inherent in it. But at length they, who had been, by nature, practice, cuſtom, and external ſituation, ſo far off from the worſhip, ſervice, love, favour and image of God, were brought nigh to him, as in Chriſt Jeſus by faith: thus they were admitted into a ſtate of acceptance, reconciliation, and friendſhip with God, through the atoning blood of Chriſt; and were become his peculiar people, and ſpiritual worſhippers.

V. 14—18.] In every ſenſe, Chriſt was to be conſidered as their Peace, the Author, Centre, and Subſtance of their reconciliation to God, and of their union with the Jewiſh believers in one church. For he had effected a cordial peace between thoſe diſcordant parties, who had ſo much deſpiſed, and even deteſted each other; by breaking down that partition-wall, which had ſo long ſeparated the Jews from the Gentiles: namely, the ceremonial law, to which the Gentiles were extremely averſe, even when otherwiſe favourable to the worſhip of Jehovah; and of which the Jews were tenacious and proud, to a degree of diſguſting bigotry. But Chriſt, by aſſuming human nature, and fulfilling, in his prieſtly character, eſpecially by his ſacriſice on the croſs, theſe typical inſtitutions, had aboliſhed them; and thus removed the and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner *ſtone*.

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

22 In whom ye alſo are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

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ground of that enmity, with which the Jews and Gentiles had behaved towards each other about them. So that this law, whoſe commands conſiſted of external ordinances, having loſt all its uſe and obligation; the Gentiles were admitted into the chriſtian church, without ſubmitting to that yoke, or being deemed unclean becauſe uncircumciſed. Thus they became one body with the believing Jews: that ſo, Chriſt might create, as it were, "One new man," conſiſting of regenerate perſons both Jews and Gentiles, united to himſelf the Head, quickened by his Spirit, walking in newneſs of life, harmonious in their worſhip and obedience, and mutually loving, and doing good to one another. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xi. v. 1—9. 1 *Cor*. c. xii:) Thus Chriſt was the Peace-maker between Jews and Gentiles: and at the ſame time, he reconciled both of them in one body unto God; for the ceremonial law implied man's ſtate of condemnation, pollution, and enmity againſt God; to whom he could not approach, except on a mercy-ſeat, and by prieſts, ſacrifices, incenſe, and purifications; being at laſt kept at a great diſtance from him: but the death of Chriſt upon the croſs took away that guilt, which was the cauſe of the enmity; that ſo, a holy God might honourably pardon and be reconciled to his rebellious creatures; and it made way for the communication of his Holy Spirit to regenerate ſinners, and ſo to deſtroy the enmity of their hearts againſt the holy character, worſhip, and ſervice of God. (Notes, &c, 2 *Cor*. c. v. ver. 17—21.) Having finiſhed this great deſign, he had come by his apoſtles and miniſters, to preach peace with God, and with each other, to the Gentiles who had been far off; and to the Jews who were outwardly nigh to God. For through the Perſon, ſacrifice, and mediation of Chriſt, ſinners of all deſcriptions were allowed acceſs to God, as a Father, and were introduced with acceptance into his preſence, with their worſhip and ſervices, under the immediate teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit, as one with the Father and the Son in this great work of ſalvation, as well as in the unity of the Godhead; (*Iſaiah*, c. lvii. v. 19.)

V. 19—22.] The Gentile believers were therefore no longer ſtrangers and aliens, excluded from the privileges of God's people; as foreigners are from thoſe of native ſubjects: but they were become fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jeruſalem, with the moſt eminent ſaints: they belonged to the houſhold of God, not only as ſervants, but as children: nay, they were made a part of the ſpiritual temple, which the outward ſanctuary had typified; having been builded upon the foundation, which prophets of old, and apoſtles of late had laid in their doctrine: of which foundation, and of the whole ſuperſtructure, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf was the chief corner ſtone, the centre of union, the cement, and ſupport. In, or upon him, the whole building, being fitly framed according to the counſel and plan of the divine Architect, grew up to an holy temple in the Lord; being dedicated to his glory, the place of his ſpecial preſence and power, in which he delighted to be worſhipped. Thus by the continual converſion of ſinners, and the progreſſive ſanctification of believers; whilſt each individual in his proper place, conduces to the ſtability and proportion of the whole, and is himſelf conſecrated and preſerved by being a part of it; the ſpiritual temple is erecting from age to age; until it's full completion in heaven. So that the Gentiles, being *in* Chriſt by faith, were builded on this foundation, laid by prophets and apoſtles, whoſe predictions and doctrine related to the chief corner ſtone: thus they became a part of the temple, together with Jewiſh believers; for the ſpecial in-dwelling of God, who in and through his Holy Spirit dwelled and reigned in them, communicated his peculiar bleſſings, and was glorified by them. (1 *Cor*. c. vi. v. 19, 20. 2 *Cor*. c. vi. v. 16. 1 *Pet*. c. ii. v. 4—9.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot duly value the goſpel, unleſs we are convinced that we are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and muſt have periſhed, if God had left us to ourſelves, as he moſt juſtly might have done. Yet, when we had neither capacity for, nor title to, happineſs, when we were unable to help ourſelves, and unwilling to try; we were utterly inſenſible of our danger, ready to vindicate our conduct, and perhaps proud of our wiſdom, ſtrength, and goodneſs! This is ſtill the caſe with the multitudes, "who "walk according to the courſe of this world," or in the broad way of deſtruction: for they, who go with the ſtream, who will be in the faſhion, and live in pleaſure, "are dead whilſt they live." They ſeek liberty in the bondage of ſatan; and that prince of the power of the air illudes his numerous votaries with gay phantoms of fancied good, and enables them to build magnificent palaces in his unſubſtantial element; that they may neglect "the gift of God, which is eternal life." Thus millions copy his example of rebellion, and do as he would have them. He ſtill worketh in the hearts of the children of diſobedience: he prompts his miniſters of unrighteouſneſs and infidelity: and whilſt he emboldens them to deride the ſcripture doctrine of divine influences, and the agency of good and evil ſpirits; he muſt feel an horrid pleaſure mingled with contempt of their folly, who are thus deluded by his palpable deceptions. Thus, there is a black inſpiration; and ſatan and his angels working on men's pride, enmity, and love of ſin, teach them to invent, propagate and ingeniouſly defend their impious or infidel notions, in excuſe or palliation of their ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts. But indeed, in one way or other, we have all had our converſation among theſe children of diſobedience, under ſatan's influence, and fulfilling the deſires of our carnal minds: and

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Speaking of his impriſonment for preaching to the Gentiles; of his gracious appointment to that office, and the manifold advantages of it, &c, 1---12. 2*d. Praying fervently for the Epheſians, that they might be abundantly ſtrengthened, enlightened, ſanctified, and comforted, and concluding with animated praiſes,* 13---21.

FOr this cauſe I Paul, the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt for you Gentiles;

on the broad ground of ſcripture we may aſſert with confidence, that whether men have been moſt prone to ſenſual, or to ſpiritual wickedneſs, all are alike *by nature* the children of wrath: that they are yet dead in ſin, who oppoſe this humbling tenet; and that their ſtate is very dubious, who know nothing of it in their own caſe. In proportion as we thus judge of ourſelves, ſo will be our apprehenſions of Chriſt, and his ſalvation: the more fully we perceive our guilt and pollution, the greater will be our aſtoniſhment in contemplating the greatneſs of the love, and the rich mercy of our God: and we ſhall not only allow the gift of Chriſt, of pardon, and of eternal life to be moſt free; but we ſhall aſcribe the change, that we have experienced in our converſion, to the abundant love of God to us, even when we were dead in ſin. By his power we were quickened together with Chriſt: he taught us to aſpire to an inheritance in the heavenly places, with our riſen and aſcended Redeemer: and theſe conſiderations will excite us now to adore the exceeding riches of the grace of God, in his kindneſs towards us; which will be the admiration, and delightful theme of all holy creatures, throughout a bleſſed eternity. When we conſider the infinite majeſty of God, the immenſity of the creation, the meanneſs and wretchedneſs of man, and the ſtupendous plan of redemption; we ſhall not be able to account for ſuch favour ſhewn to us; except we reflect, that the exceeding riches of divine grace, will be proportionably diſplayed, and glorified in the view of the whole creation, on account of each of theſe circumſtances, and of many others, to eternal ages. Therefore "we are ſaved by grace, "through faith, and that not of ourſelves, it is the gift "of God:" for if it had been at all of works, or man could in any reſpect have boaſted: the glory of God therein had not been complete. Yet let none infer, that this is an unholy ſalvation: for all, who partake of it are "God's workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto "good works," and his purpoſe, and efficacious operation concur in ſecuring the holineſs of true believers: ſo that none can, on the ground of ſcripture, either abuſe the doctrine to licentiouſneſs, or accuſe it of that tendency: and all, who attempt either of theſe things are "without excuſe."

But, beſides the general ruined ſtate of man, every one of us ſhould recollect thoſe peculiarities of ſituation, character, and diſpoſition, which ſet us at a greater diſtance from ſalvation, than others of our fellow ſinners. The immoral and licentious conduct of ſome; the impiety, infidelity, or dangerous hereſies of others; the phariſaical pride of many; and the utter diſregard to, or ignorance of, even the forms, and principles of religion in numbers; with a variety of other matters, had rendered the caſe of ſome perſons peculiarly perilous, and ſhould increaſe their humility and gratitude, if at length they have been converted. Many of us were once without the external knowledge of Chriſt, at a diſtance from the profeſſion of his goſpel, ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe; having no thought about, or hope of, future happineſs, and living as atheiſts in the world. Theſe things ſhould be brought into the account, in order to increaſe our love and zealous obedience; if we, who once were ſo far off, are brought nigh by the blood of Chriſt. Through this great Peace-maker, how near may we chief of ſinners approach to a reconciled God! How harmoniouſly then ſhould believers live together, as members of one body, and children of one family! May his grace reconcile all, who profeſs his truth, to God, and to each other! May every partition-wall be pulled down, and every enmity ſlain, which prevent the complete union of chriſtians, as One New Man in Chriſt! May he go with his miniſters to the ends of the earth; preaching peace to thoſe that are afar off! May his goſpel be more ſucceſsfully diſpenſed among thoſe, that are nigh! May ſinners every where ſeek, and find acceſs to the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit! If we are experimentally acquainted with this way of acceſs to our reconciled God; we are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, whatever once we were; but fellow-citizens of the Saints, and of the houſhold of God. We have no "law of commandments contained in ordinan-"ces," to keep us in bondage, to drive us to a diſtance, or excite enmity among brethren; except ſuch as are of human invention. Chriſt's inſtitutions, (as well as his moral precepts,) are ſuited to help our approach to, and walk with God, to excite our holy affections, and to conduce to our peace with one another; when properly underſtood, and put in their proper place. Sinners in theſe far diſtant regions, now hear Chriſt preaching peace to them, and are invited to ſeek acceſs to God through Him: but believers are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt being the chief corner ſtone; that they may be an habitation of God through the Spirit. Let us then enquire, whether we are builded on this foundation? Whether our hopes are fixed on Chriſt, according to the doctrine of his word? Whether we have devoted ourſelves as a holy temple to God through him? Whether we are an habitation of God by the Spirit, are ſpiritually minded, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? If this be our experience and privilege: let us take heed not to defile the temple of God, nor to grieve our holy Comforter: let us deſire his gracious preſence with, and influences upon, our hearts: let us endeavour to fill up the place aſſigned us, to the glory of God; and let us ſtudy to promote the peace and purity of the holy temple to which we belong, and to forward that work, whereby it is continually attaining to its full perfection.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—7.] Many expoſitors ſuppoſe, all between this firſt verſe, and the beginning of the next chap-

2 If ye have heard of the diſpenſation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the myſtery; as I wrote afore in few words;

4 Whereby when ye read ye may underſtand my knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt,

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apoſtles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt by the goſpel:

7 Whereof I was made a miniſter, accordding to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt:

9 And to make all *men* ſee what *is* the fel-

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ter, to be a kind of parentheſis: but it is far more obvious to render the ſentence "for this cauſe I Paul *am* the priſoner, &c." His zealous preaching to the Gentiles, and admitting them into the chriſtian church without circumciſion, &c, which implied the abrogation of the Moſaic law, had ſo irritated the Jews, that they had ſeized on him at Jeruſalem; in conſequence of which, he was at this time a priſoner at Rome, in the cauſe of Chriſt, and for the ſake of the Gentiles. As he was therefore the priſoner of Chriſt for them, they ought to read his epiſtle with peculiar attention. *Since* they had heard of the manner in which he had been converted, and entruſted with a diſpenſation to preach the goſpel of the grace of God, as the apoſtle of the Gentiles: and how Chriſt, by immediate revelation, had made known to him the myſtery of his love: as he had briefly written to them in the preceding chapters; on an attentive peruſal of which, they would readily perceive his extenſive knowledge of the myſtery of Chriſt, in which ſome thought him defective. This had not in former ages been made known to mankind with that clearneſs, with which it had at length been revealed to the holy apoſtles and prophets of Chriſt by the Holy Spirit: eſpecially it had not been underſtood, that the Gentiles, without being proſelyted to the Moſaic law, ſhould be admitted to be fellow-heirs with the Jews of their covenanted bleſſings, forming with them one myſtical body, and embracing the goſpel. Of this new diſpenſation Paul had been made a miniſter: having received the gratuitous pardon of his own ſins, and abundant mercy and favour from God; and having been effectually changed by the powerful operation of his Spirit, and qualified for that important ſervice. Many perſons explain the myſtery ſpoken of in theſe verſes, *excluſively* of the calling of the Gentiles: yet the apoſtle ſeems rather to have meant the complex myſtery of redemption, according to the purpoſe of God in Chriſt, which in the fulneſs of time introduced a new diſpenſation, terminated the old one, and ſo opened the way for the Gentiles into the church, by faith in Chriſt, in ſuch a manner as the Jews had not previouſly thought of.

V. 8. *Unto me*, &c.] The apoſtle here formed a new word, to expreſs the deep ſenſe he had of his own unworthineſs: this is very properly rendered "leſs than the leaſt;" as it is a comparative, formed from the ſuperlative degree of the Greek adjective, ſignifying *little*. He ſeems not merely to have adverted to his former perſecuting enmity, &c: that made him deem himſelf the chief of ſinners; but here he ſpake of himſelf as a ſaint, though moſt mean, and unworthy of that title. In general, we muſt aſcribe this to his unaffected humility, his ſelf-knowledge, acquaintance with the holy law, near communion with God, and candour towards his brethren: and perhaps thoſe humiliating infirmities, of which he repeatedly ſpake, were in ſome degree taken into the account. But the conſideration of his peculiarly aggravated crimes, before converſion, and the unparallelled mercy and favour, that had been ſhewn him, gave him ſuch a ſenſe of his immenſe obligations, and of the returns of love, gratitude, zeal and holineſs, which became *him*; that he deemed his attainments and experience farther beneath the proper ſtandard, than thoſe of any other true chriſtian. Surely, thought he, no other believer loves the Lord, in a degree ſo diſproportioned to his obligations as I do! All his external obedience, labours, uſefulneſs, and even ſufferings would be conſidered as ſo many additional favours beſtowed on him: and that coldneſs of affection, or riſing of evil in the heart, which he could bear with in others, he deemed inexcuſable in himſelf! Yet this did not lead him to doubt of his being a ſaint; but only to ſtand more amazed at the love of the Lord towards him; and under this impreſſion, he uttered the feelings of his heart in ſuch energetic language, as but few can uſe with propriety or ſincerity: though many employ the words; rather as expreſſive of what they ought to mean, than of what they do feel concerning themſelves; and ſome perhaps, as affecting the praiſe of humility. On ſo great a ſinner, and ſo unworthy a believer, was this aſtoniſhing grace conferred; that he ſhould be employed as an apoſtle, to preach among the idolatrous Gentiles, through many nations, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt! The vaſtneſs of the divine Redeemer's condeſcenſion and mercy; the preciouſneſs of his blood, and purchaſed ſalvation; the fulneſs laid up in Him, and the freeneſs, with which it was beſtowed; the privileges of his people, and their glorious inheritance; theſe riches of Chriſt, which were not provided for himſelf, or for holy creatures, but purchaſed for the vileſt of ſinners; for the payment of their debts, the ranſom of their ſouls, and the enriching of them to all eternity; which ſufficed for all the multitudes that ever had come, or ſhould come to Him for them, how many ſoever they were; which never could be exhauſted or diminiſhed by the moſt liberal and profuſe communication of them; or leave the glorious and gracious Proprietor leſs rich than before, to the ages of eternity: theſe are the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; and they baffle even the powers of computation, they are incomlowſhip of the myſtery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt:

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God,

11 According to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord:

12 In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him.

13 Wherefore I deſire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

14 For this cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named;

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do ex-

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rehenſible and infinite! This was the great ſubject of the apoſtle's miniſtry among the Gentiles, whom he called to come and partake of theſe unſearchable riches, by faith in Chriſt. It may be very uſeful to compare the animated language of this chapter, with the cold reaſonings of modern theologicians, and their extreme caution leſt they ſhould ſpeak too highly of Chriſt and his ſalvation!

V. 9—13.] The end of this preaching was, that men of all nations and deſcriptions might perceive the happy fellowſhip or partnerſhip (ſo to ſpeak), of Jews and Gentiles, in the bleſſings of ſalvation; according to the myſterious plan, which had been formed from the beginning in the counſels of God, but had been hid from his creatures in general; ſave as he had given ſome previous intimations of it by his prophets, and had at length more fully diſcovered it by Jeſus Chriſt; by whom, as the eternal Word, he at firſt created all things, and was now effecting a glorious new creation. (*John*, c. i. v. 1—4.) To the intent that angels and archangels, even the principalities and powers, who were around his throne in heavenly places, and had from the beginning witneſſed and adored the diſplays of his wiſdom, in the works of creation and providence, ſhould now diſcover ſtill more ſurpriſing, and beautifully varied diſplays of it, in his church of redeemed ſinners: whilſt they beheld rebels changed into ſpiritual worſhippers; all the Perſons and perfections of the Godhead, more abundantly glorified, even by means of man's apoſtacy; ſatan's devices turned againſt him, and the moſt diſcordant characters united in one loving family, or as one body in Chriſt. All this accorded to the purpoſe of God, which from eternity he had conceived in his infinite mind, of ſaving ſinners in, and by, Chriſt Jeſus our Lord: through faith in him, and an intereſt in his ſalvation, both Jewiſh and Gentile believers, had obtained the privilege of coming before God with a humble boldneſs; notwithſtanding their reverence of his infinite majeſty and purity; and with a confidence of being accepted, and receiving abundant bleſſings, notwithſtanding their conſcious guilt and pollution. As therefore ſuch honour redounded to God, and ſuch bleſſings were conferred on men, through the preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles: the apoſtle was well ſatisfied with his ſufferings on that account, and deſired the Epheſians not to be diſcouraged, or turn aſide from their profeſſion, on accout of them: either for fear of being expoſed to ſimilar perſecutions from the Jews, or through the inſinuations of Judaizing teachers, who might attempt to prove that Paul had done wrong in diſregarding the legal ceremonies, and had thus needleſsly expoſed himſelf to perſecution. Whereas his conſtant and patient endurance of ſuch ſufferings, in defence of the liberty of the Gentile churches, was indeed an honour to them; it manifeſted the importance of their cauſe in his judgment, and it ſhewed the temper of the bigotted Jews: and it ſhould therefore animate them to ſtand faſt in the liberty of the goſpel.

V. 14—19.] The apoſtle could not go, as formerly, to eſtabliſh the churches by his perſonal exhortations, &c, but his affectionate deſire of their proſperity was unabated: ſo that in his impriſonment he bowed his knees in conſtant prayer for them, unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus: of whom the whole family of believers on earth, and ſaints and angels in heaven, are named and conſidered as the children of God, being gathered together in one in Chriſt. (c. i. v. 10.) To this Father of Chriſt, and of the whole family the apoſtle prayed, that according to the riches of his mercy, which were emphatically his glory, he would grant the Epheſians to be powerfully ſtrengthened, by his Holy Spirit, in all the holy diſpoſitions of their renewed ſouls, in faith, reverential fear, love, gratitude, hatred of ſin, hope, patience, &c; that thus they might be ſtedfaſt amidſt temptations and perſecutions, enjoy comfort, and glorify God in every ſituation and duty. That Chriſt being welcomed into their hearts, by faith, to be their Lord and Saviour, he might dwell there as the ſovereign of all their affections and actions, and the ſource of all their joys: that ſo they might be rooted, as a tree in a deep and fertile ſoil, and eſtabliſhed as a building on a firm foundation; by their ſupreme love to Chriſt, and his ſalvation, cauſe, people and ſervice; and thus be ſecured from turning aſide, or growing negligent, and be rendered ſtable and fruitful in their profeſſion. That they might alſo be enabled to apprehend and underſtand, as all true ſaints did, in ſome

ceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think, according to the power that worketh in us;

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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meaſure, the vaſtneſs of the love of Chriſt to his people. This had in it a breadth commenſurate with the boundaries of the earth, as it extended to ſinners of every nation and character; a length equal to the duration of the world, yea, in ſome ſenſe, to eternity itſelf: and a depth and height which might be contemplated in the abject ſtate of deſerved wretchedneſs, in which Chriſt viewed ſinners from the height of his eſſential glory; the depth of ſuffering and abaſement to which he ſtooped for their ſalvation; and the height of preſent privilege and future felicity to which he advanced them. In ſhort, the apoſtle prayed, that they might ſpiritually and experimentally know more of the love of Chriſt; which yet paſſed the knowledge of all created beings, and could never be fully underſtood; being in all reſpects infinite and incomprehenſible; that they might be ſo filled with heavenly knowledge, holy affections and conſolations, as to leave no room in their ſouls for error, ignorance, ſin, or infelicity; but that the fulneſs of God's power, grace, light, love, and joy might wholly occupy their hearts; and that their powers might be ſo enlarged, as to receive more and more of them, till they ſhould be filled with all the fulneſs of God, as his temple, with his glorious and felicitating preſence.

V. 20, 21.] The apoſtle added to his moſt enlarged petitions, an act of adoration ſuited ſtill more to exalt the expectations of the reader. He aſcribed glory to God, as able, not only to do all that he had aſked for them; but *above all*, *abundantly above all*, *exceeding abundantly above all*; not only that he, or the Epheſians had aſked, *but could aſk*, *or even think!* So that they might ſtretch their thoughts, enlarge their deſires, and multiply their moſt comprehenſive petitions to the utmoſt; yet they never could reach the whole of what God was able to beſtow upon them; or what he honourably could do for them in Chriſt Jeſus. Nay all, that yet remained to be done, in order to complete their felicity and glory, in ſoul and body, was but according to that power which had effected their redemption from the dominion of ſatan, and their new creation to holineſs; and ſtill upheld, preſerved, and renewed them, amidſt all their temptations and trials. To this God of power and grace unſpeakable, the apoſtle moſt earneſtly deſired, that glory, adoration and praiſe ſhould continually be rendered in every part of the church, by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all the ages of time, and to all eternity: and he cloſed this moſt rapturous act of devotion, by affixing his Amen to theſe his prayers and praiſes. In attempting to explain ſuch ſcriptures, it is almoſt impoſſible to avoid comparative flatneſs and inſipidity; an inſpired penman alone could do juſtice to them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we ſhould be called to ſuffer, even unto bonds, in the cauſe of truth, and as the priſoners of Chriſt, we may hope to endure the croſs with that unconcern and ſatiſfaction which holy Paul expreſſed: but our feelings would be very different, if we ſhould ſuffer as evil-doers, or as buſy-bodies in other men's matters. This ſhould teach chriſtians in general, and miniſters eſpecially, to confine themſelves to their proper work, to which the diſpenſations of providence and of divine grace have called them; and to ſeek continual inſtructions from the Lord, both as to the myſteries of the goſpel, and the path of duty: that ſo their profiting in the knowledge of Chriſt, and their fitneſs for the work aſſigned them, may be evident to all men. We enjoy vaſt advantages for theſe ſtudies; as the myſteries of redeeming love were not made known even to ancient prophets, as they now are to believers in general, who are acquainted with the word of revelation: and our encouragement is proportionably great; as we ſinners of the Gentiles are fellow-heirs with the ancient people of God, in all the promiſed bleſſings, if we indeed are *in Chriſt*, by believing the goſpel. The gift of the grace of God, and the effectual working of his power, are neceſſary to form a poor ſinner into a faithful miniſter: and deep humility united with exalted thoughts of Chriſt and his unſearchable riches, are invariable characteriſtics of thoſe, who are thus appointed to the work. Indeed, when we conſider our own ſinfulneſs by nature and practice; and contraſt the poverty of our attainments, the coldneſs of our affections, and the manifold defilements of our conduct, with our obligations, opportunities, and the glorious theme on which we are to inſiſt; we may well tremble at the thoughts of preaching in the name of ſo holy and exalted a Saviour, even to the meaneſt of our fellow-rebels. But then, thoſe unſearchable riches of Chriſt, which we would recommend to others, may give ample encouragement to our own hearts: and our deepeſt humiliation will not abate our confidence of hope, if we duly advert to the power and love of our Redeemer. His riches are as unſearchable as ever: we ſhould therefore invite the chiefeſt of ſinners to leave their gilded joys and glittering indigence, to come and be enriched by Chriſt. We ſhould deſire that all men might know the bleſſedneſs of the communion of the ſaints, with God, and with each other, through the myſtery of the Perſon and mediation of Emmanuel; by whom all worlds were created, and our ſouls were redeemed. Whilſt angels adore the manifold wiſdom of God in his church of ranſomed ſinners, the ignorance of ſelf-wiſe and carnal men deem the whole deſign to be fooliſhneſs! But ſinners, who by faith are admitted to ſhare thoſe bleſſings, according to the eternal purpoſe of God in Chriſt, behold ſome glimpſes of this glory, and are here trained up for the adorations of heaven. With humble boldneſs and reverential confidence, they are taught to approach the throne of grace by the faith of Chriſt: and thus they receive ſuch ſupports and conſolations, as keep them from fainting on account of thoſe tribulations which ſatan and wicked men employ to diſcourage them.

Men of generous minds often conſider more the effects which their ſufferings may have on others, than their own feelings under them: and they who know human nature,

CHAP. IV.

Contains exhortations to believers, 1ſt. To a conſiſtent walk, in humility and love, as united by manifold endearing bonds, 1---6. *2d. To a peaceful improvement of gifts, and performance of duties, for the good of the church; from regard to the aſcended Saviour, and the nature of his communications, and appointments for the edification of his ſaints, &c,* 7---16. *3d. To a conduct peculiarly diſtinguiſhed from the Gentiles around them; as taught of Chriſt, dead to ſin, and renewed to the divine image,* 17---24. *4th. To avoid deceit, anger, diſhoneſty, and vain diſcourſe; to beware of grieving the Holy Spirit; to diligence, and holy converſe; and to meekneſs, and kindneſs, after the example of the love of God in Chriſt,* 25---32.

I Therefore, the priſoner of the Lord, beſeech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm,

6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above

will fear leſt others ſhould faint on account of thoſe trials, which indeed are their glory. The inſtructions and admonitions of miniſters, or others ſhould always be watered, as it were, with fervent prayers: and we may ſerve our brethren or relatives in this way, when precluded from all other methods. Whilſt therefore we bow our knees before the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the Father of his whole family in heaven and earth; we ſhould not fail to ſupplicate him in behalf of others, in every part of the world; remembering the riches of his glory, and intreating him to deal with us, and them, according thereto. Nor can we do better than often to advert to, and enlarge upon the petition before us; whether we are praying for ourſelves, or our fellow-chriſtians. We ſhould deſire, that the Lord would grant unto us, that we might be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit, in all the graces of the *new man*; that our hearts may be made the throne, and temple of the Lord Jeſus; that in the daily exerciſe of faith, we may realize his gracious preſence, and experience his ſanctifying conſolations, and become more entirely devoted to his ſervice: that being rooted and grounded in love to him and his cauſe, we may become fruitful in every good work, and in the profeſſion of our faith in Him: that thus we may underſtand, experience, and enjoy more and more of his boundleſs love; which paſſeth all comprehenſion, and will be more and more diſcovered, and adored to all eternity: that ſo at length, we may be filled with all the fulneſs of God. In aſking for ſuch enlarged bleſſings for ourſelves and for all our brethren, we ſhould not be ſtraitened in our own minds; as we are not in our gracious God. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all, that we ever yet aſked, or thought, or ever ſhall be able to aſk or think, as long as we live: let us then enlarge our expectations, and multiply our ſupplications; encouraged by what He hath already done for his church, and by his regenerating and upholding our ſouls: being aſſured that the converſion of ſinners, and the increaſing light, holineſs, and comfort of believers, will redound, in more abundant adorations, and thankſgivings, to his glory by Chriſt Jeſus, in his whole church, and through the ages of eternity. Amen So be it. Let thy name, O Lord, be thus hallowed on earth, as it is, and ever ſhall be in thy holy habitation above!

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—6] The apoſtle again reminded the Epheſians, that he was the Lord's priſoner; and he admoniſhed them, as one, who muſt be allowed to have had their welfare very nearly at heart. In general he beſought them to let their habitual conduct in the world, and among themſelves, be worthy of, and meet for their high vocation. The privileges, and proſpects, to which the free grace of God had called them, from their ſtate of wretched idolatry; the obligations conferred, the motives and encouragements afforded, them; and every thing in the character, doctrine, and love of Chriſt, as well as the nature of their future inheritance, required of them a peculiar temper and conduct; which he was about to point out to them in a variety of particulars. Eſpecially he muſt exhort them to behave with humility, and ſelf-abaſement, without ſelf-preference, boaſting, emulation, or contempt of others; and with meekneſs, gentleneſs, and long-ſuffering amidſt inſults and injuries; as well as a diſpoſition to forbear with one another in love, as to thoſe occaſions of offence, or diſguſt, which could not be wholly avoided, even among believers in their preſent imperfect ſtate. Thus they ought ſtudiouſly, and diligently to endeavour after peace and harmony with each other, according to the ſuggeſtions of the Holy Spirit; whoſe in-dwelling in all their hearts was the cauſe of their unity as chriſtians, and ſhould influence them to live together, as bound in the cloſeſt amity, and the neareſt of all alliances: notwithſtanding ſome leſſer differences of ſentiment, and the manifold defects to be diſcerned in each other. For in truth, the whole church was one body, of which every believer was a member, and Chriſt the Head: this body was animated, as it were by one life, or ſoul, even the omnipreſent Spirit of Chriſt: all believers were called to hope for the ſame eternal happineſs, on the ſame ground of God's word, warranted by the ſame experience of his converting grace: they had all One Lord, Ruler, Protector, and Judge, under whom they had their ſeveral employments allotted them: they had all one faith, both as to its Object, Author, nature, and efficacy: and they all believed the ſame doctrines, in the great eſſentials of religion: they had all been admitted into the church by one baptiſm, with water, into the name of the all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt.

8 Wherfore he ſaith, When he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he aſcended, what is it but that he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that deſcended is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave ſome, apoſtles; and ſome, prophets; and ſome, evangeliſts; and ſome paſtors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt:

14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, *and* cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things which is the head, *even* Chriſt:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of itſelf in love.

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt, as the ſign of regeneration, and the outward ſeal of the new covenant: and they were all, whether Jews or Gentiles, become the worſhippers of One God, even the Father of all; who was infinitely above, and abſolute Ruler over, all creatures; who pervaded, ſuſtained, and acted by all, as his inſtruments; and who was indeed in them all, through Chriſt, and by his holy Spirit, being perſonally diſtinct from, yet myſteriouſly one with the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. (c. i v. 22. c. ii. v. 17.) Thus they had every poſſible motive to live in love and peace, as being united in ſo many important and endearing particulars. All diviſions and diſcords in ſuch circumſtances muſt be peculiarly incongruous: yet pride, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-will, ambition, reſentment, the devices of falſe brethren, and the ſtratagems of ſatan, would tend to diſunion; and it would require their moſt prudent and ſtrenuous endeavours to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

V 7—16.] The common Head and Lord of this one body had conferred on every individual member, gifts and grace, according to that meaſure, by which, in his ſovereign wiſdom he proportioned his communications to the wants and circumſtances of his ſaints. This therefore every one ought thankfully to receive, and quietly to employ for the benefit of the whole, without envying, coveting, or diſputing. With reference to this matter, the Lord had ſpoken by the Pſalmiſt concerning the victories and exaltation of the Meſſiah; that when he aſcended up on high, and led captive thoſe enemies, who had enſlaved the human race, he received gifts, for that he might beſtow them, upon rebellious men, &c. (Note, &c. *Pſalm* lxviii. v. 18.) Now if Jehovah, who was there ſpoken of, *aſcended*, what doth this imply, but that he previouſly deſcended into theſe lower parts of the earth? So that his incarnation, abaſement, death, and burial, in human nature, previous to his reſurrection and aſcenſion, were evidently pointed out by the prophet. He who thus deſcended and abaſed himſelf, was the very ſame Perſon who alſo aſcended up far above all heavens, as placed over all the inhabitants of them; that he might fulfil all things relative to his mediatorial undertaking; that from his fulneſs he might fill his church and all believers with his abundant gifts and graces; and that he might fill heaven and earth with his glory. (c. i. v. 22, 23.) Being thus exalted, he firſt qualified and endowed with the Holy Ghoſt his choſen apoſtles, as his gifts to men; that through their miniſtry, and by the laying on of their hands, ſinners might be partakers of his ſalvation, and of abundant ſpiritual gifts and miraculous powers. He next qualified and raiſed up prophets, or extraordinary teachers endued with the gift of prophecy, and acting in ſubordination to the apoſtles, in ſpreading his goſpel; others he qualified to be evangeliſts, to preach the goſpel from city to city, as aſſiſtants to the apoſtles, and acting by their directions: moreover he qualified and appointed ſtated paſtors and teachers in the different churches, to carry on the work begun by the apoſtles, &c. Thus the aſcended Saviour, by ſending forth able and faithful miniſters, gave gifts unto men, as through their labours he communicated all other ſpiritual bleſſings. This appointment was intended for the perfecting of the ſaints, in knowledge and holineſs, as well as completing of their numbers, by the performance of the ſeveral parts of the miniſterial work; or for the perfecting of other holy perſons to perform in their turn the work of the miniſtry, for edifying or building up the ſpiritual temple: by bringing ſinners, through faith, to be built on the true foundation; and by increaſing the fitneſs of believers for their ſeveral ſtations in the church; in order to the beauty, harmony, and proportion of the whole. Or conſidering the church as the body of Chriſt, it was intended to nouriſh and mature that body, till all believers were brought to that unity of faith and agreement in doctrine; and that ſpiritual and experimental knowledge of the Son of God, in his Perſon, glory, and ſalvation, as iſſuing in love, confidence, obedience and conformity; which would render the whole "a perfect man," 17 This I ſay therefore, and teſtify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart:

19 Who being paſt feeling have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.

20 But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt;

21 If ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former converſation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts;

23 And be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

25 Wherefore, putting away lying, ſpeak

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complete in every member, ſenſe, and organ, and all grown up to maturity, according to that meaſure of capacity, gifts and grace, which Chriſt allotted to every individual, in order to the proportion of the ſtature of his myſtical body, "the fulneſs of him who filleth all in all!" That ſo the church on earth may in each ſucceſſive generation bear ſome proportion to the whole aſſembled company when perfected in number, in knowledge, holineſs, union and felicity, in heaven. That thenceforth believers ſhould not be, as many had been, like children in knowledge and experience; and ſo through inſtability, want of judgment, and weakneſs of faith, liable to be toſſed to and fro, as ſhips without balaſt, by the waves of the ſea, or carried about like clouds with the wind, by the falſe and pernicious doctrines, which ſubtle and ingenious men deviſed; and by the plauſible reaſonings and pretences with which they propagated them; and thus, as ſatan's miniſters, waylaid profeſſors of the goſpel, to deceive and pervert them, for their own ambitious and ſelfiſh purpoſes. To prevent the diviſion, ſcandals, and deluſions ariſing from the cunning craftineſs of ſuch deceivers, and the unſuſpecting credulity of weak chriſtians, apoſtles, prophets, evangeliſts, &c, had been appointed; and every believer had his meaſure of ſpiritual gifts beſtowed on him; that he might improve it to promote the purity, peace, and edification of the church. Thus all chriſtians, as well as miniſters, being taught *to hold* or *maintain* the truth in love; uprightly profeſſing, living upon and defending the great truths of the goſpel, in meekneſs towards all men, and love of one another, might grow up in all things to a nearer communion with, and conformity to Chriſt, by influence derived from him, and by obſerving his directions; as members in that body of which he is the Head, from whom the whole receives all its life, vigour and ſpiritual health; and being fitly proportioned and cloſely united, through the gifts, grace, and ſervices of each individual, and with the effectual operation of Chriſt by his Spirit, according to his appointed meaſure in every part, continual increaſe is made to it, both by the converſion of ſinners, and the ſanctification of believers; and the whole is edified, united, adorned, and advanced, in love of Chriſt and of every one to the other, with all the happy effects and fruits of love. In this reſpect the church reſembles the human body, which conſiſts of various members, &c, united by joints, ligaments, ſinews, &c: each part being proportioned to its place, and fitted for its uſe; the whole being compacted into one ſyſtem, by the nerves, arteries, veins, &c, and the circulations continually carrying on from the head and the heart through every part of the whole. Thus it grows up from infancy to manhood, and is preſerved in vigour and activity; whilſt every part performs its proper function, in union with, and and under the direction of the head, in perfect harmony with all the reſt, and for the common good. This ſhews the intent, tendency, and duties of the ſeveral ſtations of chriſtians in the church; and if theſe were more attended to, the reſemblance would be more manifeſt, and the effects unſpeakably beneficial. (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xii.)

V. 17—24.] In order, that by love the Epheſians might ſerve one another, the apoſtle next called upon them, not only as a friendly monitor, but as teſtifying and charging them in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jeſus; that they ſhould not thenceforth, after having profeſſed the goſpel, conduct themſelves in the ſame manner, that the unconverted Gentiles did; but ſhould mark ſuch a diſtinction of temper and behaviour as became their vocation. For the Gentiles around them walked "in the vanity of their mind;" their vain ſpeculations and carnal affections concurred in influencing them to chooſe and purſue worldly vanities, as their chief good. For their underſtanding was darkened through their pride, prejudices and luſts, and by the agency of ſatan: ſo that they were wholly averſe to that life of ſpiritual obedience which God requires and communicates, which accords to his own nature and felicity, and which is the beginning and preparation for heavenly joys. This alienation from the life of God was the effect of their groſs ignorance in every thing relating to true religion; and that ignorance aroſe not ſo much for want of capacity, or means of information, as from the blindneſs or hardneſs of their hearts, and the obſtinate depravity of their affections. Thus they ſtupified themſelves with falſe principles, corrupt fables, and habitual exceſſes, till they loſt all feeling of conſcience and ſenſe of propriety, decency and morality; and ſo gave themſelves up to the unreſtrained indulgence of their lewd inclinations, by the greedy commiſſion of the moſt unnatural and deteſtable uncleanneſs; as if their higheſt happineſs had conſiſted in theſe worſe than brutal practices. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. i. v. 18—32.) But the Epheſians had not ſo learned that religion, of which Chriſt is both the Teacher and the leſſon, the centre of all doctrines, promiſes, ordinances and duties. Indeed ſome had learned Chriſt from teachers, who paid little regard to their practice. But they had been better inſtructed; *ſeeing* they had heard Chriſt himſelf, as it were, ſpeak by his apoſtle, and had been thus taught by him, as the truth indeed was *in Jeſus*, laid up in him, as in a treaſury, every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and ſin not: let not the ſun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that ſtole ſteal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.

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to be communicated from him to his church, through his word and ordinances: or, *if ſo be* they had been taught by him, through the Spirit, as well as by his miniſters. For indeed, the truth, as it was in Jeſus, taught them, that they muſt put off, in reſpect of their whole former converſation and behaviour, the *old man*, or that ſinful nature, which they derived from fallen Adam, and which is corrupt in all its principles and affections, according to thoſe various inordinate deſires of worldly things, which mock men's expectations, deceive their ſouls, and make them deceivers of each other; and which may therefore be called "*luſts of deceit.*" The outward conduct, reſulting from this corrupt nature, muſt be caſt off at once, as a filthy garment; and the inward deſires themſelves muſt be denied, crucified, and mortified, till they be wholly aboliſhed. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. vi. v. 5, 6.) They had alſo been taught, according to the truth in Jeſus, that they muſt be continually renewed more and more, in the inward temper, judgment, and affections of their ſouls, by the power of divine grace, into the humble, ſpiritual, holy, and loving mind of Chriſt; that ſo they might put on "the new man," and that their habitual conduct might be conformed to his example, and evince that they were new created after the image of God, in righteouſneſs, and *the holineſs of truth*; even that holineſs, which ſprings from a real belief of the truth, conſiſts in uprightneſs towards God and man, and produces true and genuine peace and ſatisfaction. (Note, &c. *Gen.* c. i. v. 26. *Rom* c. xii. v. 1—3. c. xiii. v. 14.) Theſe leſſons they had been taught by the apoſtle; and by Chriſt himſelf, if they were true chriſtians: and in connexion with the means, motives, and aſſiſtances afforded them, they would effectually lead them to a conduct very different from that of their Gentile neighbours.

V. 26—28.] Let them therefore ſhew that they had put off the old man with his deeds, by laying aſide every kind of lies and deceit; let them no longer flatter, ſlander, defraud, amuſe, or compliment others, by any deviation from ſtrict ſincerity: but let every one of them ſpeak the plain truth to his neighbours, without diſguiſe, prevarication, ſimulation or diſſimulation: ſeeing that men, both in the church, and in civil ſociety were "members one of another;" and ought not in any way to deceive each other. Though it would be proper to expreſs diſpleaſure at what was wrong, on many occaſions, both in the management of their families, reproving ſin, and even ordering their temporal concerns; ſo that all anger was not to be prohibited: yet let them be ſure to reſtrain that dangerous paſſion within the bounds of reaſon, meekneſs, piety and charity; not being angry without cauſe, or above cauſe, or in a proud, ſelfiſh and peeviſh manner; not expreſſing their diſpleaſure by reproaches, or furious rage, or ſuffering it to ſettle into reſentment; but always endeavouring to ſubordinate its exerciſe to the glory of God, and the benefit of the offender himſelf, as well as that of others; and to ſhew ſtronger diſapprobation of the ſin committed againſt God, than of the injury done to themſelves. This would induce them to attend to the caution annexed "not to let the ſun "go down upon their wrath," or not to cloſe the day without forgiving and praying for thoſe, who had offended them, or expreſſing a diſpoſition to reconciliation and kindneſs. In this, and other reſpects, they muſt take care, not "to "give place to the devil," who watched his opportunity of filling their minds with rancour and malice, and of thus exciting diviſions and contentions among them. It might alſo be ſuppoſed, that when they were idolaters, they had practiſed various kinds of fraud and diſhoneſty, and that ſome of them even lived by theft, rapine or oppreſſion. Theſe might not be able to make reſtitution in every caſe: but at leaſt let them finally ceaſe from every kind and degree of this vice; and rather, than do any wrong to any man, let every one of them ſubmit to the loweſt, and moſt laborious employment, which was honeſt, and uſeful to ſociety; not only in order to provide food and raiment for himſelf and family, but that he might be able to relieve the more urgent neceſſities of his ſick and afflicted brethren and neighbours. Thus their chriſtian conduct would be as honourable, as their former behaviour had been diſgraceful.

V. 29—32.] The apoſtle furthermore exhorted them, to abſtain from all corrupt, and polluting converſation, and not to ſuffer any thought of that contagious nature, which aroſe in their hearts, to proceed out of their lips; as this would poiſon the imaginations of the hearers, when not ſo groſsly indecent as to ſhock them. On the contrary, they ought to watch their opportunity of introducing wholeſome and inſtructive diſcourſe: and to take heed, that the general tendency of their converſation was good, uſeful, and edifying; even ſuch as might be the means of communicating grace to the hearers, by the bleſſing of God upon it; either by bringing careleſs perſons to ſerious reflection, or by encouraging, warning, or quickening believers. In this, and every other reſpect they ſhould beware of "grieving the Holy Spirit of God." His ſanctifying influences,

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Contains exhortations 1ſt. To imitate the love of God in Chriſt, to avoid uncleanneſs and covetouſneſs, and all improper converſation; and to walk as children of the light, reproving the works of darkneſs, acting with circumſpection and ſobriety, and abounding in praiſe and thankſgiving, 1---20. *2d. To ſubmit one to another in relative life; with the duties of wives and of huſbands, enforced and illuſtrated by the love of Chriſt to his church, &c.* 21---33.

and conſolations had ſealed them as God's peculiar people, until the day of complete redemption, even to the general reſurrection. As a kind and wiſe friend, the Holy Spirit watched over them for their good, with infinite condeſcenſion and love: all their hope, wiſdom, ſtrength, and joy were from Him; and the only return that he required was a ready compliance with his holy ſuggeſtions, and a watchfulneſs againſt all things of a contrary tendency. But if they indulged anger, ſelfiſhneſs, deceit, ſenſual luſts, vain converſation, &c; he would act as a prudent father does, when grieved by the miſconduct of his ſon; he would hide his face; or frown, with-hold his conſolations, and leave them to darkneſs, fears, anxieties, or even to feel their weakneſs by ſuch falls, as would expoſe them to ſharp corrections. In watching againſt this; let them put away from them all bitterneſs, and harſhneſs of temper, language, and behaviour, even toward ſuch as moſt grievouſly offended them; let them avoid all ſinful anger, and clamorous diſputes, revilings, ſlanders, and reproaches; as well as all malice and reſentment: that they might be kind to, and tenderly ſympathizing with, each other, and ready to forgive, even as God, *in Chriſt*, and for his ſake had forgiven them, if indeed they were true believers. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xviii. v. 21—35. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The mind, that was in Chriſt, will teach thoſe who ſuffer for his ſake, to be more deſirous that believers ſhould walk worthy of their vocation, than of their own exemption from the croſs: and though we can do nothing towards our own juſtification; yet, by the grace of God, we may do much for the honour of the goſpel, and the benefit of mankind. A ſpiritual, humble, obedient, and holy walk is peculiarly ſuitable to the character of our Saviour, and the freeneſs of our holy Salvation; as well as to the nature of our preſent privileges, and future inheritance. Even the candour and allowance, which we need from our brethren, ſhonld teach us to act with all lowlineſs and meekneſs; with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in love. If all, who profeſs the goſpel thus "endeavoured to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," what a different face would the church of God aſſume! But alas, whilſt there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, and one God and Father of all, on whom all depend, and from whom all our hopes and comforts come; how do the remaining ignorance, bigotry, and diſproportionate zeal for little matters, even of good men; the deſigning ambition, and furious paſſions of bad men, and the artifices of the devil, defeat the endeavours of thoſe, who labour for peace, and perpetuate, yea multiply diviſions and diſſentions amongſt thoſe, who are agreed in the great eſſentials of chriſtianity. Yet let us perſevere in ſeeking, and praying for the peace of the church: for bleſſed are the peace-makers; and whatever furious zealots may ſay of them, they ſhall be called the children of God. Let us guard againſt ſpiritual pride, envy, and the ambition of popularity: let us improve our meaſure of qualification, as the gift of Chriſt, for the benefit of others, with content and quietneſs. Let us remember, that the Redeemer firſt came down from heaven, and abaſed himſelf, before he aſcended as a triumphant Conqueror, to enrich us rebels with the fruits of his victories. Thus he left us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps, and expect abaſement, ſelf-denial, and the croſs here, and honour and felicity hereafter. Whilſt chriſtians therefore ſhould be exhorted to value the faithful miniſtry of the goſpel, as the precious gift of Chriſt, and the grand means of ſalvation to their ſouls: all paſtors and teachers ſhould be reminded of the end, for which they were appointed, even "for the "perfecting of the ſaints, and for the *work* of the miniſ-"try," rather than for the emolument or reputation of it: and for the edification of the body of Chriſt; not for the indulgence of themſelves, or the advancement of their families. We ſhould then take heed to ourſelves and to our doctrine, and labour to bring thoſe, among whom we miniſter, to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, and to that maturity of judgment and experience, which may fit them to be a part of that complete body, even "according to the meaſure of the ſtature of "the fulneſs of Chriſt." For by leading believers, with gradual advances, to this ripeneſs of knowledge; we moſt effectually counteract the ſleight of men, and that cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: for their ſucceſs is chiefly amongſt unſtable profeſſors, or ſuch chriſtians, as being children in underſtanding, are liable to be toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and by every ſubtle device of the enemy. We ſhould indeed hold the truth with firmneſs, but it ſhould alſo be in love: otherwiſe, zeal for orthodoxy will dictate ſuch violent meaſures, as may more diſtract the church, and injure the cauſe of Chriſt, than falſe teachers themſelves could otherwiſe do. But in faith working by love, we grow up into Chriſt in all things, and acting in this ſpirit, every miniſter and chriſtian, as a part of that body, of which He is the Head, contributes to the proportion, union, and proſperity of the whole; according to the effectual working of Chriſt in every part; and thus the church is increaſed in holineſs, and in numbers, "by edi-"fying itſelf in love." Indeed, every congregation, where the truth is preached, will proſper and increaſe, according to the meaſure, in which this peaceful, and loving improvement of every one's talents for the common benefit, is attended to: for the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them, that make peace; but where envying and ſtrife are, there is confuſion, and every evil work.

Let us then teſtify in the Lord againſt ſuch antichriſtian tempers, as well as againſt falſe doctrines; and inſiſt upon

BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us an offering and a ſacrifice to God, for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs, let it not be once named among you, as becometh ſaints;

4 Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon, nor covetous man, who is

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it, that believers do not walk, as others do, who are Gentiles in conduct, though chriſtians in name: for the difference between *heretofore*, and *henceforth* is of vaſt importance in this matter. Alas, do not men on every ſide walk in the vanity of their minds? Is it not plain that their underſtandings are darkened and their hearts alienated from, and hardened againſt, the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them? Nay, are there not numbers, who are paſt feeling, and have given up themſelves to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs? Muſt we not then inſiſt upon the diſtinction between real, and nominal chriſtians? Indeed there are alſo profeſſors of evangelical truth, who have ſo learned Chriſt, as not to be convinced of the neceſſity of mortifying their corrupt nature and its deceitful luſts; of being renewed in the ſpirit of their minds, and of putting on the new man, as created after God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs! But if we have truly learned Chriſt from the teaching of his word and Spirit; we ſhall be daily aiming to practiſe theſe leſſons, ſeeking help from God by fervent prayer: we ſhall mourn that ſo much power yet remains in our old corrupt nature, and ſhall long to be more like our divine Maſter, in every part of our temper, and conduct. Even profeſſors of the goſpel need cautioning againſt immoralities! True believers feel this; and hypocrites detect themſelves by raging againſt ſuch warnings. They, who moſt watch, and examine themſelves, will moſt perceive the extreme difficulty of entire truth and ſincerity in all their converſation, and of avoiding every kind, and degree of falſhood: they alſo find it very difficult to feel, and expreſs anger on the moſt juſtifiable occaſions, and to perform the duties of parents, maſters, miniſters, &c, without falling into ſin and diſhonouring their profeſſion. They perceive it very neceſſary to watch and pray againſt reſentment, "leſt the ſun ſhould "go down upon their wrath," and ſo place ſhould be given for ſatan to tempt them to further tranſgreſſions: for in every thing the occaſions of his ſuggeſtions ſhould be avoided. Nay, exact and ſcrupulous honeſty is far more uncommon, than is generally imagined; and even ſome pious perſons do things, not ſtrictly juſt, for want of being inſtructed and admoniſhed after the apoſtolical manner. But whilſt the vileſt of thieves are as welcome to Chriſt, as their more moral neighbours: yet *thenceforth*, they muſt ſteal no more, whatever hard labour may be neceſſary for an honeſt livelihood. What then ſhall we think of thoſe *chriſtians*, who grow rich and live in luxury, by various frauds, oppreſſions, exceſſive profits, ſmuggling, &c, without reſtitution, or amendment! And if the poor labourer muſt give to him that needeth, what ſhall we think of them, whoſe large revenues, and immenſe expences or hoardings, are out of all proportion to their penurious givings! Even our converſation muſt be guarded, kept pure, and ſuited to miniſter grace to the hearers; if we would act according to our obligations, and character, as chriſtians. If we neglect theſe rules, we grieve the holy Spirit of God, loſe our comfort, and evidence, and bring our ſtate into ſuſpicion. Let us then watch againſt all theſe evils, and all anger and malice, &c, and copy the loving example of our God and Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1, 2.] Inſtead of the malignant paſſions mentioned towards the cloſe of the preceding chapter, the believers at Epheſus were exhorted to follow, or imitate God, as his beloved children, in all his moral perfections, eſpecially in that love, from which their ſalvation flowed. This might beſt be contemplated in the Perſon, and love of his Son, who had aſſumed human nature, and given himſelf for them, an offering or ſacrifice to God; which was to him a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, in alluſion to the typical ſacrifices, that were conſumed on the altar. Not that the Father took pleaſure in the ſufferings of his beloved Son, in themſelves; but his juſtice and holineſs were glorified in them, and a way was thus opened for the exerciſe of mercy towards thoſe, who deſerved his awful vengeance; and in this he was well pleaſed. As the Father appointed and provided this ſacrifice, and from love to us gave his beloved Son for our ſins; and as Jeſus declared, that He and the Father were One: ſo the love of Chriſt was equivalent to that love of God, which they were to copy and walk in. Compaſſion for the deſervedly miſerable, condeſcenſion to the mean and vile, a readineſs to pardon, ſelf-abaſement, ſelf-denial, &c, were all moſt illuſtriouſly manifeſted in that love, which was propoſed as the pattern for their imitation.

V. 3—7.] When the apoſtle required that theſe vices ſhould not be named among the Epheſians, he did not mean that no mention of any kind ſhould be made of them; but that they ſhould in every way expreſs their deteſtation of them, and avoid all approaches to, or occaſions of them, in themſelves and others. The ſuppoſition therefore of many learned men, that by the word here rendered *covetouſneſs*, the apoſtle meant exorbitant, unnatural ſenſual deſires, as the mention of covetouſneſs hath nothing indecent in it, ſeems to be utterly groundleſs, as well as contrary to the general uſe of the word. Covetouſneſs is really as inconſiſtent with godlineſs, as lewdneſs is; though it be ſeldom ſo ſeverely reprobated, and is more difficult to define: and the converſation of thoſe, who ſpeak as if every thing was valuable in proportion as money can be got or ſaved by it, corrupts the judgment and principles of men, though in another way, yet as effectually as obſcene diſcourſe, an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 For ye were ſometime darkneſs, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth;)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove *them*.

12 For it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done of them in ſecret.

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifeſt by the light: for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light.

14 Wherefore he ſaith, Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light,

15 See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe,

16 Redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.

It ſeems alſo to be with peculiar propriety, that the apoſtle joined this odious vice with theſe others more generally ſcandalous. Neither one nor the other were to be named among them without deteſtation; for this became, or ſuited their character as ſaints, and their relation to God as his children, members of Chriſt, temples of the holy Ghoſt, heirs of heaven, lights in the world, &c. Neither were they to admit of any indecent converſation, or any thing vain and trifling; or even of thoſe witty turns of expreſſion, by which improper ſentiments, being conveyed in an ingenious manner, obtain applauſe, inſtead of exciting indignation. Nothing of this kind could conſiſt with the character of chriſtians; who ought rather to converſe together on the mercies of God, and unite in thankſgivings for them. For the apoſtle ſuppoſed them to know, that fornicators, unclean perſons, and covetous men were out of the way to heaven. The latter were indeed idolaters, though profeſſors of chriſtianity; ſeeing they loved, truſted in, and expected happineſs from wealth, rather than God; and ſought to increaſe, or ſecure their treaſures, inſtead of ſeeking firſt his favour, image, and glory. Such perſons therefore were not truly converted; and not being ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom on earth, they were not entitled to, or meet for the inheritance of that heavenly kingdom, which God, for Chriſt's ſake, would beſtow on all true believers. Some might indeed argue aginſt this declaration: and excuſing ſuch practices, and amuſing themſelves with ſpeculations on God's mercy, and the freeneſs of ſalvation, might perſuade others, that they were not abſolutely inconſiſtent with a ſtate of acceptance. But they were exhorted to let no man deceive them with ſuch vain words; as theſe very practices brought the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience, or thoſe who perſiſted in unbelief, impenitence, and the allowed practice of ſin. When the vileſt of ſuch tranſgreſſors repented, and believed the goſpel; they became children of obedience, from whom God's wrath was turned away: but they could not expect, that He would puniſh the Gentiles for ſuch abominations, and connive at them in profeſſors of chriſtianity, who thus were convicted of hypocriſy in that profeſſion. If they therefore meant to eſcape their condemnation; let them not partake of their criminality.

V. 8—14.] The Epheſians had once been darkneſs itſelf, through total ignorance of God and his will: but now by the goſpel they were "made light in the "Lord," as One with Chriſt, the Light of the world. Let them therefore now walk as children of the Light; like perſons, that were born again into the ſpiritual world, to be trained up as heirs of the light of heaven. If they were inwardly enlightened, the holy Spirit, by whom the change had been wrought, would lead them to a ſuitable converſation: as his fruit conſiſted in all kinds of goodneſs, mercy, equity, integrity, veracity, ſincerity, and faithfulneſs; as well as in uprightneſs in their profeſſed faith, fear, and love of God. Let them then prove, or make trial of thoſe things, which God accepted and delighted in; (*Rom.* c. xii. v. 2,) and ſeek ſolid enjoyment in them: but let them have nothing to do with thoſe works of darkneſs, whence carnal men ſeek pleaſure and profit; but which are wholly unfruitful, and yield no preſent real advantage to counterbalance in any degree the future ruin they lead to. (*Rom.* c. vi. v. 21.) On the contrary, let them reprove ſuch vices in their neighbours, by refuſing to join in them, by proteſting plainly againſt them, by ſhewing their hateful nature and pernicious tendency, or by keeping a ſignificant ſilence, when more explicit reproof might be unſuitable. For indeed it was a ſhame even to ſpeak of ſome of the practices, which the heathens ſecretly committed, even in the moſt ſacred myſteries of their abominable religion! However the light of divine truth held forth in an open profeſſion, and a ſuitable walk and converſation, would not fail to detect, and expoſe the deteſtable nature of ſuch ſhameful practices. For whatever thus tended to make things manifeſt, according to their real nature, was light, and equivalent in the ſpiritual world to the light of the Sun in the natural world. With a view to this, according to the tenor of the Old Teſtament prophecies, (*Iſaiah*, c. lx. v. 1,) the Lord now called on ſinners of the Gentiles to awake from the ſleep of ſin, and their vain dreams of worldly happineſs; yea, to ariſe from the death of ſin; and Chriſt would, by his doctrine and Spirit, give them ſufficient light, to diſcover and eſcape every danger, and to find the way of peace and holineſs.

V. 15—21.] With theſe advantages, they ought to

17 Wherefore be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking to yourſelves in pſalms and hymns and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

21 Submitting yourſelves one to another in the fear of God.

22 Wives ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the huſband is the head of the wife, even as Chriſt is the Head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo *let* the wives *be* ſubject to their own huſbands in every thing.

25 Huſbands, love your wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the church, and gave himſelf for it;

26 That He might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word,

27 That he might preſent to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himſelf.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own fleſh; but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones.

31 For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and ſhall be joined unto his wiſe, and they two ſhall be one fleſh.

32 This is a great myſtery: but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the church.

ſee to it, that they walked *accurately*, or with exactneſs according to the commands, and example of Chriſt; keeping the middle way, avoiding all appearance of evil, and aiming at more complete obedience in every particular; or *circumſpectly*, cautiouſly looking at their paths, to ſhun the ſnares laid in them; not acting as heedleſs, ignorant, or fooliſh perſons, who ruſh into dangers, temptations and miſchief; but as wiſe men who are aware of, and eſcape them. As much of their lives had been waſted in heathen darkneſs, they ought alſo to improve their time for the future, the more diligently; redeeming or buying it off from other avocations, at the expence of much ſelf-denial and watchfulneſs; that they might ſpend it in religious exerciſes, or in doing good to others, according to the duty of their ſtations: for the days were evil, and the perſecutions that awaited them, might render the term of their uſefulneſs more precarious, than in more peaceful ſeaſons: ſo that if they would ſecure their own ſalvation, or ſerve their generation, no time was to be loſt. Wherefore let them not be as unwiſe ſervants, who were not prepared for their Lord's coming, and were ignorant of their work: but let them ſpare no pains to underſtand his will concerning them; that they might ſerve him intelligently, as well as zealouſly, and without giving their enemies any advantage againſt them. Inſtead of joining in, or imitating the revels of their neighbours, or ſeeking exhileration by intemperate drinking, which induced a temporary inſanity, and conſequent diſorders both of body and mind; let them wait upon God in every appointed means, for larger communications of the Holy Spirit, whoſe ſacred influences fill the ſoul with ſatisfying conſolations in every circumſtance, and tend to the happieſt conſequences in future. In order to this, let them ſubſtitute in the place of the looſe odes and ſongs of the Gentiles, or other trifling converſation, the pſalms and hymns of the ſacred ſcripture, and ſuch ſpiritual ſongs, as pious men among them compoſed, on the peculiar ſubjects of the goſpel, and according to the doctrine of truth. In theſe let them ſpeak to themſelves, or to each other; and let them attend to the affections of their hearts, that the inward melody of holy love and gratitude unto the Lord, might connect with the outward melody of poetry and ſinging, when they uſed them in this manner, either alone or in ſocial worſhip. Let them alſo give thanks *always*, even in perſecution and affliction; and *for all things*, even ſuch as nature diſreliſhed, being ſatisfied of their loving intent, and beneficial tendency: thus let them acknowledge their manifold obligations to God, even the Father, in the name of Chriſt, through whom alone bleſſings are beſtowed on ſinners, and praiſes accepted from them. At the ſame time let them ſubmit to one another, according to their different ſituations, and relations in the church, or the community, and the ſubordination eſtabliſhed by the word, or providence of God: and this ſhould be done, not ſo much from ſecular motives of propriety, and expediency, as in the fear of God, and a reverential regard to his authority, his favour, and his glory; which would obviate thoſe excuſes, that might be made for the neglect of this ſubmiſſion, on account of the conduct of ſuperior relations.

V. 22—33.] In particular, the apoſtle exhorted wives to ſubmit themſelves to their own huſbands, as a part of their obedience to the Lord, who had appointed this ſubordination, and required this ſubjection in all things lawful, for his own glory, and the benefit of mankind. For in the external arrangement of providence, the huſband was the head of the wife, as her ruler and protector;

33 Nevertheleſs let every one of you in particular, ſo love his wife, even as himſelf; and the wife *ſee* that ſhe reverence *her* huſband.

even as Chriſt was conſtituted the Head of the church, and the Saviour of that whole body. The rule of Chriſt, and the ſubjection of the church are conducive to the benefit of the latter; as Chriſt's authority is that of wiſdom and love: and in general it is beneficial even to the women, to be ſubject to their own huſbands, as the church is to Chriſt; though the rule may ſeem to admit of ſome exceptions. But to render this ſubmiſſion more eaſy, beneficial, and comfortable; huſbands alſo muſt be exhorted to love their wives, with that tender, conſtant, faithful, and compaſſionate affection, which Chriſt hath ſhewed to the church. He had even given up himſelf to the death upon the croſs, in order to ſave his elect people from their ſins; that, having atoned for their guilt, he might alſo cleanſe them from their pollution, by thoſe influences of the Holy Spirit, of which the baptiſmal water was the external ſign; and which were communicated through the word, as the inſtrument of converſion, and progreſſive ſanctification. Thus, as the heavenly Bridegroom, He prepares the whole multitude of his people, his one eſpouſed bride, for the completion of that ſacred union; that he might preſent her to himſelf, as the object of his choice, the purchaſe of his blood, and the work of his grace, a glorious, and glorified church, not having one remaining ſpot of ſin, or wrinkle of imperfection, or any thing of the kind; but made complete in holineſs, without the leaſt remaining blemiſh. This would be the effect of the love, and authority of Chriſt, when his work ſhould be accompliſhed: and in ſuch a wiſe, holy, conſtant, and tender manner, ought men to love their wives; in every thing ſeeking their comfort and advantage, ſympathizing in their ſorrows, bearing with their infirmities, and endeavouring to promote their ſalvation and ſanctification. They ought to love them, even as they do their own bodies: for ſo intimate and indiſſoluble is this endeared relation, in its original intention, and when properly entered into, and attended to; that a man in loving his wife may be ſaid to love himſelf, as her comfort and happineſs ſhould be deemed inſeparable from his own. Now no man in his ſenſes can hate his own fleſh, or take pleaſure in wounding and paining it; but ſelf-love teaches a man to nouriſh and cheriſh it; in the ſame manner that the Lord doth his church, and every believer in it, whom he graciouſly conſiders as members of his body, and as it were a part of his fleſh and of his bones: and thus ought men to love, be tender of, kind to, and provide for the comfort of their wives. To inſtruct us in this duty, the Lord by the original inſtitution of marriage, commanded men even to leave their parents, in order to join intereſts and affections with their wives, as if they became indiſſolubly one body, or one fleſh with them. All, that was contrary to this, had been the effect of ſin, and ought to be peculiarly guarded againſt: that ſo every man ſhould conſider the wife of his choice, or rather of God's choice for him, as a part of himſelf, whom he cannot abuſe, without injuring himſelf; and who cannot be hurt, without his ſharing the harm; as if any part of his own body had been wounded. Indeed the apoſtle obſerved, that the illuſtration of theſe duties, by the love of Chriſt and his church, implied a great myſtery: for he ſpake this concerning his incarnation, and myſtical union with the church of redeemed ſinners: Nevertheleſs, though that myſtery could not be fully comprehended, or in every reſpect apply to the caſe in hand; yet every man in particular might thence learn in what manner to love his wife, even as himſelf, and be ſupplied with motives ſo to do: and every woman might learn to reſpect and honour the perſon and authority of the huſband, as conſtituted her head by the law and providence of God. It is obvious, that there muſt in all caſes be manifold defects and failures on both ſides, in the preſent ſtate of human nature; and often grievous offences may be committed: yet, this does not materially alter the duty of the other relation, (except in ſome caſes elſewhere provided for.) (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xix. v. 3—9. 1 *Cor.* c. vii.) Indeed, a great part of the difficulty, and duty conſiſts in perſevering good behaviour, notwithſtanding unſuitable returns. It is obſervable that the apoſtle ſays, "let every one love *his wife*," *not wives*: ſo that polygamy is not even ſuppoſed in the exhortation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Wicked men follow the example of their father the devil, and may be known thereby as his progeny. Surely then the beloved children of God ſhould imitate his holineſs, and ſhould eſpecially walk in love with their brethren, their neighbours, and even with their enemies, as Chriſt hath loved them, &c. The perfection and obligations of this example are infinite; ſo that there is no kind or degree of ſelf-denying, liberal or forgiving love, to which it will not direct the grateful believer. We ſhould always keep our character in mind, and enquire whether this or the other conduct "becometh ſaints!" this will not only teach us, that groſs ſenſualities or avarice are utterly inconſiſtent with that relation to our God; but that every inexpedient indulgence, and every degree of ſelfiſhneſs are to be avoided. Not only filthineſs and fooliſh talking, but even witty and ingenious repartees, when in the leaſt they infringe upon purity, piety, or charity, are unſuitable to the chriſtian's profeſſion: our ſocial intercourſe ſhould be conducted in another manner, in ſubſerviency to mutual improvement; which will beſt be promoted by declaring the loving kindneſs of the Lord, and in celebrating his praiſes. We muſt not only ſpecify what practices are wrong; but in many things we muſt inſiſt upon it, that they who do them, have no inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt; and warn men not to be deceived with vain words, and ſo emboldened to thoſe crimes, for which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of diſobedience; that men may take warning, and refuſe to be partakers with them. The darkneſs of paganiſm, and even that of many nominal chriſtians, may accord with ſuch practices: but they, who profeſs the goſpel, are to be conſidered as "light in the Lord;" and if they indeed are the children of the light, the Spirit of God

CHAP. VI.

Contains exhortations, 1*ſt. To children and parents, ſervants and maſters, concerning their reſpective duties,* 1---9. 2*d. To all of them, concerning their ſpiritual warfare, and armour, &c,* 10---18. 3*d. To pray for the apoſtle; with his reaſon for ſending Tychicus, and his concluding ſalutations,* 19---24.

CHildren, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the firſt commandment with promiſe;

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

5 Servants, be obedient unto them that

will lead them far from ſuch ſcenes, and cauſe them to bring forth the fruit of goodneſs, righteouſneſs and truth. Yet, even they need exhortations to walk in the light, and to prove more fully what is acceptable to the Lord; to avoid all degrees of fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, and boldly to proteſt againſt, and reprove them in word and deed; to let the light of their holy converſation ſo ſhine before men, that ſinners may be convicted in their own conſciences, even in reſpect of thoſe ſecret crimes, of which it is a ſhame to ſpeak, write, or preach in a particular manner. For the holy converſe and conduct of a conſiſtent chriſtian is of the nature of light; it manifeſts the contrary conduct of others to be inexcuſable; and his very ſilence is often moſt emphatically eloquent. After the example therefore of prophets and apoſtles, we ſhould call on thoſe, who are aſleep and dead in ſin, to awake and ariſe, that Chriſt may give them light: and the Lord will employ ſuch warnings and invitations to quicken whom he will; even as he uſes the further inſtructions of his miniſters to guide awakened perſons in the paths of peace and holy obedience.

By this light we ſhould walk with accuracy and circumſpection; redeeming our time from ſloth, needleſs ſleep or recreation, and impertinent viſits, for uſeful and important purpoſes; becauſe life, health, liberty, and the uſe of our ſenſes and underſtandings, are at all times uncertain. The world alſo is full of miſery and iniquity: and there is no work, nor counſel, in the grave, whither we are going. Let us then acquaint ourſelves with the Lord's will, attend to his work, and wait for his coming. Thus we ſhall practically ſhew our wiſdom, whilſt many prove their folly by talking about religion, without knowing or doing the will of Chriſt. When we are afflicted, or wearied, let us not procure a vain exhiliration, by any degree of intemperance, which is hateful and pernicious, and ends in deeper dejection; but by fervent prayer let us ſeek to be filled with the Spirit, and to be ſatisfied with his holy conſolations: and let us avoid whatever might grieve our gracious Comforter. Thus we ſhall be animated to ſpeak to each other in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs; and to join the melody of a grateful heart to that of our lips, whilſt we give thanks always, for all things to our God and Father, in the name of his beloved Son; and thus anticipate the joys of heaven, in the communion of the ſaints on earth.

If we were all ſubjected to one another in the fear of God, and according to our ſeveral relations in life; ſociety would appear like a well organized body, and every individual would ſhare the advantages. Every relative duty ſhould be enforced by evangelical motives and examples. The moſt entire ſubmiſſion of wives to their own huſbands will be no infringement of their liberty; if performed for the Lord's ſake, and after the example of the church's obedience to him: eſpecially if huſbands alſo loved their wives after the pattern of Chriſt's love to his choſen people. He died for them, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe them, to be to him for an honour and praiſe to all eternity, and that he might be glorious in making them happy. Whilſt we adore and rejoice in this condeſcending love, and preſs forward to that perfect holineſs, which is intended for us; and whilſt we reverence both the myſtery of this ſacred union with the Lord, as members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones; and his loving authority over us, who nouriſheth and cheriſheth us, as a man doth his own fleſh: let huſbands thence learn how to love their wives, and to ſhew themſelves juſtly entitled to their ſuperiority, by wiſdom, joined with tender ſympathy and patient care: and let wives hence learn to be ſubject to, and to reverence their huſbands. If the original appointment of marriage, and the ſubject before us were duly attended to, all harſhneſs, tyrannyand unfaithfulneſs muſt be excluded; for no man hateth his own fleſh: and on the other hand all conteſts for ſuperiority, and unreaſonable attachment to humour and inclination, as interfering with chearful obedience, would be prevented. In ſhort, were chriſtianity general, and chriſtians more attentive to the precepts of their Lord; harmony and affectionate confidence would ſweeten domeſtic life, without any material interruption or alloy: but as all are ſinners, it behoves every individual to make many conceſſions and allowances, and to perſevere in the duty of the relation, though attended with a croſs. Thus the worſt evils will be prevented; and even an offending or unbelieving partner may be won upon: whereas a retaliation of miſconduct can only render diſagreement perpetual, and tend to the moſt painful and diſhonourable conſequences.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—4.] (Note, *Exod.* c. xx. v. 12.) Believers, who had parents living, were next exhorted to be obedient to them, *in the Lord,* for his ſake, and the honour of his goſpel. This general exhortation muſt be limited according to their ages, and particular circumſtances, as in other caſes. Some of them probably had Gentile parents: theſe they muſt not obey when their commands contradicted thoſe of Chriſt; yet it would be incumbent on them to give up their own will, in all things lawful for the credit of chriſtianity. This obedience to parents was in itſelf equitable and reaſonable, a debt owing to the inſtruments of their exiſtence, and the tender guardians of their infancy; and generally conduare

are your maſters according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, in ſingleneſs of your heart, as unto Chriſt;

6 Not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers; but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good-will doing ſervice, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doeth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord whether *he be* bond or free.

9 And, ye maſters, do the ſame things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Maſter alſo is in heaven; neither is there reſpect of perſons with him.

10 Finally, my brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that

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ceive to the children's good. As the ſentiments of all nations coincided in this matter; ſo the law of God expreſſly commanded children to honour the perſons and authority of both father and mother, and to requite their kindneſs as they had opportunity. This was placed as the firſt commandment of the ſecond table, being the firſt of the relative duties; and a promiſe of long life in the land of Canaan was annexed to it, as given to the Iſraelites, which might be generally applied to chriſtians, and encourage them to expect temporal comfort, and length of days, as a gracious recompence for obedience in this particular; unleſs the Lord ſhould ſee good to reward it more liberally in another life. However, it hath been obſerved in every age, that remarkable proſperity has attended thoſe, who were diſtinguiſhed for filial obedience. The apoſtle alſo exhorted parents, (for though fathers only are mentioned, doubtleſs mothers alſo were intended,) to uſe their authority without rigour; leſt their children ſhould be diſcouraged, prejudiced againſt chriſtianity, or provoked to obſtinacy and diſobedience; which always would prove painful to the parents, and often ruinous to themſelves. Their reſtraints, reproofs and corrections ought therefore always to be uſed in a meek, affectionate and forgiving diſpoſition: whilſt they diligently educated them in ſuch a manner, and with ſuch inſtructions, as might beſt initiate them in the knowledge of Chriſt, and true religion; and gave them ſuch friendly admonitions, as might guard them againſt the various ſnares of the world, and the temptations of ſatan. In theſe exhortations the inferior relation is conſtantly mentioned firſt; perhaps becauſe the duty of it is moſt contrary to corrupt nature; yet it ought to be attended to, even when the ſuperiors neglect theirs.

V. 5—9.] Servants, profeſſing the goſpel were next exhorted to be obedient to their own maſters, according to the fleſh, or to whom they were ſubjected in temporal matters. In general, theſe were ſlaves, the property of their maſters, and often treated with conſiderable ſeverity, though ſeldom with modern cruelty. But the apoſtles were miniſters of religion, not politicians: they had not influence to aboliſh ſlavery; and perhaps in that ſtate of ſociety as to other things, it would not have been expedient: and as God did not pleaſe miraculouſly to interpoſe in the caſe; ſo they did not deem it proper to exaſperate their perſecutors by expreſſly contending againſt the lawfulneſs of ſlavery. Yet both the law of love, and the goſpel of grace, tend to its abolition: and the univerſal prevalence of chriſtianity muſt annihilate it, with many other evils, which in the preſent ſtate of things cannot wholly be avoided. In the wiſdom of God, the apoſtles were therefore left to take ſuch matters as they found them, and to teach ſervants and maſters their reſpective duties; in the performance of which, the evil would be mitigated, till in due time it ſhould be extirpated by chriſtian legiſlators. Servants were therefore taught to obey their maſters, not only with a reſpectful attention to their perſons and authority, and a fear of diſpleaſing them; but with a jealous and trembling fear of offending and diſhonouring God, by an improper behaviour. This was to be done with a ſingle deſire and aim to pleaſe Chriſt, their great, and gracious Maſter, whom they obeyed, in conſcientiouſly ſerving, even an unreaſonable, and tyrannical earthly maſter. They were alſo to do their work, not as eye-ſervants, who are diligent in their maſter's preſence, and ſlothful in his abſence, being only deſirous of pleaſing man; but as the ſervants of God, who heartily did his will, even in their ſecular employments. Then they would chearfully, and aſſiduouſly do ſervice to their maſters, as endeavouring to pleaſe the Lord, and not men, in ſo doing: being aſſured, that whatever good action any man did from ſuch pious principles, it would be graciouſly recompenſed by the Lord; and that a poor ſlave would be as much accepted in performing the duty of his place, as any free man in his apparently more important ſervices. On the other hand, believing maſters ought to act from the ſame principles, and in the ſame conſcientious manner, towards their ſervants, whether they were chriſtians or not: exerciſing their authority with humanity and gentleneſs; not only, not inflicting rigorous puniſhments, but forbearing to menace or terrify their ſervants, or to expreſs any haughty, or exceſſive anger to them, even when moſt evidently faulty. For though the laws of man gave them great power in this reſpect; yet they muſt remember, that they were accountable to the great Lord and Maſter of all men, for their uſe of it; who will deal with men, according to their conduct towards their inferiors, and expects his people to copy the example of his lenity and mercy.

V. 10—20.] The apoſtle here draws to the concluſion of his epiſtle, by a figurative exhortation, taken from military affairs. As the ſoldiers of Chriſt the Epheſians were called to fight under his banner, againſt ſatan, the world, and ſin: but, they were too weak in themſelves for this conflict, and muſt therefore "be ſtrong in "the Lord," by a continual reliance on his mighty power for protection, ſupport, and aſſiſtance. In the fulneſs of Chriſt, and the graces of the Spirit, a panoply or com-ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high *places*.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil day, and having done all to ſtand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breaſtplate of righteouſneſs;

15 And your feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of ſalvation, and the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance, and ſupplication for all ſaints;

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the myſtery of the goſpel,

plete ſuit of armour was provided for every believer: this they were daily to put on, in a diligent, and watchful uſe of the appointed means. Thus armed they might be able to ſtand againſt the aſſaults of ſatan, by whatever artful method he, or his inſtruments, attempted to obſtruct their progreſs. For the apoſtle, and they too were called to conflict, and wreſtle, not only againſt their own in-dwelling corruptions, the oppoſition of perſecutors, the enticements of wicked men, and the allurements of the world; but alſo againſt thoſe inviſible, and formidable principalities and powers, who ruled the darkneſs of this world; even ſatan, and his angels, the great authors of man's ignorance, impiety, and iniquity all over the earth. Theſe might be called "ſpiritual wickedneſſes *in high places*," not only as they held their empire, as it were, in the air, and tempted men to ſpiritual wickedneſs, eſpecially in their religious worſhip: but they became proud rebels and apoſtates even in *heavenly places*; and being ſpiritual wickedneſſes in that holy world, they were caſt out from thence; and had, from the beginning, oppoſed man's entrance into heaven by every means, which malice, capacity, ſagacity, or experience could ſuggeſt. It was therefore neceſſary for the Epheſians, to be completely armed for the conflict, with ſuch powerful and determined enemies; that they might be able to ſtand in the evil day of peculiar temptation or perſecution, or at the approach of death. As ſoldiers, they muſt be prepared every day for the conflict, and would continually be called to reſiſt their foes: but ſome days would peculiarly encourage, or give advantage to, ſatan's aſſaults; and as they could not know before-hand, when ſuch occaſions would be afforded him; they muſt, as vigilant and valiant ſoldiers, be always ready. That, thus withſtanding in the evil day, and having done all expected from them, they might ſtand victorious on the field of battle, and approved by their great Commander. Their minds ought therefore to be fortified and prepared for the aſſault, by conſcious ſincerity in their profeſſion, and truth in their whole converſation; as the loins of ſoldiers were girded by their military belt, when they marched out to the battle. Righteouſneſs, or an habitual, and conſcientious obedience to the various commandments of God, as evidential of their faith, ſhould be their breaſt-plate, which would defend them from fatal wounds in the day of conflict: whereas conſcious negligence and diſobedience would render them afraid to face perſecution or death, in the cauſe of Chriſt. But to ſtand their ground in ſuch difficult ſituations, or to march forward in ſuch rugged paths, "their feet muſt be ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace;" that is, their motives and encouragements to obedience, amidſt temptations and perſecutions, muſt be derived from a clear and comprehenſive knowledge of the goſpel; through which, God is revealed as in Chriſt, reconciling ſinners to himſelf, and actually at peace with every believer, notwithſtanding paſt tranſgreſſions, and preſent defects and infirmities. This aſſurance would make obedience delightful, though ſelf-denying, and animate the eſtabliſhed believer to reſiſt temptation, to endure tribulation, and to march through difficulties and enemies, in the cauſe of Chriſt, and in the way to heaven. (Note, *Deut.* c. xxxiii. v. 25. *Luke*, c. xv. v. 22.) Over all theſe faith muſt be placed as a ſhield; by crediting God's teſtimony, realizing unſeen objects, reſting the ſoul on the promiſes, and relying on the power, truth, mercy, wiſdom, grace, and providence of God, according to his word; they would be able to ward off the temptations of ſatan, as ſoldiers received the darts of the enemy on their ſhields. The ſuggeſtions of the tempter to the mind would indeed, often reſemble darts, by the ſuddenneſs and violence, with which they were injected; and fiery, or poiſoned darts, by the fatal effects produced by them. For as poiſoned darts would fatally inflame the blood of thoſe wounded by them; ſo the ſuggeſtions of ſatan would inflame the anger, pride, luſt, avarice, or other corrupt propenſities of the heart, unleſs immediately intercepted, and extinguiſhed by the ſhield of faith. This clauſe is often intepreted excluſively of thoſe harraſſing temptations, by which hard thoughts of God, and horrid or deſponding concluſions concerning themſelves, are excited in men's minds. Theſe lead to immenſe diſtreſs, and eventually to guilt; and faith in God's word muſt extinguiſh them: yet probably, the apoſtle meant the words in a more comprehenſive ſenſe. To all this Hope, or a ſcriptural expectation of victory and eternal glory, muſt ſupply the place of an helmet, to cover the head in the day of battle; by counteracting that

20 For which I am an ambaſſador in bonds: that therein I may ſpeak boldly, as I ought to ſpeak.

21 But that ye alſo may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful miniſter in the Lord, ſhall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.

23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. Amen.

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diſcouragement, which doubtfulneſs of the event induces, in times of ſharp temptation: ſo that it may be called the helmet of ſalvation, as nothing can be courageouſly done without it. To complete the whole, the word of God muſt ſerve the chriſtian ſoldier for a ſword: an exact and comprehenſive acquaintance with its various doctrines, promiſes, precepts, warnings, and a readineſs at recollecting and adducing pertinent texts upon every emergency, would drive the tempter to a diſtance, and procure a final victory over him. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. iv. v. 1—11.) Thus the whole ſuit of armour would be complete: for no covering was provided for the back; as victory muſt be ſought by valour, not by cowardice. To give all the reſt their full efficacy, to procure, put on, keep bright, and uſe, this ſuit of armour, they muſt be ſure to pray always, conſtantly, frequently, at ſtated times, in occaſional ejaculations, and more abundantly in the proſpect, or the hour of temptation; uſing all kinds of prayer and ſupplication, in dependance on, and according to, the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and watching unto it, againſt remiſſneſs, diſcouragement, wearineſs, interruptions, unſeaſonable engagements, &c, with all perſeverance; ſeeing ſatan would peculiarly tempt them to negligence in this matter, that he might obtain further advantages againſt them. They muſt alſo remember to help one another, and all the ſaints, by their prayers for them, without diſtinction. Eſpecially the apoſtle intreated their prayers for him, that he might have opportunity, and liberty of ſpirit, boldly to declare his important meſſage, in the face of danger and death: for though he was Chriſt's ambaſſador of peace to the Gentiles, he was at that time executing his commiſſion in confinement, and in fetters: ſo greatly was his glorious Lord deſpiſed among men! However, he did not regard this degradation, or feel any anxiety about his liberty; provided he were but enabled to ſpeak with becoming boldneſs, firmneſs and impartiality, when called to bear teſtimony to the truth. The ſubject reſpecting the whole armour of God could ſcarce be divided, upon this plan of elucidation. The reader, who is acquainted with what hath been written on this ſubject, will perceive, that in ſome particulars the expoſition here given, rather varies from that of approved writers. Perhaps zeal for particular doctrines, ſometimes renders pious men, too apt to explain every expreſſion in ſupport of them; though it weakens the proof of them, makes one part of ſuch paſſages coincide with the other, and leaves out matter equally important. Indeed it is apprehended, that by adducing every thing, that can be thought of, in explaining ſuch metaphors, many things are ſuppoſed to be contained in them, which were quite out of the writer's mind when he penned them.

V. 21—24.] The apoſtle would not unite a particular account of his own circumſtances, with theſe ſpiritual inſtructions: but as they would be anxious to know them, he had ſent with this epiſtle, a brother and miniſter competent to inform them, and to encourage and edify them by his converſe and preaching. The concluding deſire and prayer of the apoſtle were, that peace with God, their conſciences, and each other, as connected with faith and love, and communicated from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus, might abound to all the brethren. At the ſame time he gave them his apoſtolical bleſſing, in ſuch language, as ſhewed that the grace, or ſpecial favour and mercy of God, would be on all them, and them only, who loved Chriſt, in ſincerity, and in an uncorrupt and holy manner. (Note, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xvi. v. 21—24.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The goſpel furniſhes believers with efficacious motives to all relative duties: and the law directs all, whom Chriſt hath redeemed from its curſe, how they may adorn his doctrine, and ſhew forth his praiſe; for all its commandments are right and beneficial. When children honour and obey their parents, they take a proper method to obtain temporal comfort and proſperity: and when they do it "in the Lord," it forms an evidence of their intereſt in his promiſes, which will be fulfilled in their everlaſting felicity. Similar motives ſhould induce parents to attend diligently to the education of their children, with meekneſs, prudence and affection; that they may not provoke them to wrath, or tempt them to ſin; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But alas, how ſadly is this duty neglected, even among profeſſors of the goſpel! How many parents, by their imprudence, violent paſſions, harſhneſs, or unforgiving temper and conduct, diſguſt their children, prejudice them againſt religion, or drive them into bad company to eſcape them. This does not excuſe the children's diſobedience, but it awfully occaſions it. On the other hand, how commonly do we ſee more regard paid to every kind of inſtruction or trifling embelliſhment, than to their religious principles and conduct! So that too often the education of children leads them to thoſe habits, notions, or connections, which make way for their ſubſequent ungodlineſs, infidelity, diſſipation, licentiouſneſs, or avarice; by which they ruin themſelves, and propagate impiety, vice and miſery, in an accumulating progreſſion! They, who fear God, and love their children, ſhould watch, pray, and even tremble, leſt they ſhould prove the occaſion of condemnation even to their own offſpring: for though God alone can change the heart, yet he commonly does this by means of the good inſtructions and example of parents, and in anſwer to their fervent prayers. Whereas they, whoſe chief anxiety ſeems to be, that their children ſhould be wealthy, polite, and accompliſhed, whatever be the event to their ſouls, can have no ground to expect the bleſſing of God upon them. Few maſters will refuſe their approbation of the injunctions here laid upon their ſervants, or ſervants their's to the exhortations given to their maſters: but alas they, who ought to obey the precept, are prone to object to it, or to explain it looſely! However, the more advantages ſervants now enjoy, the more chearfully ſhould they yield obedience, and perform ſervice to their own maſters; and the more cautious ſhould they be not to diſhonour the goſpel by a negligent, refractory, or unfaithful behaviour. They ſhould eſpecially avoid the imputation of eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers; but ſhould always act as in the fear of God, and with good-will do ſervice, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: this will engage the ſervants of Chriſt to diligence in their work, even if their earthly maſters behave ill to them; it will ſanctify all their employments, and ſecure them a gracious recompence from the Lord. Whilſt the ſame principles will render maſters conſiderate, kind, gentle, and conſcientious in their whole deportment, remembering that they alſo have a Maſter in heaven, who is no reſpecter of perſons. And what orderly and happy families will thoſe be, where relative duties are thus attended to.

But if we would ſerve the Lord in this evil world, we muſt depend on him for ſtrength, as well as for inſtruction and a merciful acceptance. Our enemies indeed are mighty, and we are without ſtrength: but our Redeemer is almighty, and in the power of his might we may overcome all that oppoſe our courſe. Let us then daily put on the armour, that the Captain of our ſalvation hath prepared for us; that being ſober and vigilant, and always ready for the battle, we may be able to ſtand againſt all the wiles of the devil. The potent rulers of the darkneſs of this world, who wrought ſpiritual wickedneſs in heaven, will oppoſe our march to that inheritance, which they have loſt, and endeavour to bring us to that hell, to which they are condemned: they often have powerful allies in the principalities of the earth, and wicked men always fight under their banner: but our fleſh, the corrupt nature, the traitor in the camp, is our moſt dangerous foe: whilſt fear of preſent ſuffering, and deſire of preſent gratification continually war againſt our ſouls. We muſt therefore engage in this warfare as men in earneſt, continually expecting the onſet of our foes, either by open violence, or deep laid ſtratagems. Some fiery darts will every day be thrown at us, to inflame our paſſions, or diſtreſs our hearts: but evil days of peculiar danger and difficulty muſt be expected; and we ſhall not be able to withſtand in them, and having done all, to ſtand as conquerors before our Captain; unleſs we are habitually armed for the fight. The ſoldier, who is ſecure in the enemy's country, will probably be aſſaulted and ſhamefully worſted, when he leaſt expects it. (Notes, &c. 2 *Sam.* c. xi. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 40—43. 69—75.) Habitual ſincerity in profeſſing and obeying the truth, and uprightneſs towards God and man, muſt be the girdle of our loins, and the breaſt-plate, in this important warfare; but then our feet muſt alſo be ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace. In the conſtant exerciſe of vigorous faith and lively hope, we ſhall poſſeſs our impenetrable ſhield and helmet of ſalvation: whilſt with the ſword of the Spirit, even the word of truth, we may drive our enemies before us, and ſeek the victory for ourſelves and our fellow-combatants. Thus armed, and praying always with all earneſtneſs, by the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance, we ſhall be made more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. All the ſaints are our fellow-ſoldiers, though divided into different battalions, diſtinguiſhable by a few unimportant externals; and we muſt help them all with our ſupplications: for general ſucceſs againſt the rulers of darkneſs, as well as perſonal victory, ſhould be our noble ambition. But the miniſters of the goſpel ſhould be peculiarly remembered by all chriſtians: they are expoſed to the ſpecial rage of the enemy; when they fall, it is as when a ſtandard bearer fainteth, and their honourable conduct is of vaſt importance. They ſhould eſpecially be prayed for, who are expoſed to great hardſhips and perils in their work. For the ambaſſadors of peace from the Lord to his rebellious creatures, have often been caſt into priſon and put to death as criminals! It is peculiarly deſireable, that utterance ſhould be given them, in perilous ſituations, that they may boldly declare the myſtery of the goſpel: for the more boldly they ſpeak, in conſiſtency with the meekneſs of wiſdom and love, the better do they perform their work. Such men will rather deſire to make full proof of their miniſtry, than enjoy perſonal eaſe or liberty: their own affairs will be inconſiderable in their judgment, compared with the ſucceſs of the goſpel. They will however, greatly rejoice to have beloved brethren and faithful miniſters, to comfort and eſtabliſh the people in their abſence: and whilſt they wiſh for peace, with faith and love, to all that profeſs the goſpel: they will alſo remind them, that grace will be with all them, and them only, who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. Amen.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the PHILIPPIANS.

The apoſtle's labours, ſufferings, and ſucceſs at Philippi in Macedonia, have been conſidered; (Notes, &c. Acts, c. xvi. c. xx. v. 1—6.) *The following Epiſtle was written to the church there planted, from Rome, perhaps ſomewhat later than that to the Epheſians. The Philippians had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their liberal kindneſs to the apoſtle, and had juſt ſent Epaphroditus with a ſeaſonable ſupply to him, in his impriſonment; whom he afterwards ſent back*

back with this moſt affectionate epiſtle. This was ſuited to eſtabliſh them in the faith, to caution them againſt deceivers, to encourage their hopes, and to excite them to follow after peace and holineſs: and it is equally ſuited to teach us the ſame leſſons.

Anno Domini 65.

CHAP. I.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Addreſſing the Philippians; thanking God on their account; declaring his confidence in, and love to them, and ſhewing what he prayed for in their behalf, 1---11. *2d. Informing them that his impriſonment had tended to the furtherance of the goſpel; and that many had thereby been excited to preach Chriſt, in which he greatly rejoiced; though ſome of them did it from bad motives,* 12---18. *3d. Expreſſing his confidence of hope, and the prepared ſtate of his mind for life, or death; his preference of the latter on his own account; and his willingneſs to live for the benefit of the church; with exhortations to a becoming converſation, to unity, and to chearfulneſs in ſuffering for Chriſt's ſake,* 19---30.

PAUL and Timotheus, the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, to all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus which are at Philippi, with the biſhops and deacons:

2 Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Anno Domini 65.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 (Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making requeſt with joy,)

5 For your fellowſhip in the goſpel from the firſt day until now:

6 Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jeſus Chriſt:

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, becauſe I have you in my heart, inaſmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the goſpel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and *in* all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1 *Paul,* &c.] As Paul's apoſtleſhip had probably never been called in queſtion at Philippi; and as he joined Timothy in this epiſtle, (who was then at Rome with him;) ſo he only ſtiles himſelf, a ſervant of Chriſt, in common with Timothy. He addreſſed himſelf to the ſaints "at Philippi, with the biſhops and "deacons;" hence we learn that the diſtinction between biſhops, and preſbyters was not then eſtabliſhed; but that the paſtors of the church were either called biſhops, (overſeers,) or preſbyters, (elders,) indifferently; being only diſtinguiſhed from the deacons, who managed the ſecular matters, and the charities of the church. (Notes, &c. *Acts,* c. vi. v. 1—7 c. xx. v. 17—28.)

V. 3—8.] The converſion and ſubſequent good conduct of the Philippians never occurred to the apoſtle's mind, without exciting him to thank God in their behalf: and he often thought of them; for always, in every prayer of his, ſecret or ſocial, he made requeſts for them, with lively emotions of joy, which helped to ſolace him in his confinement. For he thanked God for, and rejoiced in their fellowſhip in the goſpel, and its bleſſings, from the firſt day of their converſion to that preſent time, (which was above ten years;) without their having turned aſide, or grown remiſs in their profeſſion. (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 4—9.) He was therefore confident, that He, even God the Spirit, who had begun the good work of ſanctification in their ſouls, would carry it on, and perform it, till the perfection of their redemption, in body and ſoul, at the day of Chriſt. For though many, who made a credible profeſſion or chriſtianity, afterwards fell away, having no root in themſelves; yet it was meet for him to hope better things of them, and to be ſatisfied that a good work of new creation had indeed been wrought upon them: for their long continued conſiſtency of conduct had given them a peculiar place *in his heart*; or rather, they had ſhewn, that they had *him in their hearts,* and had abundantly evinced their love to Chriſt, by their kindneſs to his afflicted ſervant; inſomuch that both in his impriſonment they cordially ſympathized with him, and endeavoured to alleviate his ſufferings; and in all that he undertook, for the defence, and confirmation of the goſpel, they had concurred with him, and ſhewn themſelves partakers of the ſame grace, which had been beſtowed upon him; acting from the ſame holy principles, and returning his love with reciprocal affection. Indeed, God was witneſs, how greatly he longed after, and how gladly he would promote their ſpiritual welfare and comfort; with a holy, tender, and compaſſionate affection, like that of Chriſt to his people.

V. 9—11.] The apoſtle next gave the Philippians a-excellent; that ye may be ſincere, and without offence till the day of Chriſt;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt, unto the glory and praiſe of God.

12 But I would ye ſhould underſtand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the goſpel;

13 So that my bonds in Chriſt are manifeſt in all the palace, and in all other *places*;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Chriſt even of envy and ſtrife; and ſome alſo of good-will:

16 The one preach Chriſt of contention, not ſincerely, ſuppoſing to add affliction to my bonds.

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am ſet for the defence of the goſpel.

18 What then? Notwithſtanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Chriſt is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation, through your prayer, and the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt,

20 According to my earneſt expectation, and *my* hope, that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed, but *that* with all boldneſs, as always, *ſo* now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my

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compendious account of his conſtant prayers for them. He was confident that they were true believers, and loved the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity; and he therefore prayed that their love of him, his cauſe, people, truths, ordinances, &c, and of the holy character, law, and government of God, and of all men for his ſake, might abound more and more, in all its varied exerciſes, and happy effects; and that it might be regulated by an enlarged, and exact knowledge of divine things; and by that ſound judgment in every matter, which was the reſult of a holy reliſh for ſpiritual excellency, a matured diſcernment in the various parts of religion, and deep experience of its power in their own hearts. Thus falſe affections, unjuſtifiable meaſures, enthuſiaſm, &c, would be prevented; and all thoſe evils into which vehement zeal, without proportionable knowledge and judgment, betrays men, to the ſcandal of the goſpel, and the diviſion of the church: and thus their abundant love would be directed in forming and executing deſigns of extenſive uſefulneſs. He further prayed, that they might be enabled "*to diſtinguiſh things that differed,*" and ſo to guard againſt counterfeit revelations, falſe affections, and all thoſe ſpecious errors and evils, by which ſatan and his miniſters have in every age impoſed upon the unwary: thus they would chooſe and "approve "things that were excellent," and reject others, however varniſhed over. He alſo prayed, that they might be "*ſincere,*" not only as true believers, but as uncorrupted with baſe alloy, whether of falſe doctrine, ſuperſtition, or a worldly ſpirit and conduct; being like honey, when fully purified from the wax: that ſo they might neither ſtumble at the ſcandals occaſioned by others; nor yet be left to advance, or do any thing, which might grieve or miſlead their brethren, or cauſe their neighbours to ſtumble at the word; but that each believer might be thus upheld, till he ſhould honourably finiſh his courſe; and even that their church might be thus preſerved through ſucceſſive generations, until the day of Chriſt: and that like trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, they might not only in ſome meaſure be fruitful; but that they might reſemble thoſe trees, which are laden with fruit on every bough; being filled with all holy tempers, all kind of good works, all the fruits of the Spirit, through every day of their future lives, in the full improvement of their talents, and according to the duties of their ſeveral relations. For theſe good fruits would not only be beneficial to men, and eventually advantageous to themſelves; but through Chriſt, as the effects of his grace, and accepted through his mediation, they would redound to the praiſe and honour of God, adorning and recommending the goſpel, ſilencing gainſayers, and bringing ſinners to glorify God in the obedience and worſhip of faith.

V. 12—20.] The apoſtle ſeems to have been informed, that the Philippians feared leſt his impriſonment ſhould check the progreſs of the goſpel, and intimidate others from preaching or embracing it: and no doubt. But ſatan, and his ſervants expected this effect from it: but Paul would have his friends to know, that his ſufferings had rather conduced to promote the ſpread of chriſtianity, through the over-ruling interpoſition of God: and that the reſtraint put upon his perſonal miniſtry had been more than counterbalanced by other circumſtances. So that his bonds fo Chriſt's ſake, and his conſtancy in them; the doctrine fo which he was confined, and which he preached even in tha ſituation, had become openly known even in Nero's palace among his courtiers, and in all other parts of Rome; which had excited a general attention to the goſpel throug that immenſe city, whence the report would circulate almoſt throughout the earth. Moreover, many chriſtians, who were qualified for, and appointed to the miniſtry, bu had before been timorous, perceiving how Paul was protected, comforted, and proſpered in his impriſonment, wer greatly emboldened to preach without fear of perſecution, i the moſt open and uſeful manner; by whoſe labours th knowledge of the goſpel was rapidly diffuſed. Indeed whilſt ſome preached Chriſt of good-will, there were other that were actuated by envy of Paul's reputation, ſucceſs, o meaſure of liberty, who aimed to cauſe diviſions, even b preaching the goſpel of peace! Probably theſe were Ju body, whether it *be* by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live *is* Chriſt, and to die *is* gain.

22 But if I live in the fleſh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I ſhall chooſe I wot not.

23 For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which is far better:

24 Nevertheleſs to abide in the fleſh *is* more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I ſhall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jeſus Chriſt for me, by my coming to you again.

27 Only let your converſation be as it becometh the goſpel of Chriſt: that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel;

28 And in nothing terrified by your adverſaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of ſalvation, and that of God.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf

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daizers, who concealed part of their ſentiments, and preached the ſubſtance of the goſpel, in order to form a party under their influence, and in oppoſition to Paul and his friends; that ſo they might gradually impoſe the Moſaic law on the Gentile converts. The deſigning, ambitious, and ſelfiſh conduct of theſe men, proved them inſincere, in what they preached; and that they only wanted to excite contentions between the Jewiſh, and Gentile converts; which would not only have added affliction to the apoſtle's mind during his impriſonment; but they ſuppoſed that it would alſo increaſe the virulence of his perſecutors. However, others acted from love to him, as well as to Chriſt: knowing that he was appointed, as the apoſtle of the Gentiles, to defend as a bulwark, the pure goſpel of Chriſt, againſt all that oppoſed, or perverted it; and that he was now lodged in priſon, as a witneſs for the truth concerning juſtification, and chriſtian liberty, againſt Judaizers; and to bear teſtimony even before the emperor concerning the holy doctrine of ſalvation through Chriſt Jeſus. But, though it were ſo, and ſome aimed to oppoſe, grieve, or expoſe him the more: yet as Chriſt was preached by that means, either in a pretended, or a ſincere zeal for his honour, among great numbers, that had hitherto been ſtrangers to the goſpel, who might in due time be more fully inſtructed in the faith: ſo he did rejoice, and was determined to do ſo, whatever conſequences might enſue to him from it. For he knew, that theſe afflictive diſpenſations, however aggravated, would help forward his final ſalvation, through the prayer of his brethren, and the communication of the Spirit of Chriſt to his ſoul, to promote his humility, ſpirituality, and meetneſs for heaven. This ſatisfied him, as to his perſonal concern in the matter; as he was willing to endure any abaſement or ſuffering, for the honour of Chriſt. And indeed he earneſtly expected a happy event of his trials, as one who with out-ſtretched neck eagerly looks for the coming of ſome beloved friend: and he confidently hoped, that he ſhould not be made aſhamed in any thing by the diſappointment of his expectations, or endeavours; but that, as in all former inſtances, he had boldly and ſucceſsfully ſtood his ground; ſo in this preſent caſe alſo, he ſhould be ſo ſtrengthened, and inſpired with courage, that Chriſt might be magnified in, and by, his frail body: whether his life were ſpared that he might again labour in ſpreading the goſpel, or whether he ſhould be called to ſhed his blood in confirmation of his teſtimony.

V. 21—26] In the moſt animated manner the apoſtle here declared the happy frame of his mind, in his perilous ſituation. As Chriſt was the Author, and ſupport of his ſpiritual life; ſo was He the end and object, as it were, of his life on earth: he had no other buſineſs, intereſt, honour, or pleaſure, for which to live, but Chriſt and his glory, ſervice, and favour: and therefore he knew that to die would be his greateſt gain; as he ſhould then be enabled more perfectly to know, love, ſerve, and enjoy the favour of his gracious Lord; and have done with ſin, temptation, and ſuffering for ever. Yet if he continued to live in the fleſh, and to endure hardſhip a little longer, it would be worth his while: as his labour would be fruitful of good to himſelf, as well as to others. Yet he knew not which he ſhould chooſe, if it were left to him; being in a ſtrait between two, and drawn both ways, by the reaſons he had to deſire life on the one hand, and death on the other. Indeed he had a moſt vehement longing to depart from this world of ſin and ſorrow, that he might immediately go and be with Chriſt; exchanging this life of faith, hope, and feeble love, &c, for that of ſight, fruition, and perfect holineſs: as this was incomparably more deſirable, than any thing, which could be poſſeſſed or enjoyed on earth. Nevertheleſs his continuance here being the more needful for their benefit, he was willing to poſtpone the completion of his own happineſs for their advantage. And indeed, having this confidence reſpecting his own concerns; he was alſo aſſured by intimations from the Lord, that he ſhould abide ſome time longer, to promote their growth and eſtabliſhment in the faith, and that joy which was connected with it: and that being permitted to come, and renew his labours among them, he ſhould be an inſtrument of increaſing their abundant rejoicing in Chriſt.

V. 27—30.] None of the events before referred to, nor any other, could harm the Philippians; if they *only* took heed to have their converſation becoming the goſpel, which they had embraced. (Note, *Eph.* c. iv. v. 1—8;)

of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake;

30 Having the ſame conflict which ye ſaw in me, *and* now hear *to be* in me.

The original word denotes the conduct of citizens, when anſwerable to their privileges, and for the credit, ſafety, peace and proſperity of their city: thus the Philippians, being graciouſly made denizens of the heavenly Jeruſalem, ought to act ſuitable to that high character, and to ſeek the honour of the goſpel and the welfare of the church in all their conduct. Then it would be well with them, and gladden the apoſtle's heart, whether he came to ſee them, or only heard of their affairs; and that they ſtood firm in the profeſſion of the faith, and in obedience to Chriſt, amidſt all their ſurrounding temptations, and bad examples; avoiding all diſſentions, continuing as one body actuated by one ſpirit; being of one heart and mind in the great concerns of religion; not ſtriving with one another about leſſer matters; but as one compact phalanx, ſtriving with united force againſt the common enemy, to exclude falſe teachers, to prevent abuſes, to bear up under perſecution, and by every means, to promote the ſpread of chriſtianity. In attending to theſe things, they ſhould by no means be intimidated by the number, power, menaces, or cruelties of their adverſaries; whoſe envenomed rage againſt ſuch excellent perſons, proved them enemies to God, and holineſs, and in the way of perdition: whilſt their meek and patient ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake, united to the holineſs of their characters, were an additional evidence that they were the friends of God, and partakers of that ſalvation, which he works in the hearts of his people. (1 *Pet.* c. iv. v. 12—16.) For indeed they were called to an additional honour and privilege; in that it was *given* to them, not only to believe in Chriſt for ſalvation, but to be diſtinguiſhed among his diſciples, by a nearer conformity to Him in ſuffering, for which their reward would be great in heaven; (Note, *Matt.* c. v. ver. 10—12:) as they were then enduring that ſame honourable conflict, which they had ſeen him engaged in, when ſcourged and impriſoned at Philippi; and which they heard that he was at that time ſuſtaining, by his confinement at Rome.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Thoſe ſervants of Chriſt, that moſt reſemble their Lord, will thank God on every remembrance of the congregations, among whom they have laboured; when they know that miniſters and people, in their proper places, attend to their ſeveral duties, in ſuch a manner, as evinces them to have fellowſhip with Chriſt, and to ſhare the bleſſings of his goſpel. But alas, how often are faithful paſtors conſtrained to make requeſt with tears, inſtead of joy, for thoſe, in whom they once were confident, but for whom they now tremble! However, we may always be confident, that God will perform his good work in every ſoul, wherein he hath really begun it by regeneration: though we ſhould warn men not to truſt in ſuperficial appearances, ſudden emotions, external reformation, change of ſect or ſentiment, or any thing ſhort of a new creation unto holineſs. But it is meet for us to hope the beſt of thoſe who profeſs, and do not diſgrace the truth; and to have their welfare much at heart, who have ſhewed us kindneſs for the Lord's ſake, have ſympathized in our ſorrows, and helped us in our labours for the defence and confirmation of the goſpel: as we may well conclude, that they are really partakers of divine grace. We ſhould therefore long after them in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt; and pour out our prayers for them, when incapable of doing them other ſervice. We cannot in general pray better for ourſelves and in behalf of thoſe, who poſſeſs that faith, which worketh by love, than by copying the example before us; and requeſting that our love may abound yet more and more, and be exerciſed in knowledge and in all judgment; that we and they may diſcern between things that differ, and know how to chooſe the good, and refuſe the evil; that we may be ſincere and diligent diſciples; be preſerved from all ſcandals and offences, and be filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are through Chriſt, to the praiſe and glory of God. For thoſe things, which moſt honour God, will eventually moſt benefit us: we ſhould not therefore be content to leave it dubious, whether any good fruit be found on us or not; a ſmall meaſure of love, knowledge, judgment, ſpirituality, and fruitfulneſs ſhould not ſatisfy us; but we ſhould long and pray to be truly magnanimous, men that aim at great things, and nobly aſpire to do much good, and to be holy as God is holy.

The conſideration, that the Lord worketh all things after the counſel of his own will, ſhould reconcile us to thoſe afflictive diſpenſations, which ſeem to preclude us from uſefulneſs. Whatever ſatan or wicked men may intend, or expect; our God can further the ſucceſs of his goſpel, by the very events, that are uſed to ſtop its progreſs. He often works by apparent contraries; and his moſt able miniſters have been immured in priſons, that their bonds in Chriſt might bring the knowledge of his truth into the palaces of princes; and the blood of the martyrs hath more abundantly made fruitful the good ſeed of the word of God. Nay, the extremeſt ſufferings and cruel deaths of his ſaints, inſtead of intimidating, have infuſed courage into their brethren, whilſt they witneſſed the triumphant conſolations of the happy ſufferers. Indeed, ſatan will endeavour to prevent theſe bleſſed effects, even by ſtirring up men to preach the goſpel from unworthy motives: and not only have ambition and avarice *moved* men to take this office upon them; but envy, malice and contention have done the ſame: and Chriſt and his truth have often been preached, in order to grieve, perplex, or expoſe his faithful, ſuffering ſervants! So varied are the effects of human depravity! We muſt indeed grieve to ſee tares ſown in the Lord's field, and the ſouls of men deceived by damnable hereſies: but when the ſubſtance of the truth is preached amongſt ignorant perſons, we ſhould neither ſo much regard our own reputation, or that of our party, or be ſo concerned about the motives of the perſons employed, as not to rejoice; if by ſuch men and means ſinners are brought acquainted with the all gracious Saviour. The mortifying circumſtances, which ſometimes attend theſe tranſactions, will turn to our ſalvation, if we bear them in a proper manner; through the ſupply of the Spirit of Chriſt, granted in anſwer to the prayers made for, and by us. Our earneſt expectation and hope ſhould not be, to be honoured of men, or to eſcape the croſs; but to be ſo upheld amidſt contempt and affliction, that we may

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Exhorting the Philippians to harmony, humility, and ſelf-denying love, from the example of Chriſt; to diligence in working out their ſalvation; and to ſuch a converſation as might edify their neighbours, and iſſue in his rejoicing in the day of Chriſt, 1---16. *2d. Aſſuring them that he would chearfully die a martyr for their good; ſhewing his deſign of ſending his beloved Timothy, and his hope of viſiting them himſelf; ſpeaking of Epaphroditus's ſickneſs, as a reaſon of his more ſpeedily ſending him back to them; and exhorting them to value ſuch faithful and laborious ſervants of Chriſt,* 17---30.

IF *there be* therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the ſame love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing *be done* through ſtrife or vain glory; but in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.

not be put to ſhame, or to diſgrace the cauſe of God; and that we may act with ſuch boldneſs and conſtancy amidſt dangers and enemies, that Chriſt may be magnified in our bodies, whether by our laborious ſervices, or the honourable concluſion of our work and warfare. We have not indeed made that progreſs in the divine life, that holy Paul had; yet, if we are true believers, we habitually conſider Chriſt as our life. Our main intereſt, work, honour and comfort in this world are centered in him; and his glory is the great end to which we deſire to direct all our conduct. In proportion to the depth of our experience in this matter, ſhould be our well-grounded aſſurance, that to die will be our gain. If we have this earneſt of our inheritance, death can take us away from nothing but what is vain, vexatious, defiling, enſnaring, and utterly inſufficient for our felicity: and it will convey us to the fountain-head of thoſe holy joys, which here we reliſhed and ſometimes taſted, but were never able to participate without alloy or interruption. However, we ſhould be willing to live in this evil world, if the Lord ſee good: this will retard, but it will alſo increaſe our complete felicity, if our days be ſpent in diligent labours and patient ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake. We need not wiſh to chooſe in this matter, for we ſhould not know what choice to make. It is bleſſed indeed to be in the ſtrait between two, which the apoſtle deſcribed: to have a longing deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt, which is far better; and yet to be willing to abide in the fleſh, in order, if the Lord pleaſes, to be helpful to the faith and holy joy of our brethren. Yet it cannot be expected that believers ſhould generally be found thus ſuperior to the love of life, and the fear of death; and thus willing to live and ſuffer, when aſſured of their own ſalvation, from love to their brethren. We ſhould not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, either in ourſelves or others; yet we ſhould preſs forward to the full aſſurance of hope, and this entire ſubmiſſion to the Lord's will. Nor can any thing harm us, if we only let our converſation be as it becometh the goſpel of Chriſt. In that caſe, all changes perſonal or relative, in the church or in the world, will be working together for our good. This then ſhould be our primary perſonal concern: and all the company of believers, however divided and ſubdivided, ſhould conſider themſelves as one great army; and endeavour to ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel; and to recommend the ſalvation of Chriſt to all around them. In ſuch a cauſe we ſhould not allow ourſelves to be terrified by any adverſaries; for their reproaches and menaces againſt thoſe, who thus ſerve Chriſt, is a manifeſt proof, that they are in the broad road to deſtruction, as they hate the truth and image of God in his people. This enmity of ungodly men againſt us for Chriſt's ſake, when we love and are beloved of the brethren, is an evident token to us, that we partake of ſalvation by the grace of God; as both friends and foes diſcern his ſeal upon us: as it is given unto us, in the behalf of Chriſt, to believe the ſame truths, and to love and ſuffer for the ſame holy cauſe, and to endure the ſame conflict, which prophets, apoſtles, and martyrs have been engaged in before us.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtle evidently deemed harmony among chriſtians, eſſential to a converſation becoming the goſpel. If therefore there were any authority of *exhortation*, in Chriſt, as ſpeaking by him, or any *conſolation* in communion with Chriſt: if the exerciſe of love to one another for the Lord's ſake had ever been pleaſant to them; (whereas anger and diſcord had filled their hearts with a tempeſt of conflicting paſſions:) if they were indeed all partakers of the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt: if any bowels of commiſeration had been ſhewn towards them by the Lord; or required from them towards each other, or towards their ſuffering teacher; he would call upon them, by all theſe motives, to complete the joy he had formerly received from them, by living together in the moſt entire peace and love. (*Rom.* c. xii. v. 16.) The expreſſions are here varied to include all that can be imagined in the moſt cordial amity, unity and ſympathy. Let them live together as members of one body animated by one ſoul; let their common love to Chriſt, and delight in his holy ſervice, unite them in love to each other; let them be of one accord in every undertaking to promote the common cauſe; and let them ſeek, in behalf of themſelves and each other, that degree of ſpiritual illumination, which might make them of one judgment, and of the ſame ſentiments as much as poſſible. But as leſſer differences muſt take place; and even in the concerns of the church, ſome would judge more favourably of perſons or meaſures, than others; of which ſatan would take advantage, in order to diſturb their harmony: let them all watch themſelves, 5 Let this mind be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery, to be equal with God:

7 But made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men:

8 And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.

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that they did nothing from ſelf-will, a contentious temper, or an ambitious deſire of obtaining applauſe, influence, or ſuperiority. On the other hand, let them ſee to it, that they were actuated by an humble ſpirit; and that, from a conſciouſneſs of the evils in their hearts and conduct, which others obſerved not, and from candour to their brethren, they were ever ready to deem others more deſerving eſteem than themſelves. In many caſes this could not be done, in reſpect of talents or ſpiritual gifts; though ſelf-flattery and vain-glory would readily and dangerouſly intrude in that reſpect alſo: but if theſe, and the obligations connected with them, were properly eſtimated, they would rather tend to humble than to exalt them, even as Paul ſpake of his knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt, when he deemed himſelf leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints. (*Eph.* c. iii. v. 4. 8.) They ought not therefore to regard either their own attainments, or intereſts, alone, or principally, but in humble, ſelf-denying love, to recede from every perſonal concern, for the benefit of the brethren, and the peace of the church.

V. 5—8.] To illuſtrate and enforce in the moſt effectual manner that conduct, which he had recommended, the apoſtle here called on them to cultivate, and manifeſt the ſame judgment and diſpoſition of heart, which had been ſo conſpicuous in Chriſt Jeſus. He had been "in the form of God;" he appeared in divine majeſty and glory, as the Creator and Lord of all, in the heaven of heavens, and all the angels worſhipped him as God, One with, and coequal to the Father. He had manifeſted himſelf as Jehovah, to patriarchs, prophets, and the Jewiſh church, through ſucceſſive ages; and had not thought it a robbery to be equal with God, and to receive divine adoration from men. To this he was conſcious of having a full right, without in the leaſt interfering with the honour due to the eternal Father. *Nevertheleſs*, (ſo the word rendered *but* often ſignifies, in exactly the ſame connexion,) he emptied or impoveriſhed himſelf; he diveſted himſelf of his divine glory, that he might appear on earth like one of no dignity or reputation; (as princes travel without the inſignia of royalty, and are not known from private perſons). He did not come down from heaven "in the form of God," as when he gave the law from mount Sinai; he appeared, not like himſelf the Lord of glory, but "in the form of a ſervant," even of the loweſt ſervant: as he was really a Servant to the Father, when in the form of a ſervant; ſo was he really God, when in the form of God: and as all God's creatures muſt be his ſervants, by the law of their creation: ſo if Chriſt had not originally been more than a creature, he could not have *taken upon him* the form of a ſervant. In this voluntary ſuſception of a new character, in order to man's ſalvation, "he was made in the likeneſs of men;" he aſſumed our nature, and became like us in all things but ſin. Thus the only begotten of the Father tabernacled here on earth "in faſhion as a man," being truly man, but more than man at the ſame time: and he was pleaſed ſtill more to abaſe himſelf, by ſubmitting to the moſt indigent circumſtances, and the moſt accumulated hardſhips for our good; eſpecially he became obedient to the whole divine law, as our Surety, and fulfilled all righteouſneſs amidſt inconceivable difficulties and temptations: in this he perſevered to the end, and his voluntary obligations requiring it of him, he ſubmitted to ſuffer death, even that of crucifixion, the moſt infamous, tormenting, and accurſed kind of execution, to which the vileſt of malefactors were condemned; and was moſt perfectly reſigned and obedient to the Father, through all the inward agony, and multiplied indignities and cruelties, which he endured. Thus low he voluntary ſtooped from "that glory, which he had with the Father before the world was." He not only abaſed himſelf to become man; but he denied and humbled himſelf as a man, to the very depth of ſuffering and ſhame; from love to worthleſs hell-deſerving rebels and enemies! This example can never be done juſtice to by human language; and all our imitation muſt neceſſarily fall infinitely ſhort of it. In this view of the ſubject how important, and energetic is the apoſtle's argument! How ſtriking is the illuſtration! But many very learned men have laboured to prove, that the apoſtle only meant, that "the man Jeſus, though he "acted as the Ambaſſador and Repreſentative of God, "did not think of robbing Him of his glory, by claiming "equality with God." This would ſink the meaning not only into inſipidity, but to abſurdity: for it would propoſe as an example of the moſt perfect ſelf-denial and humility, a bare exemption from the moſt horrible impiety and ambition imaginable! As certainly it muſt be ſuch, for any mere creature in any circumſtances to harbour a thought of equality in honour and majeſty, with the infinite God! Indeed we could not make this ſenſe conſiſtent with our Lord's frequent declarations concerning himſelf. (*John*, c. v. ver. 17, 18. 23. c. viii. v. 58. c. x. v. 30—33. c. xiv. v. 9.) Moreover, the whole interpretation of the paſſage muſt be forced and unnatural: the reality of our Lord's human nature, "in the likeneſs o "man," and "in faſhion as a man," might as juſtly be queſtioned, as the reality of his Deity, who was "in the "form of God:" and his *taking upon him* the form of a ſervant; his *becoming obedient*, &c, are unmeaning words upon the Socinian interpretation; but exceeding emphatical upon that before propoſed. It is ſometimes worth while to ſhew how theſe boaſting reaſoners may be baffled in the argument, and driven either to give up thei conclusions, or admit abſurdities, even in reſpect of thoſe texts, to invalidate which, the whole ſtrength of their genius and learning hath been exhauſted. For even theſe ſtand untouched; as the deep-rooted rocks, are proo againſt the moſt furious aſſaults of the raging billows. But had theſe adverſaries made ſome deeper impreſſio

9 Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

11 And *that* every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence, work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling:

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleaſure.

14 Do all things without murmurings and diſputings:

15 That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world;

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

18 For the ſame cauſe alſo do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

19 But I truſt in the Lord Jeſus to ſend

upon the authority, or meaning of theſe ſcriptures; yet the Deity of Chriſt would ſtill be known to be the doctrine of the Bible by every humble enquirer after divine truth.

V. 9—11.] The eternal Word, and Son of God, having fulfilled his engagements as our incarnate Surety; God the Father moſt highly exalted him in our nature, by placing him upon the mediatorial throne. Thus he gave him a name, and a degree of honour and authority, above that of every other name; ſo that no created being ever was, or could be ſo honoured, as He was, who had been the Man of ſorrows, and crucified between two thieves! Inſomuch that at the name of Jeſus; the name given to a poor Babe, born in a ſtable, and laid in the manger, (becauſe that Babe was Emmanuel, "*God with us*," that Child born was the "mighty God,") every knee ſhould bow, in ſubmiſſion, and adoration. That is, every rational creature ſhall either willingly adore him, or ſhall be puniſhed as the enemies of God and his kingdom. This includes angels, and ſaints in heaven; men on earth; the bodies of the dead, who are under the earth, and all the principalities, and powers of darkneſs. In ſhort every tongue ſhall confeſs, every creature muſt one way or other acknowledge, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord of all, the Lord of glory, yea, Jehovah the Saviour: and this will be ſo far from interfering with the honour of God the Father, (as Anti-trinitarians object;) that it will be to his glory. For Chriſt and the Father are One: and the whole Deity is more diſplayed, and glorified in his Perſon and Redemption, in the view of the whole univerſe, than in all his other works: ſo that all the honour and worſhip, which is rendered to the Perſon of the Son, as God manifeſt in the fleſh, is virtually rendered to the Godhead; through the medium of his humanity, by which alone ſinners can know, approach unto, or worſhip the infinite God. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* ii. *Iſaiah*, c. xlv. v. 21—25. *Rom.* c. xiv. v. 10—12.)

V. 12, 13.] Having ſuch an endearing and encouraging example before their eyes; let the beloved Philippians continue to act, as they had hitherto done. They had always been prompt to obey the will of Chriſt, made known by his apoſtle, not merely whilſt he abode amongſt them, but even with increaſing attention when he had left them: and he deſired, that they ſhould now in his abſence, labour diligently in all things connected with their aſſurance of ſalvation, and their more complete deliverance from the power of ſin, by the renewal of their ſouls to holineſs. Thus they ſhould work earneſtly in the great concern of their own ſalvation, "with fear and "trembling:" leſt any of them ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of the promiſed reſt; leſt any of them ſhould be proved to have no root in themſelves, by falling away in the hour of temptation; leſt by negligence they ſhould loſe their comfort, and ſubject themſelves to darkneſs and terror at the approach of death; or leſt they ſhould diſhonour God, and prejudice men againſt the goſpel, by falling into ſcandalous ſins. Some would render it "la"bour for each other's ſalvation." But that ſeems not to be the natural meaning; though it be indeed implied in ſcripturally working out their own ſalvation, by diligence in every good work, and a believing, watchful attendance on every means of grace. In doing this, they ſhould conſider, that God was even then working in them, that willingneſs to repent, believe and obey, of which they were conſcious; and that ability to reduce their good deſires to effect, which their paſt conduct evinced. In this he had acted according to his ſovereign purpoſe of good-will to men; and what they had experienced in this matter, ſhould animate them to more vigorous exertions, and direct them to depend wholly on God to enable them for, and accept them in every good work. Thus it would be manifeſt that their affections were ſpiritual, and therefore permanent; whilſt the inefficacious and tranſient emotions of mere profeſſors, would iſſue in renewed and increaſed hardneſs of heart.

V. 14—18.] In all their concerns, whether ſecular, or religious, the Philippians were exhorted to avoid every kind of murmuring againſt God's appointments, and grudging of one another; or engaging in controverſies, or ambitious competitions for pre-eminence. Thus they would be blameleſs, and not liable to be accuſed by their

Timotheus ſhortly unto you, that I alſo may be of good comfort, when I know your ſtate.

20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate,

21 For all ſeek their own, not the things, which are Jeſus Chriſt's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a ſon with the father, he hath ſerved with me in the goſpel.

23 Him therefore I hope to ſend preſently, ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me.

24 But I truſt in the Lord that I alſo myſelf ſhall come ſhortly.

25 Yet I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-ſoldier, but your meſſenger, and he that miniſtered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heavineſs, becauſe that ye had heard that he had been ſick.

27 For indeed he was ſick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him: and not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow.

28 I ſent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye ſee him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the leſs ſorrowful.

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neighbours, as contentious, ſelfiſh, obſtinate, deceitful, or injurious; their whole conduct would be harmleſs, and inoffenſive, as well as benevolent, and they would appear to be the genuine offspring of God, by the purity, equity and love exhibited in their characters; they would eſcape the reproach and cenſure of their obſervers, and their profeſſion of the goſpel, joined with their holy converſation and ſpiritual worſhip, would cauſe them to ſhine, amidſt their immoral, idolatrous and licentious countrymen, as lights in the world. The nation indeed, to which they belonged, was crooked, deceitful, injurious, and perverſe; which appeared in their conduct towards one another, as well as in their perſecution of the chriſtians: but the doctrine and example of conſiſtent believers would tend to enlighten them, and to direct their way to Chriſt and holineſs; even as the light-houſe warned the mariners to avoid the rocks, and directed their courſe into the harbour. This muſt be done, not only by *holding faſt* the truth; but by *holding it forth* as the word of life, in their profeſſion, diſcourſe, public ordinances, and holy actions: In this manner they would certainly be ſaved themſelves, and be inſtruments of ſaving others, and the good work begun among them would be diffuſed and perpetuated to other generations. This would enable the apoſtle to anticipate the joy reſerved for him in the day of Chriſt, when it would appear that his labours at Philippi had not been fruitleſs, and that he had not run as one, who loſes the race. And provided their faith, and its bleſſed fruits were thus preſented in Chriſt Jeſus, as an acceptable and honourable ſacrifice, and ſervice to God; if he too were offered upon that ſacrifice, by laying down his life as a martyr; he would be ſo far from regretting this event, that he would rejoice at ſuffering in ſuch a cauſe, and congratulate, yea ſhare their happineſs, in the expectation or endurance of his dying agonies. He would not therefore have them be troubled on his account; but rather rejoice with, and for him as a very happy man, even in his impriſonment, and in the proſpect of a violent death. Nothing can exceed the genuine magnanimity of this moſt beautiful paſſage.

V. 19—23.] The apoſtle did not however ſuppoſe, that he was at that time to ſuffer death: he truſted in the Lord Jeſus, in whoſe hand all hearts and events were, that he ſhould be enabled ſhortly to ſend Timothy, to enquire into the ſtate of their ſouls and of the church; the reſult of which, he was perſuaded would conduce to his comfort. He had pitched upon him for this ſervice, becauſe he had with him no one of ſo excellent a ſpirit as Timothy, and ſo entirely coincident with himſelf in his views and aims; or who would be concerned for their welfare, with ſo prudent, tender, and aſſiduous an affection, like the natural love of parents to their children. For all men too much ſought their own eaſe, ſafety, intereſt, credit, or indulgence, which often interfered with the work, honour and cauſe of Chriſt. Probably this was wholly the caſe with ſeveral, that had offered their aſſiſtance to Paul, but had declined difficult and perilous ſervices: others perhaps had rendered themſelves ſuſpected by the ſame ſelfiſh conduct; and moſt concerned had given the apoſtle cauſe for diſſatisfaction, by preferring eaſier, and ſecure ſervices to thoſe of far greater importance, but connected with more ſelf denial, labour and peril. Probably ſome of his moſt approved helpers were abſent on other ſervices, and ſome might be fully employed at Rome: but after all deductions and limitations, the apoſtle's complaint muſt ſtand for a lamentable teſtimony to the ſelfiſhneſs of human nature. However, the Philippians had already had experimental proof of Timothy; and they well knew, that he had imbibed the very mind of the apoſtle, as his genuine ſon in the the faith; and that he was ever ready to enter into his views, to concur in his meaſures, to obſerve his directions, to conſult his comfort, and to labour, venture and ſuffer in the cauſe of Chriſt, and in ſerving with him in ſpreading the goſpel, as a ſon with his father. But he deemed it better not to ſend him, till he knew how his own cauſe would be decided, which he continually expected to come on before the Emperor's tribunal.

V. 24—30.] The apoſtle was ſatisfied, confiding in the Lord, that he ſhould ſpeedily regain his liberty, and be enabled to pay them another viſit. However, before he could either ſpare Timothy, or come himſelf, he deemed it expedient to ſend Epaphroditus to them, whom he owned as a brother, &c, and whom they had ſent as their meſſenger to him, to bring him a ſupply to his urgent neceſſities. Probably Epaphroditus was a paſtor of the church at Philippi, and being abſent from his ſtated charge, he longed after them, and his labours of love

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladneſs; and hold ſuch in reputation:

30 Becauſe for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to ſupply your lack of ſervice toward me.

among them; eſpecially he was in heavineſs, becauſe they had heard of his ſickneſs, and the thoughts of their ſorrow on his account was more painful to him, than his own ſickneſs had been. He had indeed been very dangerouſly ill; but God had graciouſly reſtored him for further uſefulneſs: and in this he had ſhewn mercy to the apoſtle alſo; to whom it would have been an additional ſorrow, if ſo excellent a perſon had loſt his life by miniſtering to him in his bonds. It does not appear, that any miracle was wrought in this caſe; and we may thence infer that the gift of miracles could only be exerciſed on particular occaſions, of which thoſe endued with them had ſome previous intimation. On account therefore of the late ſickneſs of Epaphroditus, the apoſtle had been the more careful to ſend him back; that the joy of the Philippians might be increaſed by ſeeing their beloved miniſter in health again: for the very thought of that joy would alleviate his ſorrows, though at a diſtance from them. He would therefore, have them to receive him for the Lord's ſake with all expreſſions of thankful joy; and to eſteem, and highly honour ſuch affectionate, laborious miniſters: for indeed the ſickneſs of Epaphroditus had been the effect of his exceſs of diligence in the work of Chriſt; as he had not even regarded his life, that in the place of the abſent Philippians, he might render every poſſible ſervice to the apoſtle, both in his perſonal concerns, and in thoſe relating to the ſpread of the goſpel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All our conſolations, hopes, and experience in the fellowſhip of the Spirit, and the bowels and mercies of God our Saviour, as well as all our regard to our own peace, ſhould engage us to be of one mind with our brethren, and ſo to fulfil the joy of all wiſe miniſters and chriſtians. Nothing ſo honours Chriſt, defeats the machinations of his enemies, or fills the ſoul with conſolation, as this holy love: but envy, contention, and ambition, not only diſturb the peace of the church, but torture the ſoul that entertains them. Neither inward, nor outward peace can be enjoyed, except in proportion as "in lowlineſs of mind we eſteem others better than ourſelves, and look at the things of others, as well as at our own." Theſe are hard leſſons to man's proud, carnal heart. Many have learned doctrines very accurately, who know nothing of this practical inſtruction. We cannot ſtudy this ſubject ſucceſſfully, except by continually looking unto Jeſus: but whilſt faith penetrates the vail of ſenſible objects, and contemplates Chriſt "in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God:" Yet making himſelf of no reputation, aſſuming the form of a ſervant, and the nature of man; appearing as an infant in the ſtable, as a poor carpenter at Nazareth, as an indigent and deſpiſed preacher in Galilee and Judea; as obedient to the law during his life, and as an inſulted criminal at his death upon the croſs: when theſe things are contemplated, and the height of his eſſential glory is contraſted with the depth of his voluntary abaſement; and with the motives and effects of this ſtupendous tranſaction, we ſee ſuch obligations and encouragements to ſelf-denying love, as the whole univerſe beſides can never ſupply: and beholding, as in a glaſs, this glory of our Lord, we are gradually changed into his image. And whilſt we contemplate his ſubſequent exaltation, and the name given to this lowly ſufferer above every name, we learn to abaſe ourſelves, that we may be exalted, to ſerve others in order to our own beſt intereſt, and to labour and ſuffer reproach, that we may enſure glory, honour and immortality. But as every knee muſt bow to Chriſt, as every tongue muſt confeſs him to be the Lord, to the glory of God the Father: let us examine whether we do thus ſubmit to reverence, love, obey and worſhip the incarnate Son of God; or whether we are yet among thoſe enemies, that muſt be bruiſed under his feet ſhortly?

In this view, even hopeful profeſſors ſhould be exhorted not only to be obedient, as in the preſence of their paſtors, but to increaſe in circumſpection when removed from under their faithful care. Thus ſhould we all work out our own ſalvation with jealous fear and humble caution; waiting for the full aſſurance of hope, and the renewal of our ſouls to holineſs, in the Lord's way of ſimple dependance, diligent obedience, and ſerious attendance on his ordinances: thanking him for working in us the willing mind, and calling upon him for grace to perform the duties incumbent on us. Surely ſome zealous advocates for evangelical truths have never read this chapter for they can do nothing without murmurings and diſputings! Theſe conſtitute their element! Theſe are the unhallowed weapons of their warfare! But how can they be blameleſs and harmleſs on this plan, when envy and ſtrife are inſeparable from confuſion and every evil work? And how can they think themſelves the children of God, who in ſo many features bear the expreſs image of ſatan? But let us pray to be made peaceable, humble, unambitious, and inoffenſive, both in the church and in the community, that by well doing we may put to ſilence the calumnies of ungodly men: and that we may be without rebuke in the midſt of this our nation, which alas is proved to be crooked and perverſe by the prevalence of infidelity, impiety, and every kind of immorality, under a chriſtian profeſſion, and abundant means of religious inſtruction. Let us then endeavour to ſhine among our ungodly neighbours as lights in the world, and to hold forth the word of life in our families and circle, by a profeſſion of the truth connected with a holy converſation. Then the miniſters, who have preached the goſpel, will anticipate their rejoicings in the day of Chriſt, aſſured that it will then appear, that they did not run, nor labour in vain, and hoping that far more extenſive and permanent good was done, than they lived to witneſs. In ſuch a proſpect a zealous ſervant of Chriſt would be animated to a readineſs for death in his Maſter's cauſe; whilſt the exultation of faith and grace would conquer nature's reluctance to ſuffering: and certainly they, who have been thus offered upon the ſacrifice of their brethren's faith, are to be conſidered as objects of peculiar

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Exhorting the Philippians to joy in the Lord, cautioning them againſt deceivers; and ſhewing them what grounds of carnal confidence he had, and how he had counted them, and all other things but loſs for Chriſt, and his ſalvation, 1---11. *2d. Deſcribing his earneſtneſs in preſſing forward to perfection; exhorting them to imitate him; and contraſting the conduct of carnal profeſſors, with the heavenly temper, and hope of true believers,* 12---21.

FInally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the ſame things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* ſafe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the conciſion,

3 For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.

4 Though I might alſo have confidence in the fleſh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might truſt in the fleſh, I more:

5 Circumciſed the eighth day, of the ſtock of Iſrael, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a Phariſee;

6 Concerning zeal, perſecuting the church, touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, blameleſs.

7 But what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt.

8 Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things *but*

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congratulation, as they have almoſt univerſally died rejoicing and triumphant. But alas, in the beſt times how few are like-minded with the apoſtle, and naturally care for the ſtate of the people! for whilſt numbers evidently and wholly ſeek their own intereſt, reputation, eaſe, or indulgence, and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt; we are all too attentive to ſuch matters, and ſometimes allow them to interfere with our uſefulneſs. So that a man, who is ready to engage even in a ſervice of great importance, where no emolument or credit from man can be expected; and in which hardſhips, perils and ſufferings muſt be encountered, is deemed a prodigy, rather an object of aſtoniſhment, than of imitation. But let us ſeek deliverance from this mean regard to our own accommodation, by increaſing zeal for the Lord's glory, and love to the ſouls of men: that they, who beſt know the proof of us, may perceive, that we ſhould have been ready to have ſerved with Paul, in all his ſelf-denying labours, like a dutiful ſon with an honoured father. Thus young miniſters ſhould attach themſelves to the moſt faithful and uſeful of their ſeniors; to learn, as it were, this ſpiritual warfare under ſuch veteran and experienced ſoldiers: and thus aged miniſters ſhould inſtill their principles, and communicate their views to their younger brethren; that they may be able to introduce them into uſeful ſervices, as their companions in labour, and approved fellow-ſoldiers. What an ingenuous ſpirit doth the goſpel inſpire! The moſt eminent miniſters, who have learned moſt entirely to truſt in the Lord Jeſus for every thing, will yet frankly acknowledge their obligations for temporal aſſiſtance; to thoſe, who owe their ſalvation to their labours of love! the affectionate paſtor will be more full of heavineſs for the grief of his people on his account, than for his own pain and ſickneſs! And he will long after them, and to renew his labours among them, as a tender mother doth after her beloved infant! The Lord often afflicts ſuch men to manifeſt the excellency of their diſpoſition; but he will have mercy upon them, and not let them have ſorrow upon ſorrow: and they will readily put themſelves to inconveniencies to remove the grief, or increaſe the comfort of their brethren; rejoicing though at a diſtance, in the thoughts of their joy, as an alleviation of their own ſorrow. Such miniſters ſhould be received and honoured for the Lord's ſake, who ſpend their ſtrength, and diſregard even life and health in his work, and to ſupply the lack of ſervice of thoſe, who are incapable of performing it: but they ſhould not without neceſſity be kept from the people of their peculiar charge.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—7.] The apoſtle deemed it needful to cloſe, or ſum up the preceding practical exhortations, by calling the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord Jeſus, and in their relation to him as their glory and ſalvation. This he had often inculcated, by various methods; and it was not difficult for him to repeat the ſame inſtruction: but as it was ſafe for them, and ſuited to their afflicted circumſtances, he preferred ſuch repetition to more ingenious or admired ſpeculations. He alſo warned them to beware of dogs, &c: the Jews contemptuouſly called the Gentiles dogs; but the bigotted, ſelfiſh Judaizing teachers ſeem to be here intended by that emblem; they could fawn on thoſe, that favoured them; but they were greedy, ſnarling, and ready to bite or devour ſuch as oppoſed them. (*Iſaiah*, c. lvi. v. 9—12.) But the evil workers may alſo include thoſe teachers and profeſſors, who abuſed the doctrines of grace, and indulged themſelves in ſin, as a part of their chriſtian liberty. They were however, eſpecially to beware of *the conciſion*, or the "*cutting off*:" the Judaizers laid much ſtreſs on *cutting off* the foreſkin, though they did not mortify the deeds of the body: they wanted to *cut off* the Gentiles from the church, but they *cut off* themſelves and others from ſalvation, by their dependance on the works of the law. The honourable title of the circumciſion did not therefore belong to them: that ancient rite was no longer of any value: Chriſtians were the true circumciſion, the covenant people of God, the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham; the righteouſneſs of faith was ſealed to them by the circumciſion of the heart, of which baptiſm loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Chriſt,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable to his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.

13 Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forget-

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was the outward ſign. They worſhipped God, not ſo much according to the external forms, as ſpiritually, and under the teaching of the Holy Ghoſt, (*John*, c. iv. ver. 23, 24:) and they rejoiced and gloried in Jeſus Chriſt the ſubject of all the prophecies, and the ſubſtance of all the ſhadows of the old diſpenſation. The apoſtle did not thus put himſelf upon a level with the Gentile converts, becauſe he had nothing of a carnal nature to depend on: for if any man ſuppoſed himſelf to have many diſtinctions of this kind to glory in, he could evince that he had more. He had been circumciſed on the eighth day, according to the law and cuſtom: he could trace back his genealogy to Iſrael and Abraham: he was of the tribe of Benjamin, which never apoſtatized from the worſhip of God at the temple, as moſt of the other tribes did: both his parents were Hebrews; ſo that he was neither born nor educated a Helleniſt Jew, who might be ſuppoſed leſs exact in the law: as a Phariſee he had been peculiarly ſtrict both in the Moſaic ceremonies, and the traditions of the elders: his perſecution of the church proved his zeal for that kind of religion; and his whole conduct was externally ſo conformable to the letter of the law, that in reſpect of that kind of righteouſneſs, no one could lay any thing to his charge. But all thoſe things, which he once deemed moſt advantageous to him, and conducive to his acceptance with God, as well as to his reputation and preferment, he at length learned to account loſs for Chriſt: being aſſured, that if he depended on, or cleaved to them, they would prevent his ſalvation by Chriſt; he had willingly renounced them all: as the merchant in a ſtorm caſts over-board his moſt valuable property, leſt it ſhould occaſion the loſs of his life.

V. 8—11.] Not only did Paul thus judge concerning his legal righteouſneſs, and the worldly proſpects connected with it: but after many years ſpent in ſucceſsfully preaching the goſpel, with apoſtolical authority, miraculous gifts, immenſe labour, multiplied ſufferings, and moſt exemplary holineſs; yet doubtleſs, in the great concern of his own ſalvation, he deemed all theſe things to be loſs, in compariſon of the moſt excellent knowledge of Chriſt by faith, in the glory of his Perſon and ſalvation. For his ſake, whom he rejoiced to call his Lord, he had ſuffered the loſs of his worldly friends, proſpects, intereſts, country, and liberty; and he continually expected, that he ſhould be called to lay down his life in his cauſe: but he accounted all theſe things likewiſe to be moſt worthleſs in compariſon of Chriſt; he gladly parted with them, in order to win the Pearl of great price, which alone could make him rich, honourable, and happy for ever. For his great deſire was "to be found in Chriſt," in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, as Noah was in the ark, when the deluge ſwept away an unbelieving world: and to ſtand before God, not having, as his plea or title to life, his own righteouſneſs, which having reference to the law, as it's meaſure, could only condemn him; but that righteouſneſs, which is received by faith; even that righteouſneſs, that God beſtows on, and imputes to the believing ſinner; namely, the perfect obedience unto death of his incarnate Son, which alone can anſwer the demands of the law, and render a tranſgreſſor's ſalvation conſiſtent with the perfect juſtice of God. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. iii. iv. v. 2. *Cor.* c. v. ver 21.) All things elſe the apoſtle deemed worthleſs compared with this knowledge of Chriſt, and that joyful transforming view of his glory, and experience of his grace, which reſulted from ſaving faith: that he might know more of the power of his reſurrection, by the new creation of his ſoul to holineſs; that he might have fellowſhip with him in his ſufferings, both by the mortification of his ſinful nature, and by enduring patiently the enmity of the world for his ſake: being made conformable to his death; both by dying to ſin, that he might live to God, and by laying down his life in the ſervice of his beloved Saviour: and that ſo, by any means, at any rate, by making any ſacrifice, or bearing any afflictions, he might attain to that perfect felicity, to which the ſaints will be admitted at the reſurrection; of which their preceding joys will be an anticipation. The apoſtle did not mean that he doubted of this happy event of his labours, (c. i. v. 21:) but he ſhewed what that great object was, which he purſued, and for which he renounced all other hopes and proſpects, and endured ſuch complicated trials: and he inſtructed others in the way of poſſeſſing an aſſured hope.

V. 12—14.] Even this ſimple dependance, and earneſtneſs of ſoul, were not mentioned by the apoſtle, as if he had attained the prize, or were already perfected in his Saviour's image: he was ſtill purſuing, and aiming, by further labours, and progreſs in holineſs to finiſh his courſe, and obtain the prize, for which he had been graciouſly arreſted by the Lord Jeſus, when he was a malignant perſecutor. He diſregarded all his paſt attainments and ſervices; as the racer in the Iſthmian games, as it were, forgot the ground he had run over, and the competitors, that he had left behind: and he reached forth to further labours, and advancement in conformity to Chriſt, ting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before,

14 I preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe-minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an enſample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt:

19 Whoſe end *is* deſtruction, whoſe god *is their* belly, and *whoſe* glory *is* in their ſhame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our converſation is in heaven; from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

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without loitering or wearineſs; as the racer exerted all his vigour and agility to outſtrip thoſe before him, and to paſs over the remainder of his courſe. Thus he preſſed forward to the mark with unremitting ſpeed, that he might receive the prize of heavenly glory, which God from above called on him by Jeſus Chriſt to aſpire unto: even as the racer urged his courſe to the goal, keeping the victor's crown full in view, and animated by the acclamations of thoſe, who excited him ſo to run, that he might attain. (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. ix. v. 24—27.)

V. 15, 16.] The apoſtle therefore exhorted all thoſe, that were perfect, to be like-minded with him in theſe things; counting all but loſs for Chriſt, deeming preſent attainments inconſiderable, and preſſing forward to the mark. The very exhortation ſhews, that he uſed the word perfect in another ſenſe than before; and it implied, that the temper and conduct before deſcribed form the chriſtian's higheſt perfection in this world. The expreſſion may ſignify the ſound character, of the eſtabliſhed believer; the man, who is matured in judgment and experience, and hath made moſt progreſs in chriſtianity. In this way they would beſt wait for further inſtruction: and if any of them were otherwiſe minded than their brethren, and under any miſtake, or miſapprehenſion; in thus avoiding diſputation, and practiſing what they knew, on evangelical principles, they might hope that God would make known that to them, of which they ſtill remained ignorant; and their ſtronger brethren ſhould bear with their prejudices, till they were in this manner obviated. Nevertheleſs, they ſhould be careful not to decline from that meaſure of faith, diligence, conſtancy, and holineſs, to which they had attained: but, by walking according to the ſame rule of divine truth, and minding the ſame means of improvement, by which they had hitherto proceeded; they might keep the ground they had gained, and make further progreſs; not growing ſlack in one thing, by zeal in another.

V. 17—19.] The apoſtle could confidently call on them to imitate him in theſe things; and to obſerve and copy ſuch chriſtians as followed the example of him and Timothy, &c; for many walked in a very different manner. He had often ſpoken to them againſt their contagious principles and examples; and he now mentioned them, not with acrimony, or reſentment, but with tears of compaſſion for their ſouls, and of grief for the diſhonour which they brought upon the goſpel. For in fact, they were the moſt dangerous enemies to the croſs of Chriſt; they entered not into, nay they hated, the holy import of that inſtructive tranſaction, which was the grand diſplay of God's holineſs, of the excellency of the divine law, and of the evil of ſin; and their licentious lives more diſgraced the doctrine of the croſs, than all the obloquy and oppoſition of avowed enemies. The end of their vain profeſſion would be final perdition; as "their "god was their belly," the indulgence of their appetites was the end they propoſed to themſelves, and the chief ſatisfaction they ſought; to this baſe end they ſacrificed the moſt important intereſts, and from it they expected their happineſs, inſtead of ſeeking it in, and from, the Lord. At the ſame time, they gloried in their doctrines, practices, and ſucceſs in making proſelytes, and corrupting others; of which they ought to have been aſhamed, and which would certainly terminate in their deep diſgrace; for in ſhort they were carnally-minded, and ſought for, or favoured nothing but worldly things. Some expoſitors explain this almoſt excluſively of the Judaizing teachers, and their followers: and doubtleſs many of them were of this ſtamp; being as entire ſtrangers to true holineſs, as to the glory of the croſs of Chriſt; and only ſeeking to live luxuriouſly, to acquire credit, or obtain ſecular advantages, by their profeſſion of chriſtianity; and their zeal for the legal ceremonies. Yet there were dangers and abuſes from other quarters; and the apoſtle's words are at leaſt equally deſcriptive of licentious, Antinomian profeſſors, whether Jews or Gentiles; of which we cannot doubt but many would ſpring up in every part of the church: nor is it prudent to repreſent all the danger to lie on one ſide, when the oppoſite extreme is equally fatal.

V. 20, 21.] In oppoſition to the baſe, and groveling characters before deſcribed, the apoſtle here ſhewed that the true chriſtian was a citizen of heaven, where his heart and treaſures were lodged, and whence his hopes and comforts were derived; ſo that his judgment, affections, and conduct would be of an heavenly nature. Thence alſo all true believers expected the coming of Chriſt to be their Judge, and were continually preparing to meet him. Inſtead of idolizing their ſenſual gratifications, they deemed the body itſelf at preſent to be vile, and in an humiliating condition; being the ſeat of enſnaring appetites, the inſtrument of ſins, the incumbrance of the ſoul in duty, liable to manifold loathſome diſeaſes, 21 Who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.

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and condemned to return to corruption and duſt. But they expected that Chriſt at his ſecond coming would change their bodies, faſhioning them into a complete conformity to his glorified body, rendering them incorruptible and ſpiritual, and preparing them to participate and help the holy felicity of the immortal ſoul to all eternity. This he would effect by his omnipotent operation, according to that divine power, by which he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf, and to give them final deliverance from death, their laſt enemy. This proſpect taught them to mortify the deeds of the body, and to ſeek the renewal of their ſouls to a meetneſs for their glorious inheritance.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould be zealous of good works, but we muſt rejoice in the Lord Jeſus alone. Repetitions on ſuch important ſubjects, though eaſy to the teacher, are ſafe to the hearers, and muſt not be deemed ſuperfluous; being often more uſeful than the moſt original and learned diſquiſitions. We cannot too earneſtly guard men againſt thoſe, who either oppoſe, or abuſe the doctrine of free ſalvation. Many of theſe perſons are greedy of their own intereſt, fierce againſt their oppoſers, and ready to rend or cut in pieces the church, to propagate their own peculiar notions, or obſervances. But the true chriſtian will be aware of them; he worſhips God in the Spirit, rejoices in Chriſt Jeſus, has the circumciſion of the heart, and confides in nothing, of which unregenerate men are capable. But how far ſhort do many, that have confidence in the fleſh, come of the attainments of Saul the perſecutor? Their birth of chriſtian parents, their early baptiſm, and their form of godlineſs, can ſcarce be imagined ſuperior to his diſtinctions of a ſimilar nature: but where is their ſtrictneſs, their zeal, their morality, and their blameleſs conduct? Yet they ſtill truſt in their poor ſcanty, worthleſs, or pretended works, and forms; and deem them too valuable to exchange them for Chriſt and his ſalvation! But if they ever *come to themſelves*, and become acquainted with God, his law, and their own characters; they will deem all their gain to be loſs, for Chriſt: and if ſubſequent to their converſion they ſhould loſe all outward things, and endure all kind of perſecutions in the Lord's ſervice; if they ſhould labour more abundantly, and walk more holily than their brethren; they will count *even* all theſe things, but loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt; they will renounce all dependance on their beſt ſervices, and deem all worldly objects worthleſs, compared with the hope of winning Chriſt and being found in him. They will deprecate, as ſure deſtruction, having their eternal ſtate in any meaſure decided according to their own righteouſneſs; they will deſire above all things to have the gift of righteouſneſs by the faith of Chriſt: they will ſee that no additions need be made to his unſearchable riches, no ſecurity added to his ſure refuge, no appendages to his robe of righteouſneſs. Thus would they deem themſelves rich, ſafe, and happy in proportion to their aſſurance of being found in Chriſt, and made the righteouſneſs of God in him: but in ſeeking for this aſſurance, as well as in order to glorify ſo bounteous a Friend; they will alſo ſeek for a more transforming knowledge of Chriſt, a deeper experience of the power of his reſurrection, and a nearer conformity to him in his ſufferings and death, by dying to ſin, and crucifying the fleſh with its affections and luſts. And at the ſame time, the love of Chriſt, and the longing after him will conſtrain them, if called to it, to ſuffer, yea to die with him, that they may be alſo glorified together.

Thouſands and ten thouſands have teſtified, that this is the judgment and experience of true chriſtians: nor can any meaſure of perſonal holineſs, or ſelf-denying labours ſatisfy the man, who counts all but loſs, that he may win Chriſt, and be juſtified by faith in Him alone. He ſtill deems himſelf not to have attained; he is continually humbled for his manifold defects and defilements: he ſtill follows after, in hope of attaining to that prize, for which he was apprehended, when a careleſs ſinner, or a proud formaliſt, by the Saviour's preventing grace. In his chriſtian courſe he forgets the things, which are behind, and reaches forth to thoſe, that are before; and ſo preſſes forward to the mark for the prize of his high calling in Chriſt Jeſus. In theſe things there are vaſt diſparities among real chriſtians; but all know ſomething of them. They, who are moſt perfected in the life of faith and grace, have need to be exhorted to be thus minded; they who are newly ſet out ſhould be called on to emulate ſuch honourable examples: and whilſt in theſe great concerns they are thus minded, the Lord will guide them into the further knowledge of his truth and will. For ſatisfactory views of divine things are far better acquired by peaceable meditation and diligent obedience, than by noiſy diſputations. We ſhould however, be very careful not to grow remiſs and languid in thoſe things to which we have already attained; we ſhould ſtill continue to walk by the ſame rule, and mind the ſame things; that we may make a perpetual progreſs in the divine life, and ſecure, as it were, every poſt, of which we have got poſſeſſion. Let us then ſtudy to walk after the example of apoſtles and evangeliſts, that our conduct may be meet for others to copy with advantage: for alas, in every age there are profeſſors of the goſpel, of whom the humble, zealous chriſtian can ſcarce think or ſpeak without ſorrow and weeping. Of theſe, miniſters muſt tell their flocks in tender love; ſeeing their end is deſtruction; ſenſual indulgence is the filthy deity; they glory in their ſhameful abuſe of the goſpel; and mind earthly things even in their religious profeſſion. But let us, as citizens of heaven, have our converſation of a contrary nature: may we continually prepare for the coming of our Judge; that we may be found of him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs: may we expect confidently to have our vile bodies changed by his Almighty power into the faſhion of his glorified body; and in this proſpect may we apply to him daily to new create our ſouls unto holineſs, to deliver us from our enemies, to bruiſe ſatan under our feet, and to employ both our bodies and ſouls as inſtruments of righteouſneſs, in his ſervice on earth, till he ſhall come to receive us to his heavenly kingdom!

CHAP. IV.

Contains *1ſt. Affectionate exhortations to ſtedfaſtneſs, concord, joy in the Lord, moderation, believing prayer, and univerſal good behaviour, united with encouragements,* 1---9. *2d. The apoſtle ſhewing his thankful ſenſe of the kindneſs of the Philippians, in the ſupply ſent him by Ephaphroditus; expreſſing his contentment; commending their former and preſent liberality as moſt pleaſing to God, and profitable to themſelves; and concluding with ſalutations from himſelf, and others,* 10---23.

THerefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown, ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

2 I beſeech Euodias, and beſeech Syntyche, that they be of the ſame mind in the Lord.

3 And I intreat thee alſo, true yoke-fellow, help thoſe women which laboured with me in the goſpel, with Clement alſo and *with* other my fellow-labourers, whoſe names *are* in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I ſay, rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving let your requeſts be made known unto God;

7 And the peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus.

8 Finally, my brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things *are* honeſt, whatſoever things *are* juſt, whatſoever things *are* pure, whatſoever things *are* lovely, whatſo-

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NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *Therefore,* &c.] This verſe evidently applied to the ſubject, with which the former chapter concluded. Seeing they had ſuch hopes, and ſo powerful a Friend; let them ſtand faſt in faith and obedience, amidſt all enemies and temptations; as they had hitherto done, and as had been recommended to them. The verſe is principally remarkable for the variety of expreſſions, in which the apoſtle poured out the affection of his heart towards the Philippians. They were his brethren in Chriſt, dearly beloved, with whom he longed to commune, and to whom he earneſtly deſired to be ſtill more uſeful. He deemed them his joy and crown amidſt all his ſorrow and diſgrace; and he expected they would be ſo in the day of Chriſt.

V. 2, 3.] Euodias and Syntyche ſeem to have been women of note at Philippi, who on ſome account had diſagreed; this both impeded their uſefulneſs, and tended to cauſe diviſions in the church. The apoſtle therefore, intreated them to accommodate their differences, by mutual conceſſions, &c; that ſo they might be of one mind in Chriſt, for his ſake, and in ſeeking the peace and welfare of his church. The true yoke-fellow, or genuine aſſociate in the work of Chriſt, whom the apoſtle addreſſed without naming, was doubtleſs well known at Philippi; though our conjectures reſpecting him muſt be precarious. The word is maſculine in the original, and ſome think that he was the huſband to one of the women above mentioned; others that he was ſome eminent miniſter at Philippi. However, the apoſtle intreated him to uſe his influence, in bringing thoſe women to a cordial agreement, and in helping them to accompliſh all their good deſigns for the honour of Chriſt, and the ſpread of the goſpel: for they had formerly laboured by their private endeavours to promote the ſucceſs of his public miniſtry; as Clement alſo had done, and ſeveral others, whom he acknowledged as his fellow labourers; and whoſe zeal and love emboldened him to ſay, that their names were enrolled in the book of life, among the elect of God, and the heirs of heaven. (*Luke,* c. x. v. 20. *Rev.* c. xiii. v. 8. c. xx. v. 12.) It is uncertain whether this were, or were not, the ſame with Clemens Romanus, an epiſtle of whoſe writing is yet extant.

V. 4—7.] The apoſtle again exhorted them to rejoice in the Lord Jeſus *alway,* ever in the midſt of their perſecutions, afflictions, and temptations; though they were poor, bereaved, ſick, impriſoned, or in danger of death; yea, notwithſtanding their former manifold ſins, and their preſent lamented imperfections and defilements; the deplorable evils that they muſt witneſs among profeſſed chriſtians, and the wretched ſtate of the world around them. For the favour, mercy, ſalvation, protection, and conſolation of their all-ſufficient and Almighty Lord; the honour of their relation to him, the felicity of communion with him, and the eternal glory he had purchaſed for them, compriſed a joy, which might more than counterbalance all the cauſes of their ſorrow; and which would ſatisfy and ſanctify their hearts, and fortify them for ſelf-denial, ſuffering and death. Nor were they to conſider this exhortation as given without a due conſideration of their inward and outward impediments: to evince this he would again call upon them to rejoice, for he knew, that if they lived up to their privileges, they could never want cauſe for joy, and would generally be enabled to rejoice. In connexion with this they ought to manifeſt an indifference in reſpect of thoſe worldly poſſeſſions &c, about which men in general contend and wrangle; that ſo the *meekneſs* of their diſpoſition might be known to all men, even to their enemies; who would perceive how moderate they were, as to the acquiſition, and uſe of outward things; and how compoſedly they ſuffered the loſs, or want of them, or any of thoſe hardſhips, to which the injuſtice of their perſecutors expoſed them. This they ſhould aim at, under a realizing aſſurance that the Lord was at hand: the preſent life, with all its trials or enjoyments was ſpeedily vaniſhing; the Lord would ſoon come to receive the ſouls of his people to glory, and to terminate the proſperity of his eneever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praiſe, think on theſe things.

9 Thoſe things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do; and the God of peace ſhall be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed again; wherein ye were alſo careful but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want; for I have learned, in whatſoever ſtate I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am inſtructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need.

13 I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.

14 Notwithſtanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction,

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mies; nay the day of final retribution would ſoon arrive with complete redemption to believers, and perdition to ungodly men. Whatever then was taken from, or wanting to them; whatever diſcouraged or diſtreſſed them, in their own concerns or thoſe of their brethren; let them watch againſt unbelieving anxiety and an uſeleſs ſolicitude about events; and let them in every caſe, by prayer and ſupplication for themſelves and others, make their requeſts known unto God; pouring out their hearts before him, and joining their fervent prayers with thankſgivings for mercies already received. In thus applying to God, under a conſciouſneſs of their indigence, dependance, and unworthineſs, and in a believing reliance on his mercy, power, truth, and grace; they would find that the peace, which God alone could beſtow, conſiſting of an inward thankful, admiring ſenſe of his forgiving love, an acquieſcence in his will, a confidence in his help, and a ſerene compoſure of the ſoul, would be vouchſafed to them. This peace indeed ſurpaſſed the comprehenſion of all, who did not experience it, nor could any words give them an adequate idea of it; even true believers could not fully explain, nor clearly underſtand its nature and excellency: but they would find their affections, and all the powers of their ſouls poſſeſſed, and garriſoned by it, to the excluſion of anxious cares, and harraſſing temptations, through the merits of Chriſt, the ſupply of his Spirit, and the exerciſe of faith in him.

V. 9, 10.] The ſubſtance of the practical exhortations, which the apoſtle had further to give them, might be compriſed in few words. Whatſoever tempers, words, or actions in any way expreſſed truth, candour, ſincerity, or fidelity; whatſoever appeared grave, *venerable*, or reſpectable; whatſoever was juſt and upright, ſtamped with probity and integrity; whatſoever evinced purity, chaſtity, and temperance; whatſoever was amiable, or *friendly*: whatſoever was juſtly of good report; and approved as virtuous or commendable among men, let them continually think of ſuch things, and endeavour to manifeſt them in every part of their conduct. In ſhort, let them practiſe what he had taught them, and they had received as teachable ſcholars; what they had heard from him, and witneſſed in his example: and then he could confidently aſſure them of the comforting, and protecting preſence of their reconciled God, (as the author of inward and outward peace,) with their ſouls and in their aſſemblies.

V. 10—13.] The apoſtle would not conclude the epiſtle without a ſpecial acknowledgement of the kindneſs ſhewn him by the Philippians. It had indeed "greatly rejoiced him in the Lord," and with reference to his providence, will, and glory, that after a conſiderable time, their care of him had flouriſhed again, as a tree ſhoots forth its buds in the ſpring. This not only excited him to rejoice in, and thank the Lord, for putting it into their hearts to ſupply his urgent neceſſities; but it made him glad, as it evinced the proſperous ſtate of their ſouls. Indeed he then was ſatisfied, that they had all along been careful for him, and deſired to help him; but they had wanted the opportunity of doing it, ſo ſoon as they had intended: yet perhaps his godly jealouſy over them might make him fear, leſt they were become diſaffected, or remiſs. He did not ſpeak this with reſpect to the want which he had ſuffered, as if that were ſo intolerable an evil; for he had learned in the ſchool of experience, under the tuition of Chriſt, to be content, and well ſatisfied with the Lord's appointments, in whatever ſituation he was placed. He knew how to be abaſed by the deepeſt poverty, labouring hard for a mean ſubſiſtence, neglected and deſpiſed, without repining; or uſing any diſhonourable means of obtaining relief; and he was able to abound, without deviating from the ſtricteſt rules of temperance and humility; and without growing reluctant to the moſt ſelf-denying, and afflictive labours. In every reſpect, and in all things, he was initiated into the myſterious life of faith, and communion with God as the ſource of conſolation: ſo that he knew how to be full, and able to impart to others, or to be hungry and deſtitute of bare neceſſaries for himſelf, without being diſcompoſed, or unfitted for his place and work. So that, he found by experience, that he could do all things, in this reſpect, and in whatever was connected with his duty; not by his natural ability, nor yet by the grace which he had already received; but through the ſtrength communicated to him from Chriſt, whoſe power reſted upon him, and enabled him for whatever he called him to. Theſe leſſons he ſeems to have learned, by a deep ſenſe of his own unworthineſs, and his obligations to the Lord; by continually contemplating the poverty, abaſement and ſufferings of Chriſt; by a believing confidence in the wiſdom, faithfulneſs and love of God, who ordered all theſe matters in the beſt manner poſſible; by a lively hope of immortal felicity; and from an ardent deſire by any labours, or ſufferings to promote the cauſe of Chriſt in the world.

15 Now, ye Philippians, know alſo, that in the beginning of the goſpel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16 For even in Theſſalonica ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity.

17 Not becauſe I deſire a gift: but I deſire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were ſent* from you, an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God.

19 But my God ſhall ſupply all your need according to his riches in glory by Chriſt Jeſus.

20 Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Salute every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

22 All the ſaints ſalute you, chiefly they that are of Ceſar's houſhold.

23 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

V. 14—20.] Though the apoſtle could well have endured his poverty without murmuring; yet he was not on that account leſs entitled to aſſiſtance: and the Philippians had done a good work in communicating with him in his affliction, by ſtraitening themſelves to relieve him. This renewed inſtance of their liberal affection made it proper for him to inform them, that at the beginning of the goſpel being preached among them, when he *was departing* from Macedonia; no church had maintained chriſtian fellowſhip with him, by their giving him, and his receiving from them, a ſupply, except that of the Philippians. Even when he was ſucceſsfully preaching at Theſſalonica, and labouring with his own hands for a maintenance, they had repeatedly ſent ſome relief to his urgent neceſſities. This demanded his grateful remembrance: not becauſe he deſired a gift for its own ſake, or coveted the property of his hearers; but he deſired to ſee them fruitful in thoſe good works, which would conduce to their preſent comfort, and future felicity: whereas it grieved him to ſee profeſſors of chriſtianity tenacious of their worldly goods, and leaving their miniſters to ſtruggle with deep poverty; becauſe they thus injured themſelves. But in every reſpect he had all, that he could wiſh for; he was fully ſatisfied with their conduct, and with his own circumſtances; having received from Epaphroditus the ſupply they had ſent. This he knew to be far more acceptable to God, than the moſt fragrant incenſe, being a ſpiritual ſacrifice, well pleaſing to him, as the genuine fruit of their faith in, and love to the Lord Jeſus. (*Eph.* c. v. ver. 2.) The apoſtle indeed could not make them that return, which he wiſhed: but his God and Father, whoſe he was, and whom he ſerved, would ſurely ſupply all their wants of every kind, according to the riches of his all-ſufficiency and bounty; eſpecially by bringing them to his eternal glory through Jeſus Chriſt. To Him therefore, as the common Father of the whole family, he aſcribed the glory of all, that was done in, for, and by them: and of all his manifeſted perfections, and wonderful works; which he deſired might be univerſally adored for ever and ever. Amen.

V. 21, 22.] The brethren, may here either mean the miniſters at Rome, or ſuch of the apoſtle's friends as were come from other parts to be with him. There were true ſaints even in Nero's houſhold, who kept their places, and ſerved Chriſt in that moſt perilous, and enſnaring ſituation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Affectionate miniſters, like tender parents, can ſcarce find words emphatical enough to expreſs their love for, and fervent deſires after, the felicity of thoſe, whom they regard as their preſent joy, and their future crown. They greatly long after their ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith, and conſtant devotedneſs to God, amidſt the temptations, and allurements of the world: and their good conduct for a ſeaſon makes them the more earneſt with them, to acquit themſelves in like manner for the future. They ſo love the bleſſed office of peace-makers, that they will even *ſupplicate* their own ſpiritual children, to be of one mind in the Lord: and they ſo much deſire the ſucceſs of every good work; that they uſe all their influence to excite every one to help all thoſe, who labour in any way to promote the goſpel; and thus give aſſurance that their names are written in the book of life. Believers have always ground of rejoicing in the Lord: though they are not always able to rejoice: the perfection of their duty, and the full enjoyment of their privilege are preciſely the ſame: their diſconſolations ariſe from weakneſs of faith and grace, and they ſhould be called upon to rejoice in the Lord alway, though they be not able to come up to the ſtandard, that they may aim high: for the nearer they come to it, the more will the Lord be glorified in, and by them. Living upon theſe holy, ſatisfying, and ſubſtantial joys; we ſhould make it appear, that we are not of this world. Let the carnal and ſelfiſh graſp at, and contend about the poſſeſſions, and parade of a day: our moderation about temporal things, and our compoſure amidſt injuries and loſſes ſhould be manifeſt to all men. The Lord is at hand; the hour of death, and the day of judgment will ſpeedily arrive. The tranſient joys, and ſorrows of the preſent ſcene are not worth our ſolicitude: all our temporal and eternal intereſts too are in the Lord's hands; we ſhould therefore be careful for nothing, except to know the ſtate of our ſouls, and the path of duty. In all our ſorrows, fears or wants, we ſhould make our requeſts known unto God, for though he knows them before-hand; yet he loves to hear them from us. Whatever our difficulties may be, we have always cauſe to unite grateful praiſes with our prayers and ſupplications: and in this way we ſhall find an inward ſatisfaction, and experience that peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding; and our hearts and minds will be preſerved in ſerenity, whatever ſtorms may rage around us.

The origin of all our privileges and ſalvation is wholly in the free mercy of God; yet the actual enjoyment of them is intimately connected with our conſcientious holy converſation. Therefore, whatſoever things are true, reſpectable, juſt, pure, loving, lovely, or of good report; whatſoever is virtuous and commendable; whatſoever prophets, apoſtles, or martyrs have exemplified; whatſoever excellency we have heard, and read of, or witneſſed in the conduct of the ſaints: theſe we ſhould continually think of, and diligently endeavour to practiſe; and in this way we may hope for the preſence and bleſſing of the God of peace and love. Even they, who proſper in religion, have their winters, as well as their ſpring ſeaſons: ſometimes their zeal and love ſeem to languiſh, and then again at laſt they flouriſh more abundantly. Yet they often lack opportunity, when they perhaps were deemed inattentive: and their faithful miniſters may ſometimes ſuſpect or mourn over them; when if they knew all, they might be rejoicing greatly in the Lord for them. However, we ſhould always confide in God alone, for all human friendſhip is precarious. It is a great and difficult attainment to learn in whatever ſtate we are, therewith to be content. Pride, unbelief, a vain hankering after ſomewhat unpoſſeſſed, and a fickle diſreliſh to preſent things, render men naturally diſcontented in the moſt favourable circumſtances: and their continual ſhiftings from one thing to another, reſemble the toſſing to and fro of a man in a fever, who imputes his reſtleſſneſs to his poſture, rather than to his diſeaſe. It requires much humility, ſpirituality, faith, and reſignation to render us contented in our appointed ſituations. Probably, few chriſtians, who enjoy liberty and plenty, can fully and ſincerely adopt the language of Paul the indigent priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt! We ſhould however, ſtudy this important leſſon: we ſhould pray continually for patient ſubmiſſion and hope, when we are abaſed; for humility, and a heavenly mind, when exalted; and to be initiated into the practical myſtery of temperate, ſelf-denying, liberal, lowly abundance; or that of chearful, contented, and honourable indigence, even if we be called to ſuffer hunger and extreme want. We can indeed of ourſelves do nothing; but we may do all things through Chriſt, who inwardly ſtrengthens his people, in proportion as they ſimply depend upon him. He can teach, and enable his miniſters to live in poverty among the affluent, without grudging, envying, coveting, or repining; even when they have an equitable claim upon them for a portion of their abundance. Indeed we ſhould aim at this very much, if we would be examples to the flock, and convince the wealthy, that we ſeek not *their's but them.* Notwithſtanding this, the people ſhould however be taught, that they do well in communicating to the wants of their faithful paſtors, who are juſtly entitled to liberal aſſiſtance, in proportion as they are willing to endure all things rather than hinder the goſpel of Chriſt. And they, who diſtinguiſh themſelves in ſuch ſervices, from pure motives, ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance; for their moſt ſecret good works ſhall be publiſhed at the laſt day, if not before. The affectionate ſervant of Chriſt will not deſire a gift; but on ſome occaſions he will firmly refuſe it, whatever his ſtraits may be: yet he cannot but long to ſee his people fruitful in ſuch things, as will abound to their own account: and though he be willing to ſuffer want; yet he muſt grieve when they neglect their bounden duty, and ſo bring their ſtate into queſtion. We ſhould not be reluctant, on proper occaſions, to acknowledge our obligations to thoſe, who have miniſtered to our neceſſities; and to commend their fruits of faith and love, as "an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a "ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing unto God." What we cannot repay, we may truſt that He will, according to his riches in Chriſt Jeſus, ſupplying all the wants of thoſe, who thus ſtraiten themſelves, and bringing them to his heavenly kingdom; that glory may be to Him our God and Father for ever-more. Whether ſaints reſide in palaces, cottages, or dungeons, communion ſhould be maintained among them by mutual prayers, ſalutations, and kindneſſes: the Lord will have ſome to honour him in every ſituation; and he can preſerve them unhurt, in their proper places, however perilous, by the power which protected the three young men in the fiery furnace: for the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will be with, and ſufficient for, all his people, wherever diſperſed, or however diſtinguiſhed.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the COLOSSIANS.

Coloſſe was a populous city of Phrygia, in the leſſer Aſia. Probably Paul was never there: but Epaphras, or ſome other Evangeliſts ſent forth by him, had planted a church in that city, perhaps during his reſidence at Epheſus. As the apoſtle of the Gentiles, he wrote this epiſtle to them, to guard them againſt the philoſophical ſubtleties of their neighbours, and the artifices of Judaizing teachers; to eſtabliſh them in the great truths of the goſpel, and to exhort them to holineſs of life. The epiſtle was written from Rome; and probably ſent by Tychicus and Oneſimus, at the ſame time with that to the Epheſians, to which, in many things, it bears ſome reſemblance.

CHAP. I

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Saluting the Coloſſians; thanking God in their behalf, and praying for their increaſing knowledge, holineſs, patience, and grateful joy, 1---14. *2d. Shewing the perſonal, and mediatorial glory of Chriſt; and the bleſſings to which they were called by faith in him; and ſpeaking of his own ſufferings, and miniſtry, as the apoſtle of the Gentiles,* 15---29.

PAUL, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

2 To the ſaints and faithful brethren in Chriſt which are at Coloſſe: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and of the love *which* ye *have* to all the ſaints;

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the goſpel;

6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* alſo in you, ſince the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye alſo learned of Epaphras our dear fellow ſervant, who is for you a faithful miniſter of Chriſt;

8 Who alſo declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

9 For this cauſe we alſo, ſince the day we heard *it*, do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding;

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs;

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 3—8.] The apoſtle began as uſual by aſſuring the Coloſſians, that he gave thanks "to *the* "*God and Father* of our Lord Jeſus" for his grace beſtowed on them, and prayed for the perfection of that good work in them. This, he and his friends had done, ever ſince they heard of their faith and love, (*Eph.* c. i. v. 15;) bleſſing God, who had called them from the deluſive purſuit of earthly objects, to hope for happineſs in himſelf. The object of this hope was laid up in heaven, the place of perfect purity and joy, out of the reach of the viciſſitudes of this lower world. It was treaſured up *for them*, and no enemy could deprive them of it. They had heard of it, in the word of truth, even the glad tidings of ſalvation, which had been ſent to them. Theſe were intended to be publiſhed throughout the world, and had made a very rapid progreſs among the nations: and having been attended by a divine power, they had brought forth fruit in every place, in the converſion of multitudes to the holy ſervice and ſpiritual worſhip of God, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. The ſame bleſſed fruits had been produced in their hearts and lives, ſince the time, when they firſt heard the goſpel, and had truly, and experimentally believed the doctrine of the grace of God, and been really made partakers of Chriſt, and his ſalvation. Theſe things they had learned from Epaphras, whom the apoſtle owned as a dear fellow-ſervant in the work of Chriſt; and a faithful miniſter appointed ſpecially to labour for their good, as their ſtated paſtor. Moreover he had aſſured the apoſtle of their love to Chriſt, and to him for Chriſt's ſake, which they exerciſed in the Spirit, under his influences, and in a ſpiritual manner: and this made him ſo confident in reſpect of their intereſt in the heavenly hope before-mentioned.

V. 9—14.] Since the time that the apoſtle heard of their faith in, *and faithfulneſs to*, Chriſt, (v. 2;) he and his friends had not ceaſed to pray for them. They eſpecially deſired that they might be filled, or completely endued with, the knowledge of the will of God; both in his method of ſaving ſinners, and in reſpect of their duties to him, and all men, as his redeemed ſervants: that they might underſtand the import, and ſpiritual extent of his commandments, and how to obey them in the ſeveral relations, ſituations, and offices, which they ſuſtained in the church, and in the community; and in the improvement of their different talents. That they might know how to apply general rules to their own particular caſes; and ſo do the work of Chriſt aſſigned to each of them in the beſt manner, from the pureſt motives, and with the happieſt effect. Thus they would proceed "in "all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding;" with ſagacity and prudent diſcernment of ſeaſons and opportunities; diſtinguiſhing between real excellency, and all deceitful appearances; wiſely attending to their duties in the moſt inoffenſive, and engaging manner, without affording their enemies any advantage, or ſlipping opportunities of his blood, *even* the forgiveneſs of ſins:

15 Who is the Image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible, and inviſible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.

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uſefulneſs through timidity, or failing of ſucceſs through want of caution and diſcretion. That ſo they might habitually behave in a manner worthy of that glorious and holy Lord, whoſe ſervants and worſhippers they were; not diſgracing him by any inconſiſtency or impropriety of conduct; but acting as became perſons ſo highly favoured, and divinely inſtructed: that their conduct might in all reſpects be well-pleaſing, and honourable to him; whilſt fruitfulneſs in every kind of good work connected with a ſtill further increaſe in the ſpiritual knowledge of God, and of the glory and harmony of his perfections, and in an experimental acquaintance with Him, as productive of all holy and pious affections, and growing conformity to him. (Note, &c. *Phil.* c. i. v. 9—11.) They alſo prayed that the Coloſſians might be moſt abundantly ſtrengthened in all the graces of the new nature, with an energy ſuited to their utmoſt need; according to the glorious power of God, by which he converted, upheld and comforted believers, through the Holy Spirit: that ſo they might be enabled to bear all their tribulations and perſecutions with patient ſubmiſſion, perſevering conſtancy, meekneſs of long-ſuffering, and joy in the Lord. Whilſt amidſt all their trials, they gave thanks to the Father of our Lord Jeſus, whoſe ſpecial grace had made them meet to partake of the inheritance provided for the ſaints, in the world of perfect light, knowledge, holineſs and happineſs; at a diſtance from all ignorance, error, ſin, temptation, fear and ſorrow. As believers, they were even then called "to walk in the light;" and compared with the condition of unconverted men, their ſituation might well be ſo called: yet when the ſtate of glory was ſpoken of, into which the ſpirits of their departed brethren had already entered, they were ſtill in comparative darkneſs. However, they had obtained a lot in that bleſſed inheritance; and their holy deſires, their ſpiritual affections, and their capacity for delighting in the work and worſhip of God; eſpecially their love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his glorious ſalvation, were their meetneſs for that inheritance, and all its joys, and employments; and a ſure evidence that God intended to bring them to it. For in order to effect this change in them, he had reſcued them from the power of darkneſs, the empire of ſatan the prince of darkneſs, whoſe blind and abject ſlaves they had formerly been; and he had tranſlated them into the kingdom of righteouſneſs, of liberty, of light and comfort, which he had conſtituted under his dear Son, or the Son of his love; (Note, *Matt.* c. iii. v. 17;) by faith in whom they enjoyed this redemption, as the purchaſe of his atoning blood; whereby forgiveneſs of ſins, and all other ſpiritual bleſſings were vouchſafed to them. (Notes, &c. *Acts*, c. xxvi. v. 17, 18. *Eph.* c. i. v. 7—11. 13. 15—18.) The apoſtle joined himſelf and the Jewiſh converts, along with the Gentiles in theſe things: and doubtleſs all are the ſubjects of the prince of darkneſs, of whatever nominal religion they are, till inward converſion tranſlates them into the kingdom of Chriſt. This happy change having taken place in the Coloſſians, they had abundant cauſe for joy and gratitude amidſt all their tribulations.

V. 15—17.] Having mentioned Chriſt as the well beloved Son of God; the apoſtle here explained more fully the import of that expreſſion. He declared him to be "the Image of the inviſible God;" (*Heb.* c. i. v. 3.) Being poſſeſſed of all the divine perfections, as One with the Father; he appeared on earth, diſplaying thoſe perfections, and performing all divine operations, through the medium of the human nature. Thus, he made known the inviſible God to mankind, as his expreſs Image: he repreſented the Father, and manifeſted his glory; ſo that they, who ſaw him, ſaw the Father alſo. In, and through him, as God manifeſt in the fleſh, ſinners might know, approach, truſt in, and worſhip God with acceptance; which otherwiſe they could not have done. It ſeems evident that Chriſt is not called the Image of God in reſpect of his divine nature only, which many divines have ſuppoſed, and ſo by their illuſtrations have weakened or confuſed the argument for his real Deity: for the divine eſſence is no more viſible in the Perſon of the Son, than in that of the Father; and therefore the One cannot be the Image, or viſible repreſentation of the other. But the Perſon of Chriſt, as God in human nature, is the viſible, or ſenſible diſcovery of the inviſible God; and he that hath ſeen him hath ſeen the Father. The apoſtle further declared Chriſt to be "the firſt-born *of the whole creation*;" (for ſo the words may be literally rendered). Chriſt is often called the firſt-begotten, or only begotten of the Father, &c; and it hath been ſhewn, that theſe expreſſions muſt be underſtood of the myſterious union in the ſacred Trinity, and the relation of the ſecond Perſon to the firſt, in the divine ſubſiſtence; for the grand diſplay of the love of God to the world, conſiſted in giving his *own Son* to become man, in order to die for our ſins, rather than in giving him *when incarnate* to death for us. The expreſſion here uſed ſeems to be of the ſame import: he was qualified to be the Image of the inviſible God to men, by reaſon of his original and eſſential glory, (*John*, c. i. v. 14—18:) exiſting as the co-eternal Son of the Father before the creation of the world; he appeared as the firſt-begotten Son of God, to be the heir of all things, when they were called into exiſtence, (*Heb.* c. i. v. 2;) as the firſt born is the heir of the eſtate or kingdom. The reaſon, or proof adduced by the apoſtle demonſtrates, that he meant the words in ſome ſuch ſenſe; "for," ſays he, "by him all things were created, &c." He then proceeds to mention all creatures in heaven, and earth, and by the figurative terms of "thrones &c," the emblems of the higheſt created dignity, and exaltation, he evidently intended to declare that every creature of God, however diſtin-

18 And he is the Head of the body, the church: who is the Beginning, the firſt-born from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the pre-eminence.

19 For it pleaſed *the Father* that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell;

20 And having made peace through the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf; by him, *I ſay*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 And you, that were ſometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,

22 In the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his ſight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and ſettled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the goſpel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a miniſter;

24 Who now rejoice in my ſufferings for you,

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guiſhed, was created by Chriſt, as one in Deity and operation with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Nay he added, that they were all created *for* him, for the diſplay of his glory, and to do him ſervice, (*Prov.* c. xvi. v. 4:) that he *was* before all things; yea that *all things by him conſiſt*, or are preſerved in being and order; ſo that without his ſuſtaining power, they muſt fall into confuſion, or non-exiſtence. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xlv. v. 5. 7—12. 21, 22. c. xlvi. v. 5. *John*, c. i. v. 1—5.) It is perhaps impoſſible to uſe ſtronger language, to expreſs creating and upholding Power, univerſal Sovereignty, and real Deity, than is here employed! To which the Socinians can only ſay, that it is all figurative, and only means the introduction of the goſpel diſpenſation, as a kind of new creation; than which nothing can be more abſurd! Or they may ſay, that Paul was miſtaken! And to ſuch evident infidelity we oppoſe the demonſtrative evidences of the divine inſpiration of the ſcriptures. In fact, we find ſimilar language in every epiſtle, and almoſt in every part of the new teſtament. It ſhould alſo be obſerved, that however we may interpret the expreſſion, "the firſt-" born of every creature;" no man can infer from it, that Chriſt is a ſort of ſupra-angelic creature (according to the inconſiſtent opinion of the Arians;) without expreſly oppoſing St. Paul's inference from, or proof of, his own doctrine; in which he evidently ſhews, that he meant, that Chriſt was before, above, diſtinct from, yea the Author, Proprietor, and Support of, all ranks and orders of creatures whatſoever.

V. 18—20.] The ſame glorious Perſon, of whoſe original majeſty ſuch ſublime language had been employed, was next declared to be the Head of the body of the church; (*Eph.* c. i. v. 22, 23.) This manifeſtly related to his mediatorial character, which he voluntarily aſſumed, and ſuſtained in human nature. He is alſo "the "Beginning," the Author and Source of ſpiritual and eternal life to man, the reſurrection and the life both of his body, and ſoul: and "the firſt-born from the dead;" the firſt, who roſe to die no more; the firſt-fruits of his people, who roſe to inherit the mediatorial throne, as their Surety and for their benefit. So that it was evidently intended, that in "all things He ſhould have "the pre-eminence," over all worlds, and in all reſpects; as to creation, providence, redemption, eſſential dignity, univerſal ſovereignty, aſſumed and delegated authority, perſonal excellency, and the diſplay of Omnipotence, as the conqueror of death, and of him that had the power of death; both in the world, and in the church; above all creatures viſible and inviſible, during time and to eternity. For it pleaſed, or ſeemed good to the Father, that all fulneſs ſhould dwell in Him: that all the plenitude of divine power, authority, wiſdom, knowledge, holineſs, juſtice, truth, mercy, grace; even all the fulneſs of God ſhould dwell in the Perſon of Chriſt; and be exerciſed by, and communicated through, his human nature, by virtue of the union of the Deity and humanity in his myſterious Perſon; that from his fulneſs all thoſe might receive, who became One with him by faith. Thus it pleaſed all Fulneſs, the original, infinite, inexhauſtible Fulneſs of Being and perfection, or of the Deity, to dwell in Chriſt, for the benefit of his church; that "having "made peace;" or laid the foundation of an honourable reconciliation of ſinners to himſelf, "by the blood of his "croſs," and the ſatisfaction thereby made to divine juſtice; he might effectuate that reconciliation both in reſpect of "Things in heaven, and things on earth." The ſpirits of juſt men in heaven owed their reconciliation to Chriſt's undertaking for them: and all on earth, whether Jews or Gentiles, who believed in Chriſt, were reconciled unto God, through their union with Chriſt, and their intereſt in the atonement of his blood; and thus the whole became one church and one body in Him; and they all will at length be tranſlated to heaven, there to continue for ever in a ſtate of perfect reconciliation to, and friendſhip with God, and each other. This ſeems to be what is meant by all "things in heaven and earth;" for though holy angels become one family through Chriſt with redeemed ſinners; yet they cannot be ſaid to be reconciled unto God, as they never were in a ſtate of enmity againſt him. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. v. ver. 9, 10. 2 *Cor.* c. v. v. 17—21. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 13—17.) Some commentators would wholly confine the meaning to man's being reconciled to God and his ſervice; others explain it wholly of God's being reconciled to his offending creatures: but why ſhould not both be included? As the atonement of Chriſt purchaſed for all believers, both pardon of ſin, and new creating grace; that they might walk with God in a ſtate of mutual peace, and reciprocal friendſhip.

V. 21—23.] The Coloſſians, among others, had been called to ſhare theſe bleſſings. They had been alienated from God, and his ſervice, yea enemies to him in their minds, which had been manifeſted by their wicked works; ſo that they had juſtly merited to be treated as and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his body's ſake, which is the church;

25 Whereof I am made a miniſter, according to the diſpenſation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 *Even* the myſtery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifeſt to his ſaints;

27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this myſtery among the Gentiles; which is Chriſt in you the hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wiſdom; that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus:

29 Whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

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enemies by the Lord: yet by his rich mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, they were now brought into a ſtate of reconciliation. This had been effected, "in the body of his "fleſh," in the body which He aſſumed of our nature, that he might be capable of ſufferings and death, as a ſacrifice to divine juſtice for the ſins of men. In conſequence of this, the goſpel had been preached to them, and they were enabled to believe it; thus they were freely juſtified, and brought to love and ſerve God, as at peace with him by a mutual and cordial reconciliation: the intent of which was, that they ſhould at length be preſented before God ſo perfectly holy, as to be unblameable and unreproveable even in his ſight: their ſanctification being at length rendered as complete, as their juſtification had been when they believed. (*Eph.* c. v. v. 25—27.) This would certainly be the caſe with every one of them, who continued in the profeſſion and exerciſe of faith, like a building that is grounded and ſettled on a firm foundation; and ſo was not by any carnal fear, deluſion or expectation, or by any temptation, moved away from the hope of eternal life, according to the truth of the goſpel: which they had heard, this had been ordered to be preached to every creature under heaven, and had actually been publiſhed very widely, among Jews and Gentiles, without diſtinction of nation or previous character; and of this goſpel Paul had been made a miniſter and an apoſtle. This laſt verſe may be rendered "*ſince ye continue*, &c;" as implying a confidence of their ſincerity, as evidenced by their ſtedfaſtneſs. But our tranſlation is good ſenſe and ſound doctrine, for many promiſing profeſſors are moved away from the hope of the goſpel, "having no root in themſelves;" fear of coming ſhort is one grand means of the true believer's perſeverance; and it was frequently the apoſtle's manner, by ſuch intimations to caution individuals to beware of deceiving themſelves.

V. 24—29.] The ſufferings of the apoſtle came upon him chiefly by preaching to the Gentiles: but the bleſſed effects of his miniſtry among them, and that of thoſe who concurred with him therein, cauſed him to rejoice in all that he endured for their ſakes: for he thus filled up that, which was behind of the ſufferings of Chriſt &c. The ſufferings of Chriſt perfectly ſufficed for the redemption of his body the church; nor could thoſe of the apoſtle have in any meaſure made up the deficiency, if there had been any. But the atonement muſt be applied; that application is by faith; faith came by hearing; hearing by preaching; and preaching was inſeparable from ſuffering: ſo that Paul's ſufferings in his fleſh for the benefit of the church were neceſſary in their place, and could not be diſpenſed with. By them he filled up what was behind of the afflictions of Chriſt; as the ſufferings of martyrs, confeſſors, and believers in general form one aggregate of pain and diſtreſs, with thoſe of the Head of the church, the whole of which is conducive to, and neceſſary in different ways for, the complete ſalvation of the whole body. But the apoſtle might with the more propriety ſay this, as he ſuffered in the ſame cauſe, from the ſame perſons, in the ſame meek and patient manner, and from the ſame ſpirit of zeal and love, with his divine Maſter: ſo that his afflictions reſembled Chriſt's in every thing, except that Chriſt's alone were expiatory. He had been made a miniſter of the goſpel, according to the ſovereign appointment of God, in his gracious dealings with him; that he might fulfil the prophecies of the ſcripture, in preaching to the Gentiles, and bringing them into the church: thus he was employed to make known that myſtery, which had been hid from men, during all preceding diſpenſations, and ages of the world; but was at length thus manifeſtly revealed to the holy followers of Chriſt. For to them it had pleaſed God to make known the abundance of his mercy and grace, as well as the reſplendent glory of all his perfections, in this myſtery among the Gentiles; which was, not only Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, preached and reigning *among* the Gentiles; but Chriſt *in* the hearts of multitudes of them, dwelling, and ruling there by faith, and the power of his Spirit, implanting his love, renewing his image, and writing his law; which fully ſealed and warranted their hope of eternal glory. This precious Saviour was the great ſubject of the apoſtle's preaching, and of that of his faithful brethren; who warned every man to flee from the wrath to come, and from every other confidence, to this refuge; and to beware of deluſion in ſo important a matter; and they inſtructed every man with all wiſdom, and in every thing, that could render them wiſe unto ſalvation, or wiſe to ſerve God in their ſeveral places. For they deſired and aimed to preſent every man, who attended on their miniſtry, complete in Chriſt, perfectly juſtified, and at length perfectly ſanctified. In this, the apoſtle laboured with unwearied diligence; ſtriving by every means to bring ſinners to Chriſt, and believers to eſtabliſhment and holineſs: yet this aſſiduity and earneſtneſs were not of himſelf; but according to the working of a divine power on his ſoul, which wrought mightily in him, exciting

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. *Shewing his love to, his prayers for, and his joy in the Coloſſians, and other believers, whom he had never ſeen; and his deſires of their comfort, growth, ſtedfaſtneſs and perſeverance,* 1---7. 2d. *Cautioning them againſt philoſophical deluſions, and Judaizing teachers; and proving that they had* all *in Chriſt, which was prefigured by the Moſaic law,* 8---17. 3d. *Warning them not to be beguiled into the worſhip of angels, or the obſervance of legal ordinances; and pointing out the worthleſneſs of voluntary humility, will, worſhip, and ſelf-impoſed auſterities,* 18---23.

fervent deſires to God, and the ſalvation of ſouls, communicating vigour in all holy affections, raiſing him above all low and ſelfiſh aims, and ſupporting him in conſtancy, patience, and chearful fortitude, amidſt all his difficulties and perſecutions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All ſpiritual bleſſings from God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt belong to the ſaints, and faithful brethren in Chriſt, whereſoever they are diſperſed: may we be found of that number! We ſhould thank God, and pray for thoſe, who ſhew their faith in Chriſt, by love to all his ſaints, though they be not perſonally known to us; when we hear ſo good an account of them. The hope of ſuch chriſtians is laid up for them in heaven, out of the reach of enemies and diſappointments; and they have been called to partake of it by the word of the truth of the goſpel: and bleſſed be God, this joyful meſſage is come to us, in this diſtant region of the earth! And if we have known the grace of God in truth, it bringeth forth fruit in our holy lives, and ſpiritual worſhip; but if it hath in no degree this effect upon us, it will only aggravate our condemnation. This may be learned from all the fellow ſervants of our common Lord, who faithfully miniſter in different parts of his church: for they all declare, that "love in the Spirit," of Chriſt, of holineſs, and of God's people, ordinances and commandments, is inſeparable from ſaving faith. It is not only neceſſary that men ſhould know the grand outlines of divine truth; but we ſhould alſo pray for believers, that they may be perfected in the knowledge of the Lord's will, in all wiſdom, and ſpiritual underſtanding; in order that they may walk worthy of their vocation, pleaſing the Lord in every part of their conduct, and producing every kind of holy fruit in abundance. Thus men will beſt increaſe in the knowledge of God: for an humble, upright, teachable and ſpiritual mind exceedingly helps the exerciſe of a ſound judgment, in inveſtigating the nature and perfections of God; and experience confirms the knowledge, that faith appropriates from divine revelation. This again tends to increaſing ſimplicity in dependance on God, which brings ſtrength into the ſoul; that being invigorated with all might according to his glorious power, the believer may exerciſe patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs, under the ſevereſt trials, and provocations. Indeed we may well be thankful unto the Father, if we have the witneſs in ourſelves, that we are made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light; having acquired a reliſh for thoſe contemplations, and that holy worſhip, in which the bleſſed ſpirits before the throne are inceſſantly employed. And if we duly reflect, that the whole world lieth under the power of darkneſs, except as divine grace reſcues ſome from this deſtructive bondage, by tranſlating them into the kingdom of the beloved Son of God: that theſe could not have been ſaved, had they not been redeemed from merited wrath, with the blood of Chriſt, through whom their ſins are all freely pardoned: that the ſubjects of theſe two kingdoms, with their reſpective rulers, will ſhortly be removed to an eternal and unchangeable ſtate; Chriſt and his people being together in heavenly felicity, ſatan and his ſlaves being caſt into outer darkneſs and deſpair: when theſe things are duly conſidered; we ſhall deem it ſo vaſt a favour, to be delivered from ſatan's kingdom, and tranſlated into that of Chriſt; that we ſhall know ourſelves to have unſpeakable cauſe for gratitude, in the deepeſt ſcenes of adverſity, and the ſharpeſt conflicts of temptation: as theſe trials will ſoon terminate, and we ſhall ſpeedily find ourſelves among thoſe, that are come out of great tribulations, and are ſinging his praiſes, who has waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood.

Then, and not before, we ſhall have ſome adequate conceptions of the great myſtery of godlineſs; and ſhall underſtand the import of the apoſtle's energetic language concerning the Lord Jeſus; "the Image of the inviſible God;" the firſt-born of the whole creation; the univerſal Creator, Suſtainer, Proprietor, and Lord of heaven and earth, of men and angels, of the viſible and inviſible world and of all the hierarchies of cherubim and ſeraphim before the throne of God; all which were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt. Let us then adore theſe myſteries in humble faith, and inſtead of wanting material images of the inviſible God; or framing groſs notions of him in our creative imagination, or vain ſpeculations; let us contemplate the glory of the Lord in Chriſt Jeſus, the expreſs Image of his eſſential excellency. Here we may learn humble confidence and reverential fear, filial love, ſpiritual worſhip, joyful communion, and growing conformity to his holineſs, as dwelling in our nature, reconciling the world unto himſelf; the Beginning of our life, the firſt-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. Here we may become acquainted with the character of our God; and may approach to, and have fellowſhip with, him, notwithſtanding our exceeding guilt and pollution. For it hath pleaſed the infinitely glorious God, that all fulneſs ſhould dwell in him, both to relieve our weak apprehenſions, and our guilty conſciences; in our diſcoveries of his glorious majeſty and holineſs, through ſo encouraging a medium, as the Perſon of Emmanuel, God with us, making peace by the blood of his croſs, and reconciling all things in heaven, and things on earth to himſelf and to each other, in this moſt gracious and aſtoniſhing manner! If we are convinced that once we were alienated, and enemies in our minds by wicked works; and are now reconciled to God, by the incarnation, ſacrifice, and grace of Chriſt; we ſhall not attempt to explain away, or preſumptuouſly think of comprehending

FOR I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh;

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt;

3 In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.

4 And this I ſay, leſt any man ſhould beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be abſent in the fleſh, yet I am with you in the ſpirit, joying and beholding your order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt.

6 As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, *ſo* walk ye in him:

7 Rooted and built up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thankſgiving.

8 Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the God-head bodily.

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theſe deep myſteries: but we ſhall ſee a glory, and ſuitableneſs in this plan of redemption, as uniting the honour of the divine law and government, with the hope of guilty periſhing ſinners; though much yet remains far above, and out of the reach of our low capacities: and whilſt we long to be preſented holy, unblameable, and unreproveable in the ſight of God; it will be impoſſible for us to abuſe the doctrine of his grace, to encourage a continuance in ſin. Many things indeed muſt try the faith of profeſſors: but every trial we ſtand, and every temptation we reſiſt, without being moved away from the hope of the goſpel; and every event which ſhews that we continue in the faith grounded and ſettled; tends to aſſure us, that we ſhall be preſented faultleſs before our God with exceeding joy. May this goſpel then be ſucceſsfully preached to every creature, that is under heaven! May numbers of miniſters, like Paul, be raiſed up, and ſent forth, who may even rejoice in their ſufferings for the cauſe of Chriſt, and after his example! And may we all remember that our afflictions, when properly ſupported, are intended for, and conduce to, the glory of God, our own ſalvation, and the benefit of the body of Chriſt. Let us be thankful, that God hath made known to us thoſe myſteries, that were hid from ages and generations, and to ſhew the riches of his glory among us Gentiles. But let it be obſerved, that theſe things can yet be known only by his ſaints; (*Matt.* c. xiii. v. 10—17:) the ſecret of the Lord is ſtill with them that fear him, and we need not wonder to hear learned, ingenious, and able men, betray their ignorance of theſe myſteries; when we reflect on their pride, their carnal mind, and their evident contempt of, and enmity to, the humbling doctrine of the croſs. As Chriſt is preached among us; let us ſeriouſly enquire, whether he dwells and reigns within us? For this alone can warrant our aſſured hope of his glory. This, all miniſters ſhould preach, warning every man, and inſtructing every man in all wiſdom; that they may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus. May we then every one of us thus labour with all earneſtneſs, and by every method we can uſe, to promote the cauſe of Chriſt: and be careful to ſtrive according to that working, which worketh mightily in thoſe, who ſimply depend on it; and pray for it; and who go forth in that ſtrength, to do the work, and ſeek the glory of the Lord.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtle was deſirous that the Coloſſians ſhould know what earneſt deſires he had experienced, and what vigorous endeavours, and fervent prayers he had been engaged in, amidſt all his difficulties, and oppoſition, for them, and the chriſtians of Laodicea, (a neighbouring city,) and all others, who had never ſeen him; in order to promote their ſpiritual welfare. It is, I think, juſtly concluded from this, compared with the reſt of the epiſtle, that Paul had never preached at Coloſſê. He eſpecially wreſtled moſt earneſtly with God in prayer, (c. iv. ver. 12,) that their hearts might be encouraged, by divine conſolations, in every part of their duty: and that, in order to this, they might be united together in the moſt perfect, and harmonious love of one another; that ſo all envies, reſentment, &c, might be excluded; which would otherwiſe certainly burden their conſciences, inflame their paſſions, grieve the Holy Spirit, and interrupt their comfort. In this moſt cordial union he prayed, that they might attain to, and poſſeſs, all thoſe ſpiritual riches, which were to be found in the full, diſtinct, and complete underſtanding of the goſpel of Chriſt, as connected with the full aſſurance of faith and hope: that ſo they might confidently acknowledge and profeſs their belief of the myſtery of God, even of the Father and of Chriſt, his beloved Son, as One with him, according to the great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh: in whom, or in which myſtery, were treaſured up all the riches of wiſdom and knowledge. Theſe were indeed *hid* from the eyes of proud unbelievers: but the infinite wiſdom and knowledge of God were more diſplayed in the Perſon and redemption of Chriſt, than in all his other works: all man's true wiſdom and knowledge conſiſted in a practical and experimental underſtanding of theſe myſteries, and ſuch inſtructions as were deducible from them: yea, from this treaſury all true wiſdom and knowledge muſt be derived by faith and prayer; and all that ſcience or philoſophy, which were contrary to this, were worthleſs. This the apoſtle inſiſted on, leſt any man ſhould beguile them into ſome ſpecious deluſion, by the enticing words of man's wiſdom; as if either heathen ſages, or Jewiſh ſcribes could teach them any wiſdom diſtinct from, and preferable to, the myſteries of the goſpel.

V. 5—9.] St. Paul when abſent in body, was preſent

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power:

11 In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh by the circumciſion of Chriſt:

12 Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your ſins and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened, together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes;

14 Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to his croſs;

15 *And* having ſpoiled principalities and powers he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat,

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in ſpirit with the Coloſſians; he greatly intereſted himſelf in their concerns, and realized as it were, to his mind, the proſperous ſtate of their church. Thus he was filled with joy and complacency, as if he had witneſſed the orderly management both of their private concerns, and of thoſe of the church; and the conſtancy of their faith in Chriſt, notwithſtanding the terrors of perſecution, and the artifices of falſe teachers. As they had therefore by faith received Chriſt Jeſus, to be their Lord and Saviour, according to the ſeveral offices, that he ſuſtained for the benefit of his church; let them continue in an habitual dependance on, and obedience to him; let them ſeek all their wiſdom, ſtrength, hope, holineſs, and comfort from him, and aim in all things to ſerve and glorify him. That being rooted in him, as trees in a fruitful ſoil, and builded upon him, as an houſe upon a firm foundation; (*Eph.* c. iii. v. 17:) and being ſtabliſhed by living faith in him, according to the doctrine which they had been taught; they might abound more and more in the exerciſe of faith, and all the fruits produced thereby, and proceed in their courſe with fervent thankſgiving to God for all his benefits. Let them therefore be upon their guard, that no man robbed them of their hope, or comfort, or turned them aſide from Chriſt, by any philoſophical ſubtleties, and vain deluſive ſpeculations, which were oppoſed to the ſimple belief of the goſpel. Theſe were human traditions, which were delivered from the heads of their ſeveral ſects, and ſo handed down from age to age: and they formed the elements, or firſt principles of a ſuppoſed wiſdom ſuited to the proud, curious, and carnal temper of the world; but which was totally incompatible with the doctrine of Chriſt. The Judaizing teachers ſeem to have blended their ſyſtem with philoſophical ſpeculations borrowed from the Pagans: thus the traditions of the ſages, and thoſe of the Phariſees were incorporated; and the worldly elements of heathen ſuperſtition, or philoſophy were blended with legal, or other external obſervances. Unleſs ſomething of this kind be ſuppoſed, it will be found difficult to underſtand the apoſtle's diſcourſe, for he ſpake of philoſophical deluſions, and legal ceremonies at the ſame time; he argued againſt both of them at once, but he levelled his reaſonings chiefly againſt the Judaizing teachers. To what he had before advanced, he here added, that "in Chriſt all the fulneſs of the God-"head dwelleth bodily." In the temple the Lord diſcovered his preſence by the Shekinah or viſible glory: yet this was only an emblem, or ſhadow of his gracious preſence: but in Chriſt the fulneſs of the Deity dwelt ſubſtantially; and all the divine perfections reſided in, and were exerciſed by Chriſt, as God manifeſted in the fleſh; by virtue of the myſterious Union of the divine and human nature in one Perſon. When the apoſtle ſpake of believers being filled with all the fulneſs of God; he evidently meant it of their receiving a rich abundance of all divine communications from God; and his in-dwelling in his people refers to his gracious and powerful preſence with them. But all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Chriſt is language unſpeakably ſtronger, and evidently refers to his being conſtituted the repoſitory of all ſpiritual bleſſings, from whoſe fulneſs all believers receive. (*John*, c. i. v. 14—16.) For God dwelling in human nature, as in a temple, exerciſes all his perfections, performs all divine operations, and communicates all benefits to man, through that medium. (c. i. v. 19.)

V. 10—15.] As Chriſt was completely qualified for his mediatorial work by the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily: ſo believers are completely ſupplied with all they want, by their myſtical union with him. Being *in him* by faith, he is their wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption: all their inſtruction, acceptance, holineſs, deliverance, liberty, victory, &c, are derived from him by faith, in the uſe of his appointed means. As he is alſo the Head of all principality and power, (*Eph.* c. i. v. 21—23;) all angels being his willing ſervants, and the whole creation being in one way or other ſubjected to him: ſo chriſtians have nothing to fear from any creature, nor reaſon to ſeek help from any but Chriſt. The Jewiſh teachers ſeem to have imbibed, and new-modelled the Pagan notions of ſubordinate deities, &c, and applying it to the ſcripture-doctrine of angels, they appear to have introduced a kind of mediatorial worſhip of them, with which they attempted to corrupt the chriſtian church, and not wholly without ſucceſs. To this the apoſtle ſeems here to refer, as well as in what is ſaid afterwards. But the chriſtians had no occaſion to pay homage to thoſe creatures who, however exalted, were ſubjected to their Lord and Redeemer. Nor did they want the external ſeal of circumciſion, in order to their acceptance, or complete ſalvation: for *in Chriſt*, and by their union with him, they had the true circumciſion, which was not performed on their bodies by the hands of men, but on their hearts by the holy Spirit; in conſequence of whoſe regenerating work, they were daily employed in putting off the body of or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or the ſabbath *days*:

17 Which are a ſhadow of things to come: but the body *is* of Chriſt.

the ſins of their fleſh; they renounced and watched againſt all the ſins, to which their natural corrupt propenſities excited them; and they had crucified the old man as propagated from Adam, whence all theſe evil luſtings originated. This was the true circumciſion, which Chriſt himſelf performed on the hearts of his people, by his holy Spirit; (*Rom.* c. ii. v. 28, 29:) for "the circumciſion of Chriſt," ſeems rather to ſignify his work in the believer's ſoul, than his own perſonal circumciſion; though that was a part of his mediatorial humiliation, by which the true circumciſion was purchaſed for them, wherein they were made conformable to him. Inſtead of the outward ſign of circumciſion, baptiſm had been ſubſtituted; (which ſome ſuppoſe to be meant by the circumciſion of Chriſt:) this repreſented their death and burial with him, from their former legal confidence, and their ſinful and worldly purſuits; that they might be conformed to his reſurrection. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. vi. v. 1—11.) The baptiſm of Jews and Gentiles, when converted to chriſtianity, implied their death unto ſin, and their new birth unto righteouſneſs; their entrance into the church and kingdom of Chriſt; the waſhing away of the guilt and pollution of their ſins; and their dedication to the ſervice of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, in whoſe name, as the God of their ſalvation, they were baptized. The ſame inward change had been ſignified by circumciſion, which was adminiſtered to adult proſelytes, and then to their infant offspring: ſo that no argument can hence be deduced againſt the baptiſm of infants. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xvii. *Matt.* c. xxviii. v. 19, 20.) This death, burial, and reſurrection with Chriſt, and in conformity to him, were effected by means of the faith of the operation of God. The general idiom of the Greek language induces ſome expoſitors to explain this of their believing dependence on that energy of God, which raiſed Chriſt from the dead, to work all in, and for them, that was wanting. But Paul was more exact in his doctrine than in the idiom of language: and the paſſage ſo accords to ſome others, which evidently ſignify, that the faith, through which the change in their ſtate and character had taken place, was itſelf the effect of a divine energy upon their hearts, that probably this latter was intended. (*Eph.* c. i. v. 19, 20. c. ii. v. 8.) However, this is more expreſsly declared in the next verſe. They had been dead in their ſins, and in that carnal ſtate, of which the uncircumciſion of their fleſh was an outward token: but God had quickened them together with Chriſt, and in virtue of his reſurrection; having in his death provided for the forgiveneſs of all their tranſgreſſions, to the full benefit of which he had thus admitted them. (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 1—11.) For Chriſt had blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, the ceremonial law, which was, as it were, the church's bond for payment of the debt of ſin contracted by violation of the moral law; but which Chriſt the Surety had paid in behalf of all believers, and ſo blotted out the debt. This was againſt the Jews, and contrary to them, as well as to the Gentiles: for it is obſervable that the apoſtle changed the perſon, when he came to ſpeak on this ſubject, ſaying *us*, not *you*. Not only was it a heavy yoke for them to bear; but all its ſacrifices and ablutions teſtified that they were guilty and polluted; yet could they not take away their ſins: ſo that the bond could never have been diſcharged, except as Chriſt came and made payment of it; and unbelievers among the Jews were under condemnation by the teſtimony even of the ceremonial law, as well as for their additional ſins, which the multiplying of precepts neceſſarily occaſioned. At the ſame time the Gentiles, who had not even theſe ſhadowy expiations, &c, were under condemnation as tranſgreſſors, and were excluded by them even from the viſible church. But Chriſt not only blotted out the debt, but removed the bond out of the way, and nailed it as a cancelled deed to his croſs, that it might no more appear againſt his people. The ceremonial law therefore, and the whole Moſaic diſpenſation, having received its intended accompliſhment in Chriſt, were of no more force or value than a cancelled bond: and the Gentiles, being admitted into the church by faith in Chriſt, and his inſtitution of baptiſm, had no need of circumciſion or any legal obſervances, and ought not to pay any regard to them.. Moreover Chriſt had at the ſame time virtually deprived ſatan, and the principalities and powers of darkneſs of their uſurped dominion; and made way for the ſubverſion of their kingdom, which was before univerſally eſtabliſhed throughout the Gentile world. For by ſatisfying the juſtice of God for ſin, he had removed the cauſe of fallen man's ſubjection to ſatan, and made way for the preaching of the goſpel to the nations, with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven to make it ſucceſsful. So that he vanquiſhed thoſe enemies when he hung upon the croſs; and when he aroſe, and aſcended into heaven, he led them captive; and he made an open ſhew of his victory, and manifeſted the triumphs of his croſs, when by the preaching of his goſpel he proceeded to deſtroy ſatan's ſtrong-holds, and to reſcue his captives in the different nations of the earth. (*Eph.* c. iv. v. 8—10.)

V. 16, 17.] The apoſtle next made application of his doctrine to the Coloſſians: as Chriſt had cancelled the ceremonial law; let no man venture to judge and condemn the Gentile believers, as guilty, or as no part of the church, becauſe they diſregarded it: and let not any of them trouble themſelves about ſuch bigotted judgments; which related to the diſtinction between clean and unclean meats, or the uſe of, or abſtinence from, this or the other drink; or the neglect of the Jewiſh feſtivals and ſolemnities, the new-moons, and ſabbaths. Doubtleſs, this laſt related principally to the weekly ſabbath, which being obſerved on the ſeventh day was now become a part of the abrogated Jewiſh law. For the ſabbath, under the Moſaic diſpenſation, was a ceremonial, and a judicial, as well as a moral requirement. The morality of it had no neceſſary connexion with the ſeventh day in preference to all others; ſave as that was for the time appointed: but the appropriation of a part of our time for the worſhip and ſervice of God is of moral, and eſſentially immutable obligation, (Note, *Exod.* c. xx. v. 8—10.) But the firſt day of the week, the Lord's day, was the time kept holy by chriſtians, in

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worſhipping of angels, intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly puffed up by his fleſhly mind,

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.

20 Wherefore, if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye ſubject to ordinances?

21 (Touch not; taſte not; handle not;

22 Which all are to periſh with the uſing;) after the commandments and doctrines of men.

23 Which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom in will-worſhip, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh.

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remembrance of Chriſt's reſurrection; and the ſabbath in the New Teſtament always ſignifies the ſeventh day, the obſervances of which, the Judaizing teachers wanted to impoſe upon the Gentile converts. All theſe things were ſhadows of goſpel bleſſings: but the truth, reality, and ſubſtance of them were of Chriſt, reſulting from his Perſon, work and ſalvation, and conſiſting in the holineſs, peace, communion with God, and heavenly reſt, which he vouchſafes to believers.

V. 18, 19.] As Chriſt was the Head of all principalities and powers, the apoſtle warned the Coloſſians not to allow any man to rob them of that glorious prize, for which they were candidates, by giving them wrong directions, or turning them out of their courſe. This would be attempted by certain perſons, who would perſuade them to an uncommanded, and ſelf-impoſed humility, in the worſhip of angels; pretending that it would be improper for ſuch mean, ſinful creatures to come to God immediately with their prayers, and that it was therefore expedient to ſolicit the mediatory good offices of holy angels. Thus they aſcribed divine honours to created beings, as if they were ever preſent with men, in all places, or acquainted with the ſincerity, and the deſires of their hearts: nay, they ſeemed to intimate that they were more compaſſionate, and kind, than the Lord himſelf. This might be deemed humility, and it was a voluntary degradation, to which a rational creature ought not to ſubmit; yet in fact it originated from pride, and a moſt preſumptuous intruſion into the ſuppoſed ſtate of the inviſible world: it ſubſtituted man's proud conjectures and ſpeculations in the place of divine revelation; and was the genuine offſpring of that ſelf-wiſdom, with which the carnal mind is ſo prone to be puffed up. By thus exalting angels to the office of Mediators, and worſhipping them in that capacity; they eſpecially diſhonoured Chriſt, the One Mediator between God and man; to whom, as God manifeſted in the fleſh, ſuch worſhip ought to be appropriated. They did not therefore adhere to, depend on, or hold communion with Chriſt, the Head; but in fact, departed from the grand principles of the goſpel, by chooſing and worſhipping other mediators: and as no ſinner can approach, or be accepted of God, but in and by Chriſt; ſo this error tended directly to ruin their ſouls. For all the body of true believers are united to, and receive all grace from Him: they are compacted together into one body by their union with him, and each other, and by thus filling up their proper places, and performing their proper functions in his church; as the human body is made up of many members compacted together, by joints, tendons, &c; united to, and influenced by one head. Thus they derive ſpiritual nouriſhment from Chriſt, through his ordinances; and being in this manner knit together, they increaſe in knowledge, holineſs; &c, by the power of God, and into nearer conformity to him. (*Eph.* c. iv. v. 15, 16.) It hath before been intimated, that the Jews ſeem to have borrowed ſome of the Pagan notions, and applied them to the ſcripture doctrine of angels; by theſe means the Judaizing teachers had begun to corrupt chriſtianity, with a new and refined ſpecies of idolatry. To what lengths the ſame principles afterwards carried profeſſing chriſtians, in the worſhip of departed ſaints, real or imaginary, and of their images, &c, as well as angels; eſpecially in the church of Rome, is well known. But the whole was done in direct defiance to the apoſtle's teſtimony, which ſufficiently proves all ſuch practices to be as contrary to the honour of Chriſt by the goſpel, as more direct idolatry is to the honour of God by the law.

V. 20—23.] If the Coloſſians were become dead with Chriſt to the ceremonial law, thoſe rudiments or elements of this world; (*Gal.* c. iv. v. 3—9;) Chriſt having made payment of, and cancelled that bond; why did they act, as if they were ſtill living in the world, under a carnal diſpenſation, and ſtrangers to a more ſpiritual worſhip and ſervice? And why did any of them ſubmit to thoſe, who *dogmatically* impoſed ſuch legal ordinances, and human traditions upon them? The Judaizing teachers had crept in at Coloſſe, and with great eagerneſs inculcated their principles, which ſeem to have met with countenance from ſome profeſſors of chriſtianity. They called on them with great vehemence, not "to "touch" or eat ſuch food, as was legally unclean; and not ſo much as to taſte it; nor yet to handle any thing, which might pollute them. Whereas, all ſuch things periſh with the uſing, and could communicate no real defilement. Once, typical inſtructions had been conveyed by ſuch appointments; but now their obligations had ceaſed, and they were of no more authority than other doctrines and commandments of human invention. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xv. v. 1—20.) Such things indeed, as the worſhip of angels, and the diſtinctions of meats, had a ſhew of wiſdom, which might impoſe on the injudicious. To add voluntarily to the rule of duty, and thus to render it more ſtrict, had a ſemblance of great devotion, and extraordinary ſanctity: but it implied that God had given a defective rule, and that he would accept of what he had never commanded. It might alſo *appear* very humble to worſhip angels; yet this aroſe from abominable pride and unbelief. The abſtaining from meats, with various ſelf-

CPAP. III.

Contains exhortations 1ſt. To ſeek, and affect heavenly things; as riſen with Chriſt, and following him to heaven, 1---4. *2d. To mortify carnal luſts, and evil tempers; to ſeek conformity to Chriſt, eſpecially in love; to keep cloſe to the word of truth, and to abound in grateful praiſes, &c.* 5---17. *3d. To various relative duties,* 18---25.

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impoſed auſterities might have a ſhew of extraordinary ſpirituality; by which the body was neglected from a pretended ſuperiority to animal indulgence, and willingneſs for mortification and ſuffering: yet all this was not "in any honour," to God, or any thing valuable in itſelf: nay the whole tended to ſatisfy, in a diſhonourable manner, the propenſities of the fleſh, of the carnal mind, by gratifying its ſelf-will, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-righteouſneſs, bigotry, and contempt of others, &c. This is doubtleſs the meaning of the concluding ſentence; though the conſtruction of it is very difficult.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who know the worth of ſouls, will ſeek and pray for the ſalvation of ſinners all over the earth: and they, that greatly love their brethren, will earneſtly ſtrive for the eſtabliſhment and progreſs of thoſe, whom they have not ſeen: and when they can do nothing elſe, they may wreſtle with God in prayer for them. The hearts of chriſtians are commonly comforted, and animated in duty, in proportion as they are knit together in love: and there are riches, in the full aſſurance of underſtanding of the goſpel, with which believers in general are but little acquainted. Indeed, there is an inexhauſtible mine of moſt precious treaſure in the word of God; from which men are enriched in proportion to the ſimplicity, diligence, and perſeverance, with which they ſeek for it. We cannot comprehend the myſtery of God, *even* of the Father and of Chriſt: but we may believe, acknowledge, contemplate, and adore it. Thus we ſhall derive from the treaſures laid up in our Emmanuel, ſupplies of wiſdom and knowledge, far more valuable than all man's boaſted ſcience and philoſophy: but theſe treaſures are hid from the proud and unbelieving; and are only to be diſcovered and appropriated by faith. We have peculiar need to inſiſt on theſe truths at preſent, when ſo many are employed in beguiling men with enticing words; extolling the powers of human reaſon, and depreciating revelation; deriding theology, and idolizing philoſophy: boaſting of demonſtration and experiment in natural ſcience; and rejecting unanſwerable evidences of the divine inſpiration of the ſcriptures, and treating all experience of the power of divine grace in the heart with the moſt ſovereign contempt! Whilſt multitudes of frivolous and ſuperficial ſpeculators are thus beguiled into infidelity, ſcepticiſm, or deſtructive perverſions of chriſtianity; it muſt rejoice every eſtabliſhed believer, and every zealous miniſter, to know that there is yet a remnant to be found, diſperſed through the land, who walk orderly according to the obedience, and worſhip of the goſpel, and are ſtedfaſt in the faith of Chriſt: with theſe he will find his heart united; and, if he hath opportunity, he will exhort them, to walk in Chriſt, even as they have received him to be their Prophet, Prieſt, and King; that being rooted in, and built up on him, they may be ſtedfaſt in the faith, and fruitful in every good work; abounding therein with thankſgiving. But let every reader, eſpecially young perſons, and enquirers after the truth, beware leſt any man ſpoil them through philoſophy: they may depend upon it, that all the boaſted knowledge, which is oppoſed to the myſteries of the Perſon, and redemption of Chriſt, is a vain deceit, a worldly wiſdom; like that of Jewiſh Scribes, who crucified Chriſt, or that of heathen philoſophers, who deemed the preaching of the croſs to be fooliſhneſs. Men cannot follow ſuch vain deluſions, and be the diſciples of Chriſt: for in Him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily! All true chriſtians glory in this great myſtery of godlineſs: and all that oppoſe it, are ſtrangers to the life of faith, and the way to the Father. (*John*, c. xiv. v. 6.) Without union and communion with Chriſt, and with the Father through Him, and by the ſupply of his Spirit, we can do nothing: but true chriſtians are complete in Him; they derive all they want from his fulneſs, and they are ſafe in his keeping, who is the Head of all principality and power. If this be our privilege, we want not Jewiſh exploded ceremonies, or new invented ſuperſtitions. The circumciſion of the heart, the crucifixion of the fleſh, the death and burial to ſin and the world, and the reſurrection to newneſs of life, implied in baptiſm, and connected with faith of the operation of God; ſufficiently prove that our ſins are forgiven, our debt is blotted out, and cancelled, and that we are fully delivered from the curſe of the law. Moreover, He, who triumphed upon the croſs over the principalities and powers of darkneſs, will from his glorious throne, defend us from all their aſſaults and ſtratagems, till he hath made us more than conquerors. We therefore want no other wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſtrength, holineſs, liberty, or victory; than what Chriſt beſtows. We need not regard thoſe, who judge us in reſpect of meats and drinks, and holy-days, or other human traditions, which are not ſo much as a ſhadow of things to come, as Jewiſh ceremonies once were: but we enjoy the ſubſtance in Chriſt, and by walking in his ordinances and commandments. Surely then we want no other mediators, and need not abaſe ourſelves to worſhip our fellow-ſervants, to the great diſhonour of our common Lord. Such voluntary ſelf-degradation is real pride, which refuſes ſubmiſſion to the teaching, righteouſneſs, and authority of God; and it is the genuine effect of a carnal mind, puffed up with imagined knowledge, and vainly intruding into thoſe things, which are not ſeen. The church has long enough been peſtered with ſuch groſs deluſions, with human inventions, will-worſhip, ſelf-impoſed auſterities, &c: men have long enough been miſled by thoſe who ſaid "touch not, taſte "not, handle not;" concerning ſuch things as periſh with the uſing. But whatever ſhew there may be of wiſdom, ſanctity, or mortification in ſuch devices; they certainly are worthleſs in themſelves; they neither honour nor pleaſe God; and they gratify the proud ſelf-preference, the domineering bigotry, and the perſecuting temper of the carnal heart of man. Let us then not de-

IF ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.

4 When Chriſt, *who is* our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' ſake the wrath of God cometh on the children of diſobedience:

7 In the which ye alſo walked ſometime, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye alſo put off all theſe; anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, ſeeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Chriſt *is* all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God,

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part from the ſimplicity of our dependance on, and devoted obedience to, the Lord Jeſus, our Head of authority and influence, from whom the whole body, by joints and bands, "having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God." As dead with him to the world, and its wiſdom, and maxims, let us willingly bear his yoke, and ſteadily aſſert our liberty from human impoſitions. What He hath left indifferent, let us regard as ſuch, and leave others to the like freedom; and remembering the tranſient nature of earthly things, let us endeavour to glorify God in our uſe of them.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—4.] If the Coloſſians were indeed riſen with Chriſt, as their baptiſm and profeſſion implied, (c. ii. v. 12, 13. 20,) it behoved them to evidence it, by ſeeking thoſe things, "which were above." Perfect knowledge, holineſs, and felicity, in the immediate preſence of God, and in his ſervice and love; are "the things, which are above:" of theſe they were to ſeek the earneſts, and aſſured hope, in preference to all worldly intereſts, or pleaſures, and in the diligent uſe of all appointed means. Thus they were to follow Chriſt, their Fore-runner: that as they were dead to ſin and alive to God, in conformity to his death and reſurrection; ſo they might be conformed to him in his aſcenſion into heaven; where, as their Surety, he was exalted upon the mediatorial throne, at the right hand of God the Father, to appear in his preſence and to prepare a place for them. By faith beholding his glory, and aſpiring in hope to this heavenly inheritance, they ought to value, chooſe, ſavour, purſue, and delight in ſpiritual, and not in earthly things. (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 4—9.) For according to their profeſſion, and the apoſtle's confidence reſpecting them, they were dead to their former hopes, intereſts, motives and purſuits: "And their life was hid with "Chriſt." The ſpring of that eternal life, which abode in them, and from which all their preſent comforts, hopes, and activity were derived, was in Chriſt and his fulneſs: the ſtreams of this living water flowed into their ſouls by the influences of the Holy Spirit, through faith: thus they were united unto Chriſt, and had communion with him; and wiſdom, ſtrength, grace, and comfort were derived from him: he lived and ruled in them, and they lived in, by, and to him. The fountain of their life, and the nature, ſupports, and principles of it were *hidden* from carnal men; who could not underſtand what were the ſecret ſprings of their active diligence, and joyful patience, in oppoſition to all their temporal intereſts and ſatisfactions. Thus their life was alſo ſecured from evil men, and fallen ſpirits, who could by no means cut off its ſupplies, or deprive them of it: nor was it in their own keeping, but in that of Chriſt; by union and communion with whom it was ſuſtained, and who was himſelf the unfailing ſource of it. Thus it was with him *in God*, through the union of the Deity with his human nature; and ſo the immutable power, faithfulneſs, wiſdom and love of God ſecured it for them. When therefore, Chriſt their life ſhould appear to raiſe the dead, and judge the world; then would every one of them, who thus lived by him, appear with him in glory, being completely made like to him, both in body and ſoul, that they might be glorified together with him: and all their comforts on earth, and all the felicity of their departed ſpirits before the reſurrection, would be an anticipation of this perfect and eternal glory reſerved for them: (*Gal.* c. ii. v. 20.)

V. 5—11.] The exhortations here given are ſimilar to thoſe, that have been already conſidered; (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. iv. v. 17—32. c. v. ver. 1—6.) "The members which are upon earth," ſignify the various luſts of man's carnal nature; the members of the old man, the body of ſin. In the regenerate "the fleſh is crucified with its affections, and luſts;" yet there is ſtill life in it. It muſt therefore be daily mortified; a continual oppoſition muſt be made to all its corrupt workings; the ſupplies of its life muſt be, as it were, cut off, no proviſion muſt be made for its iudulgence; occaſions of, and temptations to ſin muſt be avoided; and even lawful inclinations muſt be habituated to brook denial. Thus the members of the carnal nature, which affects earthly things and diſreliſhes heavenly, muſt be continually enfeebled, and put to death by a lingering unrelenting execution. In the detail of particulars here adduced, we may obſerve, that "inordinate affection," may relate to inexpedient, and exceſſive deſires after even lawful indulgences; and holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any: even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo *do* ye.

14 And above all theſe things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which alſo ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom; teaching and admoniſhing one another in pſalms and hymns and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatſoever ye do in word or deed,

"evil concupiſcence," ſignifies the ſenſuality of the heart, imagination, and mental powers, which muſt be mortified, or groſſer crimes of one kind or other will follow. But ſeveral expoſitors explain the word rendered covetouſneſs, to mean ſomething ſimilar; and as denoting rather the exceſſive deſire of ſenſual gratification, than the love of riches. This appears to me to be a very dangerous miſconſtruction.: for by this means ſenſuality is ſuppoſed to be forbidden with a needleſs redundancy of words; and covetouſneſs eſcapes without the leaſt rebuke: whereas the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and both the ſcripture, and matter of fact ſhew it to be one of the greateſt poſſible hindrances to man's ſalvation, and the greateſt of all ſnares to profeſſors of the goſpel, (*Pſ.* x. v. 3. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 22. c. xix. v. 23, 24. 1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 9, 10;) nor can any vice ſo properly be called idolatry, as avarice. The original word literally ſignifies *having more*, or *have more*, implying the hankering after ſtill more, and more, which is evidently the diſeaſe of the avaricious. It is but ſeldom uſed in the Greek writers for any thing, but covetouſneſs; though a few inſtances may be found of its being applied to an inſatiable greedineſs in other matters. But the general meaning of the word in the new teſtament may be underſtood from moſt of the paſſages, in which it is uſed; where its import cannot be doubted, (*Luke*, c. xii. v. 15. 1 *Theſs.* c. ii. v. 5. 2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 3;) though an exception or two be found to it. But why ſo many words ſhould be explained as conveying nearly the ſame idea, contrary to the *uſual* ſenſe of one of them, and to the excluſion of a moſt important inſtruction, it is difficult to conceive: for the pious writers, who have adopted this interpretation, could not poſſibly mean to ſcreen this baſe and ſordid vice; though the miſtake has evidently that tendency. The Coloſſians had indeed once habitually practiſed one or other of theſe vices; when they lived *among* thoſe, who were of the ſame character, and had themſelves no experience or expectation of nobler intereſts or ſatisfactions. But now they muſt not only mortify theſe groſs, carnal propenſities, which had acquired ſtrength by habit; but they muſt lay aſide as a caſt-off garment, thoſe evils, which are next recapitulated. The word tranſlated *blaſphemy* may ſignify ſlanders and revilings, as well as profane ſpeeches reſpecting God, and holy things. Theſe, as well as all polluting diſcourſe, and falſhood of every kind, muſt be renounced: ſeeing "they had put off the old man, with his deeds," by the mortification of their carnal nature, and by ceaſing from the allowed practice of all ſin: they ought therefore to avoid whatever was in the leaſt inconſiſtent with their profeſſion: and as they "had put on the new man," and profeſſed their conformity to Chriſt; and as this renewal of the ſoul, after the holy image of Him, who had at firſt created it, and who had thus new created it, was "in knowledge," or by the transforming knowledge of the glory of God in Chriſt; ſo they ought to act like men, who were of one mind and judgment with the Lord, hating iniquity, and loving righteouſneſs, in their whole conduct. For they were fully admitted to all the privileges of God's people, and ſhould therefore act in character. They were members of the chriſtian church, in which all other diſtinctions were aboliſhed. Greeks, and Jews, circumciſed and uncircumciſed, illiterate perſons of the moſt barbarous nations, the uncivilized Scythians, and the meaneſt ſlaves, as well as free men, were all equally made the children and heirs of God, by faith in Chriſt: their relation to, and intereſt in him, were all, that was requiſite for their acceptance, and admiſſion to theſe privileges; and He dwelt in them all, by the power of his Spirit transforming them into his own holy image; whereby they were diſtinguiſhed from all other perſons.

V. 12—15.] Being therefore the elect of God, whoſe privilege it was to be freely beloved in Chriſt, and whoſe character it was, that they were made holy by him: let them put on, and manifeſt in their whole conduct, a tender, compaſſionate, kind, lowly, unambitious, meek, and patient ſpirit; bearing with, and forgiving one another, if any diſpute or cauſe of complaint aroſe among them, after the example of Chriſt's love to them. Over all theſe let them put on charity, or active, liberal love; this would be as the bond of union to all their other graces, and form their characters conſiſtent. It would compact them into one body, and produce the moſt perfect ſtate of the church on earth: as indeed it is the very bond which unites God and all holy Beings, in the perfect happineſs and holineſs of heaven. (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii:) and as the peace of God in their conſciences, and hearts was the ſource of all their comforts; that peace ought to rule within them, as the umpire of all their differences; that they might be influenced by ſo endearing an example to live peaceably with all men. Eſpecially this ſhould teach them "to keep the unity of the "Spirit in the bond of peace," as they had been called into a ſtate of peace with God, in one body, as united in Chriſt their Head: for which it behoved them to be thankful, and to ſhew their gratitude in this manner. (*Eph.* c. iv. ver. 31, 32. c. v. ver. 1, 2. *Phil.* c. iv. ver. 7.)

V. 16, 17.] (*Eph.* c. v. ver. 18—20.) By "the "word of Chriſt" the whole of the ſacred ſcripture ſeems to be meant; which was all from Him, as the Light of the world, and the perſonal Word of God; and which, in one way or other all related to him. This *do* all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

18 Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Huſbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter againſt them.

20 Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, leſt they be diſcouraged.

22 Servants, obey in all things *your* maſters according to the fleſh; not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers; but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God:

23 And whatſoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.

25 But he that doeth wrong ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no reſpect of perſons.

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was to dwell in them richly: by diligent ſtudy and meditation, they were to ſtore their memories and underſtandings abundantly with it; that their judgments might be formed upon it, their hearts caſt into the mould of it, and their conſciences directed by it. Thus they would be enriched by it in all ſpiritual wiſdom and knowledge; (c. ii. v. 2, 3;) and would learn to act wiſely in their whole conduct; or they were directed to uſe their knowledge in all wiſdom, by reducing it to practice. In this way, they would be enabled, and ought to be ready, to teach, caution, exhort, reprove, or encourage one another: whilſt the words of thoſe pſalms, &c, which they ſang together with holy affections, under the influence of divine grace in their hearts, to the glory of the Lord, would furniſh them with words ſuited for ſuch mutual admonitions. And in general, whatever they were employed about, whether in converſation, in ſocial worſhip, in their ſecular or domeſtic concerns, or in any work of piety or charity; let them "do every "thing in the name of the Lord Jeſus;" in a believing dependance on his merits and grace, in obedience to his precepts, and for the honour of his name; giving thanks to God, *even* the Father, by him; as ſuch ſervices can only be accepted from ſinners, through his interceſſion.

V. 18—25.] (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. v. ver. 22—33. c. vi. v. 1—8.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſincerity of our profeſſed faith and love muſt be evidenced by a conſiſtent temper and conduct: and we muſt ſhew that we are ſpiritually alive through our riſen Saviour, by ſeeking and ſavouring thoſe things which are above, where he ſitteth at the right hand of God. Thus we ſhall know our intereſt in his atonement, by the life we have derived from him; and may be aſſured, that when Chriſt, who is our Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in glory; though this life of faith, and experienced communion with an unſeen Saviour, muſt be hid from, and derided by ungodly men. Having ſuch hopes and comforts, we ſhould daily employ ourſelves in mortifying every carnal affection, and in ſeeking a more entire deliverance, not only from forbidden gratifications, but from all inordinate affection, every evil hankering after ſenſual indulgence; and from that idolatrous covetouſneſs, which God abhorreth: for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience. In ſuch practices and purſuits we might have been left to periſh: for whether we once walked in them or no, we were by nature prone to them, and ſhould have lived and died among the children of diſobedience, if we had been left to ourſelves. Let us then proceed alſo to put off anger, malice, ſlander, revilings, irreverent words concerning God, polluting diſcourſe, and all kinds and degrees of inſincerity: for a chriſtian ſhould no more allow himſelf in any of theſe, than a courtier would diſhonour his prince, and demean himſelf by wearing ſqualid and ragged garments. Having therefore put off the old man and his deeds, and put on Chriſt; and being renewed in knowledge after his image, let us ſtudy to copy his example, and to act conſiſtent with our rank and character. As to all other diſtinctions, we may well be indifferent about them, ſeeing Chriſt is all and in all: but we ſhould be earneſtly deſirous of evidencing ourſelves to be the elect of God, holy and beloved, by cultivating every benign, friendly, humble and gentle temper, by copying the forgiveneſs through which we are ſaved; and by putting on that love which is the bond of perfectneſs, that it may above all appear in every part of our conduct; whilſt we follow peace with all men, and are of one mind with thoſe, who belong to the Lord's body.

We ſhould alſo ſeek to be enriched in divine knowledge and wiſdom, by a comprehenſive acquaintance with the word of Chriſt; that being familiarly verſed in the doctrines, promiſes, warnings, examples, &c. of the holy ſcriptures, we may be throughly furniſhed unto every good work. From this ſacred treaſury we may deduce inſtructions for mutual admonition, whilſt we unite in the worſhip of God, and in praiſing him with grace in our hearts: and ſo we ſhall be habitually led to do every thing in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God, *even* the Father by him. By theſe means, our ordinary employments and relative conduct will be ſanctified, and made a ſpiritual ſacrifice. Thus the diſobedient and diſobliging behaviour of wives; and the bitter words and harſh conduct of huſbands will alike be precluded; becauſe ſuch things are not *meet* for thoſe who are devoted to the Lord. Children will thus learn obedience to their parents, becauſe this is well-pleaſing to the Lord: and from the ſame motive parents will learn to exerciſe their authority with prudence and gentleneſs; not exaſperating their children by violent anger or durable reſentment; nor diſcouraging them by diſapproving of their endeavours to pleaſe them. Thus ſervants will learn to be

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1ſt. Exhortations to maſters to behave properly to their ſervants; to perſeverance in prayer; to prudence, and an holy converſation, 1---6. *2d. Concluding remarks concerning Tychicus and Oneſimus; ſalutations from, and to ſeveral perſons; with admonitions and directions general and particular,* 7---18.

MAſters, give unto *your* ſervants, that which is juſt and equal; knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving;

3 Withal praying alſo for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt, for which I am alſo in bonds:

4 That I may make it manifeſt, as I ought to ſpeak.

5 Walk in wiſdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your ſpeech *be* alway with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man.

7 All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful miniſter, and fellow-ſervant in the Lord:

8 Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he might know your eſtate, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Oneſimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who *is* one of you. They ſhall make

faithful, diligent, and conſcientious in obeying their maſters; from fear of God, and regard to his authority, and all-ſeeing eye upon them. In ſhort, true religion will teach every man to do the work of his ſtation heartily, to the beſt of his ability, and with chearful diligence, as unto the Lord and not to men: expecting from him the gracious reward of the heavenly inheritance, as the ſervants of Chriſt, in obedient faith; and fearing, (when tempted,) to do wrong, leſt he ſhould come ſhort of that inheritance, or expoſe himſelf to his diſpleaſure, who is no reſpecter of perſons. Theſe principles alone will render men univerſally conſcientious, in all places and circumſtances, from love to Chriſt, zeal for his glory, a deſire of recommending his goſpel, and of poſſeſſing the aſſurance that they are intereſted in its bleſſings. But that evangelical profeſſion, which leaves men regardleſs of relative duties, and gives thoſe they are connected with *juſt* cauſe for complaint, is very ſuſpicious: and the miſconduct of ſome profeſſors in the ſeveral relations of life, is ſo evidently and habitually wrong, that there can be no doubt but they deceive themſelves, as well as diſgrace the goſpel. Let us then earneſtly beg for grace, to enable us to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in theſe, and in all other things; that the ſincerity of our love may be evidenced beyond all reaſonable ground for ſuſpicion.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Maſters,* &c.] (Note, &c. *Eph.* c. vi. v. 9.) The concluding admonition of the preceding chapter related to maſters, as well as to ſervants. The former were here exhorted to give their ſervants that ſupport and recompence for their labours, which was juſt and equitable; and in all things to act towards them in a conſiderate and reaſonable manner; not abuſing their authority, but remembering their accountableneſs to their Maſter in heaven.

V. 2—4.] (Note, *Eph.* c. vi. v. 18—20. *Phil.* c. iv. ver. 6.) In order to the due performance of all the before-mentioned duties, the apoſtle exhorted them to *perſiſt* ſteadily in prayer; watching againſt all indiſpoſition for, and impediments to that duty, perſevering notwithſtanding delays and diſcouragements; and joining thankſgivings for mercies continually received. He alſo deſired them to pray for him, and his brethren in the miniſtry; that God would give them opportunity, and boldneſs to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt; (c. i. v. 27. 1 *Cor.* c. xvi. v. 9;) for which Paul was then a priſoner; that both in that condition, and when ſet at liberty, he might fully manifeſt the counſel of God concerning the way of ſalvation, and the calling of the Gentiles, as he ought to do.

V. 5, 6.] (Note, *Eph.* c. iv. v. 29. c. v. ver. 15. 17.) "Wiſdom towards them that were without," might include a prudent caution not to expoſe themſelves needleſſly to their perſecutors, to which ſome in a great meaſure reſtrict it: but it was a general rule of vaſt extent and importance; implying ſuch habitual propriety, circumſpection, and diſcretion in their whole conduct, as might preſerve them from being enſnared or drawn into ſin by their unconverted neighbours, and from giving them any unfavourable impreſſions of the goſpel; and ſuch an evident excellency of character, as might ſilence calumny, ſoften prejudice, and win upon them to examine into thoſe religious principles, which produced ſuch happy effects. Thus they were to redeem their time, in acquiring and exerciſing this heavenly wiſdom, to the honour of God, and the good of mankind: at the ſame time their converſation was not only to be inoffenſive, but "always with grace," the genuine language of piety, purity, wiſdom and love; that ſo it might ſavour of heavenly things; as meat is preſerved, and made reliſhing by being ſeaſoned with ſalt. (*Matt.* c. v. ver. 13.) Thus they would know how they ought to anſwer every man, whether he aſked a reaſon of their hope, and ſeriouſly enquired into the nature of chriſtianity; or whether he deſired a ſolution of ſome doubt, or difficulty; or whether he were diſpoſed to object, cavil, diſpute, or revile: for the meekneſs of heavenly wiſdom would dictate a pertinent anſwer on every occaſion, and preſerve them from diſgraceful contentions.

V. 7, 8.] (*Eph.* c. vi. v. 21, 22.)

V. 9—14. Oneſimus, of whom we ſhall read hereafter, (Philemon,) and whom the apoſtle ſent with Ty-known unto you all things which *are done* here.

10 Ariſtarchus, my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth you, and Marcus, ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

11 And Jeſus, which is called Juſtus, who are of the circumciſion. Theſe only *are my* fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a ſervant of Chriſt, ſaluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may ſtand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 Luke, the beloved phyſician, and Demas, greet you.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his houſe.

16 And when this epiſtle is read among you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewiſe read the *epiſtle* from Laodicea.

17 And ſay to Archippus, Take heed to the miniſtry, which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

18 The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

chicus, was formerly an inhabitant of Coloſsè: the language, uſed concerning him, ſhews how high he now ſtood in the apoſtle's eſtimation. Ariſtarchus continued with Paul, during his impriſonment; (*Acts.* c. xxvii. v. 2;) but whether this was voluntary, or whether he was confined with him for the ſake of the goſpel, is not certain. Marcus, or John Mark, Nephew to Barnabas, (*Acts*, c. xiii. v. 13. c. xv. v. 37—39,) was before this, fully reconciled to the apoſtle; and his unfavourable opinion of him was completely eraſed, by his ſubſequent good conduct. Probably the Coloſſians had formerly received ſome injunction from the apoſtle not to countenance Mark, as a miniſter: but he now reverſed it: for he, and Ariſtarchus, with one called Jeſus, (a common name among the Jews,) and ſurnamed Juſtus, becauſe of his integrity, were the only miniſters of the circumciſion, who had cordially united with him in preaching the kingdom of God among the Gentiles, and who had been a comfort to him. Epaphras, a Coloſſian, and probably the founder, or a paſtor of their church, ſent his ſalutations to them. He could not then attend his labours among them: but he continually prayed for them ſo fervently, that he even laboured, or wreſtled with God for them; that they might be eſtabliſhed in the faith, be ſtedfaſt and upright diſciples of Chriſt, and be complete in their knowledge and practice of the whole will of God. (c. i. v. 9, 10.) For the apoſtle could teſtify to the greatneſs of his zeal for the ſpiritual welfare of the Coloſſians, and of thoſe other neighbouring churches with which he had been connected. Luke had long been Paul's beloved companion in travel, and in ſufferings; he had been educated a phyſician, but he ſeems to have been an evangeliſt, or preacher of the goſpel, in the various cities, that he went to. With him Demas ſent his ſalutations, of whom we afterwards read an unfavourable account. (2 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 10.)

V. 15—18.] Nymphas ſeems to have been an eminent chriſtian at Laodicea, whoſe well ordered family might properly be called a chriſtian church, or a ſociety by whom the Lord was ſtatedly worſhipped. The apoſtle directed this epiſtle to be read in the neighbouring church of Laodicea, as it was ſuited for general inſtruction: and that an epiſtle, which they would receive from Laodicea, ſhould be publicly read among them. This direction hath given riſe to various conjectures: but probably the apoſtle had written to the Laodiceans, though the epiſtle was not preſerved. Archippus was perhaps newly appointed to the miniſtry, or he ſhewed ſome ſymptoms of timidity or negligence: the apoſtle therefore ſent a meſſage to him in particular, charging him to take heed to his ſacred miniſtry; and to perform fully the ſeveral duties of it, with diligence, faithfulneſs, boldneſs, and zealous affection: for the edification of believers, and the converſion of ſinners; by ſound doctrine, a holy example, fervent prayers, unwearied labours, and every means in his power; as having received it from the Lord, being accountable to him for his conduct in it, entitled to his aſſiſtance in his endeavours, and to act by his authority; and bound to ſeek his glory, in a decided preference to his own eaſe, ſecurity, intereſt, reputation, or accommodation. The apoſtle penned the ſalutation with his own hand, as uſual: and he called on the Coloſſians to remember his bonds, and ſuffering for their ſake, as Gentile converts: this would confirm them in the faith, render them conſtant in ſuffering for the ſame cauſe, and induce them to pay the more entire regard to his admonitions: and he concluded with praying that the grace of God might be with them, &c.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As there is no reſpect of perſons with the Lord; ſo his miniſters muſt act with ſimilar impartiality, and exhort maſters as well as ſervants, the rich as well as the poor, to the duties of their ſeveral ſtations; and to render to their inferiors what is juſt and equal, knowing that they alſo have a Maſter in heaven. None of theſe duties can be performed aright, except we perſevere in fervent prayer, and watch unto it with thankſgiving; and it is juſt and equal that maſters profeſſing godlineſs, ſhould pray for, and with their ſervants, and give them ſuitable inſtructions for their ſouls, as well as a comfortable proviſion for their temporal life. They who love the goſpel, ſhould always remember faithful miniſters in their prayers; beſeeching the Lord to aſſiſt and proſper all their labours, and to enable them, with ſuitable plainneſs and boldneſs, to declare the myſtery of Chriſt: and they, who are expoſed to peculiar dangers or ſufferings, in the cauſe of the goſpel, ſhould be eſpecially remembered in the prayers of their brethren. Great wiſdom and circumſpection are required in all our conduct towards thoſe, that are without; with whom we are often connected in relative life, and engaged in ſecular concerns. They will certainly watch and ſcrutinize our whole behaviour; they will often artfully endeavour to perſuade, entice, or provoke us into ſin, that they may charge the blame on our religious principles: they will make little allowance for our faults; and even our indiſcretions may produce an abiding prejudice againſt the truth. On the other hand, a ſober, diſcreet, upright, faithful, and friendly conduct will often win upon them, and be greatly inſtrumental to their good. We ſhould therefore redeem time, that we may employ it in ſeeking wiſdom from the word and Spirit of God: as well as in employing it for the benefit of mankind: we ſhould ſtore our hearts with good treaſure, and ſeaſon them with wiſdom and grace, that our ſpeech may always be inſtructive, and ſuited to the perſons, with whom we converſe; and that we may know how we ought to anſwer every man. Chriſtians ſhould deſire to know one another's ſtate: and mutual viſits, or friendly correſpondence among faithful miniſters, and fellow-ſervants of Chriſt, may help forward this communion of the ſaints, excite their prayers for each other, and tend to the comfort of their hearts. What amazing changes doth divine grace make in men's characters! Faithleſs ſervants thus become faithful, and beloved brethren! Often the firſt becomes laſt, and the laſt firſt, in the viſible church: our fears of ſome, that have miſbehaved, are removed, and they become fellow-workers, that are a comfort to us: whilſt our hopes of others are grievouſly diſappointed. But the Lord knoweth them that are his: and we ſhould always labour fervently in prayer for thoſe connected with us, that they may ſtand perfect and complete in the whole will of God; in this manner teſtifying our zeal for them, when unable to render them other help. Miniſters, eſpecially when they firſt enter upon their office, or when they ſeem wavering in it, ſhould be ſeriouſly and affectionately exhorted, "to take heed to their miniſtry, which they have received of the Lord, that they fulfil it." For the ſmiles, flatteries, or frowns of the world; the ſpirit of error, and the various workings of ſelf-love, turn many aſide, or lead them into ſuch a ſtyle of preaching and living, as comes far ſhort of *fulfilling their miniſtry*. Thus their own ſouls are endangered; their flocks are ſoothed into a formal profeſſion, or deluded into error; and the promiſing hopes, that were entertained of their uſefulneſs, are lamentably diſappointed. Let ſuch perſons then, take heed to themſelves, and to their doctrine, as thoſe, who ſerve the Lord Jeſus; let them remember the counſel of Paul, his bonds for Chriſt, and his laborious, ſelf-denying faithfulneſs even unto death: for in preaching his doctrine, imbibing his ſpirit, and copying his example, we may expect that the favour and bleſſing of God will be with our ſouls, and proſper all the labours of our hands.

The Firſt Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the THESSALONIANS.

Theſſalonica was a large city in Macedonia, where Paul had planted a church, after his departure from Philippi; (Acts, c. xvii. v. 1—10.) *He was driven thence by the bigotted Jews, before he had time to bring their affairs to a complete ſettlement; nor was he able till long after to return thither. After ſpending ſome time at Berea, he went to Athens, whence he ſent Timothy to enquire into the ſtate of the Theſſalonians: but this epiſtle is juſtly concluded not to have been written from Athens, as the ſpurious poſtſcript aſſerts, but afterwards, probably from Corinth, where the apoſtle continued for a conſiderable time. It is conjectured to have been written before any other of his epiſtles, that are extant: it is full of affection and confidence, and more conſolatory and practical, and leſs doctrinal, than ſome of the preceding epiſtles: in other reſpects its intention, and inſtruction do not materially differ from them.*

Anno Domini 55.

CHAP. I.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Saluting the Theſſalonians; ſhewing how he thanked God, and prayed for them; and declaring his remembrance of their active faith, &c, and his confidence of their election, 1—4.

2d. Relating the effects, which the power of God attending the goſpel had produced among them, in their converſion and conſiſtent conduct; and mentioning the good report, that was every where ſpread abroad concerning them, 5—10.

Anno Domini 55.

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, *which is* in God the Father, and *in* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceaſing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſight of God and our Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5 For our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your ſake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghoſt:

7 So that ye were enſamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 For from you ſounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but alſo in every place your faith to God-ward is ſpread abroad; ſo that we need not to ſpeak any thing.

9 For they themſelves ſhew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to ſerve the living and true God;

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead, *even* Jeſus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—4.] Silas, or Silvanus, was not come to the apoſtle, till after his arrival at Corinth, nor had Timothy returned to him; (*Acts.* c. xviii. v. 5:) ſo that the epiſtle could not be written from Athens. Paul joined theſe two faithful fellow-labourers with himſelf in this addreſs, as moſt expreſſive of his affection for the Theſſalonians, to whom they were ſo well known. After his uſual ſalutation and introduction; he obſerved, that he conſtantly remembered, their work of faith &c. They profeſſed to believe in Chriſt, and their active obedience ſhewed them to be poſſeſſed of a living faith: this wrought by love of Chriſt and his miniſters, truth, and cauſe; and that powerful affection induced them to labour ſtrenuouſly in all things connected with the honour of Chriſt, and the aſſurance of their intereſt in him: they profeſſed to hope in the promiſes of God, and to expect eternal life, as his gift in Chriſt Jeſus; and this living hope rendered them patient and conſtant in their adherence to Chriſt, in the midſt of their tribulations, and perſecutions. Theſe graces and duties they attended to, as in the ſight of God, even their reconciled Father; and the apoſtle knew, from what he had witneſſed, that they were his brethren beloved, and the elect of God in Jeſus Chriſt. This, he did not ſpeak as a matter of immediate revelation; for in what follows he aſſigned the reaſon of this confidence: ſo that his favourable concluſion reſpecting them was drawn, by tracing back the effects of divine grace in their converſion, to their cauſe in his election of them. But the purpoſe of God in calling the Gentiles could not be known in this manner; and indeed ſeveral of the Theſſalonians were Jewiſh converts. And as to a national election, with which ſome learned men amuſe us; in what ſenſe a remnant of Theſſalonians, that is of the inhabitants of one city, could prove the national election of the Macedonians; or what is meant by ſuch an election, they would do well to inform us, who adopt ſuch expedients to explain away a doctrine, which is indeed very repugnant to the ſelf-wiſdom, and ſelf-righteouſneſs of the human heart.

V. 5—10.] The goſpel, which the apoſtle, Silvanus, and Timothy preached, had not come to the Theſſalonians in word only: it had not been left to it's natural efficacy, or the power of arguments and perſuaſion upon their minds. Numbers had thus heard it, and continued in their idolatry and iniquities, or were become mere formal profeſſors: but it had come *with* power, and *with* the Holy Ghoſt; that is *in*, or with the power of the Holy Ghoſt. This cannot relate to miracles only; for many ſaw miracles, who continued unbelieving: but the new-creating power of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word, had produced ſuch a full conviction of it's nature, and importance, and ſuch an aſſurance of faith and hope, as had induced them at all events to embrace, and profeſs the goſpel; even as a ſhip is carried by a full tide, and a fair wind, over every obſtacle, into the haven. For they knew and obſerved what manner of men the preachers were among them for their ſakes; whilſt they witneſſed their patience, ſelf-denial, diſintereſted diligence, holineſs, love, &c: and this induced them to attend to their doctrine. So that they joined themſelves to theſe deſpiſed preachers of a crucified Saviour; in whom they profeſſed faith, they aſſociated themſelves with them in divine worſhip, and they copied their examples; in doing which, they became imitators of their Lord alſo. Thus they received the word into their hearts, in the midſt of great afflictions in their circumſtances, and from their perſecutors: yet had they ſuch joy in, and from the Holy Ghoſt, as made them ample amends. So that they became examples, not only to their idolatrous neighbours, but even to believers in other parts of Macedonia, and in Achaia: for the goſpel ſoon was ſpread from Theſſalonica into thoſe regions, by perſons, who went out from among them. In all places, whither the apoſtle travelled, the report of the converſion, and good conduct of the Theſſalonians had arrived before him and they, who came to him from other parts, declare

CHAP

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Reminding the Theſſalonians of his affectionate faithful labours, and holy manner of life among them, 1---12. *2d. Expreſſing his ſatisfaction in their reception of the goſpel; and their conſtancy amidſt perſecution; and ſpeaking of the guilt and ruin of the unbelieving Jews,* 13---16. *3d. Shewing his joy on their account, his deſire of ſeeing them again, and his hope of a joyful meeting at the coming of Chriſt,* 17---20.

FOR yourſelves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

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the ſame; ſo that every where, he met with thoſe, who joyfully mentioned his proſperous entrance with the goſpel among them; and how they had been converted from their idolatry, to ſerve and worſhip the one living and true God, by faith in Chriſt; and to wait for his coming from heaven to raiſe the dead, and judge the world, in believing, and patient hope, diligent preparation, and univerſal conſcientiouſneſs. For they were fully aſſured, that God the Father had raiſed him from the dead, and advanced him to the mediatorial throne at his right hand, there to reign till all enemies ſhould be put under his feet. Him therefore they looked, and waited for, as their great Deliverer from the wrath to come. To this, both Jews and Gentiles had been juſtly expoſed for their ſins; and under this, they muſt all have finally periſhed; if the Son of God had not become incarnate, performed his ſurety-ſhip obedience to the law, laid down his life as a vicarious ſacrifice, riſen as the firſt-fruits of the reſurrection, aſcended into heaven to be the Advocate of ſinners, ſent forth his goſpel to call men to partake of this ſalvation, and accompanied it by the power of his Spirit, to overcome the proud and carnal oppoſition of their hearts. Thus he delivered them from the wrath of God, which is coming, and will for ever be coming upon all impenitent and unbelieving ſinners: of this deliverance their converſion was the ſure evidence, and having this earneſt and pledge of final and complete ſalvation, they waited in joyful hope for that ſolemn ſeaſon, which will complete the deſtruction of the wicked; and this ſupported them under their leſſer troubles and ſufferings, from which it did not pleaſe their gracious Saviour to deliver them; becauſe he knew how to over-rule them to their everlaſting good.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is matter of cordial joy and fervent gratitude to faithful miniſters, to witneſs "the work of faith, and labour of "love, and patience of hope, in the Lord Jeſus," of thoſe, among whom they have preached the goſpel. This will put vigour into their prayers and praiſes for them; as evidencing that they are "in God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt;" partakers of "mercy, grace and peace;" "beloved brethren," and "the elect of God." But faith, which worketh not obedience; profeſſed love, that declines ſelf-denying labour; and hope, which is ſeparated from patient continuance in well-doing, can never prove a man's "election of God." All other ways of proving it are vain and deluſory; and this ſcriptural medium is not capable of being abuſed. Alas! even the goſpel that Paul preached, often comes in word only; and thus men continue impenitent, ſlaves to ſin, or at moſt only become notional formaliſts, and mere profeſſors. This ſhould excite all who, preach, and all who love the goſpel, to pray without ceaſing, that it may every where, and at all times, be attended by the divine power of the Holy Spirit, producing in men's minds that full aſſurance of its truth and importance, which alone will induce them to break through all hindrances, and make all ſacrifices, that they may follow Chriſt, and be partakers of his ſalvation. This is the work of God; but he works by means: and when miniſters are evidently ſuch perſons among the people, that in following them, they follow Chriſt alſo, it is very conducive to their conviction and converſion. When this happy change is effected, and ſinners join themſelves to, and copy the examples of, them, who walk as Chriſt walked; they are often enabled to receive the word, amidſt poverty, contempt, and manifold afflictions, with abundant joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Thus they become good examples to their families and neighbours, and even to their fellow-chriſtians: the word of God ſounds forth from them to others; and they zealouſly embrace every opportunity of diffuſing this heavenly light: and when great numbers of careleſs, ignorant and immoral perſons are turned from their idols and iniquities, their carnal purſuits and connections, to ſerve the living and true God; to believe in, and obey the Lord Jeſus; to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world; and to wait for the Lord Jeſus from heaven, as "believing that he will come to be their Judge," and hoping "to be numbered with his ſaints in glory everlaſting:" the matter ſpeaks for itſelf, there needs little pains to ſpread the report; for it is a work of God that will be ſure to be known; and rendered conſpicuous by its own light. May he then ſend forth miniſters into all parts of the world, attended by his power, and thus made abundantly ſucceſsful in the converſion of the nations to the worſhip of the living God, and the obedience of faith in his Son! But let us remember "that the wrath of God is revealed from "heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men". All temporal miſeries terminating in death are the effects of that wrath: but Jeſus did not come to deliver us from theſe ſufferings, but from "the wrath to come," the everlaſting miſery of hell. None but Jeſus can deliver any man from this merited condemnation: all that believe in him, with an obedient faith, are delivered from it, and all others are expoſed to it, "for the wrath of God abideth on them." Let us then examine this moſt important matter with proportionable ſeriouſneſs and diligence: let us give diligence to make our calling and election ſure: if we have obtained this aſſurance, let us remember the price, which our deliverance coſt our great Redeemer; that humble love may conſtrain us devotedly to obey, and chearfully to ſuffer for, him. But if any are conſcious, that they have not experienced this deliverance; let them take warning, without delay to flee from the wrath to come, and to ſeek refuge in Chriſt, and his ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—8.] The Theſſalonians well

2 But even after that we had ſuffered before, and were ſhamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the goſpel of God with much contention.

3 For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanneſs, nor in guile:

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in truſt with the goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak; not as pleaſing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time uſed we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke, of covetouſneſs; God *is* witneſs:

6 Nor of men ſought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdenſome, as the apoſtles of Chriſt.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children:

8 So being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail; for labouring night and day, becauſe we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the goſpel of God.

10 Ye *are* witneſſes, and God *alſo*, how holily and juſtly and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you that believe:

11 As ye know, how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father *doth* his children,)

12 That ye would walk worthy of God,

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knew that the apoſtle and his fellow-labourers, did not come among them with empty ſpeculations, or in an inefficacious manner: ſo that they were ſenſible, that it was a well grounded report that had been ſpread abroad concerning them. (c. i. v. 9.) Having been ſupernatually directed to go over into Macedonia; they had not yielded to diſcouraging fears, when they ſuffered ſuch ſevere, ignominious, and iniquitous uſage at Philippi; (*Acts*, c. xvi. v. 9, 10. 22—24:) but as ſoon as they were ſet at liberty, they came to Theſſalonica, and there boldly, in dependance on God, and from zeal for his glory, they preached that goſpel of which he was the Author: this they did with the greateſt earneſtneſs of ſpirit from deſires of their converſion; and with the moſt conſtant perſeverance, notwithſtanding the oppoſition of the Jews, and the diſputings they were conſtrained to maintain with them. For their exhortations, were neither ſuited to beguile men into falſe notions, or into licentious practices; nor had they any ſiniſter or ſelfiſh motives in their earneſtneſs for their conviction: on the contrary they were moſt fully aſſured of the divine authority and excellency of their doctrine: and conſcious of the utmoſt integrity, purity and ſincerity in their endeavours to propagate it. For as they had been approved of God himſelf, and marked out to be ſtewards of his myſteries, and entruſted with the goſpel; ſo they had ſpoken with the moſt ſimple, and ſincere deſire of approving themſelves faithful to him: and meeting with his acceptance, knowing that he would ſcrutinize and prove the ſecret intentions of every heart. Nor had they ſought to pleaſe men, for the ſake of their own eaſe, intereſt, reputation, or accommodation; or in any way except as it was conducive to their edification. (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. iv. ver. 1—5. *Gal.* c. i. v. 10.) They had therefore never, on any occaſion, employed flattering words, to ſoothe them into a deluſive opinion of their good eſtate or character, to palliate their ſins, or to compliment their endowments, or virtues. This the Theſſalonians knew, being ſenſible, that they addreſſed them in the plaineſt and moſt convincing language; nor had they ever made their religion or miniſtry a cloke to cover any avaricious deſigns, which they concealed, and hoped to gratify at their expence; as God would teſtify for them. Neither had they courted their applauſe, or aſpired at authority over, or honour among them or any other chriſtians; on the contrary, they even receded from their due, and would not burden them by requiring a maintenance from them. This was a mark of reſpect, which the apoſtles generally received from the churches; and Paul had as juſt a claim to it, as they: but he did not inſiſt upon it either for himſelf or his companions, becauſe he was aware, that it might have been burdenſome to them, as they were generally in low circnmſtances. In this and all other reſpects, they had imitated the gentleneſs of a nurſing mother to her beloved infant; which ſhe deems it a pleaſure to ſuckle, and attend upon, and has the deſired recompence of her diſintereſted aſſiduity, when it thrives and is in health. Thus being affectionately deſirous of their ſpiritual growth and proſperity, they were not only willing to impart the goſpel to them; but the tendereſt feelings of their hearts attended their labours. They readily ſpent their ſtrength, exhauſted their ſpirits, and ventured their lives for them, becauſe they were dear to them; and they deſired no other recompence for their labours, than their "furtherance "and joy of faith."

V. 9—12.] The Theſſalonians could well remember the diſintereſted, and painful toil and labour of the apoſtle, and his aſſociates: for they not only employed the day in the various parts of their miniſterial duties, or in working hard for a ſubſiſtence; but they bereaved themſelves of reſt, ſpending the whole, or a conſiderable part of the night in the ſame manner: leſt by being chargeable to ſome of them they ſhould prevent their own ſucceſs. Thus they faithfully preached to them the goſpel of God: and they could witneſs, (as the Lord himſelf alſo would,) in what a holy, upright, and blameleſs manner, they behaved themſelves; not only in thoſe things, which unbelievers might have noticed, but alſo in their moſt retired and intimate behaviour, among ſuch as believed the goſpel: ſo that none of them had ſeen any thing, but who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but (as it is in truth,) the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus: for ye alſo have ſuffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jeſus, and their own prophets, and have perſecuted us; and they pleaſe not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 Forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles, that they might be ſaved, to fill up their ſins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you, for a ſhort time, in preſence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to ſee your face with great deſire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto

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what evinced the greateſt purity, probity, ſincerity, and holy love. Accordingly, they had alſo exhorted, and animated them with every conſolatory topic, and charged them with authority, to copy their example: and as a wiſe and affectionate Father uſes arguments, perſuaſions, encouragements, and commands, in directing the conduct of his children: ſo had they uſed the ſame means of inducing them to walk worthy of the holy character of God, whom they worſhipped; and who had ſo graciouſly called them from the power of darkneſs into the kingdom of his Son, that they might be therein trained up for the eternal glory, and holy felicity of heaven. (Notes &c. *Eph.* c. iv. ver. 1. *Phil.* c. i. v. 27. *Col.* c. i. v. 10. 13.)

V. 13—16.] The apoſtle, and his friends, thanked God continually in behalf of the Theſſalonians: becauſe they had not treated their meſſage, as the word of man, which may be doubted of, diſputed againſt, rejected, or even derided, without great damage, however plauſible or ingenious it may be. On the contrary, they had received it, as the word of God, (which it certainly was;) and had accordingly reverenced, attended to, believed, and obeyed it. Thus it had effectually wrought in their hearts repentance of ſin, hatred of their idolatries; faith in Chriſt; love to him and his cauſe; delight in God's worſhip and ſervice, a ſupreme valuation of his favour, a realizing view of eternal things, &c. In this manner, they became imitators of the chriſtian churches in Judea, in doctrine, worſhip, and holy obedience: and they adhered to the truth and will of Chriſt, patiently and chearfully, amidſt the perſecutions, which they endured from their neighbours, who were inſtigated by the unbelieving Jews: even as the chriſtians in Judea were hated and perſecuted by thoſe of their own nation. Nor ought this to be wondered at; ſeeing the Jews, though profeſſed worſhippers of God, had murdered their promiſed Meſſiah, (as their anceſtors had done the prophets;) and they perſecuted the apoſtles, and diſciples of Chriſt, from a pretended, or blind zeal for the law. In this they pleaſed not God, but exceedingly provoked him: whilſt they were contrary to all men, and oppoſed as much as poſſible the ſalvation both of Jews and Gentiles Eſpecially as they prohibited, and did all in their power to hinder, the preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles; as if they could not endure, that they ſhould be ſaved. Thus with ceaſeleſs efforts, they filled up the meaſure of their perſonal and national iniquities, for which the wrath of God was even then about to come upon them to the uttermoſt; in the deſtruction of their city and temple; the ſlaughter of immenſe multitudes of their nation; the ſcattering, enſlaving, and abject miſeries of the ſurvivors; and the moſt unheard of calamities of every kind purſuing them into every region of the earth, through numerous ſucceſſive generations. (Notes &c. *Matt.* c. xxiii. v. 34—39. c. xxiv.)

V. 17—20.] The apoſtle had been forced from the Theſſalonians; but his affections were ſtill with them; the ſeparation was only for a ſhort ſeaſon, or for "*the ſpace of one hour*;" "for the apoſtle's mind was full of the ideas of eternity, which did, as it were, annihilate any period of mortal life." (Doddridge.) He had however been exceedingly deſirous of returning to them, which he had attempted with more abundant earneſtneſs: (for in this he ſpake of himſelf, as Timothy had viſited them again, and perhaps Silas alſo;) but Satan, by exciting diſturbances and oppoſition to him at Berea, and in other places, had hindered him from effecting his purpoſe; as he could not have come with propriety. Otherwiſe they might be ſure, that he gladly would, and that he would embrace the firſt opportunity of ſo doing: for what did they ſuppoſe was the object of his hope in the work of the miniſtry; but ſuch ſucceſs as he had met with among them? Or what was his joy, and crown of exultation *in that reſpect*; but to ſee numbers of ſuch affectionate converts to Chriſt, as they were; whom he could look upon as perſons, in whom he ſhould rejoice in the preſence of the Lord Jeſus, when he ſhall come to judge the world? For indeed he and his brethren did not glory, or rejoice in their gifts, popularity, or excellency of ſpeech; but in being owned of God, as his inſtruments in their converſion, and in encouraging them to a holy walk and converſation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Confidence in God, zeal for his glory, love to the ſouls of men, and conſcious integrity, will ſupport faithful miniſters amidſt manifold hardſhips and ſufferings: and when they have been ſhamefully uſed in one place; they will not decline further labours and perils, but will be courageous in ſpeaking the goſpel of God in another you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

ſituation. Even when their miniſtry excites the cavils and objections of unbelievers, and conſtrains them to engage in argument, and to contend for the truth; they will perſevere, (though they love peace, and hate diſputatious conteſts;) for they cannot but ſpeak the things, which they have heard and known. All miniſters ſhould be careful, that their preaching be free from fallacy, deceit, and a licentious tendency; and that their *motives be equally pure* from all artful deſigns of advancing, enriching, and indulging themſelves, by means of their miniſtry. For ſuch diſcoveries of all kinds of baſeneſs have been made, reſpecting prieſts of different religions; that mankind are very apt to ſuſpect ſome fraud or corrupt intention to be lurking under a great appearance of zeal and devotion. It is in vain to oppoſe any arguments to this deep-rooted ſuſpicion; except they are corroborated by manifeſt facts. We ſhould therefore conſider ourſelves, as allowed of God to be put in truſt with the goſpel; and recollect that this is of all others the moſt important ſtewardſhip: our faithfulneſs in it will produce the happieſt conſequences; but unfaithfulneſs will conſtitute the moſt aggravated guilt, and enſure the deepeſt condemnation. We ſhould therefore by no means ſeek to pleaſe men; but ſimply ſtudy to approve ourſelves to God, who trieth the hearts. Even the approbation of godly men may be fallacious; and may interfere with our ſimplicity in aiming to pleaſe the Lord by faithfulneſs to our truſt. A man may indeed be too rough and ſevere in his manner of ſtating the truth: but ſelfiſh principles will far more generally lead men to temporize, to palliate, and to ſpeak ſmooth things. This puts men into a good humour with themſelves, and that makes them friendly to the preacher; which may be very conducive to his ſecular advantage, and for a time even add to his reputation. It is therefore a very great thing indeed for a miniſter to be able on good grounds to ſay, "neither at any time, uſed we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetouſneſs, God is witneſs: nor of men ſought we glory, &c:" and to be able to appeal both to the Lord, and to men, that he hath conſtantly receded even from his equitable claims, out of love to men's ſouls, and leſt he ſhould be burdenſome to them. But when this decided faithfulneſs; this unambitious, diſintereſted, and ſelf-denying plainneſs of ſpeech on all occaſions, unites with equal tenderneſs and affection; ſo that the ſame perſons can ſay, "we were gentle among you, even as a nurſing mother cheriſheth her children: ſo being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls; becauſe ye were dear unto us:" then the ſervant of Chriſt come as near to the mind of their Lord, as can be conceived attainable by mortal men. There are few indeed, who are not warped one way or the other, by conſtitution, habit, or circumſtances: it behoves us therefore to ſearch out our ſpirits, to be open to conviction, and to guard againſt our own peculiar weakneſs. If we are deſirous of the character of able, faithful, and affectionate miniſters of Chriſt, we ſhould not ſhrink from labour and toil, day or night; we ſhould chearfully endure hardſhip, both in preaching the goſpel, and alſo in diligent endeavours to avoid being chargeable to thoſe, who are *unable*, or *unwilling* to aſſiſt us: and we ſhould have a noble ambition to be able to appeal to men, as well as unto God, that we have behaved ourſelves with purity and equity, and in a blameleſs manner amongſt them, with whom we were moſt converſant. This will give energy to our words, whilſt we exhort, encourage, and charge them, that believe, "to walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory." Indeed we ought always to have their welfare at heart, as a father hath that of his children; and to ſeek it with the ſame affectionate and aſſiduous earneſtneſs, from the moſt diſintereſted motives. We ſhould give thanks to God without ceaſing, in behalf of thoſe, who receive the goſpel from us, not as the opinion of fallible men, but as the ſure teſtimony of the Lord, which giveth wiſdom to the ſimple. This it certainly is, as far as any man preaches according to the ſcriptures, however unlearned, deſtitute of ingenuity, obſcure, or frail the preacher may be. When thus received, with reverent faith, and obedient attention, it will work effectually an entire change in mens judgments, diſpoſitions, and whole characters: they will become followers, not of this or the other leader of a ſect, but of the primitive chriſtians: and they may expect to be reviled and perſecuted by their neighbours, (as far as outward circumſtances will admit,) even as they were of the Jews. For the ſame nature is in men of every age, and clime, which was in thoſe who killed the Lord Jeſus, and the holy prophets, and perſecuted the apoſtles and primitive chriſtians; and Satan, who ſtill worketh in the children of diſobedience, hateth the pure goſpel of Chriſt, and the faithful preaching of it to ſinners of all deſcriptions, as much as he did of old. But they who would forbid us thus to preach to the chief of ſinners, and thoſe who are dead in ſin, that they may be ſaved, do not in this pleaſe God, and they are contrary to all men: yet by a *modern* device of Satan, even ſome pious perſons eſpouſe ſentiments, which lead them to contend againſt the practice of their fellow-ſervants, who go at their Lord's command, into the high-ways and hedges to compel men to come in. It is indeed grievous that men, ſo valuable in other reſpects, ſhould countenance the conduct of thoſe, who, in every age, are actuated by the ſame proud and bigotted ſpirit, which influenced the Jews of old, when filling up the meaſure of their ſins, till wrath came upon them to the uttermoſt: but we would by no means inſinuate, that they are in the leaſt influenced by ſimilar principles. The affectionate and faithful miniſters of Chriſt may be forced from thoſe, with whom their hearts are moſt united; and they may be fruſtrated, through the devices of ſatan, in their moſt earneſt deſires and endeavours of coming to them again: yet their ſeparation will be only for a ſhort ſpace. Their hope and joy in their

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Shewing his anxiety about the Theſſalonians, his motives for ſending Timothy, and the comfort he had received, from the tidings brought by him concerning them, 1---9. *2d. Thanking God, and praying that he might be enabled to viſit them; and for their increaſe, and perſeverance in faith and holineſs,* 10---13.

WHerefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

2 And ſent Timotheus, our brother, and miniſter of God, and our fellow-labourer in the goſpel of Chriſt, to eſtabliſh you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

3 That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions: for yourſelves know that we are appointed thereunto.

4 For, verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation; even as it came to paſs, and ye know.

5 For this cauſe when I could no longer forbear, I ſent to know your faith, leſt by ſome means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, deſiring greatly to *ſee* us, as we alſo *to ſee* you:

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and diſtreſs by your faith:

8 For now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God

ministry connect greatly with the ſpiritual growth and fruitfulneſs of thoſe, who have profited by their labours: they are now their crown of rejoicing, far more than all poſſible commendation from other men: and they will meet them, in the preſence of the Lord Jeſus, at his coming, as their glory and joy; and then all the pangs of their partings and ſeparations will be richly and eternally compenſated.

NOTES.

V. 1—5.] (Notes, *Acts*, c. xvii. v. 15. c. xviii. v. 1—6.) Timothy came from Berea to Athens, whilſt Paul was there; but it ſeems that Silas did not. The apoſtle, being anxious about the new converts at Theſſalonica, could not bear to be any longer in ſuſpenſe about them, or to act as if he were unconcerned for their welfare: he therefore choſe to be left alone at Athens, though that muſt have been very inconvenient to him; and he ſent back Timothy to Theſſalonica, to eſtabliſh the chriſtians of that city in the faith, by ſuitable inſtructions, which he was eminently qualified to give them; and to encourage them to hold faſt their profeſſion, whatever oppoſition they met with, by aſſuring them of peculiar protection, conſolation, and reward. This was intended to prevent any of them from being moved to renounce, or diſguiſe their faith, by means of the afflictions, to which it expoſed them: for they knew, that the diſciples of Chriſt were appointed to have fellowſhip with him in his ſufferings. Their ſituation amidſt the enemies of God, and their doctrine and character would render contempt and enmity unavoidable: the malice of Satan would certainly ſtir up perſecutions as far he could: and it pleaſed the Lord to appoint them a certain meaſure of ſuffering for the trial of their faith, their increaſing ſanctification, and the honour of the powerful, and excellent effects of his grace in them. This the apoſtle had plainly, and confidently predicted, and warned them to expect, when he was with them, even before the perſecution had begun: he had never allowed them to be deluded by an expectation of peace, or proſperity; but had taught them to look for tribulations from without, and for inward conſolations. Accordingly it had come to paſs; he and his aſſociates had been driven from among them by furious perſecutions: and as he had left them in the midſt of this fiery trial, ſo he had ſent to ſee how they had ſtood it, and whether their faith had thus been proved genuine: as he could not wholly diveſt himſelf of ſolicitude, leſt the tempter, even Satan, ſhould have prevailed againſt them, by his manifold artifices, to renounce the faith, and comply with the idolatry of their neighbours; and leſt thus his unwearied labours for their good ſhould prove in vain. (*Acts*, c. xiv. v. 22.) The apoſtle continued to ſpeak in the plural number, though the context evinces that he meant it only of himſelf. This he ſeems to have done in ſome other places: but it was from modeſty, as only one of many miniſters, who were of the ſame mind; and not from any affectation of dignity.

V. 6—10.] Whilſt Timothy was abſent Paul departed from Athens to Corinth; whither Timothy returned to him, and Silas alſo. The tidings, which he received from Theſſalonica, concerning the faith and love of the brethren in that city, and their affectionate remembrance of him, and reciprocal deſire to ſee him, were ſo ſatisfactory; that they not only relieved his mind from anxiety, but abundantly compenſated for all his other trials and diſtreſſes, and filled his benevolent heart with conſolation. For indeed he ſeemed to enjoy life with great reliſh, and to live to ſome purpoſe; when his ſpiritual children ſtood faſt in the faith, hope, love, and obedience of the goſpel. Nor could he find language, to expreſs the gratitude he owed to God, and the thanks, which he now *again* was excited to render him on their account, and for that overflowing joy, with which this inſpired his heart before God; whilſt night and day he poured out his unremitted prayers, for the ſatisfaction of once again ſeeing them, and of perfecting what was wanting in their faith, whether in reſpect of their knowledge again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might ſee your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himſelf and our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

13 To the end he may ſtabliſh your hearts unblameable in holineſs, before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all his ſaints.

CHAP. IV.

Contains exhortations, 1ſt. To holineſs in general; and to chaſtity, integrity, love of the brethren, quietneſs, and induſtry, in particular, 1---12. *2d. To moderation in ſorrowing for deceaſed believers; from the aſſured expectation of the coming of Chriſt, to raiſe the dead, to change the living, and to receive all his people to himſelf,* 13---18.

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of the truths and promiſes of God, or the vigour of their believing dependance on them.

V. 11—13.] This affectionate and pious fervour of holy exultation, the apoſtle cloſed by penning down the requeſts of his heart for them. He earneſtly beſought "God, *even* our Father, and our Lord Jeſus," as the incarnate Son, the Head over all things to his church, to direct, and make plain his way unto them, by removing all thoſe providential hindrances, which had hitherto prevented him: and he intreated the Lord Jeſus, (for as the former clauſe is an undeniable act of divine worſhip rendered to Chriſt, as One with the Father, ſo this alſo ſeems to have been addreſſed to him;) that by further communications from his fulneſs, he would cauſe them to increaſe in love of one another, and of all men; according to the various exerciſes of that holy affection, required by the commandments of God, and to abound in every one of them; according to the nature and meaſure of the apoſtle's fervent, ſpiritual, and enlarged love of them. This he deſired, in order to the eſtabliſhment of their hearts in holineſs; and that their affections, tempers and conduct might be unblameable, in every part of their various duties to God, each other, and all men, in the ſeveral relations of life; and that it might be manifeſted that they were ſo, as in the preſence of their holy and heart-ſearching God and Father, in that deciſive day, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall come with all his holy ones, whether angels, or redeemed ſinners, to judge the quick and dead. (*Col.* c. i. v. 22.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The love of miniſters to their people, and their longing deſires after their ſalvation, cannot wholly be ſeparated from painful ſolicitude on their account: this will diſpoſe them to renounce their own conveniency, and to endure fatigue, in order to obtain ſatisfaction in ſo intereſting a concern, and to promote their ſpiritual benefit. It is a great advantage for ſuch, as are neceſſarily engaged at a diſtance from thoſe, of whom they are thus affectionately deſirous, when they have faithful fellow-labourers, to whom they may entruſt the care of them; who may eſtabliſh believers, and comfort the feeble minded concerning their faith. In the moſt peaceful times every profeſſor ſhould count his coſt, and remember that the followers of Chriſt are appointed to ſuffer affliction: and miniſters ſhould not ſhun to forewarn their hearers of this; that they may be prepared for the croſs, and meet every trial with watchfulneſs and prayer; as in this manner they will beſt be preſerved from being "moved" from their conſtancy, and ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith. For the tempter hath many artful devices, with which to aſſault men's ſouls: he knows how to ſuit his ſuggeſtions to their diſpoſitions, and to avail himſelf of their circumſtances; and he will be ſure to work upon their hopes, fears, deſires, or averſions, by the moſt ſubtle methods imaginable. So many hopeful profeſſors have thus been overcome in the day of trial; that the experienced miniſter will always have his anxieties: and he will ever caution the people to be upon their guard; leſt by ſome means the tempter ſhould tempt them, and his labour ſhould be in vain. But in proportion to theſe ſolicitudes will be his rejoicing, when he finds that his beloved children ſtand faſt in the faith, and walk in love; and that their remembrance of, and affection to, him correſpond with his feelings towards them. In proportion as he has the mind of Paul, he will be comforted over them, in all his affliction and diſtreſs by their faith: the pleaſure of his life will greatly conſiſt in ſeeing them ſtand faſt in the Lord, walking in his ordinances and commandments blameleſs, and in no degree moved by the reproaches of their enemies. He will feel that he can never ſufficiently thank God, for all the joy which he derives from them, and the teſtimony of the Lord's acceptance of his labours, which their converſion implies: and if he be abſent from them, ſuch good tidings of them will draw out his ſoul in more fervent prayers to God continually; that he may again enjoy the comfort of their beloved ſociety, and perfect what is lacking in their faith; to whatever hardſhips and perils this may expoſe him. Thus will he beſeech God, even our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to direct his way unto them; that he may again on earth meet with thoſe, whom he ſo tenderly loves: and that eſpecially, the Lord would make them to increaſe and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men; and *thus*, (for love is the fulfilling of the law,) eſtabliſh their hearts unblameable in holineſs, before God our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jeſus, with all his ſaints: when all ſuch deſires and prayers will fully be accompliſhed. May the Lord make all, who are called the miniſters of Chriſt, to be of this faithful, loving, diligent, and diſintereſted ſpirit; and may he proſper all their labours, and comfort their hearts, with numbers of converts like theſe Theſſalonians!

CHAP IV.

FUrthermore then we beſeech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jeſus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to pleaſe God, *ſo* ye would abound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication:

4 That every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour:

5 Not in the luſt of concupiſcence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.

6 That no *man* go beyond, and defraud his brother in *any* matter; becauſe that the Lord *is* the avenger of all ſuch, as we alſo have forewarned you and teſtified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs.

8 He therefore that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God, who hath alſo given unto us his Holy Spirit.

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourſelves are taught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beſeech you, brethren, that ye increaſe more and more:

11 And that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—8.] *As to what remained,* it was requiſite for the apoſtle to intreat the Theſſalonians, with the moſt affectionate perſuaſions, and to exhort them with earneſtneſs and authority, to abound more and more in the practice of all thoſe duties, concerning which he had before inſtructed them. They had received this inſtruction in an obedient and teachable manner; and thus had learned how they ought to order their whole conduct, that they might pleaſe God in all their actions: and he now called upon them to be yet more zealous in every good work, and aſſiduous in cultivating every holy diſpoſition. It was indeed unneceſſary for him to enter into an exact detail of particulars; as they knew what commandments he had given them in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jeſus; for their ſanctification, in their entire ſeparation from all evil, and their conſecration to God; in the complete mortification of the old corrupt nature, and the renewal of their ſouls to the divine image under the influences of the holy Spirit, through faith, in the uſe of appointed means, and by an attention to every part of their rule of duty, conſtituted the will of God reſpecting them. It was eſpecially incumbent upon them to abſtain from fornication, (as well as from adultery and other vile abominations, that were generally practiſed among the Gentiles:) that ſo every one of them might learn, and underſtand, in what manner, to poſſeſs his body, the receptacle of his rational ſoul; in a ſanctified and honourable uſe of all its members, as the inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God, and in an exact government of every ſenſe and appetite according to the divine law, and the ends intended by the all wiſe Creator. Thus every man would act honourably, as a rational creature, and a worſhipper of God: whereas all the defilements of the imagination and affections, and every kind of inordinate, or forbidden indulgence, according to "the luſt of concupiſcence," would be exceedingly diſgraceful to a chriſtian; being an imitation of the vile practices of the Gentiles, the worſhippers of impure deities, and ſtrangers to the holy character, law, and truth of God. In like manner they muſt not over-reach, or defraud their brethren or neighbours, in any tranſaction; either by taking advantage of their ignorance, neceſſity or credulity; by exacting immoderate profits; or by any of thoſe tricks and ſubterfuges, which ſelfiſhneſs deviſed to impoſe upon the unwary, without blaſting men's credit, or incurring puniſhment by human laws. Such perſons might not be detected, or could not be called to account by men: but the Lord would not ſuffer their hypocriſy and injuſtice to eſcape with impunity; being himſelf the Avenger of all ſuch clandeſtine frauds, and impoſitions. Of this, the apoſtle had before warned them, when he was with them, and he had teſtified that theſe practices ſhould not eſcape the vengeance of God. For he had not called them into his family, in order to give them a licence to live unholy, either in gratifying their ſenſual appetites, or their avarice; but that they might be taught, inclined, and enabled to walk before him in holineſs. The word "uncleanneſs," here uſed, hath led ſome expoſitors to explain the ſeventh verſe of clandeſtine adultery. But if fornication were forbidden, adultery muſt be, of courſe; for even the Gentiles condemned the latter, whilſt they connived at the former. The paſſage is evidently wreſted from its moſt obvious meaning by this interpretation: diſhoneſty is as inconſiſtent with chriſtianity as lewdneſs; and in this over-reaching, fraudulent manner, perhaps even more common: and the word *uncleanneſs* may either be referred to what went before; or be underſtood as a general word for wickedneſs, which is all filthineſs in the ſight of God. Notwithſtanding the excellent ſtate of the Theſſalonian church: there might be ſome creep in among them, who would talk of the doctrines and comforts of chriſtianity and yet affect to deſpiſe theſe practical exhortations, as inconſiſtent with the grace and liberty of the goſpel: but the apoſtle reminded them, that in ſo doing, they did not deſpiſe him, Silas, or Timothy; but God himſelf, who had given them his Holy Spirit, by whoſe inſpiration theſe exhortations had been penned.

V. 9—12.] *As to the new commandment,* which your own buſineſs, and to work with your own hands, (as we commanded you,)

12 That ye may walk honeſtly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them, which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.

15 For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord, that we, which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep.

16 For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt:

Chriſt had given his diſciples, of loving one another, the apoſtle need not write to them concerning the reaſons, nature, exerciſes, fruits, and bleſſed effects of it; for they were inwardly taught of God, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, thus to do; it was an eſſential diſpoſition of the new man, which counteracted, and overpowered the ſelfiſhneſs of their old nature. Indeed they did exerciſe that holy affection, not only among one another, but towards all the chriſtians of the ſeveral churches in Macedonia: yet he would exhort them to increaſe more and more, in the fervency of their love, and in all the fruits of it. And, whilſt men in general aſpired to eminence, reputation, or authority, by an inter-meddling, and turbulent conduct: it ſhould be their *ambition*, (ſo the word literally ſignifies,) to behave quietly, peaceably, and contentedly in their own ſituations, however low and obſcure; and to attend diligently to their proper work, in the community, in the church, and in relative life: and as moſt of them were poor; they ought to be induſtrious in their manual labour, (as the apoſtle had commanded them, when he worked hard for his bread among them.) Thus they would be enabled to act honeſtly and creditably among their unbelieving neighbours; paying all their dues, maintaining their families decently, and being preſerved from ſeeking relief by any diſhonourable ſervices or compliances; as not having any want of things ſuited to their ſtation, or requiſite in order to relieve one another in their diſtreſſes.

V. 13—18.] (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 23. 50—54.) Perhaps the apoſtle heard, that ſome of the Theſſalonian believers had died lately; and that their relatives and brethren were greatly dejected about them, as not duly attending to the conſolations, ſuggeſted by the goſpel. He therefore would not have them to be ignorant concerning thoſe, that were fallen aſleep in Chriſt, that they were in a ſafe and happy eſtate: as it was not proper for them to ſorrow on ſuch occaſions, in the diſconſolate manner, or with the outward expreſſions of violent grief of thoſe, who had no hope reſpecting their deceaſed friends, or expectation of meeting them again. For *ſince* they believed that Jeſus died for their ſins, and roſe again for their juſtification; they might thence aſſuredly infer, that God would raiſe again incorruptible the bodies of thoſe, who ſlept in Jeſus; that they might be produced with, and preſented by him, at the laſt day: death was become only a ſleep *through* him, as the body felt no pain, and the ſoul was preſent with the Lord in holineſs and felicity. He muſt therefore inform them, by immediate revelation from the Lord, that ſuch of the whole multitude of believers, as ſhall be found alive at his coming, would not enter into the full enjoyment of heavenly felicity, in body and ſoul, before their brethren, who had previouſly died and been buried. For at that ſolemn period, the Lord Jeſus will be ſeen to deſcend from heaven, with the acclamations of attending angels, and the voice of the arch-angel, that ſhall be appointed to lead the hierarchies of heaven on this illuſtrious occaſion; and with the trumpet of God ſounding in a manner ſimilar to what it did from mount Sinai, but far more loud and tremendous. Then, all that are in the graves ſhall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and ſhall come forth; but the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, and be rendered incorruptible, even before their brethren be changed, that never died. Immediately after, they will be changed, and their bodies become immortal and ſpiritual; and thus will they ſuddenly be taken up together into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; that being approved as heirs of the kingdom, the whole company may be his aſſeſſors in judgment, and then re-enter heaven with him triumphantly: and ſo will they be for ever with the Lord. Wherefore the apoſtle exhorted the Theſſalonians to comfort, and encourage themſelves and each other with theſe animating topics, under the loſs of their brethren, the proſpect of death, and all their trials and ſorrows. Some ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle expected to live till the day of judgment, becauſe he ſpake in the firſt perſon plural of thoſe, that ſhould be alive at that time: but he elſewhere ſpake of being abſent from the body, and of being raiſed up with Jeſus. He was one, who remained alive after others had been removed; his faith and hope, as it were, annihilated the intervening ſpace; his love made him conſider, the cauſe of any perſons in the whole multitude of the redeemed, as his own; and it is evident that he did not ſpeak it perſonally of himſelf: for when the Theſſalonians ſuppoſed that the day of judgment was at hand, he diligently ſet himſelf to rectify that miſtake. (2 *Theſſ.* c. ii.) Some ſuppoſe, that Chriſt himſelf was meant by the arch-angel, being the ruler of all angels; but as we muſt underſtand the words, "The Lord," of him; ſo it ſeems not ſo natural to explain another term in the ſame ſentence, of him likewiſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Miniſters muſt not only inſtruct their hearers in the great doctrines and promiſes of the goſpel; but alſo in every part of their duty, that they may know how they ought to walk and pleaſe God; and chriſtians ſhould as readily receive ſuch inſtructions, as they do the moſt encouraging declarations of God's free grace, and ever-

17 Then we which are alive *and* remain ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore, comfort one another with theſe words.

CHAP. V.

Contains exhortations, 1ſt. To a conſtant preparation for the coming of Chriſt, in watchfulneſs, ſobriety, faith, love, and hope; as became the children of light, 1---10. *2d. To various duties, relative, and perſonal; with concluding prayers, ſalutations, &c.* 11---28.

laſting love. They ſhould alſo take in good part the earneſt, repeated, affectionate, and authoritative exhortations of their paſtors; when they beſeech, and charge them to abound more and more in every good work, according to all the commandments given them in the name of the Lord Jeſus. For as all men come ſhort of perfection; ſo miniſters cannot be fully ſatisfied with the preſent meaſure of their people's fruitfulneſs, any more than humble chriſtians are with their own attainments. The will of God, as revealed in his holy law, and in his precious promiſes, implies his purpoſe of their complete ſanctification: we ſhould therefore diligently follow after, and make advances towards, perfect holineſs: and it may encourage thoſe, who long for more entire ſanctification, to reflect, that in this reſpect, their will, and that of God are now coincident. In aſpiring after this renewal of the ſoul unto holineſs, the ſtricteſt reſtraint muſt be impoſed upon the appetites and ſenſes of the body; and upon all thoſe thoughts and inclinations of the mind, which connect with them: that not only fornication, and other groſs tranſgreſſions may be abſtained from; but that every one may learn to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification, and honour, at a diſtance from the luſt of concupiſcence, which ſo degrades numbers, that know not God. It is a diſgrace to a rational creature to be a ſlave to his animal inclinations; and to act contrary to his better judgment, his true intereſt, or the welfare of his neighbour, for the ſake of ſuch gratifications, as the beaſts are equally capable of: but it is far more diſhonourable for a ſpiritual man, a child of God, a member of Chriſt, a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and an heir of heaven, to have his mind and body polluted or unfitted for communion with God, by unlawful or inexpedient gratifications, or even by improper thoughts and deſires. Yet in many caſes this will not be avoided, without much watchfulneſs and prayer, without diligence in every means of grace, and a conſtant care to ſhun all temptations to, or occaſions of evil. It is equally inconſiſtent with the character of a chriſtian, to go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter; or to injure him in his property, reputation, or connexions. This too calls for the moſt vigilant care, and the moſt impartial ſcrutiny into every part of our conduct: for ſelf-love, habit, and the cuſtoms of the world will otherwiſe lead us, without reflection, in ſome meaſure to violate the golden rule of "doing to others, as "we would they ſhould do unto us." If a believer be led to commit offences of this kind; the Lord will ſurely chaſtiſe him, and thus bring him to repent of, and forſake them: but if profeſſors cloke ſuch allowed diſhoneſty with ſpecious appearances of piety, or zeal for doctrines, they will dreadfully find, that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch; and their preſent impunity will only tend to their heavier condemnation at the laſt. Of this, the great champion for the doctrines of grace forewarned his new converts; his beloved Theſſalonians; teſtifying that nothing could induce the Lord to connive at the want of ſtrict honeſty in men's dealings with each other. For God hath not called us into a ſtate of peace with him, that we may go on in the polluting practice of worldly luſts: but that, depending on his promiſes, we may cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of his name. (2 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 1.) And let it be remembered, that he who deſpiſeth ſuch admonitions, doth not ſo much deſpiſe the man, that enforces them from the pulpit or the preſs, as that God, by whoſe Spirit they were originally dictated: yea, he as much deſpiſes God, as that man does, who contemns the meſſage of free ſalvation. Such abuſers of the goſpel, and deſpiſers of practical exhortations may be expected in every age: but believers act from higher principles; they are taught of God to love one another for his ſake: they remember the inſtructions, which they have received on that ſubject, which is ſo congenial to their new nature: by practice they acquire habits of kindneſs, compaſſion, forbearance, and forgiveneſs: they love their brethren, whereſoever they meet with them, and they feel an expanſive benevolence to all mankind; yet they too, may properly be exhorted to increaſe in theſe things more and more. It ſhould alſo be the height of their ambition, to behave quietly and peaceably; avoiding all interference in other men's matters, diligently attending to their own duty; being willing to labour, working with their own hands in any honeſt calling, and to be active in every duty, which their ſtation in the church or the community requires of them. When chriſtians are thus induſtrious, and contented in obſcure ſituations, ſubmitting to many difficulties in order to pay all their dues, decently maintaining their families, deviſing by every means to live within the bounds of their income, having no need to raiſe contributions to ſupply deficiencies occaſioned by improvidence or extravagance; and being ready to ſpare a little for the relief of their more indigent brethren and neighbours, they will be reſpectable themſelves, and an honour to the profeſſion of the goſpel. And ſhould diſappointments and afflictions at any time render them incapable of acting according to their plan; they may expect candid allowance and chearful aſſiſtance; as they will have a teſtimony in every one's conſcience, that it is a real and unavoidable neceſſity.

Chriſtianity does not forbid, grace does not extinguiſh, our natural affections; but we are thereby taught to regulate and moderate them. It therefore behoves believers to mourn with reſignation even for ſuch relatives, as they cannot think of without diſcouragement in reſpect of their eternal ſtate: but it is peculiarly improper for them to indulge grief, and ſorrow as men without hope, for thoſe.

BUT of the times and the ſeaſons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourſelves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they ſhall ſay, Peace and ſafety; then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they ſhall not eſcape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkneſs, that that day ſhould overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkneſs.

6 Therefore let us not ſleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be ſober.

7 For they that ſleep, ſleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be ſober, putting on the breaſt-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of ſalvation:

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him.

11 Wherefore, comfort yourſelves together, and edify one another, even as alſo ye do.

12 And we beſeech you, brethren, to know

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who ſleep in Jeſus; whoſe ſouls are at reſt with him, and whoſe bodies alſo ſhall be raiſed again, to attend the triumphs of their once crucified, and riſen Redeemer. Our own loſs on ſuch occaſions we muſt feel, and mourn for with ſubmiſſion to the will of God: but the ſeparation will be ſhort, the re-union rapturous, and the ſubſequent felicity uninterrupted, unalloyed, and eternal. Nor ſhall ſuch of us, as endure the ſtroke of death, be eventually leſs favoured and happy than thoſe that ſhall be found alive at the coming of the Lord; that great event, to which we ſhould continually look forward. For when the incarnate Lord of all worlds ſhall appear in his own glory, and in that of the Father, with all his holy angels; at his ſummons, attended with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; and being joined by their brethren then living on the earth, they ſhall meet their Lord in the air with unutterable joy, and be for ever with him in the regions of perfect felicity. May we, by realizing faith and hope, continually anticipate that ſolemn, joyful period; and comfort ourſelves and each other with theſe words of truth and love!

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] Ver. 1—3.] The apoſtle did not think it needful or adviſable to write any thing to the Theſſalonians, concerning the preciſe time of Chriſt's coming, or the ſeaſons appointed of God for the accompliſhment of his promiſes and predictions. (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 36. *Acts*, c. i. v. 7.) This was not a matter of revelation, and it did not belong to him or them to enquire into it, from an unavailing preſumptuous curioſity. In general they perfectly knew, from his former inſtructions, that "the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night." (*Luke*, c. xii. v. 39, 40.) As the thief breaks into the houſe, whilſt the family is aſleep, and unprepared for reſiſtance; and thus excites great terror, and plunders or murders, as he pleaſes: ſo the day of the Lord will come on the ignorant, the careleſs, the ſecure and unbelieving, when they expect it not; it will excite the moſt diſtreſſing conſternation, and will plunge them into the moſt tremendous deſtruction. As the hour of death is the ſame to each perſon, that judgment will be to mankind in general; ſo the ſame remarks and illuſtrations equally anſwer to both caſes: and when ſinners are flattering themſelves with the hope of peace and ſafety, then ſudden deſtruction will come upon them. This is further illuſtrated by another moſt ſtriking ſimilitude: as the woman with child, often when ſhe is thinking of ſomething elſe, is ſuddenly ſeized with her travailing pangs, which will certainly increaſe upon her, whatever means ſhe may uſe to avoid them: ſo ungodly men have abundant reaſon to look forward with terror to death and judgment; yet they are employed, and amuſed by ſo many other matters, that they are ſuddenly ſurpriſed with thoſe ſolemn events, when they leaſt expect them; and this firſt aſtoniſhment will be followed with increaſing miſery, from which it will be impoſſible for them ever to eſcape.

V. 4—10.] The apoſtle deemed it needful to give theſe warnings, for the benefit of ſuch perſons, as were negligent in preparing for the coming of the Lord: yet he was well ſatisfied as to the Theſſalonians in general. They not only enjoyed the outward light of the goſpel, and profeſſed to believe and walk in it: but he was perſuaded, that they were really delivered from the power of darkneſs, and the ignorance and wickedneſs of their heathen ſtate. They were not therefore in danger of being overtaken by the day of the Lord, when unprepared, as the thief ſurpriſes thoſe, that are aſleep. They were all, according to their profeſſion and his confidence in them, the children of light and of the day, (*Eph.* c. v. ver. 8. 14;) for none of Chriſt's true diſciples were "of the night or darkneſs:" they neither continued in ignorance, or lived in wickedneſs, or wanted concealment for their ſecret practices; but being delivered from the thick darkneſs of heatheniſm, or the comparative darkneſs of Judaiſm, they enjoyed, and walked according to, the clear light of the goſpel. It behoved them therefore to act up to their privileges; and not to be ſupine, indolent, careleſs and unwatchful, as others were; but to be vigilant, circumſpect, upon their guard againſt the aſſaults and ſtratagems of their enemies, and attentive to every opportunity of duty; and to be ſerious, conſiderate, moderate in every thing of a ſecular nature, and indifferent to all animal indulgences. In general men choſe to ſleep during the quiet of the night; and to be drunken or riot-them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you;

13 And to eſteem them very highly in love for their work's ſake. *And* be at peace among yourſelves.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, ſupport the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourſelves, and to all *men*.

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceaſing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Deſpiſe not propheſyings.

21 Prove all things: hold faſt that which is good.

22 Abſtain from all appearance of evil.

23 And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole ſpirit and

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ous, when others were aſleep, that their exceſs might be leſs noticed: in like manner, all ſloth, unwatchfulneſs, intemperance, or exceſſive worldly purſuits, were more ſuited to the condition of benighted heathens, than of chriſtians; who would, as it were, turn the day into night, if they were betrayed into ſuch practices. It behoved them therefore, as enjoying the full light of the Sun of righteouſneſs, to be ſober and vigilant: for they had not only work to do; but a warfare to maintain, againſt numerous, potent, active, and ſubtle enemies: (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. vi. v. 10—19.) They ought therefore to ſtand armed like ſoldiers, and be vigilant as centinels: whilſt faith in Chriſt, and a firm belief of, and reliance on, every part of God's word; with love of God, of Chriſt Jeſus, of holineſs, of each other, and of all men, conſtituted a breaſt-plate to defend their heart and affections from mortal wounds; and a well grounded, realizing hope of eternal happineſs, and complete ſalvation, was like an helmet to cover their heads in the day of battle. This hope they were warranted to entertain; as their converſion proved, that God had not appointed them to endure the ſeverity of his wrath, which their ſins had deſerved; but that he had choſen them to obtain ſalvation of his free mercy, through Jeſus Chriſt; who had willingly ſuffered death to atone for their ſins, and to ranſom their ſouls: that whether they "waked or ſlept;" whether they lived or died, or however they were found at the coming of their Lord, they might live together with him in glory. They ought therefore to comfort themſelves, and each other, when they met together, by mutual exhortations and encouragements; and thus to inſtruct and edify one another in faith and holineſs, as they had already begun to do.

V. 12—15.] The apoſtle uſed to appoint elders, or paſtors in every city, as he had opportunity, to take care of the churches that he had planted: their office was to labour among the people, in preaching the word of God, and in every means of promoting their edification, and the converſion of ſinners; to preſide in the regulation and conduct of their public worſhip, and in the management of their ſpiritual concerns, as placed over them in the Lord, to act by his authority and in his name; and to admoniſh, reprove, and warn ſuch perſons, as acted wrong, or were likely to be drawn aſide. Theſe teachers they were exhorted to be obſervant of, to acknowledge them as the Lord's ſtewards, to cultivate an acquaintance with them, and to regard their admonitions: and they were not only directed to love them as chriſtians, but to eſteem them *more abundantly in love* for their work's ſake; and to ſhew them all reſpect and kindneſs, in return for the benefit which they derived from their faithful labours: that under their guidance and inſtruction they might live in entire harmony with each other. Moreover the apoſtle exhorted the paſtors, and others in conjunction with them, to warn, reprove, and cenſure ſuch perſons, as were unruly, and acted like ſoldiers that quit their ranks: let them alſo comfort thoſe, who were weak in the faith, timorous, diſcouraged through temptation, and harraſſed by perplexities, fears, and miſapprehenſions; and let them ſupport, by proper inſtructions, and every encouraging topic, ſuch as were weak in faith, ready to ſtumble, or of a weak and feeble capacity; as well as ſupport and provide for thoſe, that were ſick, and unable to maintain themſelves: and let them exerciſe patience and long-ſuffering towards perſons of all kinds; behaving with tenderneſs and meekneſs even to thoſe, who acted in the moſt ungrateful or perverſe manner. Nor might they in any caſe render to any man evil for evil; but they ought at all times to perſevere in all thoſe things, that were kind, benevolent, beneficent, and uſeful, both among themſelves, and towards all men, without excepting even their virulent perſecutors. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xii. v. 14. 17—21.)

V. 16—22.] (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xii. v. 12. *Eph.* c. iv. v. 30. c. v. ver. 20. *Phil.* c. iv. ver. 4—6.) The ſubſtance of theſe exhortations we have before met with. They were to conſider it as their duty as well as their privilege to be "always rejoicing" in the Lord: they were directed to pray inceſſantly, at ſtated ſeaſons, occaſionally, and with frequent ejaculations; and to watch againſt every thing, which could put them out of frame for this duty. In every circumſtance, they were to give thanks; as all their mercies were unmerited, and all their trials would prove beneficial: ſo that this conſtant ſpirit of gratitude was the will of God concerning them, as his children in Chriſt Jeſus. Many have explained "quench-"ing the Spirit," of reſtraining the exerciſe of ſpiritual gifts in themſelves or others: but doubtleſs it relates to the ſanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers: theſe tend to kindle a flame of ſacred love in the ſoul; but they may be quenched by evil tempers, by procraſtination, by exceſſive worldly cares, by inexpedient indulgences, by trifling company, or negligence; even as fire may be quenched with water, and will go out, if it be not ſupplied with fuel, if it want ſoul and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who alſo will do *it*.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiſs.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epiſtle be read unto all the holy brethren:

28 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. Amen

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air, or be choked with aſhes. Thus convictions are often finally extinguiſhed, and the Holy Spirit will no more ſtrive with men: and thus believers often greatly damp the holy ardour of their ſouls, mar their own comfort, and impede their growth in grace; by not giving themſelves up without delay to thoſe ſpiritual affections, which are excited in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, but quenching them in the manner before-mentioned. They were alſo warned "not to deſpiſe propheſyings," or thoſe inſtructions, and intimations of the divine will, which were given them by the prophets, either in explaining the ſcriptures, or from immediate ſuggeſtion of the Spirit, (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xiv:) but the exhortation may alſo include the more ordinary preaching of God's word. Yet as there would be many falſe teachers, and erroneous doctrines propagated by them; they muſt be careful to prove or try, both the teachers and their inſtructions, by the word of God; that they might reject what was ſpurious, and adhere to what was good and excellent. And not only were they to abſtain from evident evil; but from every thing, which appeared to be bad, either in their own judgment, or in that of others; and to do nothing, concerning the lawfulneſs of which they doubted; or which might appear ſuſpicious to thoſe around them, and ſo prejudice them againſt the truth.

V. 23—28.] The apoſtle ſubjoined to his exhortations his fervent prayers to God for them; knowing that his efficacious grace alone, could produce in them the will and power to do all theſe things. He beſought the God of peace himſelf, as reconciled to them in Chriſt Jeſus, and the Author of all their inward and outward peace; that He would ſanctify them in reſpect of their whole nature, as conſiſting of a rational and immortal ſoul, an animal life with its various ſenſitive appetites, &c, and a material body: that every ſenſe, member, organ and faculty, might be completely purified, and devoted to God's ſervice; and that thus they might be preſerved blameleſs till the coming of Chriſt. As he was confident that the Theſſalonians were true believers; and as he was aſſured of the Lord's faithfulneſs to his promiſes and covenant engagements to his people, whom he had called by his grace: ſo he was ſatisfied that He would fully grant his prayer for them. Having therefore deſired them alſo to pray for him, and ſolemnly charged them by the authority of the Lord Jeſus, to let this epiſtle be read to all the holy brethren, the ſaints that formed their church; he concluded with his uſual ſalutations and benedictions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Curious enquiries about times and ſeaſons are commonly unprofitable and vain. "Behold *now* is the accepted time;" the *preſent* time we ought to redeem, the *preſent* ſeaſon, of making our peace with God, and of doing his will we ought to embrace: and then we ſhall be ſafe and happy, at all events. But if we regard the ſcripture, we know perfectly, that the day of the Lord *cometh*, as a thief in the night; and that when ſinners are preſumptuouſly, or careleſſly ſaying "peace and ſafety; then ſudden "deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman "with child, which they ſhall not eſcape." No man is ſure, that death and judgment will not thus ſurpriſe him; unleſs he continually expect and prepare for thoſe approaching events: "Numbers at this very hour, "are ſpeaking peace and ſafety to themſelves, over whoſe "heads inſtantaneous deſtruction is hovering." (Doddrige.) And how dreadful will be the aſtoniſhment and conſternation of the ſcornful infidel, the careleſs profligate, the proud Phariſee, or the hardened hypocrite, when ſudden deſtruction ſhall thus ſeize upon him, and no poſſible method of eſcape can be found! As yet, we are in the land of light, of prayer, of forgiveneſs; though we might before this have been caſt into outer darkneſs. Nor are we enveloped with Pagan, Mahometan, or Antichriſtian darkneſs and deluſion: we have the light of the goſpel, and the holy ſcriptures afforded us: we have been led to pay ſome attention to them: if then we are yet in darkneſs, that the day of the Lord ſhould overtake us as a thief, our guilt muſt be peculiarly aggravated. Let us then ſeriouſly enquire, whether we really are the children of the light and of the day, by divine illumination, and by an obedient faith? Let us ſeek to render this evident, as well as to act conſiſtent with our profeſſion, by caſting off the works of darkneſs, and ſhaking off indolence, and careleſſneſs; that we may not ſleep as others do, but may watch and be ſober. Let us leave ſloth, ſelf-indulgence, ungodlineſs and worldly luſts to the children of the night and of darkneſs: but let us, who profeſs to be of the day be ſober, vigilant, awake, and armed with the breaſtplate of faith and love, and with hope as the helmet of ſalvation. Thus our evidence will continually increaſe, that God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by the Lord Jeſus; and that whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhall ſurely live together with him. And when we remember, that he purchaſed our deliverance from the wrath to come, by dying on the croſs as a ſacrifice for our ſins; we ſhall not only be directed how to comfort ourſelves together, and to edify one another in all holy affections; but we ſhall feel the conſtraining power of grateful love, and learn how to live to him, with whom we hope to live for ever in glory.

The office of a miniſter calls a man to *labour* for the ſalvation of ſouls, with unwearied aſſiduity, as well as to preſide over them in the Lord: nor ought the ſpiritual authority to be ever ſeparated from the labouring in the word and doctrine. Such faithful paſtors ſhould carefully be diſtinguiſhed from ſlothful, ambitious, or mercenary men, who have the name and garb of miniſters: they ſhould be owned, and attended to, and their admonitions ſhould be valued and obeyed; and they ought to be eſteemed very highly in love, not becauſe of the name and office they bear, but *for their work's ſake*, and in proportion to their ſkill, faithfulneſs, and diligence in it. They are therefore very culpable, who deſpiſe the admonitions, reject the authority, and refuſe reſpect and affection to the perſons of faithful miniſters: and they are ſtill more criminal, who expect the reputation, eſteem, authority, or emolument of the miniſtry, without a diligent attention to its various and laborious duties. Outward reſpect may indeed be paid them: but it is impoſſible for intelligent chriſtians "to eſteem them very highly in love for their work's ſake;" though they, will compaſſionately mourn over, and pray for them. Our love of peace among ourſelves, muſt not induce us to connive at ſin: but we muſt in our ſeveral relations in the church, in domeſtic life, or in ſociety, warn, reprove and cenſure the unruly, as well as tenderly ſoothe and comfort the feeble-minded, and ſupport the weak in body or ſoul. We ſhould alſo learn patience towards all men; eſpecially towards perſons of weak capacities, or little faith, who are often very wearying with their complaints, ſcruples, doubts, miſtakes, infirmities, fretfulneſs, and peeviſhneſs; and yet give no reaſon at all to ſuſpect their ſincerity, but rather call for compaſſion, as harraſſed with ſore temptations, which have an effect for the time upon their tempers. Even when we are injured in the moſt atrocious manner, we muſt ſee to it, that we on no account render evil for evil to any man; but muſt learn to follow with perſevering conſtancy that which is good and friendly, both among ourſelves and to all men; as knowing what patience and mercy we have experienced from God. His glory is concerned in our "always rejoicing:" this will be greatly promoted, if we "pray without ceaſing;" and in "every thing give thanks," according to the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning us. To make progreſs in this life of communion with God, we muſt be careful not "to quench the Spirit," by refuſing compliance with his holy ſuggeſtions, or poſtponing the good works, to which his influences tend to excite us. We ſhould alſo learn to pay a reverent attention to every meſſage delivered to us by his miniſters: and thus we ſhall grow in grace, and abound in conſolation. Yet as ſatan's miniſters are transformed into the miniſters of righteouſneſs; whilſt we "deſpiſe not propheſyings," we muſt learn to prove and aſſay men and doctrines; that we may diſtinguiſh between truth and ſpecious error, and ſo chooſe, and cleave to that which is good and right: that for the honour of the goſpel, we may "abſtain from all appearance of evil." Theſe exhortations ſhew us what we ought to be, and to do: but we muſt remember, that our hearts are naturally oppoſite to them; nor can any inward, and abiding change be wrought in us, ſave by a divine power. As therefore miniſters ſhould pray for, as well as exhort their people; every individual ſhould turn the precepts and promiſes of God into prayers for himſelf, and his brethren: and whilſt he uſes every other means of grace, and vigilantly ſhuns all hindrances and temptation; he ſhould ſtill beſeech "the God of peace himſelf, to ſanctify him wholly in ſpirit, and ſoul and body, and to preſerve him blameleſs until the coming of the Lord Jeſus." If theſe are our earneſt deſires, fervent prayers, and diligent endeavours; the promiſes, and covenant of our God, his power and love, and his immutable faithfulneſs authorize our fulleſt aſſurance, that having called us by his grace, he will keep us by the ſame unto complete and everlaſting ſalvation; whatever immenſe inward or outward difficulties may ſeem to render it impracticable. The moſt eminent ſervants of Chriſt want, and value the prayers of their weakeſt brethren. Let us be thankful that theſe excellent epiſtles are reſerved for our peruſal alſo: and whilſt we remark that the apoſtle charged the Theſſalonians by the authority of the Lord Jeſus, to let them be *read to* all the holy brethren, ſome of whom might not be able to read them for themſelves; we cannot but be ſure that Antichriſt alone would forbid the laity to read the ſcriptures, leſt they ſhould lead them into hereſy! We ſhall alſo learn the propriety of *reading* them in our public congregations, for the benefit of the illiterate eſpecially; and we ſhall be ſtirred up to ſtudy them with more humble diligence and obedient faith; that thus the grace of the Lord Jeſus may be with us alſo.

The Second Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the THESSALONIANS.

This Epiſtle is commonly ſuppoſed to have been written from Corinth, not very long after the foregoing: but the evidence is not very concluſive, and ſome difficulties attend this opinion: however, it is certain it was not ſent from Athens, according to the ſpurious poſtſcript annexed to it. The main objects of the epiſtle ſeem to have been, to prevent ſome miſtakes, which the Theſſalonians were about to fall into, concerning the near approach of the day of judgment; grounded in part on a miſconſtruction of ſome expreſſions in his former epiſtle; and to induce them to cenſure and ſhun certain perſons, who neglected their ſecular callings, and walked diſorderly. Amidſt a number of inſtructive warnings, exhortations, and encouragements, it contains a moſt remarkable prophecy of Antichriſt, and his blaſphemous deluſions, (c. ii;) *the exact fulfilment of which is a full demonſtration of the divine inſpiration by which the apoſtle wrote his epiſtles.*

CHAP. I.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Saluting the Theſſalonians, thanking God for their growth in faith and love; encouraging their perſeverance under perſecutions, by the proſpect of the coming of Chriſt; and ſhewing them how glorious he will then appear in the deſtruction of all unbelievers, and the complete ſalvation of his people, 1--10. *2d. Praying for their complete ſanctification, and meetneſs for heavenly felicity, by the grace, and for the glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* 11, 12.

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians in God our Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt;

2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, becauſe that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

4 So that we ourſelves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your perſecutions, and tribulations that ye endure:

5 *Which is* a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which ye alſo ſuffer:

6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled, reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;

9 Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe, (becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed,) in that day.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 3—10.] The apoſtle had received ſuch further good accounts of the Theſſalonians; that he deemed himſelf bound to return continual thanks to God in their behalf. This was meet and right; ſeeing that, in anſwer to his prayers, and by means of his epiſtolary exhortations they became more fully acquainted with divine truth, and grew ſtronger in faith, by an exceedingly rapid progreſs: and the *love* of every one of them towards all the reſt, abounded in all its manifold exerciſes and beneficial effects: ſo that he rejoiced and gloried in them in the churches of God, ſhewing them what flouriſhing chriſtians the Theſſalonians were, and what a bleſſed ſeal God had given to his miniſtry in their converſion. This may induce a doubt whether the epiſtle were written from Corinth or no: for on that ſuppoſition Paul had viſited no churches, ſince he wrote the former epiſtle, except ſuch as were planted in that vicinity: and we can hardly ſuppoſe, that he only referred to what Timothy, or Silvanus had ſaid of them; if they had left Paul for a ſeaſon to viſit other churches, and then returned to him. Perhaps therefore, a rather later date ſhould be aſſigned to this epiſtle; but it is not very material to us. However, he, and his fellow-labourers, gloried in them; becauſe they endured various perſecutions and afflictions, with exemplary patience and conſtant faith. We are not informed of the particulars relative to theſe perſecutions; but they ſeem to have expoſed the Theſſalonians to very great hardſhips and dangers. This was a manifeſt token, or demonſtration of the righteous judgment of God: it fully proved, that he would judge the world in righteouſneſs, and rectify all the apparent diſorders of the preſent ſcene: ſeeing he left his blameleſs and zealous worſhippers to endure perſecutions and tribulations; and his enemies to proſper in their impious and iniquitous oppoſition to his cauſe and people. Indeed he permitted them to be afflicted, in order to make trial of, and manifeſt, their faith and grace, and to increaſe in them all holy diſpoſitions: that they might at length be counted meet and proper perſons to inherit that kingdom of heavenly glory, which God hath prepared for them that love him: in hope of which they ſo patiently ſuffered; as well as from love to his kingdom of grace eſtabliſhed upon earth, as introductory to the kingdom of glory in heaven. Seeing, by theſe means, it would be manifeſtly ſhewn to be perfectly juſt and righteous in God, to recompenſe with tribulation and anguiſh thoſe, who troubled his harmleſs and holy friends and worſhippers by their cruel enmity and perſecution, becauſe of their relation and conformity to him: as they would evidently be proved to be his inveterate enemies. On the other hand, it would appear conſiſtent with, and honourable to, his juſtice, as well as his mercy, to beſtow reſt and felicity in heaven on thoſe, who willingly endured tribulation in his cauſe, for his ſake, from his enemies, and according to his will. This righteous judgment of God will take place, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed, as viſibly deſcending from heaven, attended by "the angels of his power;" his creatures, worſhippers and ſervants, who ſhall then act as the miniſters of his authority in ſhewing mercy and executing vengeance, (*Matt.* c. xiii. v. 41. 49, 50.) Then he will appear in flaming fire, to burn up this viſible creation, and as the emblem of his awful avenging juſtice: for he will take vengeance on all, who continue ſtrangers and enemies to

11 Wherefore alſo we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleaſure of *his* goodneſs, and the work of faith with power:

12 That the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

God, and his holy worſhip and ſervice; who have not ſo known him as to fear, love, truſt in, and ſerve him: and on all, who obey not the goſpel of the Lord Jeſus, by receiving, relying on, and ſubmitting to him, as their Saviour and King. All theſe perſons, however numerous, or diſtinguiſhed by rank, accompliſhments, or ſplendid actions, will be puniſhed with eternal deſtruction; being baniſhed, as accurſed, from the preſence of the Lord; and finding his avenging frown like lightening to appal and torture their inmoſt ſouls, and the glory of his power irreſiſtibly forcing them with dreadful conſternation into the place of torment. This will take place, when he ſhall appear with divine majeſty in human nature, to be glorified *in*, as well as *by* his ſaints; in the riches of his love, the preciouſneſs of his redemption, the efficacy of his grace, the power of his arm, and his faithfulneſs to his promiſes, as diſplayed by their complete ſalvation. Not only will he then be admired by thoſe, who now believe in him, who will then find their largeſt expectations far exceeded, and who will not know how ſufficiently to adore and praiſe ſuch a glorious Benefactor; but he will be admired *in* them likewiſe, by all the inhabitants of heaven, who will celebrate the wonders wrought by him in thus ſaving and exalting ſuch polluted rebels and enemies. This, the apoſtle was confident would be their caſe, becauſe his teſtimony concerning Chriſt had been credited by them.

V. 11, 12.] In the proſpect of this deciſive ſeaſon the apoſtle and his brethren prayed continually for the Theſſalonians, that the Lord would vouchſafe them whatever was wanting to make them meet for this felicity, to which the goſpel called them; that he would account them proper perſons to partake of it; and that he would accompliſh that work of complete ſanctification, and prepare them for that perfect felicity, to which the ſovereign good pleaſure of his goodneſs and love had appointed them, and which he had great complacency and delight in conferring on them: that ſo he would finiſh the work by his almighty power, which he was carrying on in their ſouls through the faith that he had given them, till at length it ſhould be perfected in viſion and enjoyment. This they prayed for, in order that the name of Chriſt might be glorified in them, both by their preſent bold profeſſion of his truth, and their holy conduct, and zealous labours to ſpread the goſpel; and in the ſight of the whole world, and to all eternity: and that they might alſo be glorified *in* Chriſt, by perfectly bearing his image, enjoying his love, being owned as his brethren, and ſharing, as it were, all his honour, according to the infinite riches of the mercy and grace of God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus, who had prepared ſuch ſurpriſing glory and felicity for ſinners, and in this manner brought them to the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who have already diſtinguiſhed themſelves by “the work of faith, and the labour of love, and the patience of hope,” are capable of growing exceedingly in all theſe things: for the higheſt attainments of ſaints on earth fall far beneath real perfection. When ſuch growth in grace, and abounding in all the exerciſes of mutual love, are witneſſed in believers, the hearts of faithful miniſters will rejoice: and they will deem themſelves bound to give thanks to God always for them, as it is meet; and to ſpeak of them in the churches of God, to excite their thankſgivings alſo, and to animate them to an holy emulation. The patient ſufferings of exemplary chriſtians, and the proſperity of ungodly men, and cruel perſecutors, fully demonſtrate a future judgment, when all ſhall “diſcern between the righteous and the wicked, between “him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.” This helps to explain thoſe myſteries of providence, which would otherwiſe greatly perplex us: and we perceive that the devoted worſhippers and beloved children of God are proved and purified in the fiery furnace of tribulation, that they may be accounted worthy of that kingdom, for which they ſuffer; and that wicked men are permitted to proſper, that their rancorous enmity againſt God may be manifeſted, and the meaſure of their crimes filled up, and that all may ſee the glory of that juſtice, which conſigns them to the puniſhment intended for them. It muſt indeed at length appear evident to all rational creatures, that it is righteous in God, to recompenſe tribulation to thoſe, who trouble his people, from hatred to his holy truth and ſervice; and that it is honourable to all his perfections to give reſt and felicity to thoſe, who have been troubled for his ſake, and for their love to his cauſe and worſhip. Faith, anticipating the grand deciſive day, is enabled by the light of revelation to read, and, in a meaſure, to underſtand the book of providence, which appears all confuſion to unbelievers; and thus to wait with compoſure and comfort, for the coming of the Lord. That will be indeed a day of wrath; and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God: then the Saviour, once a Man of ſorrows, and generally deſpiſed, rejected and diſobeyed, will “be revealed with “his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance,” not only on cruel oppreſſors, perſecutors, and murderers, or on ſcandalous profligates and depredators, but on all, who know not God, and obey not the goſpel of his Son; whether they were infidels, Phariſees, profane ſcoffers, hypocrites, enthuſiaſts, or Antinomians, or however they might otherwiſe be denominated or diſtinguiſhed. All of theſe ſhall be puniſhed with an everlaſting deſtruction from the “preſence of the Lord:” the majeſty of that countenance, which was once defiled with blood and ſpitting; and the glory of his power, who was once crucified in apparent weakneſs, ſhall be intolerable to, and irreſiſtible by, all the multitudes of the wicked, when with tremendous frown he ſhall bid them, “depart accurſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and “his angels!” But at that awful ſeaſon, he will come eſpecially to be glorified in his ſaints, who have here believed

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Charging the Theſſalonians not to think that the day of Chriſt was at hand; predicting a great apoſtacy; and the blaſphemies, uſurpations, and iniquitous deluſions of the man of ſin; with his downfall, and deſtruction, 1---12. *2d. Thanking God for his ſpecial mercy to them; exhorting them to ſtedfaſtneſs, and praying for their comfort, and conſtancy in every good word and work,* 15---17.

NOW we beſeech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Chriſt is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day ſhall not come,* except there come a falling away firſt, and that man of ſin be revealed, the ſon of perdition;

4 Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; ſo that he as God ſitteth in the temple of God ſhewing himſelf that he is God.

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the teſtimony of his apoſtles concerning him, and thus learned to rely on, love, obey, and rejoice in him, whom they have not yet ſeen: and to know and worſhip God the Father in and through him. No words can poſſibly expreſs, the admiring and adoring gratitude and love, which will unite with the exulting joy and triumph of that happy period! All hopes and imaginations muſt needs fall far beneath thoſe unutterable glories, and the holy affections with which they will be contemplated, and adored! But every believer will then reflect, diſplay, and increaſe the manifeſted glory of the divine Saviour, and enhance the praiſes of all the hierarchies of heaven, to the Lamb that was ſlain, and hath redeemed them to God with his blood. May we then pray always for ourſelves and each other, that "our God may count us "worthy of this calling, and fulfil in us all the good "pleaſure of his goodneſs, and the work of faith with "power; that ſo the name of our Lord Jeſus may "be finally glorified in us, and our ſalvation, and that "we may be glorified in and with Him, according to "the grace of our God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt." May we diligently ſeek to obtain and poſſeſs the full aſſurance, that this ſhall be our felicity, when "the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the people that "forget God;" and may we now do all in our power to promote and recommend the goſpel and to do good to our fellow-ſinners and fellow chriſtians; that glorifying the Lord on earth, we may be ſure of being for ever glorified with him in heaven!

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1, 2.] Having encouraged the faith and patience of the perſecuted Theſſalonians, by the proſpect of Chriſt's coming to perfect their ſalvation: the apoſtle exhorted, and ſolemnly adjured them by that great event, and as they hoped to be gathered together unto Chriſt in glory; that they would not allow themſelves to be eaſily or ſpeedily deluded into the opinion, that the day of Chriſt was at hand; whether ſuch ſentiments were propagated by men profeſſing to ſpeak by the Spirit of God, or whether they were grounded on ſomething, which he had ſpoken among them, or on a miſconſtruction of ſome expreſſions in his former epiſtle. For ſuch an erroneous expectation would diſquiet their minds, and create in them needleſs troubles, and apprehenſions; and when they found themſelves diſappointed in it, they might be tempted to queſtion the truth of the goſpel itſelf. In the mean time, it would take them off from the duties of their ſeveral callings in ſociety; and their conduct, expectations, and diſappointment might render them the deriſion of their unbelieving neighbours. Some expoſitors would render the expreſſion "*by the coming,* &c," "*concerning the coming,* "&c:" but the form of an adjuration ſeems the moſt natural and approved conſtruction, and it is entirely in the apoſtle's manner on ſuch important occaſions.

V. 3, 4.] The apoſtle again moſt earneſtly exhorted them, to let no man deceive them by any artful device or pretence whatſoever into ſo injurious an expectation: and it is evident that this caution was not unneceſſary; for notwithſtanding it, many of the early chriſtians expected the day of judgment ſpeedily to come, which betrayed them into various practical miſtakes. But Paul, by the Spirit of prophecy, aſſured them, that Chriſt would not come for this purpoſe, till *a falling away, an apoſtacy* of a great body of profeſſed chriſtians from the real goſpel of Chriſt had previouſly taken place. Doubtleſs many apoſtacies occurred in the primitive ages under different hereſiarchs: but all the circumſtances of this prediction were never verified, except in that departure from the faith, and that uſurpation and ſpiritual tyranny connected with it, which took place in the church of Rome. No apoſtacy of equal magnitude, and duration, no deluſions equally pernicious and abominable, have taken place ſince the apoſtle's days. The impoſture of Mahomet alone can be at all compared with it: and this could not be here intended, for reaſons, that will be obvious as we proceed; eſpecially as that impoſtor and his ſucceſſors were not placed in the temple of God, the viſible church, but without it, and in direct oppoſition to the very name of chriſtianity; as they propagated their deluſions mainly by the ſword, and not by lying miracles; and as the impieties of Mahomet never equalled the blaſphemies here predicted. In connexion with the apoſtacy here predicted, "the man of "ſin would be revealed." In the language of prophecy, a king generally ſignifies a ſucceſſion of monarchs of the ſame family, or carrying on the ſame deſign, (*Dan:* c. vii. v. 17—24:) thus "the man of ſin" does not mean a ſingle perſon, but a ſucceſſion of men, impious in themſelves, and conducting the ſame wicked deſign of corrupting chriſtianity in doctrine, worſhip, and practice;

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you theſe things?

6 And now ye know what witholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the myſtery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then ſhall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the ſpirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming:

9 *Even him*, whoſe coming is after the working of Satan with all power and ſigns and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh; becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved.

11 And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway

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eſtabliſhing an intolerable tyranny, on religious pretences, and uſing all kinds of ſeduction, iniquity, and cruel perſecution, to induce mankind to adopt the antichriſtian ſyſtem. This "man of ſin" would be "the ſon of perdition." (*John*, c. xvii. v. 12;) a genuine deſcendant of Judas the apoſtle and traitor, who ſold his Lord for money and betrayed him with a kiſs; a peculiar factor and agent of ſatan in deſtroying men's ſouls, and finally ſinking himſelf into perdition as his inheritance: no ſucceſſion of men have yet appeared on earth, to whom this deſcription ſo exactly accords, as the Roman Pontiffs. This deceiver would "oppoſe, and exalt himſelf above all that is called God, or is worſhipped," either by chriſtians or Pagans: thus the Roman antichriſt hath oppoſed the truths, commandments, and diſciples of Chriſt, in every age, and by every means; he hath oppoſed the prophetical office of Chriſt, by teaching human inventions; his prieſtly office, by the doctrine of human merits, and created interceſſors; and kingly office, by changing and diſpenſing with his laws: he hath exalted himſelf above all that is called God, "&c," by pretending to forgive ſins, even in thoſe, who manifeſtly continued impenitent; by granting indulgences to men to break God's commandments; by diſpenſing with and placing his own decrees above God's laws, as if of ſuperior validity; and by preſuming to give meaning, and authority to the ſcriptures themſelves, which muſt not be underſtood in any other ſenſe, than what he impoſed upon them. Moreover "he ſits as God in the temple of God," and we muſt therefore look for him within the viſible church: There he blaſphemouſly uſurps the throne of God, ſhewing himſelf to be god. Many Roman emperors affected divine honours, and demanded adoration: but there was no antecedent apoſtacy from chriſtianity; and they might rather be ſaid to ſit in the temple of Jupiter, or Mars, than in that of God; whoſe temple muſt be conſidered to be among his profeſſed worſhippers, and not among avowed heathens. But the Roman Pontiff claiming to be the univerſal head of the whole church of God; called by his flatterers "*Vice-God, a God upon earth*;" arrogating the title of "his Holineſs, boaſting of infallibility, pretending to a right to depoſe kings, and beſtow kingdoms on whom he pleaſed; (with whoſe arrogant claims before-mentioned,) anſwers ſo exactly to the deſcription here given; that we cannot doubt for whom it was deſigned. Whilſt he oppoſed the worſhip of God by enjoining the worſhip of images, and of ſaints and angels, and the authority of his laws to enforce ſubjection to his own edicts; he himſelf might be called the great idol, as well as the great tyrant of the Romiſh church; as he demanded the moſt abject ſubmiſſion and proſtration from all men, and poured contempt on all authority human and divine. But particulars cannot here be more fully inſiſted on. It ſuffices to ſhew that the Roman Pontiffs anſwered this deſcription, as the original does a ſtriking picture; and we may venture to aſſert that no other ſucceſſion of men ever did thus accord to it: perhaps no ſingle individual within the viſible church.

V. 5—12.] During the ſhort time, which the apoſtle ſpent at Theſſalonica, he had ſtated theſe particulars to them, which they ought to have remembered. When they recollected what he had ſpoken upon this ſubject, they would know, what with-held, or retarded this apoſtacy and uſurpation for the preſent; and ſo prevented it's taking place openly and evidently, till the time appointed for it in the purpoſe of God. The Roman empire, united under one powerful government, and extremely jealous of all other power and authority, prevented the eſtabliſhment of that ſpiritual tyranny and uſurpation, by which ſatan was attempting to make his grand effort againſt chriſtianity: but it would not have been prudent in the apoſtle to have explicitly mentioned it in an epiſtle for general peruſal; nor would it have accorded to the ſtyle of prophecy: however, many of the fathers ſo far underſtood him, as to declare that Antichriſt would not come, till after the downfall of the Roman empire. Had it not been for this obſtacle, the evil would have broke out much ſooner: for even then "the myſtery of iniquity did already work." This grand and deep deſign of Satan, this myſterious ſyſtem, which was founded in, and productive of, all kind of iniquities; being placed in direct oppoſition to the myſtery of godlineſs, was already operating upon the minds of men. The ambition and avarice of ſome who preached the goſpel, and exerciſed ſpiritual gifts from corrupt motives; who oppoſed the apoſtles, in order to obtain authority, influence, and ſecular advantage; or who perverted the doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt, introducing legal confidences, ſuperſtitions, will-worſhip, ſelf-impoſed auſterities, the worſhip of angels, &c: and the diſpoſition of many profeſſors to follow their pernicito God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our goſpel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

15 Therefore, brethren, ſtand faſt, and

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ous ways, were as a corrupt leaven, which working ſecretly, would at length produce this great apoſtacy. But the Roman empire, which then *let* or *hindered* it's full effect, by keeping the church under perſecution, and curbing all authority but its own, would continue to retard and prevent this event, until it ſhould be removed out of the way. The converſion of the Roman emperors to chriſtianity, in the beginning of the fourth century, tended greatly to ripen matters for this apoſtacy; by giving ſcope to the ambition and avarice of the eccleſiaſtics, and by multiplying exceedingly nominal chriſtians: but it was not till the ſubverſion of the weſtern empire by the northern nations, and the diviſion of it into ten kingdoms, that way was made for the eſtabliſhment of the papal uſurpation at Rome, the capital city. This obſtacle having been taken out of the way, that *wicked* or *lawleſs* one would be revealed, and would diſplay the deformity of his character without diſguiſe, by endeavouring to exalt himſelf above all laws human and divine. But though this great uſurper would practiſe and proſper, yet the Lord would at length conſume him by the ſpirit, or the breath, of his mouth; (*Iſa.* c. xi. v. 4.) According to the predictions of his word, and by the preaching of his goſpel, attended by the influences of his Spirit, he would gradually waſte and conſume this antichriſtian tyranny, and terminate all his corruptions of the goſpel. This he hath been accompliſhing during the ſpace of above three hundred years, ſince the firſt dawnings of the Reformation: He will ſhortly deſtroy the whole papal authority, and all its dependencies, by the brightneſs of his coming, to ſpread the goſpel through the nations. (*Rev.* c. xviii, xix, xx. v. 1—6:) and he will finally condemn, and puniſh with everlaſting deſtruction all the actors in this grand deluſion, when he ſhall come to judge the world. This certainly will be the doom of this lawleſs one, this man of ſin, this ſon of perdition: whoſe coming was to be attended, and whoſe ſucceſs obtained, not ſo much with open force, as with the deep ſubtlety, and peculiar energy of ſatan; with the higheſt pretences of authority, and claims of power; and with every kind of counterfeit ſigns and wonders, either of deep-laid human impoſture, or of ſatanical operation, by which men would mimic the miracles of Chriſt and his apoſtles, as the Egyptian magicians did thoſe of Moſes. It would alſo be accompanied with all the various kinds of forgery, fraud, legerdemain, &c; wherewith men's ſenſes and underſtandings have been cheated by artful deceivers in different ages and nations of the world; and with every impoſition and hypocritical device, which the ingenuity and ſagacity of men or devils could poſſibly invent; to ſupport the cauſe of unrighteouſneſs, and delude the world into a ſtupid admiration, a blind reverence, and an implicit ſubmiſſion to the arrogant claims, the multiplied idolatries and abominations of this grand deluſion. Thus by artful ſtratagems and machinations multitudes would be fatally deceived, amongſt ſuch as were in the way of perdition. For ſeeing they had not received the love of the truth, but had neglected or perverted the ſaving doctrine of the goſpel, through pride and carnal enmity; they would, for this cauſe, be left to judicial blindneſs; and God would, by means of theſe men, ſend them a deluſion, which would bind them, as it were, in the ſtrongeſt chains of error and falſe confidence: ſo that they would be faſcinated into the firm belief of ſatan's lie, and venture their ſouls upon it, in contempt of God's truth. Thus being held in impenitence and unbelief, and under the power of their own luſts, they would be left to manifeſt their enmity to God, and fill up the meaſure of their ſins; that they might all be condemned at the day of judgment, and receive their merited puniſhment, who had not believed the truth of Chriſt, but had pleaſure in Antichriſt's "deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs," becauſe it accorded to their pride, love of the world, and diſlike to God's ſpiritual worſhip and ſervice: for this ſeems rather to refer to the deceived, than to the deceivers. It implied, that God would act in this matter according to the general rule, of giving up thoſe, who obſtinately hate the truth through love of ſin, to be blinded by ſatan; and that there would be a remnant even under the deepeſt darkneſs of Antichriſt's reign, of another character and deſcription. Nothing can more exactly coincide with the ſyſtem of popery, as it prevailed in the Roman church and under the Roman pontiff for many ages, than this paſſage does. Even their boaſted pretenſions to miraculous powers, and the impoſture or ambiguity of every inſtance, is the grand proof of all, that they were marked out by the Holy Spirit. (*Rev.* c. xiii. v. 13—15.) And their adherence, even to the preſent day, to the worſhip of images, ſaints, and angels, and to the doctrine of abſolutions, penances, purgatory, and the merit of good works, &c, prove that the man of ſin, though conſuming by the Spirit and word of Chriſt, is not yet deſtroyed by the brightneſs of his coming.

V. 13—15.] The apoſtle here intimated that even *then* ſtrong deluſions were ſent to thoſe, who received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved: he was therefore bound to thank God always for his brethren of Theſſalonica; becauſe it was evident that they were ſpecially beloved of the Lord, having been "from the beginning choſen to ſalvation." (*John*, c. i. v. 1. *Eph.* c. i. v. 4 1 *John*, c. i. v. 1.) Some contend that the apoſtle meant the beginning of the goſpel being preached to them: but he plainly diſtinguiſhed this *choice* of them from thei *calling*, and ſpake of the latter as the effect of the former. The doctrine of election hath been repeatedly conſidered. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 28—31. c. ix. v. 11. *Eph.* c. i:) but we may here add, that if the calling of th Theſſalonians were the effect of any preceding choice o them; it comes to the ſame thing, whether that choic were made the preceding day, or from before the foundatio of the world, that is, from eternity; except as the forme ſuppoſition would militate againſt the immutability of God and his abſolutely perfect preſcience. Otherwiſe, if he acte

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hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epiſtle.

16 Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlaſting conſolation, and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and ſtabliſh you in every good word and work.

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wiſely and righteouſly in chooſing them, rather than their companions in idolatry and vice; it was equally wiſe and righteous to chooſe them from eternity, as at the very hour preceding their regeneration. This choice of them to ſalvation had not been, becauſe he foreſaw they would be holy, nor yet with the purpoſe of leaving them unholy; but with the deſign of preparing them for ſalvation "through the ſanctification of the Spirit," and his new-creating energy, beginning, carrying on, and perfecting their renewal to the divine image: and "through their belief of the truth;" for being quickened from the death of ſin, he led them to believe the ſeveral truths of God's word, eſpecially thoſe relating to the Perſon, and redemption of Chriſt; thus they were brought to receive, and rely on, him for pardon, righteouſneſs, and grace; and ſo they received their title to heavenly felicity, and were trained up for the enjoyment of it. According to theſe purpoſes of God reſpecting them, he had called them by the goſpel, which Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were ſent to preach to them: this came not to them in word only, but with the power of the Holy Ghoſt; and their converſion by it both evidenced their election of God, and was intended for "their obtaining the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." (1 *Theſ.* c. i.) The apoſtle therefore exhorted them to ſtand faſt in the belief of thoſe truths, which they had heard from him; not only amidſt the rage of perſecutors, but againſt the artifices of deceivers: maintaining the inſtructions, which they had received, whether by word of mouth from him when with them, or by any verbal meſſage he had ſent to them, or by his former epiſtle. Doubtleſs Paul's traditions were worthy of credence and obedience; but how ſhall we know any thing of them, except as they were written for our benefit? It is therefore a curious inſtance of the "deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs," in the man of ſin, to attempt the ſupport of his corrupt ſyſtem by a ſingle word in that very chapter, which moſt expoſes his devices. For oral traditions of equal authority to the written word, being the rule of it's interpretation, and committed to the keeping of the church, (that is to the Romiſh clergy,) was the grand ſupport of popery for ages; and of this fundamental principle, they have no better ſcriptural proof, than this ſingle word, and one or two more of ſimilar import! (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xv. v. 1—20.)

V. 16, 17.] The apoſtle here addreſſed himſelf in prayer to "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf," along with "God even our Father," and he mentioned Chriſt firſt, in this moſt evident act of divine adoration; "for He and the Father were One," even One God, "who had loved them, and given them everlaſting conſolation," a well ſpring of comfort in his goſpel, and by his Spirit in their hearts, which would endure to eternity, of which they then enjoyed the earneſt: and he had given them a "good hope," well grounded, of a good, a ſuitable, and ſufficient portion and felicity; which originated from his mercy, and was warranted by his grace in their hearts; which produced the moſt beneficial effects in their lives, and ſupported them under their manifold trials. He therefore beſought our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God, even our Father, ſtill more and more to comfort them; and to render them ſtedfaſt, not only in faith and hope, but in a conſtant attention to holineſs in all their diſcourſe and behaviour, and an habitual readineſs unto every good word and work.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is peculiarly incumbent on miniſters to caution men againſt, and ſolemnly to charge them not to entertain, expectations not warranted by ſcripture, but grounded on impreſſions, pretended revelations, and perverſions of the word of God: for ſatan makes immenſe uſe of ſuch things, not only to unſettle men's minds, and fill them with needleſs apprehenſions; but even to ſhake the foundations of their faith and hope, to draw them off from their duty, and to expoſe the goſpel itſelf to ridicule and contempt. It is ſufficient for us to know that our Lord will come, and will gather all his ſaints unto him; and we ſhould be equally careful to be always ready for his coming, and to guard againſt deluſions and preſumption, in reſpect to the exact time of that great event. However, we know that the ſcriptures cannot be broken: the day of Chriſt could not come, till the predicted apoſtacy had taken place. Theſe prophecies have now in a great meaſure received their completion, and confirm our aſſured belief of the truth of the ſcriptures: but though the ſon of perdition hath been revealed; though he hath oppoſed and exalted himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; and hath ſpoken and acted, as if he were a deity upon earth, who was to be worſhipped in the temple of God himſelf; though the myſtery of iniquity, after working long in ſecret, at length was brought to light; and the lawleſs one, openly proclaimed his arrogance, enforced his preſumptuous decrees, and ſupported his deluſions, by the working of ſatan, with lying miracles, and all kinds of impoſtures; yet the Lord hath not yet fully deſtroyed him with the brightneſs of his coming; and other prophecies ſtill remain to be fulfilled, before the end ſhall come. But let us obſerve that ſatan does moſt miſchief by thoſe, who, Judas like, profeſs themſelves diſciples and apoſtles, and ſell Chriſt for money; theſe are emphatically ſons of perdition, and men of ſin. Pride and ambition are always hateful; but they are moſt diabolical, when employed about ſpiritual things. There have been many Antichriſts: yet none have been ſo miſchievous, as he who ſeated himſelf in the temple of God: the world is replete with cheats and forgeries; yet none are ſo iniquitous or impious as thoſe, which ſome have called *pious* frauds; and ſatan transformed into an angel of light, carries on his trade of deſtruction, by means of lying ſigns and miracles, or other ſpecies of the deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, with more fatal effect than in any other character, or by any other engine. However, neither the father of lies, nor any of his children, can go further, or proceed

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle, 1ſt. Requeſting their prayers for him, &c; and expreſſing his confidence reſpecting them, and his prayers for them, 1---5. *2d. Charging them to cenſure, and withdraw from diſorderly walkers, who neglected their own buſineſs, and intermeddled in that of others; with ſuitable arguments, directions, and exhortations,* 6---15. *3d. Concluding benedictions, &c,* 16---18.

FInally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* courſe, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

2 And that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you, and keep *you* from evil.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Chriſt.

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faſter, than the only wiſe God is pleaſed to permit him. Every event takes place in the appointed ſeaſon; and after all the myſterious devices of iniquity, which ſatan, or wicked men can frame, "the counſel of God ſhall ſtand, and "he will do all his pleaſure;" and one Antichriſtian power has often been over-ruled to ſtop the progreſs of another, ſtill more peſtiferous. It will moreover, at laſt appear that none were deceived by any "energy of deluſion" who were not at heart, enemies to the truth and will of God, and diſpoſed to take pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs: he is continually permitting ſatan to ſeduce perſons of this character into the belief of ſome lie, by which they are held, as with fetters of iron, till they receive their merited condemnation. To avoid this fatal doom, they ſhould take heed not to ſtifle their convictions, from love of ſin; they ſhould pray earneſtly for the love of the truth, and for that ſaving faith whence it ſprings; and they ſhould uſe every means of obtaining that humble and ſpiritual mind, which is the beſt ſecurity againſt every fatal deluſion. But if we *now* hate ſin, and love the truth, we are bound to thank God for ourſelves, and for each other. Some of us can well remember the time when we hated the doctrines of God's word, and preferred ſoothing errors to them: ſome of us *ſeemed* to have provoked God to ſend "us ſtrong deluſion to "believe a lie;" and we ſhould certainly have held it faſt, if we had been left to ourſelves. If then it be now otherwiſe with us, we may thankfully aſcribe it to the ſovereign love of God, who from the "beginning choſe us unto ſalva-"tion, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the "truth, &c." But let none conclude themſelves choſen and called, who are ſtrangers to the "ſanctification of the Spirit "unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus." (1 *Pet.* c i. v. 2) Let none place ſaving faith in any thing, but real efficacious "belief of the truth," as revealed in ſcripture; for ſome form ſuch notions of it, as lead to deluſion and enthuſiaſm. This belief of the truth brings the ſinner to rely on Chriſt, and ſo to love and obey him; it is ſealed by the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and it prepares him for the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in heaven. Let us then ſtand faſt in this doctrine of the apoſtles, and reject all ſpurious additions from every quarter: let us neither heſitate, nor omit, to pray to our Lord Jeſus himſelf, as well as to our loving God and Father; that our intereſt in his everlaſting conſolation, and good hope through grace may be evinced; not only by his comforting of our hearts, but by his eſtabliſhing us in every good word and work. Then we may, even in the moſt afflicted circumſtances, look down with pity on the wealthieſt of thoſe, who have only the periſhing conſolations and hopes of this vain world; or who have only the vain confidence, which attends the contempt, neglect, or abuſe of, the goſpel of God our Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—5.] The apoſtle, as uſual, requeſted the Theſſalonians to pray for him and his fellow-workers, and for ſucceſs to their labours; that ſo, the word of the Lord Jeſus, concerning him and his ſalvation, might *run*, and be diffuſed by a rapid progreſs, from heart to heart, and from place to place, through divers nations; and that its excellent nature and effects might be manifeſted, in the converſion of numbers from idolatry and vice to the true worſhip of God, and in the holy lives of profeſſed chriſtians; as the glory of the ſame word had been diſplayed among them. He requeſted them alſo to pray for the protection of him and the other preachers of the goſpel, from the malice and violence of unreaſonable and wicked men, ſuch as the Jewiſh zealots were; whom no arguments could convince, no perſuaſion or kindneſs mollify; ſeeing their abſurd prejudices, the effect of their inward wickedneſs, puſhed them into all kinds of crimes, in order to oppoſe and deſtroy the apoſtle, and others, who preached Chriſt to the Gentiles. Notwithſtanding the abundance of miracles, and the fulfilment of prophecies, which evinced the truth of the goſpel; yet all men had not faith to believe it: that, being the effect of a divine power upon the heart, which overcame the carnal pride, obſtinacy and enmity of fallen nature. Probably ſome profeſſed chriſtians ſecretly concurred with more open enemies, in attempting the life of Paul; and theſe falſe brethren, having no real faith in Chriſt, were alſo deſtitute of faithfulneſs in their pretended friendſhip to him and his fellow-labourers. However, he was ſatisfied that the Lord was faithful to his promiſes; and that the Theſſalonians were true believers, whom he would eſtabliſh in the faith, and defend againſt the devices of the wicked one, and of evil men, and keep from the evil of ſin, and all its fatal effects. He had alſo confidence in the Lord, reſpecting them, that he would give them grace to diſpoſe, and enable them, both at preſent and in future, to obſerve all the directions and commandments, which he had given them. He therefore prayed, that he would guide and lead their hearts into the comfortable experience of the love of God

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7 For yourſelves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourſelves diſorderly among you;

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you;

9 Not becauſe we have not power, but to make ourſelves an enſample unto you to follow us.

10 For even when we where with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat.

11 For we hear that there are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working not at all, but are buſy bodies.

12 Now them that are ſuch we command and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with quietneſs they work, and eat their own bread.

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

14 And if any man obey not our word by this epiſtle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be aſhamed.

15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admoniſh *him* as a brother.

16 Now the Lord of peace himſelf give you

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towards them, and into the exerciſe of love to him, and into the *patience of Chriſt*; that patience which he exemplified, taught, required, and beſtowed; even a reſignation of ſoul under ſufferings, meekneſs and long-ſuffering under injuries, patient continuance in well doing, and a calm, believing and waiting the Lord's time of deliverance. As it is the work of the Holy Spirit to direct and lead the ſoul into the exerciſe of theſe holy diſpoſitions; and as the Lord, is here mentioned diſtinct from God, and from Chriſt; ſo it hath been ſuppoſed, with ſome probability, that the apoſtle addreſſed this prayer perſonally to the Holy Ghoſt, 'the Lord the Spirit,' the third perſon in the adorable Trinity. (*Rom.* c. v. ver. 5. c. viii. v. 14. *Gal.* c. v. ver. 18. 22, 23.)

V. 6—15.] Though the Theſſalonians generally were deſerving of commendation; yet the Apoſtle had occaſion to ſpeak with authority, and implied reproof, in one particular, of which he had before given ſome intimation. (1 *Theſſ.* c. iv. v. 11, 12.) He therefore commanded and exhorted, or charged them, in the name, and as they valued the authority, favour, and glory of, the Lord Jeſus; that they ſhould withdraw from every one, called a chriſtian brother, who walked diſorderly (like a ſoldier that quitted his ranks or deſerted his poſt,) by neglecting the directions and commands, that they had received from him. For they well knew in what reſpects they ought to imitate him and his brethren: as they had not behaved in ſuch a diſorderly manner among them, or done any thing inconſiſtent with the regularity of families, or of ſociety. In particular, they had not lived at other people's expence, or in idleneſs; on the contrary, they had wrought, with exceeding labour and fatigue, to earn a maintenance for themſelves; even during the night, when the day did not ſuffice for that, and the exerciſe of their miniſtry alſo. Thus they avoided being chargeable to any of them, that they might give them no prejudice againſt the goſpel. Not that they had no right to a maintenance, or power to require one, by the rule of the goſpel; but becauſe, in their circumſtances, they deemed it neceſſary to endure much hardſhip, that they might become a proper example for their converts to imitate. (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. ix.) Perhaps the Apoſtle perceived a diſpoſition in ſome of them to make religion a pretence for a negligent, ſauntering life, and for living upon the hoſpitality of their brethren, without working at their own trades. He had therefore, when he was with them, commanded them, not to maintain in idleneſs ſuch, as could work and would not, either from private, or public charity; that being left to endure the pinchings of hunger and want, they might be compelled to attend to their proper duty. As God gives every thing to man in the way of labour; ſo the induſtrious part of every community maintain the ſlothful. Whatever rank the latter ſuſtain, they are mere drones in the hive, unleſs they fill up the duties of their ſtation for the common benefit. Chriſtians therefore, ſhould not countenance ſuch evident injuſtice, as ſlothfulneſs implies: eſpecially as this hath always been one of the ſlanders raiſed againſt the profeſſed worſhippers of God. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. v. ver. 8, 9.) The kindneſs required of believers, and which they are propenſe unto, often gives ſlothful perſons an opportunity on various pretences, to ſeek exemption from labour, by which they become uſeleſs and miſchievous, they and their families are often reduced to great diſtreſs, debts are contracted which they cannot pay; and that bounty is diverted into a wrong channel, which ſhould encourage the induſtrious poor, and ſupport the ſick and afflicted. The apoſtle therefore reminded them of this rule; becauſe he heard that there were ſome of theſe diſorderly perſons among them, who did not at all work at their own trades, or callings, but expected to be maintained in idleneſs by their brethren. Theſe perſons would naturally contract a ſauntering, goſſipping habit, and would indulge a talkative, curious, and conceited temper; and having much leiſure, they intermeddled with other men's concerns, to the diſturbance of families, the exciting ſuſpicions and jealouſies among neighbours, and the injury of men's characters. Thus they would endeavour to acquire a character for diſcernment, and to make themſelves of conſequence, by pretending to adviſe and determine concerning the proper management, of all affairs, public and private, whilſt peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

17 The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epiſtle: ſo I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

their own buſineſs was totally neglected! Theſe perſons the apoſtle commanded and charged in the name of Chriſt, and as they would ſtand accepted before his tribunal, to ceaſe from this officiouſneſs; and to attend to their own manual labour with humility, modeſty, contentment, and peaceable induſtry; that thus ſubſiſting on their own earnings, they might eat *their own bread*, and not conſume what properly belonged to others. At the ſame time, the chriſtians in general were to take heed not to grow weary of any kind of well-doing, eſpecially of their beneficence to the poor and needy; though ſuch a perverſe uſe of it was made by ſome of their company; (*Gal.* c. vi. v. 7—10:) but if any one diſobeyed the command given by the apoſtle, "to "labour with quietneſs, &c;" they were directed to note him by ſome cenſure of the church; and every chriſtian was required to ſeparate from his company, that he might be put to ſhame, and brought to repentance. Thus the ſcandal would be prevented, and the credit of chriſtianity maintained, Yet they were by no means to ſhew any ill-will to him, or do him any injury, as if he were an enemy; but to perſevere in ſeeking his good by loving admonitions, conſidering him as a brother, though overtaken in a fault. (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor*. c. v.)

V. 16—18.] The Lord Jeſus, our great Peace-Maker with the Father, and the great Author of all peace to men, was here addreſſed in prayer, to give the Theſſalonians peace in their hearts and conſciences, peace with each other, and peace with all men, at all times, and by all means; in his providence, by his grace, through the labours of his miniſters, and their own mutual endeavours, and by means of their prayers with, and for each other: and that he would be with them all, as the Author of all comfort and holineſs to their ſouls. (*Matt*. c. xxviii. v. 20 *John*, c. xiv. v. 27.) Perhaps Paul's method of penning, by an amanuenſis, gave occaſion to ſome counterfeit epiſtles to be written in his name: He therefore penned the ſalutation with his own hand, as the token in every epiſtle, that it came from him. Having given them this information, he concluded in the uſual manner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſucceſs of the word of the Lord is as really promoted by fervent prayer, as by faithful preaching. All, in whoſe converſion it hath been glorified, ſhould labour to honour it in their holy lives; and they ſhould deſire and pray, that it may have free courſe, and be glorified in this manner all over the earth. They ought alſo to beſeech the Lord to protect his faithful miniſters againſt thoſe unreaſonable, and wicked men, who are every where to be met with, even among profeſſed chriſtians, and who are equally deſtitute of faith, and faithfulneſs; that they may not be diſmayed or diſcouraged by their moſt virulent, or determined oppoſition. However, our whole dependance muſt be upon the Lord's faithfulneſs to his promiſes, who will ſurely ſtabliſh thoſe who rely on him, and preſerve them from every fatal ſnare, and real evil. If by his ſpecial grace we have that faith, which multitudes have not, our obligations to him are immenſe; and we ſhould earneſtly apply to him to incline and enable us perſeveringly, and without reſerve to obey his commands, and that the Lord the Spirit may direct our hearts into the love of God, and the patience of Chriſt. It is of great importance to the credit and ſucceſs of the goſpel, that the injunctions of the apoſtles be obſerved; and that believers withdraw from every brother that walketh diſorderly, and habitually neglects, or violates the precepts of ſcripture. Pious men are often betrayed into a diſregard to this rule, through humility and tenderneſs: by which means the profeſſor's miſconduct turns to the ſcandal of his profeſſion, and he himſelf is ſoothed into carnal ſecurity by an ill-judged, and unkind lenity. Whatever difficulties may occur reſpecting public diſcipline: yet believers of every denomination might agree, in ſeparating from diſorderly walkers, with proper admonitions and expoſtulations; that thus being put to ſhame they might be brought to repentance. This would be ſo far from treating them as enemies, that it would be the wiſeſt exerciſe of brotherly love towards them. It is peculiarly incumbent on miniſters, to ſhew the tendency of their doctrine in their own conduct, that the people may perceive how they ought to follow them. It is not indeed required, nor generally expected, that they ſhould labour and toil, night and day, to avoid being chargeable to the people: for "they "that preach the goſpel, have a right to live of the "goſpel;" and if faithful and diligent in their work, they by no means eat any man's bread for nought. Yet they ſhould be very careful to avoid every appearance of ſelfiſhneſs, indolence, or an encroaching ſpirit; and they muſt often give up their own intereſt, indulgence, and inclination, to make themſelves an example to the people, and to give energy to their inſtructions. A ſlothful man is a ſcandal to any ſociety, but moſt to a religious ſociety. It would be deemed rigorous, ſhould we enforce the apoſtle's rule, "that if any will not work, "neither ſhall he eat:" yet in fact it is founded in equity and love. It is injuſtice to the indigent, the weak, and the induſtrious; when the bounty of their brethren is waſted on the indolent, and extravagant. The greateſt kindneſs, that can be ſhewn to the latter, is to conſtrain them, if poſſible, "to labour, working with their own "hands the thing which is good:" this alone can preſerve them from miſchief, temptation, and miſery. None can eat *their own bread*, who are not willing, in ſome way, to labour for it. They, who neglect their own buſineſs become buſy-bodies, officious intermeddlers, tale-bearers, and diſturbers of the peace of families, churches, and communities: for "the devil finds ſome "miſchief ſtill, for idle hands to do." Such profeſſors ought therefore to be diſcountenanced, rebuked, and commanded from the Lord Jeſus, with quietneſs, to labour, and eat their own bread; and if they refuſe to do this, they ſhould be cenſured, noted, and ſhunned by all believers, till they are brought to repentance. However, no abuſes of this kind ſhould make us weary of well-doing, or check our bounty to proper objects; or our genuine good-will to the moſt unworthy. Whilſt we uſe every means of peace, in our private or public capacity; we muſt ſtill pray to the Lord of peace, to give us peace always, and by all means; and that he would be with, and confer his grace on us, and all our brethren.

The Firſt Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to TIMOTHY.

We have repeatedly read of this excellent young miniſter, and need only refer to the account before given of his appointment to be Paul's companion in travel. (Acts, c. xvi. v. 1—8.) *Having been trained up under the apoſtle's immediate care; he imbibed, in an extraordinary degree, his ſpirit and principles, and was peculiarly beloved of him. The date of this epiſtle is much controverted, and there are ſeveral difficulties occur concerning it: yet it ſeems to have been written from Macedonia, when Paul was driven from Epheſus by the tumult of Demetrius and his faction. Having been forced away ſuddenly, he had left Timothy behind him to ſettle the concerns of that church, in the beſt manner he could; and he ſoon after wrote this epiſtle to him, for his direction in ſo doing. Indeed Timothy ſhortly rejoined the apoſtle: but it is not improbable, that he afterwards returned to Epheſus, and more fully regulated matters there, according to the apoſtle's directions. However, there is no reaſon at all to believe that the epiſtle was written from Laodicea, according to the ſpurious poſtſcript; for the apoſtle probably had not been at that city.* (Col. c. ii. v. 1.) *It contains cautions againſt falſe teachers; directions concerning the worſhip of God, and the behaviour of believers; the character and conduct to be expected in biſhops and deacons, and their families; exhortations to Timothy, concerning his private, and public behaviour, eſpecially in ordaining miniſters, cenſuring offenders, and ſettling other church affairs; admonitions againſt ſeveral ſins and temptations; ſolemn charges to faithfulneſs, and various doctrinal, and practical matters interwoven with them. This, and the two following epiſtles, are peculiarly replete with inſtruction to miniſters; and ſhould be continually ſtudied, and meditated on by all; who bear that ſacred character.*

Anno Domini 60. *Anno Domini* 60.

CHAP. I.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Saluting Timothy; reminding him of the intent, for which he was left at Epheſus; and ſhewing how ſome perverted the law, and who they were that were expoſed to it's condemnation, 1---11. *2d. With humble thankfulneſs making mention of his own converſion, and the encouragement given by it to other ſinners; and aſcribing glory to God,* 12---17. *2d. Charging Timothy to maintain faith, and a good conſcience, and ſpeaking of ſome that had not done this, whom he had xcommunicated,* 18---20.

PAUL, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *which is* our hope;

2 Unto Timothy, *my* own ſon in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1, 2.] In this addreſs Paul called himſelf an apoſtle of Chriſt, by the commandment of God our Saviour; by which in this connexion the perſon of the Father ſeems to have been intended, as purpoſing and contriving ſalvation for ſinners: but the Lord Jeſus was joined with God our Saviour in the granting of this commiſſion, as being one with him in eſſence, authority and counſel. Him the apoſtle called "our hope;" as all his hope of ſalvation and eternal happineſs, was fixed upon the Perſon, and atonement of Chriſt. He alſo addreſſed Timothy, as his *own* Son in the faith, or his *genuine* Son: he ſeems to have been the inſtrument of Timothy's converſion; he had, as it were, educated him in the goſpel; and Timothy reverenced, and ſerved with him in his miniſtry, as a dutiful ſon, with a loving Father. From the exuberance of his love to him he added the word

3 As I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mighteſt charge ſome that they teach no other doctrine,

4 Neither give heed to fables and endleſs genealogies, which miniſter queſtions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *ſo do.*

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conſcience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

6 From which ſome having ſwerved have turned aſide unto vain jangling;

7 Deſiring to be teachers of the law; underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.

8 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man uſe it lawfully;

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient, for the ungodly and for ſinners,

mercy to his uſual ſalutation; or perhaps becauſe his peculiar trials and ſervices would require peculiar conſolations from the compaſſion and mercy of the Lord towards him.

V. 3, 4.] The apoſtle left Timothy at Epheſus, when he went thence into Macedonia: but it doth not appear, that he went from Epheſus into Macedonia more than once, (Note, *Acts*, c. xx. v. 1—6:) nor is it to be ſuppoſed, that he ever re-viſited Epheſus, after telling the Epheſian elders at Miletus, that *he knew* he ſhould ſee them no more. (*Acts*, c. xx. v. 25.) Whatever therefore may be the difficulties attending it, we muſt fix the date of this epiſtle, to the time before ſpecified. The apoſtle left Timothy at Epheſus, that he might ſolemnly and conſtantly charge certain perſons not to teach any other doctrines, than what he had done. The Judaizers would be ſure to take the opportunity of his abſence to propagate their tenets: and it ſeems that the apoſtle knew them to be zealous for the traditions, and fabulous pretences of the elders and Phariſees, as well as for the ceremonies of the Moſaic law. But they were warned not to take notice of ſuch fables; or to their genealogies, which related to their deſcent from Abraham, or the patriarchs, by which they imagined themſelves entitled to peculiar privileges. Theſe genealogies led to endleſs intricacies and perplexities, and to many curious queſtions, and uſeleſs controverſies; and at laſt they rather induced a carnal confidence, and a conceited temper, than tended to any improvement in godlineſs of heart, and life; which could only be maintained and increaſed by the exerciſe of faith in the truths and promiſes of God, through Jeſus Chriſt. This charge therefore was to be ſtedfaſtly obſerved by him.

V. 5—7.] The word rendered "*commandment*," is by ſome explained of the moral law, the ſcope and ſubſtance of which is charity, or love towards God and man. Others underſtand it of the goſpel declaration; the end of which is to reſtore fallen ſinners to the love required by the law; and this better ſuits the context: but others explain it of the charge given to Timothy by the apoſtle. Each of theſe interpretations contains truth, and important inſtruction: and if the apoſtle intended the charge he had ordered Timothy to give to the Epheſians, (as he probably did;) that charge had reference to the law, as the rule of duty, and to the grand deſign of the goſpel. This love was to ſpring from a pure heart; the affections of the ſoul being cleanſed by renewing grace, from the love and pollution of ſin, and from carnal enmity and ſelfiſhneſs, (1 *Pet.* c. i. v. xxii:) and it was to proceed from a "good conſcience;" or one well informed concerning the will of God, and made tender and feeling by divine grace, as well as purged from guilt by the blood of Chriſt; that ſo the poſſeſſor might be influenced to act conſcientiouſly in his whole conduct: it muſt alſo come from "unſeigned faith," or a ſincere belief of the truths of God's word, and a reliance on the merits of Chriſt, and the promiſes of God through him. This faith working by love, purifying the heart, and producing a good conſcience, conſtituted the ſubſtance of what the apoſtle ordered Timothy to give in charge to theſe Epheſian teachers: becauſe it compriſed the grand eſſentials of evangelical religion. From this love, &c, ſome perſons had ſwerved or deviated, from zeal for external diſtinctions, legal obſervances, and human traditions; thus they turned aſide from the purity of the faith alſo, and got engaged in vain janglings and angry controverſies about doubtful and worthleſs matters. For they were deſirous of being teachers of the law, or doctors of the law, (the name frequently given to the principal Scribes;) and to exerciſe that office among chriſtians, in order to acquire a reputation for learning, and to be called Rabbi: but they "neither underſtood what they ſaid, nor whereof they "affirmed:" they declaimed in a looſe, confuſed manner upon general topics; not underſtanding the ſpiritual nature and uſes of the moral law, which they pretended to explain; nor the typical import of thoſe abrogated ceremonies, which they enforced. They therefore talked about ſuch matters, like men in the dark, with a mixture of truth, and error; and a miſapplication of right principles, to caſes with which they had no connexion.

V. 8—11.] The apoſtle allowed, that he and other enlightened chriſtians knew that the law was good, in itſelf, or for its intended purpoſes, provided a man did but uſe it *lawfully*, according to it's real import, and the deſign of the great Law-giver. The moral law was holy, juſt, and good, reſulting from the nature of God and man, and men's relations to Him, and to each other. Even the ceremonial law had a relative goodneſs, for the time, as typical of Chriſt and the goſpel: and the whole Moſaic diſpenſation was good, as ſeparating Iſrael from other nations, affording them the means of grace, and introducing the chriſtian oeconomy. But to enforce the whole Moſaic law on chriſtians, or to teach them to depend on their own obedience to any part of it for juſtification, was contrary to the real meaning of the law it-for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manſlayers,

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themſelves with mankind, for men-ſtealers, for liars, for perjured perſons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to ſound doctrine;

11 According to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to my truſt.

12 And I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the miniſtry;

13 Who was before a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, becauſe I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

15 This *is* a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.

ſelf, and the intention of the Law-giver. Moreover it was a perverſion of the law, to ſuppoſe the Gentile believers were under it's condemnation; becauſe they were not circumciſed, &c. It was evident even from the books of Moſes, when properly underſtood, that "Chriſt "was the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every be"liever;" and that the ſeverity of the law itſelf was intended to ſhew men that they could not be juſtified by it, but muſt live by faith in the promiſed Saviour. As then believers were righteous perſons in God's appointed way; the law did not *lie againſt them.* This ſeems to be the literal import of the phraſe, which is improperly rendered, "is not made for a righteous man." For the law is uſeful in various ways to the righteous man, in the only ſenſe, in which any mere man can be righteous; nay it was made principally for the benefit of ſuch perſons: but it's awful ſanction, it's condemning rigour, did not *lie againſt*, or refer to the caſe of, real believers; for all, who knew the ſubject, were ſenſible, that in this ſenſe, it referred to lawleſs and diſobedient perſons; even as the law of the land, which is made for the advantage of honeſt men, directs it's terrors againſt robbers, murderers, &c. After the general terms of lawleſs and diſobedient, which relate to the diſregard and contempt of God's commandments manifeſt in men's conduct; of "ungodly and ſinners;" which ſeem to denote their neglect of their duties to God, and their neighbours; and of "unholy and profane;" which may refer to the groſs ſenſuality and debauchery of multitudes, and that daring impiety commonly connected with it; the apoſtle enumerates ſome particular crimes of the moſt atrocious nature. Doubtleſs, numerous examples of them were found among the Gentiles; and ſome perhaps among the bigotted Jews, who depended on, and yet ſcandalouſly broke their law; (*Rom.* c. ii. v. 12—29:) but it can ſcarce be ſuppoſed, that the Judaizing teachers were guilty of ſuch enormities; as that muſt have totally defeated their purpoſe of propagating their principles. We may obſerve, that "men-ſtealers," are inſerted among theſe criminals, againſt whom the law of God directed its awful curſes. Theſe were perſons, who kidnapped men to ſell them for ſlaves: and this practice ſeems inſeparable from the other iniquities and oppreſſions of ſlavery; nor can a ſlave-dealer eaſily keep free from this criminality, if indeed "the receiver be as bad as the "thief." But the apoſtle did not mean, that ſuch perſons only lay under the curſe of the law; but that it was directed againſt all other practices, that were contrary to ſound doctrine, or the ſalutary nature and tendency of the chriſtian revelation. According to this, every impenitent ſinner, every man who allowed himſelf in the practice of any known tranſgreſſion, remained under the covenant, and curſe of the law: as an impenitent faith, or an hypocritical profeſſion of chriſtianity could not conſtitute him righteous. This accorded to the goſpel of the glory of God, by which he diſplayed all his perfections in the moſt honourable, and harmonious manner, by ſaving believers from their ſins, as well as from wrath: for being "the bleſſed God," the perfection and ſource of felicity, as well as of holineſs, he had deviſed to render fallen men partakers of his happineſs, by renewing them to the participation of his holineſs. This was that goſpel, which had been entruſted to the apoſtle.

V. 12—16.] The conſideration that the goſpel of the bleſſed God ſhould be entruſted *to him*, awakened in the apoſtle's mind the affection of humble admiring gratitude, and he brake forth into adoring thanks to Chriſt Jeſus for this diſtinguiſhed mercy to him. He had enabled him to, and qualified him for this honourable ſervice; and had accounted him a faithful perſon, fit to be employed as his ſteward and ambaſſador; which he had evinced by putting him into the ſacred miniſtry, and owning him as his apoſtle. This was, in all reſpects, moſt aſtoniſhing grace; ſeeing he had before been a moſt daring blaſphemer of his name, and had compelled others to blaſpheme; he had furiouſly perſecuted Chriſt's diſciples, and moſt injuriouſly haled them to priſon, and ſought to put them to death, from entire enmity to the name and cauſe of their Lord! Nevertheleſs, though his crimes had been ſo aggravated, he had obtained mercy: for they were not abſolutely unpardonable, becauſe he had perpetrated them "ignorantly in unbelief;" whereas, if his knowledge had been greater, and if his malice had been exerted againſt the full convictions of his own conſcience; he would have been given up to final impenitence. His ignorance and unbelief, indeed, amidſt ſuch abundant means of information and

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, ſon Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mighteſt war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith and a good conſcience; which ſome having put away concerning faith have made ſhipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymeneus, and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaſpheme.

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conviction, were the reſult of a ſelf-conceited, headſtrong, and contemptuous prejudice againſt the truth; yet, he "verily thought, that he ought to do many things againſt "the name of Jeſus," and was in no ſenſe convinced that he was the Meſſiah: but there were others, that were hurried on by malice, ambition and ſelfiſhneſs, to act in direct oppoſition to the dictates of their own conſciences, and thus to "ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt;" by maliciouſly and wilfully aſcribing his undeniable operations to ſome human impoſture, or ſatanical influence.—It is remarkable, that many perſons have ſuppoſed Paul's ignorance and unbelief, (two ſins, in themſelves deſerving of God's wrath, though in his circumſtances they *juſt* preſerved him from the unpardonable ſin,) to have been a kind of meritorious cauſe of his obtaining mercy; eſpecially when joined with *his ſincerity* in oppoſing the goſpel. They imagine, that in ſome manner, or meaſure, he deſerved it more than *any*, who are left to periſh. This they muſt mean, if they mean any thing to the purpoſe: for, though his guilt were leſs than that of ſome Jews, who, ſinning againſt clearer light, and more prepenſe malice, were given up to final obduracy; yet they, who maintain the doctrines of grace, ſuppoſe that many periſh in their ſins whoſe criminality is far leſs than his was; that he might *juſtly* have thus been left; and that no reaſon can *by us* be aſſigned for his ſalvation in preference to others, who had not committed the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; except the ſovereign grace of God, "who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;" and that other reaſon, which he himſelf next aſſigns, namely the praiſe of the glory of the grace of God! For he not only ſuppoſes, that he ſhould have righteouſly periſhed, if the Lord had been extreme to mark what was done amiſs;" but if his grace and mercy had not been "exceeding abundant" beyond all expectation, eſtimation or conception: not only, in that he was ready to forgive, bleſs, and employ him, when he repented, believed, and was prepared for obedience; but, "in quickening him when dead in ſin," and ſo working faith and love to Jeſus Chriſt in his heart, that he might be united to him, and intereſted in him and his righteouſneſs. (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 1—10.) His converſion, acceptance and reconciliation were therefore to be conſidered as an illuſtration of the nature of the goſpel; and of the exceeding riches of the Lord's mercy in Chriſt Jeſus: and it was indeed a true "and faithful ſaying," authenticated by the whole proof of the divine original of chriſtianity, as "the word of God, who cannot lie;" and worthy to be received with humble and thankful faith, by men of all nations; (as all are ſinners that need ſalvation, which could no other way be obtained, and as none are excluded from this ſalvation, that are willing to accept of it;) "that Jeſus," the divine Saviour, Emanuel, the Son of God, the Meſſiah, the anointed Prophet, Prieſt and King of the church, "came into the world" voluntarily, and with deſign, and for the ſingle purpoſe of ſaving ſinners, the Word, that "was God and with God; the Creator and Upholder of all worlds, the Lord of all creatures, became fleſh, that he might be the ſecond Adam, the Surety of the new covenant, to fulfil all righteouſneſs, and make an infinitely valuable atonement for ſin: in order to his officiating as the Advocate of his people in heaven, and reigning over all worlds for their benefit. The end and deſign of this were entirely, and ſingly, "the ſalvationof ſinners" of every nation and deſcription, from condemnation, ſin, ſatan, the world and death: even all, without exception, who applied to him in faith for this ſalvation. Of theſe ſinners, Paul deemed himſelf the chief; the greateſt enemy of Chriſt, and the moſt deſerving of divine vengeance of all, who ever were, or would be ſaved by him. This ſeems the purport of the expreſſion: but it is poſſible, that he ſuppoſed *his* actual crimes to be ſo numerous and enormous; that his guilt even exceeded that of thoſe who had ſinned more entirely againſt their own convictions, and ſo had been given up to final impenitency! Inſtead of imagining that there was ſomething meritorious in his blind and obſtinate ſincerity! as ſome have averred "ignorantly in unbelief." He conſidered himſelf as one ſelected on purpoſe, becauſe he was more guilty than any other perſon in the world, (thoſe only excepted, who had committed the unpardonable ſin, if even they were excepted;) that in him *firſt* or the *chief* ſinner, Jeſus Chriſt might exhibit, with the greateſt luſtre imaginable, that degree, in which he can bear with, and pardon his moſt virulent enemies, and the vileſt of mankind: that ſo it might ſtand upon record to the end of time, for the encouragement of all others, in every age and nation, who believe in Chriſt, and rely on his merits and grace for the pardon of their ſins, and the gift of eternal life; to prevent their being diſheartened by a retroſpective view of the number, nature, and heinouſneſs of their crimes.

V. 17. *Now,* &c.] Some expoſitors ſuppoſe this doxology to be addreſſed perſonally to Chriſt as God; becauſe the apoſtle had before been ſpeaking of him: but it ſeems rather to be addreſſed to the Godhead, without diſtinction of perſons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, three Perſons in the Unity of the Godhead, as the triune God of ſalvation, conſtitute the object of all our worſhip, which perſon ſoever we immediately addreſs. To God, as the King eternal, the univerſal and everlaſting Sove-

CHAP. II.

Contains directions 1ſt. To pray for all men, eſpecially for kings, &c; as the goſpel and mediation of Chriſt made no diſtinction of rank or nation, 1---8. *2d. Concerning the modeſt apparel of women; their good works; and their ſilent ſubjection; as the man was firſt formed, and the woman firſt ſinned: with a promiſe reſpecting child-bearing,* 9---15.

glory of all done *in*, *by*, and *for* him; and deſired earneſtly, that he might be honoured, in all his perfections and wonderful works, by all rational creatures, for ever and ever, Amen.

V. 18—20.] This referred to what had before been ſpoken. (v. 3. 5. 11.) The truſt committed to him by Chriſt, as his apoſtle, he had committed to his ſon Timothy: he was encouraged to repoſe great confidence in him, not only by what he knew of his principles and character; but by entertaining hopes of him "according "to certain prophecies," which inſpired perſons had uttered concerning him, previous to his appointment to the miniſtry; and he expected that by meditating upon them, he would be animated and inſtructed in "warring a good "warfare," as a valiant ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. This muſt be done, by maintaining, and inſiſting upon both the true faith of the goſpel, and a good conſcience, or an univerſally conſcientious conduct. Theſe he muſt be ſure to connect, both in his own example, and in his preaching: for ſome profeſſors of chriſtianity, having neglected to maintain, and inſiſt upon a good conſcience, had, after a time, renounced the faith alſo; and made ſhip-wreck of their whole religion, either by a total apoſtacy from their profeſſion, or the moſt heretical corruptions of the goſpel. Of theſe were Hymeneus, and Alexander, with whom Timothy had doubtleſs been acquainted. Theſe Paul had deemed it needful openly to excommunicate from the church, into the viſible kingdom of ſatan; that they might learn not to blaſpheme Chriſt, or diſgrace his goſpel by their impious tenets. We afterwards read of Hymeneus; and probably Alexander the copperſmith was the other perſon meant. Neither of them ſeem to have been recovered from their hereſies, or apoſtacy. (2 *Tim*. c. ii. v. 17. c. iv. ver. 14.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Apoſtles, and other eminent miniſters, who have moſt evidently been commiſſioned by God our Saviour, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, have had no other ground of hope, as to the ſalvation of their own ſouls, than what they poſſeſſed in common with their meaneſt brethren. In ſome reſpects they have even more needed, "grace, "mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord "Jeſus," than others: their temptations, trials, and difficulties have been greater; they had the ſame evil nature with other men, and no more wiſdom, or ſtrength in themſelves than they; and even their moſt faithful and uſeful ſervices needed mercy for their acceptance, as well as grace for their performance. However, he that appointed them, hath ever been ready to uphold and help them; and his ſtrength hath been perfected in their weakneſs. It is of great importauce for us, to charge curious and conceited perſons, to preach no other doctrine, than that of the ſcriptures: for ſatan makes immenſe uſe of ſuch teachers, to ſow tares in the Lord's field, to multiply falſe profeſſors, to deceive ſouls, to diſturb the peace of the churches, to excite queſtions and contentions; and in ſhort, to put men upon every thing, that takes them off from "godly edifying which is in faith." The deſign of the goſpel is not anſwered by our ſpeculating about it, and ſolving abſtract queſtions, or giving heed to fables and endleſs diſputation; but when ſinners, through repentance towards God, and faith in Jeſus Chriſt, are brought to the habitual exerciſe of holy love, out of "a "pure heart, a good conſcience, and faith unfeigned." All doctrines, ordinances, and forms are juſt ſo far beneficial to us, as they are uſeful in producing this effect in our hearts, and lives: and all that faith is dead, which doth not influence men thus ſpiritually to the love of God, and each other, in a practical manner. But alas, in how many ways do men ſwerve from this plain and ſimple ſtatement of the truth; and turn aſide unto vain jangling! Many, called chriſtian miniſters, deſire to be teachers of the law, knowing neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm: and thus a few ſcraps of morality are ſubſtituted in the place of the holy law, and the bleſſed law of God our Saviour! Others know not, or acknowledge not, that the law is good when uſed lawfully; and they declaim in ſo confuſed a manner againſt the law and good works; that many conclude the commandments of God to be evil, or void of obligation in themſelves! But believers derive great benefit from the holy law; and none have any thing to fear from it, but the lawleſs and diſobedient, the ungodly and profane. Yet indeed we have all deſerved this condemnation: there is none righteous, no not one, except as made ſo by faith in Chriſt, and through his grace. Few, in compariſon, have been guilty of actual murder, parricide, men-ſtealing or perjury; many may be free from the guilt of fornication, adultery, and other baſer practices: yet the ſame corrupt nature is in us all; and our enmity againſt, and ingratitude to God; our diſpoſition to diſobey and deſpiſe parental authority, to hate and quarrel with our neighbours; to pleaſe ourſelves, regardleſs of their good, and the glory of God; and a variety of polluted thoughts and affections, lying and vain words, and many other things contrary to ſound doctrine, would expoſe us to the wrath of God, and juſtify him in our final condemnation. Unleſs therefore, we are made righteous by faith in Chriſt, and really repent of, and forſake every ſin, we are yet under the curſe of the law: even according to the goſpel of the bleſſed God, preached by Paul; and at the ſame time unmeet to ſhare the holy felicity of heaven.

It is peculiarly encouraging to recollect what manner of perſons have been converted, pardoned, qualified, counted faithful, put into the miniſtry, and made inſtruments of good to mankind. Many, who before were blaſphemers, perſecutors, and injurious, have, in different ways, been thus employed on earth, and are now with holy Paul in heaven; celebrating the rich mercy and grace, by which they were made partakers of repentance, faith and love, and that precious blood, by which

I Exhort therefore, that, firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty.

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour;

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they were waſhed from all their ſins. Theſe, in their day, bare witneſs to that faithful ſaying, which we now would recommend to general acceptation; even, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners: and it always hath been greatly encouraging to trembling penitents, when the preachers of this rich grace were themſelves evidently illuſtrations of their own doctrine; even chief ſinners, yet pardoned and changed, ſent to declare to others the long ſuffering and mercy of Chriſt to them, as a pattern to all, who ſhould believe on him to everlaſting life. But no man, with Paul's example before his eyes, can reaſonably queſtion the love and power of Chriſt to ſave him, whatever his ſins have been; if he really deſire and endeavour to truſt in him, as the incarnate, and co-equal Son of God, who once died on the croſs, and now reigns upon the throne of glory, in order to ſave all, that come to God through him. For though ſome, having obſtinately rebelled againſt the light, are given up to final impenitence: yet all, who penitently ſeek ſalvation by Chriſt, according to the goſpel, are moſt certainly clear of that ſin; having committed their crimes, however atrocious, in ignorance and unbelief. Let us then ſeek hope for this ſalvation; and in humble conſciouſneſs of our unworthineſs, let us admire and praiſe the grace of God our Saviour; and aſcribe to “the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” May then all, who are entruſted with the miniſtry, faithfully and valiantly “war their good warfare,” with ſuch weapons, as are mighty through God, to deſtroy ſatan's ſtrong-holds! May they, in their doctrine and examples; and all chriſtians in their experience and practice, “hold faith and a good conſcience! May all, who are tempted to put away a good conſcience, and to abuſe the goſpel, remember that this is the old way of making ſhipwreck concerning faith alſo! And may Hymeneus and Alexander be as beacons, to warn others from ſuch fatal rocks; as monitors to teach them not to blaſpheme, and to caution them, “whilſt they think they ſtand, to take heed leſt they fall!”

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—4.] Proceeding in his charge to Timothy, the apoſtle exhorted and enjoined, that “firſt of all,” as a matter of great importance, ſupplications, and prayers of every kind, and ſuited to every emergency, and accompanied with thankſgivings for public or private mercies and deliverances, ſhould be made, in their ſecret, ſocial, and public worſhip; not only in behalf of themſelves, each other, and all their fellow chriſtians, but for all men, without diſtinction of nation, rank, or party, and without exception of their enemies and perſecutors; from a ſpirit of genuine and expanſive philanthropy. The litany of the church of England accordingly beſeeches the Lord “to have mercy upon all men:” yet hath this ſcriptural petition been publicly reprobated, as if it were inconſiſtent with ſubmiſſion to God's ſovereignty! but this is not the only inſtance, in which ſuch raſh cenſures directly involve the language of inſpiration itſelf! Whatever Paul underſtood by “all men,” that we underſtand by “all men:” and we muſt pray for the Lord *to have mercy on them*, without we mean to imprecate vengeance on them. The command to “love our neighbour” as “ourſelves,” is our rule of conduct, and ſhould dictate our prayers: the Lord's ſovereign purpoſes are his own rule only. He will hear our ſupplications for temporal benefits, or eternal ſalvation, in behalf of thoſe, on whom he ſees good to beſtow them: and in other caſes, our prayer will return into our own boſom. How can we at all pray for our enemies and perſecutors, whom we cannot know to belong to “the election of grace;” without equally *appearing* to interfere with God's ſovereignty? How can we pray for our children, relatives, or neighbours, or indeed for any unconverted perſon, or for thoſe whom we are not *quite ſure* are converted, without violating the ſame *imaginary* rule? Indeed, the malignity of an apoſtate, may be ſo exceſſive, that it may not be proper to pray perſonally for him: (1 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 14. 1 *John*, c. v. ver. 16:) but ſuch exceeding rare exceptions to a general rule, no ways interfere with our praying even for the ſalvation of all men, that now are, or ever ſhall live, on earth; unleſs in any inſtance his determination be made known to the contrary. This is no more than the Lord's prayer teaches us, (Notes, *Matt.* c. vi. v. 10;) and if there be any individual, (except in the very ſingular caſe before-mentioned,) for whom we cannot pray, that the Lord would have mercy on, and convert him; the inability muſt ariſe from ſin, even the ſin of not “loving our neighbour as ourſelves.” Nothing can more tend to confuſe theological ſubjects, to prejudice men's minds againſt the doctrines of grace, and to bring them into odium and contempt; or narrow and harden the heart againſt the human ſpecies in general; than this frequent method of making God's ſecret decrees our rule of action, inſtead of adhering to his revealed will. We know not, and cannot know, who are elect, and who are not: we are bound to love, pray for, and do good to all men; and then leave it to God to govern the univerſe in his ſovereign wiſdom, juſtice, and mercy, as he ſees good. (Note, *Deut.* c. xxix. v. 29) But to return from this digreſſion, which the importance of a much miſtaken ſubject hath occaſioned: it would be a proper expreſſion of their benevolence, for chriſtians to pray for all orders and conditions of men, in general, and in particular; and to intereſt themſelves in the calamities and deliverances of their neighbours, of the community, and of any of the human ſpecies. This would ſoften the prejudices, and conciliate the favour of thoſe around them; eſpecially when they perſevered in ſuch ſupplications and thankſgiving, notwithſtanding the perſecutions they endured. Moreover, it would tend very much to ſilence the accuſations of thoſe, who charged them with diſaffection to the civil government, and with

4 Who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For *there is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus;

6 Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time.

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apoſtle, (I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner alſo, that women adorn

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being troublers of the city; if they not only behaved with quiet ſubjection to the laws, in all things conſiſtent with their duty, and conſcientiouſly paid tribute and cuſtom: but if they were known to pray for “kings, and all in authority” over them; for their preſervation, and ſucceſs in all their undertakings for the protection and peace of the community; and for all bleſſings upon their perſons and families: and that they oppoſed no other weapons than theſe to the perſecutions and injuries they ſuffered: that is, in their private capacity: and very few of them were likely to be placed in ſuch public ſtations, as to have any regular influence on the meaſures of their governors. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xiii. v. 1—8.) The Epheſians were under the Roman emperor, who was a monſter of tyranny and cruelty: but the apoſtle uſed the word “Kings,” in the plural number; whence we learn, that the holy Spirit intended this direction for other places and ages; according to the different governments eſtabliſhed in God's providence. Theſe prayers were to be made, in order that they might “lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty;” conſcientiouſly attending on all their duties to God and man; without being moleſted, either by public calamities, or perſecutions. This object they were to aim at, and with this “quietneſs and ſecurity,” they were to be ſatisfied: The diſpoſition to lead a quiet, peaceable and honeſt life, ſubmitting to human authority, as far as was conſiſtent with godlineſs, would tend to procure them favour; and they might expect that God would anſwer their prayers, (ſo far as was good for them,) by inclining their rulers to tolerate and protect them. However, this conduct is good in itſelf, and acceptable to God our Saviour; as a fruit of faith and grace, and honourable to his name. For as he hath provided for the ſalvation of mankind, without diſtinction of rank, or nation; and can honourably, and will certainly, ſave every individual of the human ſpecies, who comes to him in his appointed way: So, *in this ſenſe,* he is willing that all men ſhould be ſaved; and it is his good pleaſure, that we ſhould do all in our power to bring them “to the knowledge of the truth.” The goſpel is to be preached to every creature: we are to aſſure all, that we can come at, that the Lord is able and willing to ſave any ſinner, who believes; Chriſt will ſay to numbers at the laſt day, “I called, and ye refuſed;” “*I would* have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not:” this ſuffices for our duty; and a thouſand queſtions on this ſubject will never receive a ſatisfactory anſwer, till that “revelation of the righteous judgment of God. As all men do not in fact “come to the knowledge of the truth,” which God wills in the ſame ſenſe, as “that all men ſhould be ſaved:” ſo the difficulty, if there be any, preſſes equally on Calviniſts, and Arminians, and even on ſuch, as abſurdly deduce univerſal actual ſalvation from a few ſuch texts; for even they cannot pretend, “that all men are brought to the knowledge of the truth.” If the clauſe therefore, be explained to mean any thing more, than God's willingneſs to ſave all that believe, and his willingneſs that we ſhould preach to, and pray for all men, without diſtinction: it would follow, that he willed, or purpoſed, what he did not actually effect; which I ſuppoſe few ſober men would aſſert. But it ſeems at leaſt equally improper to ſay, with moſt Calviniſtic expoſitors, that “all men” ſignifies “ſome of all ſorts,” and ſo to explain the *willingneſs* of God of his *abſolute determination:* becauſe it could evidently be anſwered, that it may with equal propriety be ſaid, “he willeth that all men ſhould be damned;” for doubtleſs, it is his determination, that ſome of all nations, ranks, &c, ſhould be left to periſh in their ſins. But I apprehend that the above interpretation keeps clear of this difficulty, is conſiſtent with God's ſecret purpoſes, and ſuggeſts the proper motive to the duties, which the apoſtle was inculcating.

V. 5—8.] As a further reaſon, why chriſtians were directed to pray for all men, &c, the apoſtle obſerved, that there was One God, the common Creator, Benefactor, and Lord of the whole human ſpecies: and as they had apoſtatized from him, and he had purpoſes of mercy towards them; ſo there was alſo “One Mediator between God and men, even the Man Chriſt Jeſus;” which implies, that there is but one Mediator, and excludes the worſhip of all other interceſſors. Jeſus Chriſt is truly Man; and though the efficacy of his mediation and atonement is derived from the union of the divine with the human nature, in his myſterious Perſon; yet his mediation between God and man is chiefly made in, and by his human nature, in which alone he was capable of ſuffering and dying. The One God, here ſpoken of, does not denote the Perſon of the Father excluſively, but the Godhead; the Manhood therefore of Chriſt intervenes between a juſt and holy God, and our ſinful ſouls; but then this Manhood is eſſentially, and inſeparably united to the Godhead, in the Perſon of the Son, who thus mediates between men his brethren, and God the Father, who maintains, ſo to ſpeak, the rights of Deity, requires ſatisfaction to his offended juſtice, and accepts that, made by his incarnate Son. This proviſion, and appointment was made, and revealed, for the common benefit of the human race, both Jews and Gentiles; that all, who would, might come in this way to the mercy ſeat of a pardoning God, to ſeek reconciliation to him. This themſelves in modeſt apparel with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array;

10 But, (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs,) with good works.

11 Let the woman learn in ſilence with all ſubjection.

12 But I ſuffer not a woman to teach, nor to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence.

13 For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the tranſgreſſion.

15 Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holineſs with ſobriety.

Mediator therefore gave himſelf a ranſom *for all*, "as "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſins of the "world;" that by the all-ſufficient atonement of his death upon the croſs, and the redemption price there paid for ſins, a foundation might be laid for the hopes of ſinners all over the earth; and that *all*, who believe, might actually be ſaved by it. I have long thought the diſputes raiſed about ſuch words, to be extremely frivolous, and only calculated to perpetuate controverſy. No pious, or ſober man will aſſert, that Chriſt ſo gave himſelf a ranſom *for all*, as actually to intend the ſalvation of thoſe, who never are brought to believe in him; and that he thus failed of his purpoſe, and ſuffered in vain. On the other hand, there are but few, who limit ſuch expreſſions to "ſome of all ſorts," "the elect world," &c. who do not allow the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt's atonement; that all men are to be called upon to believe in him; and that all, who do believe will be ſaved by him. It is therefore chiefly of importance, to determine, that none will be ſaved by the ranſom of Chriſt without true faith; that true faith is the gift of God, and the effect of regeneration; that known unto God, are all his works, from before the foundation of the world; and that all will certainly be ſaved, whom Chriſt ſpecially intended to ſave, when he became the Surety for his choſen people. Theſe propoſitions are capable of ſolid ſcriptural proof: and when they are eſtabliſhed, we may leave ſuch phraſes to be underſtood in their moſt obvious import, without any danger: nay, we may allow, that there is much wiſdom and mercy in ſuch general language; as it encourages the hope of uneſtabliſhed enquirers, who would be cramped by the whole truth, more ſyſtematically ſtated; and alſo that it well inſtructs us in our duty of praying for, and ſeeking the ſalvation of men in general. This ranſom once offered was to be teſtified in due time to men of every nation: and it was therefore incumbent upon every chriſtian to promote this great deſign, as he had opportunity, and ability. Of this Paul was ordained an herald, and an apoſtle, (in aſſerting which, he appealed to Chirſt, who had appointed him, as his heart-ſearching Judge, for the exact truth of what he had advanced;) ſo that he was now employed as a teacher of the Gentiles eſpecially, in the doctrines, and promiſes of the goſpel, in the nature of faith, and in the truth, and faithfulneſs of God to all his declarations, and covenant engagements. It was therefore his authoritative will, and injunction, that men profeſſing chriſtianity, whether Jews or Gentiles, ſhould pray every where, without diſcrimination of places, in their cloſets, families, or public aſſemblies, for thoſe things before mentioned; lifting up their hands to the Lord in reverent adoration, having taken care to keep them pure from iniquity, or any allowed ſin; "without wrath," either towards each other, or their perſecutors; "not doubting" of God's willingneſs, through Chriſt, to hear their prayers, though they had been Gentiles, and ſtill diſregarded the ceremonial law; and notwithſtanding all their former ſins, and preſent manifold unworthineſs.

V. 9, 10.] In order to the proper regulation of their religious aſſemblies, and their general conduct; the apoſtle furthermore enjoined, in the moſt decided manner, that the women ſhould adorn themſelves with modeſt apparel, becoming that baſhfulneſs and ſobriety of manners, which would be expected from them; not copying the vain faſhions of thoſe women, whoſe attire was intended to render their perſons attractive to the beholders, and was at once an indication of the levity of their own minds, and ſuited to excite the paſſions of others. He required therefore, that they ſhould not adorn themſelves with broidered hair, &c. We may allow that this general rule might admit of ſome exceptions, in the caſe of thoſe, whoſe ſuperior rank might occaſionally require it. Perhaps the apoſtle might advert to the looſe and unſeemly dreſſes of heathen women, whoſe characters were ſuſpected, or bad: though there is no proof of this. The exhortation alſo implied that whatever garbs they wore, they muſt conſider good works as their peculiar ornament, as became women profeſſing godlineſs. Yet he doubtleſs meant it as a general rule, that ſuch women ſhould refuſe conformity to the fooliſh faſhions of a vain world in this matter; that they ſhould chooſe to appear more plain and ſimple in their attire, than others of their rank; that they ſhould not waſte time, or run into needleſs expence, in ſuch empty decorations; but employ both, in adorning themſelves with good works: that decency, modeſty and ſobriety ſhould be more conſulted in their garments and appearance, than elegance and faſhion: and finally, that miniſters ought to teach theſe things to their congregations, as of great importance to the honour of the goſpel. It has been well obſerved, that foppery and extravagance, as to dreſs *in men*, are moſt emphatically condemned by the apoſtle's ſilence about them: this was as much as to intimate, that ſurely *they* could be under no temptation to ſuch a childiſh vanity!

V. 11—15.] (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 2—16. c. xiv. v. 34, 35.) It hath been obſerved that this rule admitted of an exception in the caſe of thoſe, who ſpake by the Spirit of prophecy; and we may add, that it only related to public teaching. The women were required to be ſilent with all ſubjection, in their religiou

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. Directions concerning the offices, and characters of biſhops and deacons; and the conduct of their wives and families, 1---3. *2d. The apoſtle expreſſing his hope of ſhortly coming to Timothy; ſhewing his purpoſe of inſtructing him in the duty of his ſtation; and ſtating the great myſtery of godlineſs,* 14---18.

aſſemblies; for the apoſtle, as Chriſt's repreſentative, would not ſuffer a woman to teach; as that would be like uſurping authority over the man; and therefore their willing ſubjection was to be ſhewn, by ſilently receiving inſtruction. For they were reminded, that the man was firſt created, and the woman of him, and for his benefit: ſo that it would be contrary to the original ſtate of things at the creation, for the woman to uſurp authority over the man. Moreover, the man was not deceived by the tempter in the firſt inſtance; but he prevailed againſt the woman, who was firſt in the temptation, and the ſeducer of the man. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. iii.) This conſideration was ſuited to teach the women, that they ſhould not affect authority, or preſume to be public teachers. But though the ſorrows and pains, attendant on child-bearing, were a peculiar mark of the divine diſpleaſure againſt that tranſgreſſion of the firſt woman: yet they, who profeſſed the goſpel of Chriſt, might hope to be ſupported and preſerved through that trying time, and even to derive benefit from all their anguiſh: at leaſt they might be ſure, that it would have nothing of curſe, or wrath in it; provided they continued ſtedfaſt in the faith, and in love to Chriſt and his people, with holineſs, purity, ſobriety and modeſty. Some ſuppoſe, the apoſtle to have meant, that though ſin firſt entered by the woman, whence all the pains and ſorrows of child-bearing originated; yet through thoſe ſorrows, One had come into the world, born of a woman, by whom they would be ſaved, who continued in faith, &c. This does not ſeem to be the ſenſe of the paſſage; yet it is worthy of obſervation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a moſt important, though much neglected duty, for chriſtians to pray and return thanks "for all men," according to the different relations they ſtand in to them, and as their circumſtances require. Thus they may ſhew their love to thoſe, whom they cannot otherwiſe ſerve; and evince that they intereſt themſelves in the happineſs of mankind in general. And not only in public, but in our families and cloſets, we ſhould pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority;" both as guardians of the public tranquility, and in reſpect of their temporal and eternal welfare: this will far more conduce to the continuance of our privileges, in being allowed without moleſtation, "to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty;" than any means, which men of more reſtleſs ſpirits can employ. But, whatever effect this conduct may have on our neighbours; "it is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour;" "he hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that he ſhould repent and live." It is his will, that all who repent, and believe in Chriſt, ſhould be ſaved: it is his command to all men every where to repent, and believe the goſpel: it is his will and pleaſure, that we ſhould employ every means of drawing men's attention to the goſpel, that they may "come to the knowledge of the truth." He is the One God of the whole earth, whom all men ought to worſhip and ſerve: and as all have ſinned, and deſerved wrath, ſo he hath appointed "One Mediator between God and man, even the Man Chriſt Jeſus, his incarnate Son, who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time; that *whoſoever* believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life." May the Lord haſten his time of cauſing this ſalvation to be teſtified all over the earth, and proſper every endeavour for that purpoſe! May he ordain and qualify many preachers, like Paul, to teach the nations in truth and verity! For ſurely we ſhould deſire, that men ſhould pray every where to God the Father, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by the holy Spirit, lifting up pure hands, without wrath and doubting. In proportion as we learn thus to worſhip in ſpirit and truth, with reverence, holy love, pure zeal, and lively faith; we ſhall find our minds freed from narrow prejudices and reſentment, and our benevolence towards all men greatly enlarged; and we ſhall more emphatically ſay to our heavenly Father "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven:"

Whatever renders the goſpel reſpectable, contributes to its ſucceſs: the modeſt, decent, and ſober apparel of women profeſſing godlineſs, muſt therefore have this tendency. They ſhould evince, that they are too much engaged in contemplating ſpiritual glories, to take pleaſure in the vain and unſeemly decorations, of the triflers, around them; that they value the adorning of good works, as their chief diſtinction; and that they can make a better uſe of their time and money, than in curiouſly adjuſting their attire, or purchaſing coſtly ornaments. But alas, in this trifling, and expenſive age, when almoſt all vie with their ſuperiors in apparel, till diſtinction of rank is nearly loſt; we too often find thoſe, who come to the places, where the word of God is preached, dreſſed as much beyond what they can properly afford, and in as unbecoming a manner, as they do who frequent the theatre! It would be well, if the profeſſors of ſerious godlineſs were wholly exempt from this diſgraceful vanity; or if they always ſpent as many hours in viſiting the ſick and poor, and as much money in relieving their diſtreſſes, as they do in uſeleſſly decorating themſelves and their children; after a manner unſuitable to their rank in life, and inconſiſtent with their profeſſion. Theſe are not trifles, or phariſaical impoſitions, as ſome pretend; but apoſtolical injunctions; (1 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 3—5:) and it ſhould be conſidered, that as raiment was only made needful by ſin; ſo it is peculiarly unſuitable for thoſe, who profeſs to believe the Bible, to be proud and vain of the very badge of their diſgrace. The original creation of the man, and then the woman; and the entrance of ſin by the latter, who being deceived was firſt in the tranſgreſſion, concur in ſhewing the reaſonableneſs of that ſubjection, humility, and

THIS *is* a true ſaying, if a man deſire the office of a biſhop, he deſireth a good work.

2 A biſhop then muſt be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, given to hoſpitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no ſtriker, not gready of filthy lucre; but patient; not a brawler, not covetous;

4 One that ruleth well his own houſe, heaving his children in ſubjection with all gravity;

(5 For if a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, leſt being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he muſt have a good report of them which are without; leſt he fall into reproach and the ſnare of the devil.

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teachableneſs preſcribed in ſcripture to the woman, and the impropriety of her uſurping authority over the man. But as the goſpel gives ſpecial encouragements to the woman, in reſpect of thoſe ſorrows, which the entrance of ſin has entailed on her, provided ſhe continue in "faith and love, with holineſs and ſobriety:" ſo the conſideration of thoſe manifold ſorrows, to which the female ſex is ſubjected, ſhould teach men to exerciſe their authority with the utmoſt gentleneſs, tenderneſs, and affection.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—7.] It hath already been obſerved, that the word rendered "biſhop" was at that time of the ſame import with that tranſlated "elder," or "preſbyter:" (Note, *Acts*, c. xx. v. 28:) for the charge given by Paul to the Epheſian elders is ſuppoſed to have been ſubſequent to the writing of this epiſtle. Whatever changes therefore were introduced, as the churches increaſed in numbers: we muſt here underſtand "elders," or "ſtated paſtors," to be the perſons intended; which is alſo evidenced by the ſilence of the apoſtle concerning any other order than biſhops and deacons. It had been ſaid, and it was true, and to be noticed; that if a man deſired the paſtoral office, and from love to Chriſt, his flock and the ſouls of men, was ready to forego other proſpects, and expoſe himſelf to hardſhips and perils, by devoting himſelf to that ſervice; he ſought to be employed in a good work, and his deſire ought to be approved and countenanced, provided he was properly qualified for that office. But it ſhould be duly conſidered, what manner of perſons ſuch paſtors ought to be; that ambitious, and improper deſires after that ſacred ſervice might be repreſſed; and that they who had been appointed to it, might know how to behave in it. Whatever natural abilities, learning, elocution or ſpiritual gifts any man might poſſeſs; he muſt be conſidered as ineligible to the paſtoral office; if he were not of a "blameleſs" character, and had not avoided ſcandalous vices, at leaſt ſince his profeſſed converſion to chriſtianity. He ought alſo to be "the huſband of one wife." Chriſt and the apoſtles doubtleſs condemned polygamy, as well as divorces, except for adultery, (Notes, *Matt.* c. xix. v. 1—9. *Mark*, c. x. v. 1.—12. 1 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 1—3;) yet there was no expreſs command for a man, who had previouſly taken more than one wife, to put them away when he embraced the goſpel; ſuch a requiſition might have produced many bad conſequences, and increaſed the oppoſition of the civil powers to the preaching of chriſtianity. But the rule, that no man, however otherwiſe qualified, ſhould be admitted into the paſtoral office, who had more than one wife, tended to ſhew the impropriety and inconſiſtency of polygamy with the chriſtian diſpenſation, and concurred with the above quoted declarations, to bring it into total diſuſe in the chriſtian church; yet, without any violence and confuſion. To argue hence, as hath been done, that polygamy was lawful for, and common among, other chriſtians, as it would not otherwiſe have been needful to reſtrict paſtors from it; would prove, if it proved any thing, that it was alſo lawful, and common for them to be drunkards, covetous, brawlers, ſtrikers, &c. Some have argued from this, that ſtated paſtors ought to be married, as a pre-requiſite to their office: but this ſeems miſtaking a general permiſſion, connected with a reſtriction, for an expreſs command. However, it is abundantly ſufficient to prove marriage to be entirely conſiſtent with the moſt ſacred functions, and the moſt exemplary holineſs; and to ſubvert the very baſis of the antichriſtian prohibition of marriage to the clergy, and of all its concurrent and conſequent miſchiefs. Yet ſome have even endeavoured to infer a part of that ſyſtem from this clauſe, and have ſuppoſed that the apoſtle meant to prohibit ſecond marriages to the clergy: but this is contrary to the whole tenor of ſcripture, by no means contained in the meaning of the words, and would certainly bring in a part of thoſe evils, which long experience hath proved inſeparable from the general prohibition: for, as good reaſons may very often be given for marrying a ſecond time, as for marrying at all: ſo that the whole meaning of the rule ſeems compriſed in the ſenſe firſt put upon it. The paſtor muſt alſo be "vigilant," a circumſpect and attentive man; one, that would watch carefully over his flock, capable of diſcerning dangers at a diſtance, guarding the people againſt the artifices of falſe teachers and the devices of ſatan; and prompt to embrace opportunities of uſefulneſs: he muſt be a ſober, ſerious, ſedate and temperate man, moderate in all his deſires and indulgences: he muſt be "of good behaviour" in all the tranſactions of life; ſhewing a meek, kind, equitable, faithful, and prudent diſpoſition towards all men. He muſt be ready, according to his ability, to relieve the poor, to entertain his brethren without grudging, and with evident chearfulneſs and ſatisfaction; eſpecially, he ſhould be hoſpitable to chriſtians, that were driven from home by perſecution, or in any other way were brought to the place of his reſidence. He muſt be ready at teaching, both capable of inſtructing others, 8 Likewiſe *muſt* the deacons *be* grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 Holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience.

10 And let theſe alſo firſt be proved; then let them uſe the office of a deacon, being *found* blameleſs.

11 Even ſo *muſt their* wives, *be* grave not ſlanderers ſober, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons be the huſbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houſes well.

13 For they, that have uſed the office of a deacon well, purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, and great boldneſs in the faith which

and promt to embrace every occaſion of doing it in publick or in private; counting it his buſineſs, and making it his delight. He muſt be free from every meaſure of intemperance, in the uſe of wine, or other ſtrong liquors; which would both be ſcandalous to him, and unfit him for the important duties of his ſtation. (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. x. v. 1, 2, 9, 10. *Prov.* c. xxxi, v. 4, 5.) He muſt be equally ſuperior to his anger; and not liable, upon any provocation, however great, to vent the vehemence of his paſſion, by ſtriking the offender, as was often the caſe among worldly men. Nor muſt he be greedy of gain, which might lead him to proſtitute his miniſtry for the ſake of "filthy lucre:" But he muſt be of a reſigned, meek, perſevering, and conſtant ſpirit; peaceable, forgiving, and calm; clamorous in diſputation, or even in reproving others; nor yet avariciouſly tenacious of that property, which he had obtained in the moſt unexceptionable manner. Moreover, the paſtor ought to be a man, who was able, and careful to govern his own houſhold, in a diſcreet and regular manner: maintaining a meek, and firm authority over his domeſtics, and having his children in due ſubjection to him; ruling over them in all gravity, and reſtraining hem from all levity and exceſs; that their appearance, deportment, and attendance on God's worſhip, might be an example to others. For if a man were evidently incompetent to govern his own family, and to preſerve order and decorum among them; how could it be ſuppoſed, that he would be found qualified to preſide over, and preſerve order and harmony among the numbers, who conſtituted the church of God? who were of various diſpoſitions and ſituations, and generally from under his immediate inſpection. Nor ought he to be a new convert to Chriſtianity, or an inexperienced perſon, but ſuperficially acquainted with human nature, and the things of God: leſt the diſtinction of his ſituation, or the applauſe beſtowed on him, ſhould elate him with pride and ambition; and he ſhould thus fall into a condemnation, ſimilar to that of the devil. It is evident from this, that ſpiritual pride and ambition conſtituted the beginning of ſatan's apoſtacy. Some have conjectured, that it was revealed to he angels, that the eternal Son of God would aſſume an inferior nature, in which he would rule over, and be worſhipped by them; and that ſatan and the other angels hat fell with him, proudly diſdained ſuch ſubjection. But all our conjectures on this ſubject muſt be uncertain, nd are in a meaſure preſumptuous. However, the pride nd ambition of miniſters, on account of their office, gifts, popularity, or ſucceſs, are of a ſimilar nature to the devil's ride in heaven, and might involve the novice under a ſimilar condemnation. The paſtor muſt moreover have a good report, an unblemiſhed character, even among his unconverted neighbours: leſt he ſhould fall into reproach, loſe his influence, diſgrace the goſpel, and be enſnared by ſatan into the practice of his former evils, or in ſome other way taken off from his work, and be entangled in the world and ſin. It would not therefore be generally adviſable to appoint thoſe to the miniſtry, whoſe conduct had been remarkably bad, until a competent time had elapſed, to evince the reality of their repentance, and to retrieve and re-eſtabliſh their characters. It is evident, that the apoſtle did not here at all ſpeak of the ſeveral duties of miniſters; but only of the conduct and character of thoſe, whoſe deſires after that office were to be countenanced by Timothy, and others concerned.

V. 8—13.] The deacons were primarily appointed to diſpenſe the charity of the church, and to manage its ſecular concerns: yet they either preached occaſionally, or paſtors and evangeliſts were often choſen from among them. (Notes &c. *Acts*, c. vi. vii. viii.) Some of the ſame things were deemed requiſite in them, as in the paſtors. They too muſt be grave, ſerious and prudent men; ſincere, candid, and conſiſtent in their diſcourſe; not ſpeaking one thing before men's faces, and another behind their backs; neither flattering, ſlandering, diſſembling, nor prevaricating, in any company, or on any occaſion: not addicted to much wine, nor greedy of filthy gain; which might tempt them to embezzle the money committed to them, or unfit them for liberally and impartially ſupplying the wants of the poor. They muſt alſo profeſs and maintain the myſteries of the chriſtian faith, with a pure conſcience, and an uniform integrity of conduct; that ſo, they might recommend it to others. It was proper, even in reſpect of this inferior office, that trial ſhould be made of new converts; that previous to their admiſſion to it, they might be approved to be men of blameleſs converſation. The wives alſo of the deacons, (and much more therefore thoſe of the ſpiritual paſtors,) muſt be of grave and ſerious deportment; not addicted to the vanities and diſſipations of the world; not prone to ſlander their neighbours, or to circulate diſadvantageous reports of them; but ſober women, temperate in all things, and faithful in the diſcharge of every relative and religious duty. Nor would it be proper for thoſe, who had previous to their converſion, taken more than one wife, to exerciſe the office of a deacon: it was requiſite that they alſo ruled their children and domeſtics in a regular, and exemplary manner. For the faithful diſcharge of this office would tend to the increaſe of their gifts and graces, is in Chriſt Jeſus.

14 Theſe things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee ſhortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thyſelf in the houſe of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

16 And without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

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and to render them very bold in profeſſing their faith. They would be much employed among the poor, and ſick, and ſuch as were impriſoned for the goſpel; and by thus expoſing themſelves, and giving counſel and encouragement to their ſuffering brethren, they would be emboldened and habituated to a promptitude of utterance, which would be a *good ſtep* towards their being admitted to the office of paſtors, or evangeliſts. This interpretation has been conteſted: yet it ſeems to be the apoſtle's meaning; and, without adverting to modern habits, or controverſies, it ſeems evident, that the due diſcharge of the primitive office of a deacon, muſt tend to qualify men for the miniſtry: it appears from facts, that ſome deacons became preachers; nor have we any reaſon to think, that any perſons were then regularly educated for the paſtoral office; but miniſters ſeem to have been always choſen from the moſt eſtabliſhed, and beſt qualified believers, and generally from thoſe, that were matured in years and experience. However, this does not prove, that a regular education may not, in the preſent ſtate of things, be moſt expedient.

V. 14, 15.] The apoſtle hoped, when he wrote this, that he ſhould ſoon be able to return to Epheſus: but matters ſo turned out, that he never again viſited that city; and Timothy, probably ſooner than had been intended, went to him into Macedonia. However, in caſe he tarried long before he ſaw Timothy, he wrote this epiſtle to ſhew him how he ought to conduct himſelf, as an evangeliſt entruſted by the apoſtle, to regulate matters in the family or houſhold of God, even that ſociety of believers, in and among whom, the living God dwelt, as in his holy habitation. Theſe directions were not peculiar to the Epheſians, but would be a rule to Timothy in other churches alſo, where he might ſuſtain the ſame office: and though we allow that biſhops, in this chapter, ſignify ordinary paſtors, and that tradition is not greatly to be depended on, in reſpect of Timothy's being the firſt biſhop of Epheſus: yet perhaps, that moderate epiſcopacy, which evidently prevailed very early in every part of the church, grew out of the extraordinary ſervices, which the apoſtles, or the evangeliſts left by them, performed in the new planted churches. The following words have been variouſly applied: the church of the living God, by ſupporting, maintaining, and recommending the truth of revelation; by publicly preaching, and profeſſing it and by the worſhip and ſervice therein performed; may be conſidered as the foundation, which upholds the edifice, as a pillar that ſupports and adorns it. This by no means includes the infallibility of any particular church; but merely implies that divine truth is upheld, profeſſed, and maintained in the true church; whilſt the world in general, and heretics in particular, oppoſe, pervert, and undermine it. Some apply it to Timothy and other faithful miniſters, (*Gal.* c. ii. v. 9:) but this ſeems to be only a part of the preceding truth; as the profeſſion, and ſuitable converſation of believers, as really maintain, and recommend the truth, as the miniſter's labours and doctrine. Others would explain the ſentence to mean, that the truth is the pillar, and ground of the church; which is good ſenſe and ſound doctrine, but ſcarce conſiſtent with the conſtruction of the paſſage: nor do the ſacred writers ſo exactly adhere to modern rules of exactitude in their uſe of metaphors. Others detach the ſentence from this verſe, and connect it with the following; as if the apoſtle had meant, that the doctrine there ſpecified was the pillar and ground of the truth: but this conſtruction alſo ſeems unnatural, and the firſt interpretation is moſt obvious and ſatisfactory. As the church was appointed to maintain, hold forth, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in the midſt of a dark and wicked world: ſo it was very important for Timothy to know how to conduct himſelf in ſubſerviency to that great deſign.

V. 16. *And*, &c.] That myſtery of godlineſs, which the church was to maintain, &c, was without controverſy or doubt, exceeding great. It never could have been thought of, if it had not been revealed; it could not be received but by faith; and it muſt be very imperfectly underſtood by man in his preſent ſtate, as it was connected with infinite and incomprehenſible objects. Some perſons might on this account deem it leſs credible; and others might attempt to obviate the objection, by explaining away the myſteriouſneſs of it: but the apoſtle allowed it to be a great myſtery. It muſt however, be noted, that it was "the myſtery of godlineſs." The revelation, and belief of it was the ſource of all pious diſpoſitions and affections in the heart of fallen men; and of all ſpiritual worſhip of God in the world. Had this myſtery never been revealed, there would never have been any true godlineſs among men: none can be found where this myſtery is unknown, or rejected: and that always abounds in proportion as it is ſcripturally propoſed and received. Thereby, men learn the true character of God, and the way in which ſinners may approach and worſhip him; they diſcover their real ſituation, their danger, and their remedy; and thus they are brought to fear, truſt in, ſubmit to, love, worſhip, and obey God. The ſubſtance and centre of this great myſtery was this, "God was manifeſt in the fleſh:" the divine nature, in the Perſon of the co-eternal and co-equal Son, and Word of God, was manifeſted to fallen men, as dwelling in and acting by the man Chriſt Jeſus: ſo that whoever ſaw, or contemplated by faith, this expreſs Image of the inviſible God, ſaw the Father alſo. (Notes, &c. *John*, c. i. v. 1—18. *Phil.* c. ii. v. 5—11. *Col.* c. i. v. 15—17.) Thus ſinners became acquainted with and re-

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1*ſt. A prediction of a grievous apoſtacy, and a great corruption of the goſpel, &c,* 1---5. 2*d. Exhortations to Timothy, concerning his perſonal, and miniſterial conduct,* 6---16.

conciled to God. This high character Emmanuel claimed, when on earth; and the unmeaſurable unction of the Holy Spirit in his human nature, as evinced by his perfect holineſs and ſtupendous miracles, juſtified his claim. But the Jewiſh prieſts and rulers put him to death, “becauſe “he, being man, made himſelf God;” and he was further juſtified by the Spirit raiſing him from the dead, (1 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 18;) and by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the apoſtles and diſciples, who bare witneſs to his reſurrection, and aſcenſion into heaven. During the whole of theſe amazing events, “he was ſeen of angels.” Theſe “morning-ſtars, who ſang together,” when he called the world into exiſtence, (*Job*, c. xxxviii. v. 7.) ſaw their incarnate Lord, laid as a babe in a manger, and ſang, “Glory to God in the higheſt. Peace on earth. “Good will towards men.” They ſaw him faſting forty days in the wilderneſs, and tempted of the devil; they witneſſed his agonies in the garden, and in both caſes, they were employed to miniſter unto him! They ſaw their incarnate Maker expire amidſt the moſt cruel indignities on the croſs; but with what ſenſations who can conceive! They witneſſed and attended his reſurrection and aſcenſion! They now behold his glory, ſing his praiſe, and execute his mandates; and they will at length be his attendants, when He ſhall come to judge the world. In all this they contemplate with aſtoniſhment, delight, and adoration, the infinite wiſdom, juſtice, holineſs, truth, and love of God; and deſire to look into theſe things, as more conſpicuous diſplays of the divine glory, than all his other works had exhibited. God manifeſted in the fleſh had alſo been preached to the Gentiles, as their Lord and Saviour, which was a great myſtery to the Jewiſh nation! and thus he had been believed on in the world, by many tens of thouſands of different nations, who, without the Moſaic law, were become the ſpiritual, and accepted worſhippers of Jehovah. This was the effect of his having “been received up into glory:” and proved, to a demonſtration, his exaltation to the mediatorial throne; all power in heaven and earth being given to him, as the Advocate and Interceſſor for ſinners. This important text ſeems to have been obſcured and confined in the interpretation given of it, by the attempt of ſome expoſitors to reduce the overflowings of the apoſtle's fervent ſpirit, to their own ideas of method. But the events referred to cannot be reduced to exact order of time, without evidently doing violence to the meaning of the words: and ſuch writers as St. Paul ſeldom attend to minute exactneſs. The conſtruction requires, that the firſt clauſe of the paſſage ſerve as the nominative caſe to the ſubſequent verbs. On the above interpretation the conſtruction is as follows: “God was manifeſted in the fleſh;” “God manifeſted in “the fleſh,” was juſtified by the Spirit, was ſeen of an-“gels, &c.” But the Socinians have with immenſe pains laboured to eſtabliſh another reading, to this effect: “the “myſtery of godlineſs, *which* was manifeſted in the fleſh.” According to this reading it muſt follow, “which myſ-“tery was juſtified in or by the Spirit:” “which myſ-“tery was ſeen of angels;” “which myſtery was preached “unto the Gentiles;” “which myſtery was believed on “in the world;” “which myſtery was received up “into glory.” The myſtery being manifeſted in the fleſh; and the myſtery being received up into glory are not very ſenſible propoſitions: but theſe men prefer any abſurdity to orthodoxy, eſpecially in reſpect of the perſon of Emmanuel. Indeed it is not very conſiſtent with their avowed diſlike of myſteries, to perſonify the word myſtery in this place, and put it even in the place of God our Saviour: and finally the authority for this abſurd emendation is unworthy of the leaſt regard.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The office of a miniſter is a laborious, but a good work: they, who deſire it as ſuch, from proper motives, do well; and if duly qualified, they ſhould be encouraged, and brought forward in it. But to deſire emolument or authority in the church, by intruding into this ſacred office; without either qualifications ſuited to its important duties, or any purpoſe of performing them; from indolence, ambition, and love of filthy lucre, is the vileſt of all proſtitutions, and merits the deepeſt condemnation. Let then none who deſire, or have entered into, this office; or who have any concern in admitting others into it, forget that nothing can compenſate for the want of proper motives, or a blameleſs conduct in thoſe, who miniſter in holy things. The paſtors of the Lord's flock ſhould be continent, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, given to hoſpitality, apt to teach, and remote from violent paſſions, and every kind of covetouſneſs. The more extenſive the ſphere, and the more conſpicuous the ſtation, to which any of them are called; the greater meaſure of all theſe holy diſpoſitions are requiſite: but no man can be a meet perſon for the paſtoral office in the moſt obſcure ſituation, who is unwatchful, frivolous, licentious, given to wine, greedy of gain, diſpoſed to furious anger, negligent of moral and relative duties, ſelfiſh, averſe to hoſpitality, unable or unwilling to teach the flock, &c. It would be invidious to contraſt this deſcription with the characters of thoſe, who have ſuſtained the miniſterial office, in different ages and parts of the viſible church. No order of men fulfils the duties of their ſtation: alas, none have more violated them, than nominal miniſters! However, it behoves us to look to ourſelves, and thoſe with whom we are concerned. We, who ſuſtain this office, ſhould pray without ceaſing to be enabled more fully to tranſcribe theſe rules into our lives: and the people ſhould learn to diſtinguiſh *mercenaries*, from upright diſintereſted miniſters: they ſhould make allowance for human infirmities, which are incident to all: they ſhould help their miniſters by their prayers; bleſſing God for ſuch as are faithful, and begging converting grace for ſuch as are evidently the reverſe of what they ought to be. It is incumbent upon miniſters to rule well their own houſes, and to have their children in ſubjection with all gravity. If they find this too difficult for them, “how ſhall they take care of the church of God?” And the folly, oſtentation, conformity to the world, extravagance, or ungodlineſs of a miniſter's family, will

NOW the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſsly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 Speaking lies in hypocriſy; having their conſcience ſeared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abſtain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thankſgiving of them, which believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with thankſgiving:

5 For it is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer.

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance

ſurely leſſen his own influence, and prevent his uſefulneſs, as well as his comfort. It is very wrong for novices, however eminent for abilities and gifts, to be puſhed forward prematurely into this arduous work. This hath ruined many promiſing young men, by puffing them up with pride, and ſo caſting them into the condemnation of the devil. The honour of the goſpel alſo is greatly concerned in the good report of miniſters amongſt thoſe that are without. And ſatan finds various advantages againſt thoſe who loſe their reputation, and incur the reproach of the enemies of the goſpel. Indeed all concerned in the church of the living God ſhould be grave, ſincere, upright, candid, temperate and diſintereſted; thoſe eſpecially to whom money is entruſted, and who have the charge of relieving the poor; for to rob them is one of the worſt ſpecies of diſhoneſty. The myſtery of faith will never appear reſpectable among men, except it be held in a pure conſcience. Profeſſed chriſtians ſhould therefore be proved, and found blameleſs, before they be admitted to any office in the church. Time ſpent in preparation and probation will not be loſt; and a precipitate zeal is not one of the preſcribed qualifications for the miniſtry. All connected with perſons in public ſtations in the church, ſhould be exemplary in their whole appearance and deportment. The wives of miniſters and deacons ſhould be grave and ſober, no ſlanderers, but faithful in all things. They ſhould chooſe ſuch wives; and their wives ſhould be reminded to ſtudy and practiſe theſe rules; and to aſſiſt and concur in ruling their children and houſeholds well. They who have acted faithfully and diligently in inferior ſtations, are beſt entitled to and qualified for more important ſervices; eſpecially when by enduring hardſhip and facing danger, they have attained to great boldneſs in the faith of Chriſt. Theſe things ſhould be frequently meditated upon, and prayed over, by all perſons concerned; that they may know how they ought to behave in the church of the living God, according to the relations in which they ſtand to him, to his ſaints, and to the world; that they may hold forth, and adorn the doctrine of truth, as pillars and ſupporters of it. This will be deſpiſed, or revered in great meaſure, according to the conduct of profeſſors; which will be greatly influenced by that of miniſters, their families and connexions. The importance of theſe things is therefore unſpeakable; and our watchfulneſs ought to correſpond to it. Whilſt numbers want a religion without myſtery, (which they cannot have, whoſe God is incomprehenſible); and whilſt many ſeem to make the goſpel-truths a myſtery of ungodlineſs: may we glory in the incontrovertibly great myſtery of godlineſs; and ſhew the ſanctifying efficacy of it in our lives! Let us remember that God was manifeſted in the fleſh, to take away our ſins; "to deſtroy the works of the devil; to redeem us from "all iniquity, and to purify us unto himſelf a peculiar "people, zealous of good works:" and let us recollect, that the doctrine of his myſterious Perſon and Redemption muſt be juſtified by the fruits of the Spirit, brought forth in our lives. Let us learn to contemplate his antecedent glory, his voluntary humiliation, his ſubſequent exaltation, and his future coming to judgment; till we hate ſin, deſpiſe the world, are transformed into his image, filled with his love, and prepared to join the worſhip of his holy angels: and let us ſtill pray, that he may be preached of to the nations, and believed on in the world; and ſo wait till he ſhall pleaſe to receive us to his glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—5.] To ſtir up Timothy, and others by him, to adhere ſtedfaſtly "to the great myſtery of godlineſs," the apoſtle declared, that the Holy Spirit ſpake, in the moſt expreſs and deciſive manner, that ſome, in the latter days, or under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, would apoſtatize from the true faith of the goſpel. Whether any reference was here made to the prophecies of the old teſtament is doubtful: (Notes, &c. *Dan.* c. vii. v. 23.—27. c. viii. v. 9—27. c. xi. v. 36—39:) But the apoſtle primarily intended revelations made to the new teſtament prophets, eſpecially to himſelf. This apoſtacy would be effected by men's hearkening to falſe teachers, who would be influenced by ſeducing ſpirits; and thus they would be led to embrace doctrines of devils, and to adopt ſuch notions about the ſouls of the dead, as would introduce the worſhip of ſaints as interceſſors; a ſpecies of idolatry like that of the heathens in worſhipping their departed monarchs, legiſlators, &c, as demons, or a middle order of beings between God and men. And as devils are the real objects of all worſhip paid to mere creatures; ſo this deluſion would tend to gratify the ambition of theſe apoſtate ſpirits. (Notes, &c, 1 *Cor.* c. x. v. 19, 22. *Col.* c. ii. v. 18.) Theſe doctrines and practices would be ſupported "*by the hypocriſy of lyars,*" who would invent a variety of legends, impoſe on men with pretended miracles, and revelations, cheat them by tales of purgatory, &c; and ſo carry on an infamous trade by forgery and impoſture, under the pretext of great ſanctity; to the aggrandizing of themſelves, and the deluding of the credulous multitude. Nor would theſe men feel any remorſe for any of their lies and forgeries; as the habit of villainy, under the maſk of extraordinary piety, would cauterize their conſciences, and render them entirely callous; even as external ſkin becomes by being frequently ſeared with an hot iron. To maintain their of theſe things, thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, nouriſhed up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou haſt attained.

7 But refuſe profane and old wives fables, and exerciſe thyſelf *rather* unto godlineſs.

8 For bodily exerciſe profiteth little: but godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

9 This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation.

10 For therefore we both labour and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, ſpecially of thoſe that believe.

11 Theſe things command and teach.

12 Let no man deſpiſe thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee,

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uſurpations over men's minds, and to fix a large body of men in their intereſt, by detaching them from other connexions, as well as to amuſe mankind by the appearance of uncommon ſanctity; they would diſcourage, and even forbid marriage, as if it were an unholy eſtate, and unfit for devout perſons: they would deny this liberty to numbers, eſpecially to the clergy; by means of which all kind of abominations would be introduced and connived at. They would alſo enjoin their abſtinence from this and the other kind of meat; either entirely, or on particular days and ſeaſons: by this likewiſe they would keep up their authority over men's conſciences, and impoſe upon the multitude with apparent devotion, whilſt they perpetrated all kind of iniquities, as the Phariſees had done before them. (Notes, &c. *Matt.*. c. xxiii.) But, indeed, God created every kind of wholeſome food for the uſe of man; and allowed chriſtians the uſe of it all indiſcriminately, at all times and ſeaſons, without reſtriction; and therefore any of his creatures might be received with thankſgiving by thoſe who believed the truth, and ſo far underſtood it, as to know their chriſtian liberty. For all his creatures being in themſelves good, and ſerving the purpoſes for which he made them, nothing was to be refuſed, as unclean; provided it was received with thankfulneſs: as the permiſſion of God's word, a temperate uſe of it according to his precepts, and prayer for a bleſſing upon it, ſanctified it to the believer's uſe, and to fit him for the Lord's ſervice. Every ſmatterer in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory muſt know what apoſtacy and corruption of chriſtianity moſt entirely accorded to this prediction. The Judaizing teachers and the Gnoſtics, &c contended for ſome of theſe ſuperſtitions; the myſtery of iniquity in theſe reſpects alſo did even then work; but it was reſerved for the church of Rome fully to prove the truth of the ſcriptures, by accompliſhing theſe predictions, in their moſt deteſtable enormities (2 *Theſſ.* c. ii.)

V. 6—10.) Timothy was directed not only to attend to theſe precautions himſelf; but to put his brethren in remembrance of them, that they might be upon their guard againſt every ſpecious deluſion. Thus he would be a good miniſter of Chriſt; and act as became one, who had been fully inſtructed in the words of truth and good doctrine, and who had digeſted them well, and turned them into ſpiritual nouriſhment: as he had been trained up in theſe things; and indeed he had made great proficiency in them. But he ought ſteadily to reject the impious fables, and fooliſh traditions of the Jewiſh deceivers, and others who perverted the goſpel; which were no better than the ſtories, which the weakeſt and moſt ignorant of women, when almoſt ſuperannuated, uſed to relate to amuſe children with. He ought, therefore, to treat ſuch follies with the neglect they merited, and to exerciſe himſelf by daily ſtudy, meditation, and practice, in every part of godlineſs; as conſiſting of a proper temper of mind, and conduct of life, towards God; and as obtained by ſinners, through the believing contemplation of, and dependance on the great myſtery of godlineſs. In this he muſt daily make progreſs himſelf; and this he ought to inculcate on others. For no diligence in mere externals, however laborious, ſelf-denying, or exact, could be of much uſe to any man. Even the Moſaic ceremonies had little profited the Jews in general; nor could they much avail the Jewiſh chriſtians: and human inventions muſt be ſtill more unprofitable and vain. But godlineſs, according to the principles and rules of the goſpel revelation, was profitable unto all things: it benefited the man himſelf, his connexions, the church, and ſociety; and though the promiſes of temporal proſperity to Iſrael, as annexed to their national obedience, were no longer in force, and though godlineſs might expoſe a chriſtian to many outward loſſes and perſecutions; nor were wealth, proſperity, or long life promiſed to it: yet the new covenant engaged to beſtow on believers ſuch ſpiritual peace, and ſuch abundant ſupports and conſolations; and they were under ſuch a peculiar care and protection of providence; that godlineſs might well be ſaid to have the promiſe both of this life, and of that which is to come. (*Matt.* c. vi. v. 33. c. xix. v. 29, 30.) This was therefore to be conſidered as a faithful ſaying, worthy of univerſal acceptation; for, in dependance on theſe promiſes, in experience of their accompliſhment, and in promoting godlineſs among mankind, the apoſtle and his brethren both laboured without wearying, and ſuffered reproach without fainting: becauſe they truſted in the living God: who is *the Preſerver* of all men, in reſpect of their lives, and temporal concerns, and who will therefore take eſpecial care of believers, who are intereſted in his covenanted bleſſings.

V. 11—16.] Timothy was inſtructed to enforce true godlineſs on men's conſciences, and to teach them the na-which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery.

15 Meditate upon theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto thy doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, and them that hear thee.

ture, obligation, motives, and encouragements of it: and, as he was younger than men generally were, to whom ſuch important ſervices were allotted, and probably than ſeveral of the elders at Epheſus; ſo it would be peculiarly incumbent upon him, to act with ſuch ſedateneſs and wiſdom, as might deprive every one of any pretence for deſpiſing his perſon, or admonitions, on that account. It behoved him therefore to be an example to the whole company of the believers, by a ſtedfaſt and conſiſtent adherence to the word of the goſpel, in his profeſſion and preaching; by a pious, pure, and edifying converſation; by love to the Lord, his people, and all men; by ſpirituality, by all the fruits of the holy Spirit; by a lively exerciſe of faith on the mercy, grace, promiſe, and providence of God, amidſt all hardſhips and perils; and by all purity, avoiding all approaches to, and whatever might excite ſuſpicion in reſpect of, thoſe youthful luſts, by which ſo many were contaminated. "Till the "apoſtle came to him," (which he hoped to do, though it turned out otherwiſe,) let him devote his time to the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, or whatever could add to his fund of profitable knowledge; and to exhorting and inſtructing the people in ſound doctrine, for the converſion of ſinners, and the eſtabliſhment of believers. As he had been endued with excellent gifts, which were conferred upon him according to the prophecies of inſpired men reſpecting him, when he was ſolemnly ordained to be a miniſter, and an evangeliſt, by the impoſition of the hands of the elders, as well as thoſe of the apoſtle, (who probably was preſent alſo;) let him not neglect to exerciſe and improve thoſe gifts; for ſome were thus negligent, or even made a bad uſe of them, and perhaps they were deprived of them on that account. Let him therefore aſſiduouſly, and carefully meditate on theſe things, and well conſider the various important duties, to which he was called. Let him give himſelf wholly to them," or be "*entirely in them*;" making them the one great buſineſs and pleaſure of his life, and cordially devoting all his time and abilities to this important ſervice: that ſo his growth in wiſdom, grace, and miniſterial endowments, and *in all other things*, might be manifeſt to all around him. And as he was placed amidſt various ſnares and difficulties, and had naturally the ſame deceitful heart as others had: ſo he ought to take ſpecial heed *unto himſelf*; to the ſtate of his ſoul, his own growth in grace, and his motives, temper and conduct in every thing: he ought alſo to look well to his doctrine, that it might be ſcriptural, clear, evangelical, and practical; well-ſtated, explained, defended, and applied. And whatever trials, or diſcouragements he might meet with, let him perſevere ſtedfaſtly in this courſe; and he would thus enſure his own ſalvation, help forward that of other believers, and be the inſtrument of converſion to many of thoſe, who attended on his miniſtry.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſcriptures are arranged with ſuch conſummate wiſdom, that the apoſtacies of thoſe, who give heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and teach the doctrines of devils, turn to a teſtimony to every humble believer; who reading that the Spirit ſpake expreſsly of theſe things long before, is thereby moſt fully convinced of the divine authority of the ſacred oracles. They, who allow themſelves "to ſpeak lies in hypocriſy," for their ſecular purpoſes, will gradually become callous in impiety and iniquity; as if their conſciences were ſeared with an hot iron: ſo that no deſperate infidels or profligates will be found ſo devoid of feeling and remorſe, as the ſanctified impoſtor: nor ought we to deem any enormity incredible, when properly authenticated to have been committed by men of this deſcription. Thoſe falſe teachers, that moſt neglect God's commandments, and allow themſelves and others in the moſt atrocious violations of moral and relative duties; are moſt prompt to forbid as evil, what God hath pronounced innocent and honourable; and to command that as duty, which he hath left indifferent. But the law of the Lord is exceeding broad; and we ſhall find abundant exerciſe for watchfulneſs, diligence, ſelf-denial, and mortification of the fleſh, in attending to all its holy requirements; without being laid under further reſtrictions, or taſked to imaginary duties; as if we had done all his will, and wanted more work! We ſhould therefore be upon our guard againſt ſuch impoſitions, on whatever pretence they are enforced: and whilſt we follow after purity, and exerciſe temperance in all things, according to the will of God; let us diſregard thoſe, that judge us in thoſe things, which he hath allowed. Whilſt we are ſatisfied, that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed; let us remember, that all ſhould be received with thankſgiving of them, that believe and know the truth; that even the divine allowance will not ſanctify an intemperate, inexpedient, extravagant, or unthankful uſe of the creatures; and that nothing will be good to us, except we ſeek by prayer for the Lord's bleſſing upon our enjoyment of it.

Of theſe things the brethren muſt be put in remembrance by thoſe, who would prove themſelves good miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt: and whatever other ſtudies or accompliſhment may be ſuppoſed requiſite in thoſe intended for the miniſtry; it is *above all* neceſſary, that they be nouriſhed up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine; and that they well digeſt that knowledge of the ſcripture, to which they have attained. Inſtead of amuſing ourſelves and others with ingenious fancies, and curious ſpeculations, or with enforcing human inventions and ſuperſtitions, by imaginary or fallacious explanations of their origin, meaning, and benefit; which are often "profane, and old wives fables;" we ſhould exerciſe

CHAP. V.

Contains directions 1ſt. About admoniſhing elder, and younger perſons, men, and women, 1, 2. *2d. Concerning the widows that were to be provided for, or employed by the church; the conduct of chriſtians towards their relations; and what was expedient for younger widows,* 3---16. *3d. In reſpect of the honour to be ſhewn to diligent rulers and teachers; and the manner, in which Timothy was to behave towards accuſed elders and offenders; and in the ordination of church offices; with a ſolemn charge to faithfulneſs and impartiality, &c,* 17---25.

REBUKE not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren;

2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as ſiſters, with all purity.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now ſhe that is a widow indeed, and

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ourſelves, and inſtruct others in the ſubſtantial duties of godlineſs. This, hath at all times the promiſe both of this world and of the next; and our preſent ſolid ſatisfaction, (as well as our eternal happineſs,) is inſeparably connected with it; but all elſe is vanity and vexation of ſpirit. This faithful ſaying is worthy of univerſal acceptation: apoſtles, evangeliſts, and martyrs have both laboured, endured reproach, and faced death in all its terrors, in ſupport of it, becauſe they truſted in the living God; who, being the Preſerver of all men, will ſurely take eſpecial care of thoſe that believe, and cauſe all things to work together for their eternal good. It behoves all, who command and teach theſe things, to take heed, that no man deſpiſe them: but this is eſpecially incumbent on young miniſters, when called into conſpicuous ſituations; for they will be narrowly obſerved; and many will be ready to deem them unfit for ſuch ſervices, eſpecially when they are called to inſtruct, or admoniſh their ſeniors and ſuperiors. Miniſters ſhould alſo be careful to confirm and elucidate their inſtructions by their example; and thus to lead forward believers to ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith, holineſs of converſation, fervent love, ſpirituality, fidelity, integrity and purity. Their time ſhould be employed in reading and meditating on the ſcriptures, in acquiring religious knowledge, and in communicating it by the public, and private duties of their miniſtry. This will leave them no leiſure for diſſipated pleaſures, trifling viſits, or idle converſation; and but little for amuſing, and mere ornamental ſtudies. That meaſure of endowment which God hath given them for that work, to which they were ſet apart, and ſolemnly devoted themſelves, when ordained by the laying on of the hands of the paſtors of the church, muſt not be neglected, or left to decreaſe by diſuſe; but muſt be diligently exerciſed, and improved. Alas, we cannot but reflect with grief of heart, that ſo few of thoſe called miniſters, ſeem ſo much as to have ever ſeriouſly read theſe directions! And that their method of ſpending their time, the ſubject of their ſtudies, the object of their purſuits, and the buſineſs and pleaſure of their lives, form a perfect contraſt to what they ought to be! But may the Lord have mercy upon each of us, and write theſe admonitions in our inmoſt ſouls! May we meditate continually on them! May our thoughts and affections be engroſſed by them! May we give ourſelves wholly unto them, that our profiting may appear unto all men! Let every miniſter then, hear the apoſtle call upon him to "take heed to "himſelf," as one that muſt give account; to look to it, that he experience the power of the goſpel in his own ſoul, and bring forth the fruits of it in his life; that his motives, tempers, words, and works be pure, and evangelical; that his doctrine be ſcriptural, that he declare the whole counſel of God, and that he manifeſt his truth to every man's conſcience, as in the ſight of his heart-ſearching Judge: and let every one, who hath thus begun his miniſtry, perſevere in this holy living, and faithful preaching; however deſpiſed, reviled, oppoſed, or diſcouraged he may be: for in ſo doing, he ſhall both ſave his own ſoul, and thoſe of his attentive hearers: whilſt blind guides, and mercenary teachers can only expect to go before their deluded followers into the pit of everlaſting deſtruction.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1, 2.] The connexion of the word "elder" in this place hath induced expoſitors in general to underſtand it of ſenior chriſtians, as well as of paſtors. We muſt alſo conclude that the apoſtle ſpake of ſuch faults, as reſulted from infirmity, and were not openly ſcandalous; or we ſhall not be able to reconcile it with what follows. (v. 20.) As Timothy was young, it was peculiarly incumbent on him to avoid harſhneſs, in animadverting on the miſconduct of aged chriſtians or miniſters: he ought not therefore to rebuke them; but to intreat them to act with greater circumſpection, and endeavour modeſtly to convince them of the impropriety and bad effects of the miſtakes, into which they had been betrayed; even as a ſon placed in authority would addreſs an honoured parent, who had not acted with due regard to his character and ſituation. In reproving young men, or miniſters, it would be proper to ſpeak with great meekneſs and affection, and to admoniſh them as brethren. The elder women he muſt counſel, and caution, as dutiful ſons in ſuch ſtations would their mothers; and he ſhould behave towards the younger women with that kind of regard and affection, which are borne to ſiſters; and with all purity, that nothing contrary to the ſtricteſt decorum might attend his miniſterial converſe with them.

V. 3—8.] The apoſtle next directed, that the aged widows, who were deſtitute, &c, ſhould be honourably treated and provided for. But if any widow had children or *grandchildren*, who were capable of relieving her; they ought to be required, as a duty of the firſt importance, to ſhew piety, or a reſpectful and grateful affection, *at home*; re-deſolate, truſteth in God, and continueth in ſupplications and prayers night and day.

6 But ſhe that liveth in pleaſure is dead while ſhe liveth.

7 And theſe things give in charge, that they may be blameleſs.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and ſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threeſcore years old, having been the wife of one man;

10 Well reported of for good works; if ſhe have brought up children, if ſhe have lodged ſtrangers, if ſhe have waſhed the ſaints' feet, if ſhe have relieved the afflicted, if ſhe have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuſe: for when they have begun to wax wanton againſt Chriſt they will marry;

12 Having damnation, becauſe they have caſt off their firſt faith,

13 And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from houſe to houſe; and not only idle, but tattlers alſo, and buſy-bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the houſe, give none occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully;

15 For ſome are already turned aſide after Satan.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

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quiting the tender, laborious and expenſive care of their parents towards them in infancy and childhood, by providing for them in their old age: for that was good in itſelf, a debt due to them, and an acceptable ſervice to God, even in preference to any other charitable work. Now the widow indeed, whom the apoſtle peculiarly intended, was one, who was really deſolate, without the means of procuring a decent ſubſiſtence, and having no relations capable of maintaining her: at the ſame time ſhe was one, who truſted in God to provide for her, and uſed no improper methods of obtaining a ſupport; but devoted herſelf to his ſervice, in continual prayers and ſupplications, ſtated and occaſional, public and private, and even by night as well as by day; taking great delight therein, and employing herſelf very much in ſupplicating God, in behalf of her fellow-chriſtians, and all around her. (*Luke*, c. ii. v. 37.) But any one, who lived a delicate, luxurious, ſelf-indulgent, diſſipated life, muſt be conſidered as dead in ſin, and only alive to worldly pleaſure; and was not therefore entitled to any aſſiſtance from the church. Timothy was directed to give theſe things in charge to the paſtors and deacons; that the body of profeſſing chriſtians at Epheſus might be preſerved blameleſs; that no encouragement might be given, even by means of their benevolence, to ſuch perſons as were a ſcandal to them. But if any man refuſed to provide for his own near relations, eſpecially for his wife, children, and houſhold, being able to do it; or would not labour, that he might be enabled to ſupport them; or if any one through covetouſneſs, extravagance, or ſelf-indulgence, neglected ſo eſſential a duty; he was to be conſidered as one that had renounced the profeſſion of the faith, by manifeſtly and habitually refuſing to obey Chriſt; nay, he acted more diſgracefully and unreaſonably than an unbeliever would do in ſuch circumſtances. It is obſervable, that covetous people moſt grievouſly pervert this text: whilſt a man evidently violates the duties of piety, equity, and charity, as well as that of providing for his indigent relations; yea whilſt he brings up his children, and maintains his family in a manner utterly unſuitable to his circumſtances, from eagerneſs to amaſs riches; he will often quote this verſe, in excuſe or vindication of his ſordid avarice, and imagine that the apoſtle commanded men to neglect all other duties, in order to enrich their children! (v. 16.)

V. 9—16.] The apoſtle could not here mean, that no widows were to be relieved, who were under ſixty years of age: for the diſtreſſes of younger widows, as well as of other poor perſons, might be very urgent. He is therefore generally ſuppoſed to refer to a certain number of widows, who were diſcharged from all ſecular cares, and maintained by the church; of whom ſuch, as were able, acted as deaconeſſes, to viſit ſick and poor women, and to adminiſter relief and counſel to them; or to attend on ſuch other concerns of the church, its miniſters and pious ſtrangers, as lay within their province. Though no command be given for ſuch an order of perſons in the church; (for many things of this kind are left diſcretionary, and to be determined according to circumſtances;) yet they might frequently be uſeful, if properly ſelected and regulated. In this view the propriety of the rule here given is apparent, and will ſhortly be illuſtrated. As the apoſtle allows, or even counſels the younger women, with reference to young widows, to marry; we can ſcarce imagine, that he would exclude them when grown old, from the number here intended, if otherwiſe qualified, merely becauſe they had followed his counſel: by "the wife of one man," therefore, it is not generally thought, that the apoſtle meant to exclude ſuch, as had married a ſecond time; which the ſcripture no where diſallows. But there were ſtrange irregularities, in this reſpect, among the heathen women; they frequently left their huſbands to live with other men, and then ſometimes returned to them again; they often gave them juſt cauſe to divorce them, that they might take other huſbands while they were living; nay they ſometimes did what was equivalent to divorcing their huſbands; nor were theſe things deemed ſcandalous

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the ſcripture ſaith, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

19 Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation, but before two or three witneſſes.

20 Them that ſin rebuke before all, that others alſo may fear.

21 I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect angels, that thou

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in that degree, which they would be at preſent. If then any woman had formerly lived in this irregular manner; it would not be conſiſtent with the credit of chriſtianity for her to be admitted into this ſelect number of devoted widows, though no other objection lay againſt her: and it was to be limited to thoſe, who had lived virtuouſly and honourably in the married ſtate. (c. iii. v. 2, 12.) They were alſo to be ſuch women, as had an eſtabliſhed character for good works, ſince they were converted. Thoſe were to be preferred, who had charitably educated the children of their poor relatives or neighbours; or who had faithfully done their duty towards their own children; who had hoſpitably entertained ſtrangers in their houſes, when in more proſperous circumſtances; who had willingly ſtooped to the mean office of waſhing the feet of the ſaints, when wearied with travelling; and who had, from love to Chriſt, readily relieved the afflicted, and diligently attended to every good work. Theſe perſons, when grown old, and left deſolate, were the proper perſons for this ſervice. But Timothy was directed to reject the application of younger widows: for experience ſhewed, that their purpoſes of no more entering into the married ſtate were not to be depended on. After a time, when their grief on account of their former loſs was ſubſided, various circumſtances might induce them to incline to marry again: and as their entrance into the number of devoted widows implied an engagement to the contrary, and probably was attended by ſome promiſe to this effect: ſo their violation of it might be called, "a "waxing wanton againſt Chriſt," by leading them to be unfaithful to him for the ſake of ſome earthly object. Thus their engagement would ſerve only to their condemnation, by occaſioning their violation of that fidelity to Chriſt, which they had previouſly promiſed: the church would ſee it neceſſary to cenſure them, and their ſin would expoſe them to condemnation, if not repented of. Some think, that they would he tempted to apoſtatize from the faith, by marrying heathens: and this ſeems to have been the caſe with ſome of this deſcription. For perhaps chriſtians would not be diſpoſed to marry thoſe, who had entered into this number; and if their inclinations led them to marry, their ſituation might expoſe them peculiarly to this temptation. It might moreover be feared, and experience had ſhewn there was danger, leſt younger widows, being ſo early freed from the employments of domeſtic life, and having much leiſure, ſhould neglect to ſpend it in devotion, and the duties of their ſtation; and ſo contract habits of idleneſs, and waſte their hours in ſauntering from houſe to houſe, as trifling viſitants, tattling and goſſipping about the news of the day, and intermeddling with other peoples affairs, ſpreading ſlanders, and ſpeaking many things of a miſchievous, and improper nature. (2 *Theſs.* c. iii. v. 11.) We are not to ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle meant, that all the younger widows who were employed in this ſervice, acted in this manner: but it was an evil incident to that practice, and formed a ſufficient reaſon for excluding them. He therefore determined that it was better to leave them at liberty, if they choſe it, and circumſtances admitted, to marry, that they might be occupied in the uſeful duties of wives and mothers, and in domeſtic buſineſs: that ſo no occaſion might be given to any adverſaries of the goſpel, to ſpeak reproachfully of it; through the miſconduct of ſuch, as profeſſed to be peculiarly devoted to the ſervice of Chriſt. For indeed ſome younger widows, being improperly admitted into this number, had turned aſide to follow the ſuggeſtions of Satan, had married unbelieving huſbands, and ſo relapſed into idolatry. The apoſtle's determination, that no widow under 60 years of age ſhould be admitted into this ſelect number of devoted women, leſt their uſeleſs lives, and miſconduct ſhould occaſion ſcandal; concludes very ſtrongly againſt all vows of virginity &c, taken by young perſons, under pretence of more ſtrict religion, than can be practiſed in the married ſtate. In cloſing this ſubject the apoſtle required every believer, man, or woman, that was able, to relieve ſuch widows belonging to their families, as were deſtitute; that the church might not be burdened with them, or prevented from relieving ſuch as were entirely deſtitute and friendleſs.

V. 17, 18.] Some perſons infer from theſe verſes, that there were ruling elders in the church, who did not preach; others do not allow the inference. As double honour chiefly relates to a more plentiful and decent maintenance; ſo it is improbable, that mere rulers, who would not be much taken off from their ſecular buſineſs, ſhould be thus maintained at the expence of their brethren. To preſide in the affairs of the church, and to preach the word, even the doctrine of Chriſt conſtituted the outlines of the paſtoral office: the direction ſeems therefore to mean, that they, who ruled moſt prudently, faithfully, and diligently; and were moſt laborious in their miniſtry, ſhould be moſt reſpected, and beſt provided for: eſpecially they, who were moſt unwearied in preaching, and private exhortation; as the exerciſe of authority was more ſuited to the natural diſpoſition of the human heart. (1 *Cor.* c. ix.)

V. 19, 20.] The character of an elder, or paſtor was of great importance; it would therefore be improper to receive an accuſation againſt him, except it were atteſted by two or three credible witneſſes. Many might be diſpoſed to revile thoſe faithful miniſters, whoſe doctrine and reproofs had offended them; and therefore the report of an individual was not to be credited againſt him; as it would not preponderate againſt his denial of the crime alledged. But in reſpect of thoſe, who were evidently

obſerve theſe things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 Lay hands ſuddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's ſins: keep thyſelf pure.

23 Drink no longer water, but uſe a little wine for thy ſtomach's ſake and thine often infirmities.

24 Some men's ſins are open before-hand, going before to judgment; and ſome *men* they follow after.

25 Likewiſe alſo the good works *of ſome* are manifeſt beforehand; and they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid.

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guilty of ſome ſcandalous offence, whether elders or others; Timothy, as preſiding in the church, was required to rebuke them before all their brethren; not only in order to their being made aſhamed, and brought to repentance; but that others might fear the ſame cenſure, and ſo be rendered more circumſpect.

V. 21, 22.] The apoſtle next moſt ſolemnly charged Timothy, as in the preſence of God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and as he hoped to join the company of the elect angels; who had been preſerved and confirmed in holineſs, when their companions were left to apoſtatize and to ruin themſelves; who then witneſſed his conduct, and would attend when he ſhould give an account of it to his ſovereign Judge: that he obſerved theſe things, with the utmoſt care, and exactneſs, whatever oppoſition and trials he might thus incur; and that in all theſe regulations he took care not to prefer one man to another, through any carnal affection, attachment, connexion, or obligations; and that he ſhewed no partiality either in cenſuring offenders, or ordaining elders, &c. In the latter caſe eſpecially he muſt be careful not to act in an haſty manner; but to take time to examine into men's characters, principles, motives, and endowments; that he might not be induced to lay hands on improper perſons, by any applications or importunity employed in their behalf. He would need great care in this matter to avoid being partaker of other men's ſins, and becoming anſwerable, in part at leaſt, for the ſins of thoſe, who thus intruded into that ſacred function, to the diſhonour of God, the great detriment of the church, and the ruin of men's ſouls: as even an obliging and eaſy temper might betray him into much criminality; from which he muſt by all means keep himſelf pure. It is manifeſt, that Timothy is here and elſewhere ſuppoſed to poſſeſs great authority in the Epheſian church, both in ſuperintending the elders already ordained, and in ordaining others, &c. It is allowed that he was an extraordinary perſon eſpecially appointed by the apoſtle to this ſervice; but there is no proof, that he conferred miraculous powers by the impoſition of his hands, as the apoſtles did. We can by no means infer the divine right of epiſcopacy, (eſpecially of modern epiſcopacy,) from the authority exerciſed by Timothy, Titus, and probably other evangeliſts: yet it is likely, that it was ſoon found expedient and conducive to peace, to have ſome ſtated preſiding inſpector, of approved wiſdom and piety, who might ſuperintend the paſtors, and affairs of a few neighbouring churches, as a ſort of moderator and cenſor; and be peculiarly attended to in the appointment of church officers; hence a kind of moderate epiſcopacy was very early, perhaps even whilſt ſome of the apoſtles lived, generally prevalent in the church. And after all the abuſes, uſurpations, controverſies, and prejudices, that have ſince taken place; perhaps the time will ere long arrive, when experience will convince godly men of a different perſuaſion, that ſomething of this kind, properly conferred, limited, and exerciſed, would prove a proper remedy to thoſe multiplied diviſions, which ſo weaken and diſgrace many religious ſocieties, that in doctrine, worſhip, and practice are in all other reſpects unexceptionable. This at leaſt is the writer's judgment of this ſubject, collected chiefly in a courſe of years from the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, and obſervation of facts: and as he does not think any ſpecies of external church government to be excluſively of divine authority; as he is little connected with any kind, and little intereſted in the determination of ſuch controverſies; ſo he hopes, that he impartially deſires that form to be adopted, and to prevail, which may moſt tend to the peace and purity of the church.

V. 23. *Drink*, &c.] This verſe is a remarkable inſtance of the apoſtle's neglect of exact method, in penning his epiſtles. It occurred to his mind, when reflecting on Timothy's manifold cares and labours, that his frequent indiſpoſitions might be increaſed by his too great abſtemiouſneſs; to the prevention of his uſefulneſs, and the ſhortening of his days. He therefore brake in upon his ſubject, to counſel him not to drink water alone any longer; but to uſe a little wine to ſtrengthen his ſtomach, and preſerve his health. We may hence form an eſtimate of the exact temperance practiſed by theſe laborious ſervants of Chriſt, who ſo zealouſly pleaded the cauſe of chriſtian liberty, who placed no dependance on ſuch matters, and who never preſcribed their own conduct as a rule for other men!

V. 24, 25.] In reſpect of the ordination of miniſters, or the cenſuring of offenders it might further be obſerved; that ſome men's crimes were ſo notorious, and ſo eaſily proved, that they lay open before-hand, and anticipated the judgments which was to be formed of their conduct and their pretenſions. In other caſes they followed after, ſo that diligent and impartial inveſtigation would be requiſite in order to detect them: and thus it would ſometimes happen, that the diſcovery might be made after the deciſion had taken place. In like manner, ſome perſons applying for admiſſion into the public ſervice of the church, had a ſufficient teſtimonial in their known, and abundant good works, which were manifeſt before any peculiar enquiry was made: and when this was not the caſe, yet upon due inveſtigation Timothy and others might become acquainted with them: ſo that in moſt inſtances an impartial attention to the buſineſs, without any reſpect of perſons, would enable them to know who were, and who were not eligible to ſuch public ſtations.

CHAP. VI.

Contains 1ſt. Directions to ſervants; and for the conduct of Timothy reſpecting thoſe, that perverted the goſpel, 1---5. *2d. The advantage of godlineſs with contentment, and the miſchiefs reſulting from the love of money,* 6---10. *3d. Exhortations to Timothy to ſhun this, and to follow after righteouſneſs, &c; a ſolemn charge to him to be faithful; and an admonition for him, to charge rich men to avoid pride, and confidence in their wealth, and to abound in liberality, &c,* 11---21.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is a reſpect due to the aged, which muſt not be with-held by their juniors, when placed in authority over them, or even on account of their incidental faults: every thing harſh and aſſuming muſt be improper in the conduct of younger miniſters towards their ſeniors in ſuch circumſtances; even as it would be in the conduct of a ſon to his parents: and admonitions are generally moſt efficacious, whether to old or young, when meekneſs and affection unite with firmneſs and faithfulneſs. The greateſt caution and purity are requiſite in the conduct of miniſters, (eſpecially when in youth,) in their moſt needful converſe with the younger women in their congregations: that all occaſion, appearance, and ſuſpicion of evil may be prevented. It is an indiſpenſible duty for children, and grand children, to requite the kindneſs of their aged parents; this is good and acceptable with God; nor are more diſtant relations exempt from a meaſure of the ſame obligation when they can afford it; that neither the church, the pariſh or the public may be charged; but that the contributions raiſed in any way, may be applied to ſuch as are really deſtitute. But if any profeſſor of the goſpel, through ſloth, improvidence, ſelfiſhneſs, or other corrupt principle, wilfully neglect or refuſe to provide for his wife, children, or other near connexions: he is in the apoſtle's judgment, virtually a denier of the faith, and even worſe than his neighbours who do not pretend to believe the doctrines of grace. Aged widows and others of good character who are left deſtitute in the decline of life, ought to be honoured, as well as ſupported. It ſeems the intent of theſe ſcriptures to teach us, that every religious ſociety ſhould, as far as it is able, make proviſion for perſons of this deſcription, and not leave them to ſordid penury, or to the tender mercies of the wicked, in their old age. But then this proviſion ſhould be limited to ſuch as "truſt in God, "and devote themſelves to his ſervice, in prayer and ſupplication night and day," at leaſt to ſuch, as give evidence, that they are more than mere profeſſors, and of a different character, than thoſe "who live in pleaſure, "being dead whilſt they live." Alas, what numbers are there of this deſcription among nominal chriſtians, even to the lateſt period of life! And how much does the ſame eaven work among profeſſors of the goſpel. Theſe hings we muſt give in charge, that the church may be reſerved blameleſs: or at leaſt, that we may deliver our wn ſouls. Every one who is brought forth into notoety in the church ſhould, as much as poſſible, be free om ſcandal: many are proper objects of charity, who ught not to be employed in public ſervices. They, who in omeſtic life have ſhewn moſt diligence, humility, comſſion, benevolence, love to the Lord's people, and readiſs for every good work, are moſt likely to fill up leiſure me profitably, and to be faithful in whatever is entruſted them. It is not ſufficient to determine what would be ſt in itſelf, of things not abſolutely obligatory or unlawful: the ſtate of human nature, and facts muſt be attended to, that it may be known what is moſt generally expedient. It might have ſeemed plauſible to have admitted the younger widows to ſuch a ſervice in the church, as implied an entire devoting of themſelves to religion for the reſt of their days: yet the apoſtle, not only with the wiſdom derived from deep reflection, and extenſive obſervation, but under the influence of the divine Spirit, decided otherwiſe. He knew that this would expoſe them to temptation, and lead many of them into ſin: that it would tend to enſnare many of them in improper marriages, and even occaſion their apoſtacy and ruin; that it would give others of them an habit of indolence, ſauntering, goſſipping, intruding into matters not belonging to them, and improper converſation: and that it would therefore, be generally better for them to be employed in the duties of the married ſtate, and in the cares of a family; that this would give leſs occaſion to the enemies of the goſpel to ſpeak reproachfully, and ſatan leſs opportunity of prevailing againſt them. And numbers have ſhewn their ignorance of human nature, and done immenſe miſchief, by attempting to improve on, or rather to ſubvert his plan.

The office of miniſter is honourable to all, who are not a diſgrace to their office: but the moſt prudent, faithful and diligent, eſpecially the moſt laborious in the word and doctrine, ought to be moſt honoured and beſt provided for. However, the reverſe proportion ſeems generally adopted in this matter! But the Lord will provide for his faithful ſervants, whatever method men may adopt in diſpoſing of their favours. It may be expected that the impartial public reprover will be expoſed to the attacks of malicious calumniators; and, though his faults ſhould not be connived at; yet accuſations againſt him ſhould not be regarded, except well authenticated: but they that give public offence by their crimes, ſhould be rebuked publicly, that others may be put upon their guard. All, who are employed in important ſervices in the church, ſhould conſider themſelves as charged by the apoſtle, "before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the "elect angels, to obſerve thoſe things, without preferring "one before another, &c." The neglect of this rule, in the exerciſe of eccleſiaſtical authority, has given its opponents one of their beſt arguments againſt it. So much hath been done out of carnal reſpects, and by partiality to relatives, friends, and connexions, in admitting men into the miniſtry, appointing them to church livings, and conniving at their crimes; that the exerciſe of all authority of this kind has been conſidered as unlawful. How far the parties concerned are culpable, in reſpect of "laying hands ſuddenly" on improper perſons, without due enquiry and circumſpection, or from complaiſance to ſuperiors, or friends; and how far this rule is obſerved, or violated in all its extent; every man's conſcience muſt determine for himſelf, till Chriſt ſhall come to take an

LET as many ſervants as are under the yoke count their own maſters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blaſphemed:

2 And they that have believing maſters, let them not deſpiſe *them*, becauſe they are brethren; but rather do *them* ſervice, becauſe they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. Theſe things teach and exhort.

3 If any man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholeſome words, *even* the words o our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the doctrin which is according to godlineſs;

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions, and ſtrifes of words whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evi ſurmiſings,

5 Perverſe diſputings of men, of corrup minds, and deſtitute of the truth, ſuppoſing tha gain is godlineſs: from ſuch withdraw thyſelf

account of his ſervants. But it is certain that immenſe criminality muſt reſt ſomewhere; as the multitude of ignorant, ſlothful, ambitious, avaricious, and immoral clergy-men, who remain uncenſured throughout the land, moſt manifeſtly proves. There muſt be thoſe ſomewhere, that are in this reſpect "partakers of other men's "ſins;" and it muſt require great care and conſcientiouſneſs for any one abſolutely to keep himſelf pure. But the rules are of equal obligation on all others concerned in the choice and ordination of miniſters, or in the management of church affairs. It is extremely difficult in all ſuch matters to "do nothing by partiality:" this will require circumſpection, firmneſs, intrepidity, diſintereſted zeal and the meekneſs of wiſdom; which cannot be obtained without much fervent prayer. Theſe things muſt be carefully obſerved by thoſe, who would not be partakers of other men's ſins; as every perſon concerned muſt feel in proportion to his conſcientiouſneſs. However they, who honeſtly deſire to do their duty, will generally be directed in it: ſome men's ſins will be diſcovered at once, going before to judgment; others require more diligent ſearch: whilſt the good works of others are manifeſt; and they that are otherwiſe, may yet be known upon due enquiry: ſo that a ſufficient judgment may generally be formed for the regulation of our conduct; if our minds be free from prejudice and partiality. Finally let us obſerve, that eminent grace will connect the ſtricteſt temperance with the moſt fervent zeal for the liberty of the goſpel: that it is the duty of every one to uſe proper means for the preſervation of his health, and life, as a debt he owes to the church, the community, and his family: and that they, who are frequently infirm, who labour abundantly in important ſervices, and whoſe earneſtneſs in ſpiritual things, induces a diſregard to animal indulgence, ſhould follow the advice of thoſe, who give them proper directions for a due regard to their health.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1—5.] (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. vi. v. 5—8. *Col.* c. iii. v. 22—25.) The apoſtle next directed, that chriſtians, who were under the yoke of ſlavery, ſhould quietly attend to the duties of their lowly ſituation; counting their own maſters worthy of, or entitled to, all that reſpect, fidelity, and obedience, which their ſuperior relation demanded; and not ſuppoſing that their religious knowledge, privileges, or liberty, gave them a right to deſpiſe their heathen maſters, to diſobey their lawful commands, or to expoſe their faults to their neighbours. This they were to attend to, that the name o God might not be blaſphemed, and his truth and worſhip reviled among the Gentiles, by means of the failur in acknowledged duties of chriſtian ſervants. And ſuc of them as enjoyed the privilege of living with believin maſters, were directed not to deſpiſe them, or with-hol from them due reſpect and obedience; becauſe they wer brethren in Chriſt, and ſo, upon a level; in reſpect of religious privileges: but rather to do them ſervice, wit double diligence and chearfulneſs, becauſe of their fait in Chriſt, and their intereſt in his love; as partakers o the ineſtimable benefit of his free ſalvation. This ſhews that chriſtian maſters were not required to ſet their ſlave at liberty; though they were inſtructed to behave toward them in ſuch a manner, as would greatly leſſen the evil of ſlavery. But ſuch a requiſition at that time woul have excited great confuſion, awakened the jealouſy o the civil powers, and greatly retarded the progreſs o chriſtianity: though the principles both of the law an the goſpel, when carried to their conſequences, will infallibly aboliſh ſlavery. Theſe things Timothy was to teac and enforce as matters of the greateſt importance: and i any perſons taught otherwiſe, and conſented not to ſuc ſalutary words, which were indeed the words of Chri ſpeaking by him, and an eſſential part of the doctrin according to godlineſs; he was to be conſidered as a ſelf-conceited ignorant man; who, being puffed up with an opinion of his own abilities, was ambitious of diſtinction an applauſe, though entirely unacquainted with the real nature and tendency of the goſpel. What ſet of men the apo tle referred to is not abſolutely certain: but as many of th Jews deemed it unlawful to ſubmit to heathen governor ſo the Judaizing teachers probably inculcated that God people ought not to obey heathen maſters, and paid the court to ſervants by perſuading them that they ought aſſert their liberty. But there might be others alſo, wh treated ſuch practical matters as low and legal; whil their attention was taken up with curious and nice ſpec lations, and diſtinctions. Such perſons, however, we to be conſidered as doting, or *raving*, (like men in the d lirium of a fever,) about hard queſtions, and diſputes words, names, forms, or notions, which had no conne ion with the power of godlineſs: on the contrary th tended to excite envy and competition between one and nother, angry conteſts for victory and pre-eminence, m tual revilings and calumnies, injurious ſuſpicions a jealouſies; and abſurd, obſtinate, and violent controve ſies between men of corrupt and carnal minds, who w

6 But godlineſs with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a ſnare, and *into* many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee theſe things: and follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art alſo called, and haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes.

13 I give thee charge in the ſight of God,

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deſtitute of the real knowledge of the truth and it's ſanctifying efficacy; and who only ſought their own ſecular advantage: ſuppoſing religion to be valuable in proportion as it tended to enrich them; as if gain and godlineſs had been but two names for the ſame thing. Thus they wanted to perſuade the chriſtian ſervants, that the recovery of their liberty was to be conſidered, as their valuable chriſtian privilege, whatever confuſion ſuch pretenſions might occaſion: and from the ſame principle; they ſought worldly lucre by their religious profeſſion, and as their leading object. From ſuch men Timothy was to withdraw himſelf; and neither have acquaintance with them, nor ſpend his time in diſputing againſt them.

V. 6—10.] The propoſition before-mentioned, "that "gain is godlineſs," might be reverſed, and ſo contain a moſt important truth. Godlineſs, connected with a contented mind, was indeed very great gain, (Note, c. iv. v. 8. *Phil.* c. iv. v. 10—13;) as it tended to a man's preſent comfort, and everlaſting benefit, whatever his outward circumſtances were. For men brought nothing into the world with them, but were born helpleſs and deſtitute, except as providence ſupplied all their wants: and it was moſt certain that no man could take any thing along with him when he left the world. So that a ſubſiſtence during his journey was the utmoſt that any man could have of earthly things, and a very mean and ſcanty proviſion would anſwer that end as well as a more luxurious and abundant one, and occaſion leſs temptation and ſin. Moreover in a ſhort time all theſe things would be finally done with: whereas godlineſs would ſoon iſſue in eternal felicity. Having therefore food and raiment, and things barely needful for the preſent, they ought to be content and ſatisfied with them; without indulging any deſires of acquiring greater affluence, or of being exempted from hard labour, and mean fare: ſeeing diſcontent in a lowly ſituation commonly produced a determination to be rich if poſſible, and led men out of the plain path of honeſt induſtry and prudent economy, in dependance on the providence, and obedience to the commandment of God. Thus they that *would* at any rate be rich gave ſatan the opportunity of tempting and enſnaring them into ſuch actions, as could not conſiſt with godlineſs, or a good conſcience; urging them to uſe diſhoneſt means of increaſing their gains, and a variety of ſhuffling and fraudulent practices; it betrayed them into ſuch a multiplicity of employments, and ſuch a hurry of buſineſs, as left no time, nor inclination for ſpiritual religion; and it led them into ſuch connexions and companies, as tended to draw them ſtill further into ſin and folly. Thus men were brought under the power of "many fooliſh and hurt- "ful luſts," even "the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the "eye and the pride of life;" which mocked their expectations, and proved moſt injurious to themſelves and others; until they were thereby plunged into inevitable ruin and eternal perdition: as men are drawn in by the vortex of a whirlpool, when they venture too near it, and ſo are ſwallowed and drowned without any poſſibility of eſcape. For when once "the love of money" is permitted to ſpring up in the heart, it becomes the prolific root of all kinds of evil. Thus impoſtures, frauds, lies, thefts, oppreſſions, murders, ſelfiſhneſs, ungodlineſs, hypocriſy, apoſtacy, contention, law-ſuits, wars, cruelty, pride, luxury, ſenſuality, or penurious avarice, are ſome of the noxious weeds, of which it daily produces a moſt abundant increaſe, according to the different conſtitutions, habits, and circumſtances of mankind. Every ſpecies of impiety, iniquity, and vice, in one way or other, grows from it, and a large proportion of the miſeries, as well as the crimes of mankind originate from the ſame ſource. And whilſt ſome profeſſors of chriſtianity, even in the apoſtle's days, had coveted riches, they had been ſeduced into apoſtacy, or led to corrupt the faith, or to act groſſly inconſiſtent with it: and thus "they had pierced themſelves through," (as with wounds made by a ſword, in every part of the body;) ſo that even thoſe, who were not finally ruined, were filled with many ſorrows, and muſt endure the moſt exquiſite anguiſh, in conſequence of their folly. All this, they would have avoided, if they had been contented with food and raiment, and watched with prayer againſt the deſire of being rich.

V. 11, 12.] According to the language of the old teſtament concerning the ancient prophets, the apoſtle addreſſed Timothy as a "Man of God," one devoted to, and employed by him as his ambaſſador to mankind: and he exhorted him to flee, without delay, or looking back, to the utmoſt diſtance from this deſtructive whirlpool, in which ſo many loſt their ſouls; and to follow after more entire conformity to the perfect rule of univerſal righteouſneſs, by an upright, faithful conduct towards all men; a proper temper and conduct towards God in every thing; a lively faith in Chriſt and the divine promiſes in him, as well as faithfulneſs in his ſtewardſhip; love to the Lord, to his brethren, and mankind;

who quickeneth all things, and *before* Chriſt Jeſus, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion;

14 That thou keep *this* commandment without ſpot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

15 Which in his times he ſhall ſhew, *who is* the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of all lords:

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee: to whom *be* honour and power everlaſting. Amen.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good

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patience under ſufferings, and meekneſs amidſt injuries, &c. Thus let him fight with conſecrated armour "the good fight of faith;" maintaining the honourable and profitable conflict againſt ſin, the world and ſatan, to which the goſpel animated him: let him contend earneſtly in faith for the prize, by ſelf-denying obedience, mortification of ſin, reſiſting temptation, enduring hardſhip and perſecution, and uſing every means of weakening ſatan's kingdom, and advancing that of Chriſt in the world. Thus let him preſs forward with all earneſtneſs, till he laid hold in actual poſſeſſion of eternal life; whereunto he, as well as the apoſtle, had been called by the ſpecial grace of God; and had, in conſequence, made an honourable profeſſion of the truth, before many witneſſes, at his baptiſm, when ordained to the miniſtry, and eſpecially in his ſubſequent labours and ſufferings as a preacher of the goſpel.

V. 13—16.] To fix Timothy's purpoſe of perſevering amidſt his various trials and perils, the apoſtle ſolemnly charged him, as "in the ſight of God, who quickeneth "all things," and could therefore preſerve his life, however expoſed, and would certainly raiſe him again to immortal glory, if he laid it down in his cauſe; and "before Jeſus Chriſt," who had boldly borne witneſs to the truth, and avowed himſelf the Son of God and the King of Iſrael in the preſence of Pilate, when he knew that he ſhould be crucified for maintaining that claim; who required his ſervants, thus conſtantly to confeſs him before men; and who had promiſed to own them, who did ſo, before his Father and the holy angels: as in the ſight of God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he charged him to keep the commandment before given, or the truſt committed to him, without the ſpot or blemiſh of any miſcarriage, neglect, unfaithfulneſs, or declining his duty, from fear of man, or love of the world; that he might be "unrebukeable;" that his brethren might ſee nothing to reprove in him, that the world might have nothing to ſay againſt him, and that his Lord might welcome him as a good and faithful ſervant. In this let him perſevere, till "the appearing of the Lord Jeſus;" which, in his appointed ſeaſon, He would diſplay in the ſight of the whole world, who was "the bleſſed," or moſt happy, "and only Potentate," poſſeſſed of abſolute, univerſal and eternal dominion, "the King of kings, and Lord of lords;" from whom all power and authority were derived and delegated; (*Matt.* c. vi. v. 13;) who alone poſſeſſed immortality, in and of himſelf, having underived, unalienable, and unchangeable exiſtence, perfection and felicity; who inhabited the "light itſelf," being ſurrounded with ſuch reſplendent glories, that no man could poſſibly approach to him, (except as revealed to ſinners in, and by his incarnate Son, whom no man ever did, or ever can ſee with his bodily eyes,) being a Spirit, and the object of intellectual viſion alone; to whom honour and power everlaſting were to be aſcribed by all intelligent creatures. Amen. The Godhead itſelf ſeems to be here intended and adored, without diſtinction of Perſons; of which all theſe things are properly ſpoken, whether the Perſon of the Father, of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit be mentioned. But the inviſible God is revealed to us, only in, and through the human nature of Chriſt, as the only-begotten Son of the Father: and this diſplay of the divine glory will be rendered moſt illuſtrious, when Chriſt ſhall be ſeen as man, exerciſing all the power, authority, and perfections of God, by the whole aſſembled univerſe. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 31—46. *John*, c. i. v. 18.)

V. 17—20.] A few rich perſons had embraced the goſpel at Epheſus; and, as wealth is a comparative thing, ſome ſuch muſt be found in other places. But Timothy, (and other miniſters,) would be liable to be tempted to pay them undue deference: and it would require much firmneſs and impartiality to give them proper counſel, caution, and inſtruction. He was therefore peculiarly directed, in the moſt plain, authoritative, and ſolemn manner, to warn them againſt the danger, to which they were expoſed, and to enjoin them the peculiar duty of their ſtation. He muſt therefore "charge thoſe that were *rich in the world*," (which was perfectly diſtinct from being *rich towards God*,) that they ſhould not be puffed up by their affluence and ſuperiority of circumſtances above their brethren; as if theſe implied more wiſdom, or excellency, entitled them to higher privileges, enſured them more regard from God, entitled them to pre-eminent authority in the church, exempted them from cenſure or reproof, or authorized them to neglect or contemn others; that they ſhould not confide in their riches, as if they could make them ſafe or happy, increaſe their preſent comfort, give them any permanent advantage, or promote their eternal felicity. As ſuch riches were *uncertain*, liable to be torn from them, often proving the cauſe of diſtreſs, temptation and ſin, ſpeedily to be left at death, and to be given an account of at the day of judgment. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vi. v. 19—24. c. xix. v. 16—26. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 13—

foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold oneternal life,

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy truſt, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppoſitions of ſcience falſely ſo called;

21 Which ſome profeſſing, have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

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21. c. xvi.) He muſt therefore charge them, as well as the poor, to truſt in the living God, both for preſent ſafety ſupport and comfort, and for eternal happineſs; remembering that he gave them all things bountifully, which they enjoyed: he therefore was to be acknowledged as the Author of their abundance; it was all diſtributed in his wiſdom, and revocable at his will, and could only be profitable to them when uſed to his glory. They muſt therefore be authoratively enjoined to do good with their riches, and to deem this their duty and happineſs; inſtead of avariciouſly hoarding, or luxuriouſly waſting them. By relieving the wants of the indigent, and doing good largely to their poor brethren, they muſt aim to be rich in good works, the genuine fruits of faith and love. They muſt be prompt and liberal in diſtributing their wealth among proper objects, and for valuable purpoſes; as the huſbandman ſcatters his ſeed without grudging, in hopes of a future harveſt: and they muſt be willing, free, voluntary, and chearful in communicating from their abundance to ſupply the wants of all around them. Thus they would treaſure up *for themſelves* the true riches, (not for their heirs, or they knew not whom, as miſers do their idolized wealth;) and lay a good foundation for their hope and comfort in the approaching ſeaſon of affliction and death; ſhewing their faith in Chriſt, (the Rock of ſalvation,) by the unequivocal fruits of love and obedience: that ſo they too might lay hold on eternal life in actual poſſeſſion; when the ſelf-indulgent, the covetous, and ungodly rich men around them, would lift up their eyes in hell, being in torments.

V. 20, 21.] The apoſtle, conſidering the ſnares and temptations, the allurements and terrors, which Timothy had to overcome, and guard againſt, in order to the faithful execution of his miniſtry in all theſe particulars; and reflecting alſo on the various ſpecies of falſe religion, which many artfully ſubſtituted inſtead of the humbling, holy goſpel of Chriſt; again moſt affectionately and earneſtly called upon him to keep inviolable, without ſhrinking or wavering, the miniſtry, or ſtewardſhip, with which he was entruſted: and he charged him to ſhun the profane and vain babblings of thoſe, who wanted to impoſe the fooliſh and trifling traditions and obſervances of the Jewiſh ſcribes, as well as the rites of the Moſaic law, upon chriſtians: and the "oppoſitions of ſcience," or knowledge, "falſely ſo called," ſuch as the gnoſtics, or knowing ones, afterwards corrupted the goſpel with. Theſe ſpeculations were borrowed from the vain philoſophy of the Gentiles; and being diſtorted, and mutilated to ſuit their purpoſe, they introduced them into chriſtianity; to render it more congenial to the heart of man, and eſpecially to gratify their fondneſs for diſputation, and their pride of ſuperior penetration and acuteneſs. Thus, one corrupt ſyſtem of pretended knowledge was oppoſed to another, jangling controverſies were multiplied and perpetuated, the truth was obſcured and overlooked, and the wildeſt abſurdities were ſubſtituted in its place. Some, even then, having been ſeduced into theſe ſpeculations, had erred from the faith in fatal hereſies; and the evil was like to increaſe. Having, therefore, given Timothy this warning, the apoſtle cloſed this moſt inſtructive epiſtle with his uſual ſalutation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is moſt important to the honour of the goſpel, that profeſſors duly perform their various relative duties; and that "ſervants count their own maſters worthy of all honour," even though they are unbelievers. Their condition, indeed, in this favoured land of liberty, admits of their changing ſuch ſituations for others: but the precepts of God's word do not at all allow them to behave with diſreſpect to the perſons, or diſregard to the lawful commands, of thoſe whom they ſerve; nor yet to return affronting anſwers, or to ſpeak of their faults to others without cauſe; but rather to weep over and pray for them in ſecret, when they are ungodly and unreaſonable. Alas, how grievouſly are the name and goſpel of God blaſphemed through thoſe ſervants, who love to talk and diſpute about doctrines and ſermons in families averſe to them; and then behave with impertinence in their places; if not with ſloth, diſhoneſty and unfaithfulneſs! Thus thouſands are fatally prejudiced againſt the goſpel. Nay, this matter is ſo little attended to, that many maſters, who would be glad to have believers in their families, and to behave to them like brethren, as far as conſiſtent with domeſtic ſubordination, are often wearied out, and tempted to prefer ſervants, who know not the goſpel; becauſe of the miſconduct of thoſe who profeſs it. Nay, ſome ſervants whoſe ſincerity is unimpeached, through a grievous miſtake, ſuppoſe equality in religious privileges to imply equality in the family: and thus they act as if they deſpiſed their believing maſters and their authority, giving them rude anſwers, or neglecting their buſineſs, or doing it in their own way, &c; as if this was a part of their chriſtian liberty: whereas they ought to honour and ſerve them with the greater diligence and alacrity; becauſe they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. No doubt there are violations of duty equally inexcuſable committed by thoſe who ſtand in the oppoſite relation; and profeſſors of the goſpel are acceſſary to believing ſervants chooſing to live in irreligious families, by behaving in ſo unchriſtian a manner to ſuch, as have come amongſt them expecting better treatment.

Theſe things therefore miniſters are bound to teach and enforce: and if any man teach otherwiſe, calling ſuch exhortations legal, and conſent not to ſuch ſalutary words, which are, indeed, the words of our Lord, and a part of the doctrine according to godlineſs; he is to be deemed a proud man, who knoweth nothing, (whatever his gifts and profeſſion may be;) and he ſhould be pitied and ſhunned as a diſtempered man, who is infected by the love of abſtract "queſtions, and ſtrifes about words; whereof cometh envy, contention, reviling, evil ſurmiſes, and perverſe diſputings." This is manifeſt, from daily obſervation; to theſe things men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth, are peculiarly addicted; eſpecially when they can make them ſubſervient to their emolument and reputation, being diſpoſed to think that the beſt religion by which they can get the moſt money. Inſtead of engaging in controverſy with ſuch mercenary, conceited, and ignorant wranglers, who will not conſent even to the apoſtle's words, or thoſe of Chriſt himſelf; we ſhould withdraw from, and thus proteſt againſt them, and leave them to diſpute by themſelves, or with one another.

Let us then alway remember, "that godlineſs with contentment is great gain." As we brought nothing with us into the world, and can carry nothing out; let us truſt him that hath hitherto provided for us, to ſupply our wants during the remnant of our pilgrimage. Having food and raiment, we ſhould daily beg of God, that we may be therewith content, and that he would keep us from every degree of covetouſneſs. We cannot look about us at all, without perceiving that "they, who will be rich, fall into temptation, are entangled in a ſnare, and are overcome by "many fooliſh hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of "all kinds of evil," in every part of the earth: and even among profeſſors of the goſpel, we often ſee piety, charity, mercy, equity, ſincerity, temperance, and humility laid, like ſo many bleeding ſacrifices on the altar of mammon; whilſt men's own ſouls, and thoſe of their ill educated children, are deſtroyed, to gratify the malignant demon! Some, yea many hopeful perſons, by allowing themſelves to covet ſomething greater, more elegant, or affluent, have erred from the faith, have made ſhipwreck of their profeſſion, or have turned out mere thorny-ground hearers; and others have pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows, to the embittering of the whole of their future lives. No words can expreſs, no deſcription reach, the numberleſs and horrid evils, that continually flow from this ſource; eſpecially in a day of outward proſperity, extenſive commerce, vaſt expence, and looſe profeſſion! But "what "is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe "his own ſoul?" Let every chriſtian flee from this deſtructive luſt: let the men of God eſpecially avoid every appearance of the love of filthy lucre, or improvident expence: let us, on the contrary, "follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs," with that aſſiduity and earneſtneſs, with which worldly men purſue their periſhing riches: let us fight the noble and profitable fight of faith, and ſo lay hold on eternal life, to which we alſo are called; and ſtrive to anſwer that good profeſſion, which (in our miniſtry at leaſt) we have made of the truth, before many witneſſes; who will all at laſt teſtify againſt us, if we forſake Chriſt from love of this preſent world. The apoſtle charges us too, "as in the ſight of God, who "quickeneth all things, and of Chriſt Jeſus, who before "Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion;" that we keep this commandment without ſpot, and unrebukeable, till the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt. Let none ſuppoſe, that our Lord delayeth his coming: in his own times he will be manifeſted, as the effulgency of the divine glory, the Image of the inviſible God. This will be brought to paſs by "the "bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of "lords;" who only "hath immortality, dwelling in inacceſſible light, and inviſible to human eyes." That we may be preſented faultleſs before the divine Redeemer's preſence with exceeding joy, receive the crown of immortal glory, and be admitted to the beatific viſion; it behoves us now to be faithful, watchful, ſober, diligent, and diſintereſted: Thus honouring our God here, and deſiring to aſcribe to him glory and power to eternity; he will honour us at laſt, before the aſſembled univerſe. Miniſters are required eſpecially to point out to rich men their peculiar dangers and duties; becauſe they are numerous and important. Whilſt *nature* prompts us to deſire connexion with them, it produces a reluctancy to that part of duty which relates to them. Even modeſty, timidity, gratitude, or ſuppoſed prudence, may warp us in this matter: a falſe apprehenſion of what may conduce to their beſt intereſt, that of ou religious ſociety, or of the church at large; and a fear of prejudicing and offending them, and ſo loſing the opportunity of doing good to, or by them; may eaſily miſlead us in this great concern. Not to ſpeak of the drea of their frown, and the credit and advantage of their friendſhip; both which are very enſnaring to the miniſters of th goſpel. But we muſt break through all theſe obſtacles, i we would be faithful ſtewards, and vigilant watchmen, an deliver our own ſouls. We muſt charge them in God' name not to be high-minded, nor to truſt in, or idoliz their uncertain riches; and not to ſeek happineſs from them but from the living God, who giveth us all things needfu to enjoy. We muſt ſhew them their danger of being betrayed into pride, avarice, ambition, ſelf-indulgence, an the love of outward ſplendour. We muſt point out to them the proper uſe and improvement of their wealth; chargin them to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate: we muſt call on them t provide againſt the time to come, when it will be ſaid t them: "Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip; for tho "ſhall be no longer ſteward." We muſt exhort them to uſe their preſent advantages, that they may lay up f themſelves a better treaſure, and enſure a good hope, an know themſelves to have a firm foundation in a dying hou that they may lay hold on eternal life. But who is ſuffi cient for theſe things? Or who can give ſuch charges wi energy, that is not himſelf evidently ſuperior to the love wealth, or any thing that wealth can purchaſe? May t Lord help us all to keep theſe things, which are committ to our truſt, to avoid profane and vain babblings, diſpu tions, philoſophy, and oppoſitions of ſcience falſely ſo ca ed; by which ſo many are drawn off from the preaching and believing dependance on, a crucified Saviour: and m the grace of the Lord Jeſus be with all his faithful miniſte and people every where, and at all times! Amen.

The Second Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to TIMOTHY.

The apoſtle Paul is recorded to have obtained a deliverance from his firſt impriſonment Rome, and after a ſhort time to have been carried priſoner thither again; whe *he ſuffered martyrdom, towards the cloſe of Nero's reign. During this laſt impriſonment he probably wrote this epiſtle to Timothy*; (c. iv. ver. 6—8:) *but whether Timothy was then at Epheſus, (as ſeems implied in the ſpurious poſtſcript,) or at what other place he was, cannot be certainly determined. The ſcope of the epiſtle was to animate Timothy in enduring perſecutions with conſtancy; to caution him and others againſt falſe teachers, and looſe profeſſors; and to direct and quicken him in his private and public duties.*

Anno Domini 67.

CHAP. I

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Saluting Timothy; ſhewing his loving remembrance of, and his prayers and thankſgivings for, him; and mentioning the faith of his grand mother and mother, 1---5. *2d. Reminding him to exerciſe his gifts and miniſtry, without fear of ſuffering; as became one, that was ſo peculiarly favoured, from a ſenſe of the beneficial nature of the goſpel, and after the example he gave him of chearful ſuffering, and confidence in the Lord,* 6---14. *3d. Speaking of ſome that had turned away from him; and of the great kindneſs of Oneſiphorus: and praying for him, and his family,* 15---18.

PAUL, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, according to the promiſe of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

2 To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved ſon: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

Anno Domini 67.

3 I thank God, whom I ſerve from *my* forefathers with pure conſcience, that without ceaſing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly deſiring to ſee thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt firſt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am perſuaded that in thee alſo.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou ſtir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord, nor of me his priſoner:

NOTES,

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *According, &c.*] The goſpel entruſted to Paul, by the ſovereign will of God, accorded to the promiſe of life and ſalvation made to fallen man, through the predicted Meſſiah, from the beginning: all theſe predictions were fulfilled in Chriſt; and then the promiſe of life was ſent to the Gentiles alſo.

V. 3—5.] The apoſtle returned hearty thanks to God, on Timothy's account; even to the one living and true God, whom he ſerved and worſhipped, after the manner of Abraham, and his other pious progenitors, in ſucceſſive ages. Theſe all looked forward to the promiſed Meſſiah, and ſerved God with a believing regard to him; though their deſcendants had rejected and crucified him, and now perſecuted thoſe who believed in him. He had indeed formerly copied their example; but his conſcience was now purged from dead works by the atoning blood; and made tender and well informed by divine grace: ſo that he now ſerved God conſcientiouſly and chearfully, with ſpiritual worſhip, and believing obedience. He was eſpecially thankful to God, that he was enabled continually to remember Timothy in his fervent and frequent prayers, by night and by day; being mindful of the tears which he ſhed, as expreſſive of his love and ſorrow, when they laſt ſeparated: and longing greatly for another interview, which he was aſſured would fill his own heart with joy and ſatisfaction. This perſuaſion aroſe from his recollection of the unfeigned faith, which his whole conduct had manifeſted to dwell in him, to influence and ſanctify his heart; which was the ſame precious faith, that had firſt been communicated to his grandmother Lois; and to his mother Eunice. Theſe pious women ſeem to have "waited for the conſolation of Iſrael," before they heard the goſpel; and thus to have been prepared to receive it. And having given Timothy a religious education; this greatly conduced to his being made partaker of the ſame faith, as the apoſtle was fully perſuaded concerning him, (c. iii. v. 15.)

V. 6—10.] (Note, 1 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 14.) The ſpiritual gifts conferred by the laying on of the apoſtle's hands, probably at Timothy's ordination, were to be exerciſed, in the performance of the miniſtry then entruſted to him. He therefore reminded him to ſtir up the gift of God, that was in him, by meditation, prayer, and diligence, as the fire is ſtirred, and ſo made to glow, when fuel hath been laid upon it. Thus love, zeal, and compaſſion for ſouls being brought into vigorous exerciſe, he would be animated to imbut be thou partaker of the afflictions of the goſpel, according to the power of God;

9 Who hath ſaved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began;

10 But is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel:

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apoſtle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

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prove his talents, and fulfil his miniſtry, with ardour, and effect. For the holy Spirit, which God had given *them*, as eſtabliſhed believers, was not the author of a timid, and cowardly diſpoſition, or of ſlaviſh and diſcouraging fears reſpecting God. But as the Spirit of adoption, he inſpired their hearts with holy courage and confidence, gave vigour and energy to their ſpiritual affections, and endued them with ſtrength for ſervice or ſuffering: whilſt love to Chriſt, his people and all mankind, animated them to ſelf denying and perilous labours; and a ſound mind, a ſober judgment, and heavenly wiſdom led them to chooſe the nobleſt ends, and to purſue them in the perſevering uſe of the moſt prudent and effectual means. So that the ſpirit of a lively chriſtian was that of courage, firmneſs, zeal, and conſiſtency of conduct in the midſt of perſecutions and temptations. Timothy was therefore exhorted not to be aſhamed of that teſtimony, which he bad borne to the Lord Jeſus amidſt thoſe who reviled, and derided him: nay, he muſt not heſitate to avow himſelf the fellow-labourer; and dutiful ſon in the faith of Paul, the deſpiſed, and impriſoned apoſtle of Chriſt. On the contrary he ought willingly to become a partaker of thoſe afflictions which were to be endured for the goſpel; depending for ſupport, protection, and comfort under them "on the power of God," which would certainly be exerted in his behalf. For he had already "ſaved them," or brought them into a ſtate of ſafety; having "called them with an holy calling;" as the divine Spirit, by whom they were efficaciouſly converted, was the Author of all holineſs in the heart of believers; and as the goſpel, through which they were called, was in all things of an holy tendency. This had not been "according to their works;" for if God had dealt with them by that rule, they muſt have been left under condemnation: but it was "according to his purpoſe," of ſpecial love, and "his grace, which was given them in Chriſt before the world began;" that is, his purpoſe of giving them grace, in, and through Chriſt Jeſus, which was engaged to him as the appointed Surety of his choſen people, "from eternal ages." Some would render the laſt clauſe "before the ſecular ages," that is of the Jewiſh nation: but this tranſlation is very unnatural: and by no means anſwers the purpoſe for which it is adduced. For if God previouſly gave grace in Chriſt to thoſe, whom he afterwards called with an holy calling; though this were only when the Meſſiah was firſt promiſed to fallen Adam, or at any other time before the Moſaic diſpenſation; the doctrine of perſonal election muſt be admitted: unleſs men will ſay, "that ſome were ſaved, and called with an holy calling," who yet were never converted. But "known unto God are all his works from before the foundation of the world;" and the words here uſed literally ſignify "before eternal ages." This eternal purpoſe of God, reſpecting the calling, and ſaving of ſinners by grace given them in his Son, was at length made manifeſt by his appearance in human nature; when through his righteouſneſs, atonement, reſurrection, aſcenſion, &c, he aboliſhed the reign and power of death, and deprived him of his ſting and terror, in reſpect of all believers; who might therefore face that dreaded enemy, in his moſt tremendous form, with comfort and confidence; being aſſured of the immediate entrance of their ſouls into glory, and a future triumphant reſurrection of their bodies from the grave. Moreover, by the publication of the goſpel he had brought life ſpiritual, and eternal, and a ſtate of immortal felicity attainable by ſinners, into full light; and had given the moſt explicit declaration of the nature, certainty, and method of obtaining that future happineſs. Whatever notions the Gentiles had of the ſoul's immortality; they knew nothing of the way, in which eternal life might be attained by ſinners; they were wholly ignorant of the meaning annexed to the words, "life and immortality," in ſcripture: their ſpeculations ſerved only for their amuſement; being blended with error and fable, involved in obſcurity and uncertainty, and utterly inefficacious upon their practice. The Jews indeed had a revelation in the Old Teſtament, both of a future ſtate, and the reſurrection of the body. But it was not ſo full and explicit, as in the New Teſtament; it was chiefly confined to one ſmall nation; and it was very imperfectly underſtood and believed even by them. So that whatever had been conjectured, or believed, previous to the coming of Chriſt, concerning a future ſtate; it might properly be ſaid, that "he had brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel:" the doctrine reſpecting it was placed in the moſt convincing, and intereſting light; every proper queſtion about it was ſatisfactorily anſwered; and the whole was ſuited to anſwer the moſt important practical purpoſes. Indeed, after all modern improvements, and boaſted metaphyſical demonſtrations, all influential belief of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of retribution, reſts wholly on divine revelation; as well as that of the reſurrection of the body, and the way of a ſinner's acceptance. If indeed, it can be demonſtrated, that the ſoul is naturally capable of immortality: yet it cannot be proved, except from immediate revelation, that God will not terminate its exiſtence, eſpecially as it is forfeited by ſin; or that he will not make every ſinner miſerable in his immortality: and it conduces to our more ſuitably valuing the oracles of God, when we clearly perceive the inſufficiency of the oracles of reaſon, in the moſt important concerns.

V. 11, 12.] Of this moſt intereſting and beneficial goſpel Paul had been conſtituted a preacher and an apoſtle; that he might inſtruct the Gentiles in the way to immortal life and happineſs; but inſtead of receiving ho-

12 For the which cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe things: nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep that, which I have committed unto him, againſt that day.

13 Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us.

15 This thou knoweſt, that all they which are in Aſia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of Oneſiphorus; for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my chain;

17 But when he was in Rome, he ſought me out very diligently, and found *me*.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he miniſtered unto me at Epheſus thou knoweſt very well.

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nour and affluence, as a recompence for his labours in publiſhing this knowledge; he ſufferred all kinds of injuries, and was then in priſon, as a criminal, in continual expectation of enduring an ignominious death. Nevertheleſs, he was not aſhamed of having engaged, and ſpent ſo many years in the ſervice of him whom men thus deſpiſed: for he knew, by faith, divine teaching and happy experience, the power, faithfulneſs, and love of that divine Saviour, in whom he had believed: and, as he could not doubt of his compaſſion and kindneſs; ſo he was fully perſuaded of his authority and ability, to take care of him in all events. He had entruſted his life, his ſoul, and his eternal intereſts into his hands as a precious depoſit. He had diſcovered their value, and their danger; he had been convinced that none elſe could effectually deliver, and ſecure them, through the trials of life, and death; and that he both could and would: he had therefore long before, and by renewed application to Him, from time to time ever ſince, entruſted them in his hands by faith and prayer; to be waſhed, juſtified, and ſanctified, and at laſt to be produced complete in holineſs, and meet for glory. What he might paſs through by the way he knew not; but he was perſuaded, that he was fully able to keep the precious depoſit to that day, to which he continually had reſpect, as the grand accompliſhment of all his hopes; when his beloved Lord would again appear in glorious majeſty to judge the world. His moſt important intereſts therefore, being thus ſecured beyond the reach of all his enemies; he was prepared to endure ignominy, pain, and death, without ſhrinking; hoping to commit his departing ſoul into his Saviour's hands; even as he had commended his ſpirit into thoſe of his heavenly Father.

V. 13—15.] After this animating declaration of his own experience, in the midſt of ſufferings, and the proſpect of a violent death; the apoſtle exhorted his beloved Timothy, to hold faſt, in a ſtedfaſt profeſſion, and faithful preaching of it, "the form of ſound words," the ſubſtance of ſolid, beneficial, and evangelical truth, which he had heard of him; and of which he perhaps had given him ſome compendious epitome. This he muſt do in the exerciſe of faith and love, by which the ſoul is united to Chriſt, and holds the truth, in a vital and efficacious manner: and he muſt thus guard himſelf and others againſt the innovations, which falſe teachers were introducing by unſound and ſpecious words. That good thing, the miniſterial charge, and the goſpel committed to his ſtewardſhip, he was exhorted thus to keep, obſerve, and fulfil, without turning aſide from it, on any account: but this he muſt do, "by the Holy "Ghoſt, which dwelt in them;" in dependance on, and compliance with his ſacred influences. This was the more needful to be intimated to him; as he muſt have heard, that all they, which were in Aſia had turned away from him. Some underſtand this of thoſe miniſters and chriſtians, that were natives of Aſia, and were with the apoſtle at Rome at this time; but who had ſhamefully deſerted him in the ſeaſon of his greateſt danger, or through the faſcinations of falſe doctrines. But others ſuppoſe the apoſtle to mean that the churches in the proconſular Aſia had withdrawn their regard from him, being perverted by heretical teachers. Probably Timothy was ſomewhere in Aſia at that time: and the apoſtle mentions two perſons in particular, whom Timothy knew, and of whom better hopes had been conceived; but it ſeems that this would have been too ſmall a matter to notice, in the defection of ſo many churches.

V. 16—18.] Oneſiphorus ſeems to have been an Aſiatic: he probably was abſent from his family when Paul wrote this; and therefore he prayed for them ſeparately. For Oneſiphorus, by his company and aſſiſtance, had greatly refreſhed and enlivened his ſpirits, and had not been aſhamed of being known to be his friend, when in chains; as many others had been. Being at Rome, he had beſtowed much pains to find out the place of his confinement; and had at laſt ſucceeded. This ſhews that Paul's impriſonment was more cloſe and ſevere, than before; (*Acts*. c. xxviii. v. 30, 31:) ſo that chriſtians in general ſcarce knew where he was, and were afraid to enquire after him. He therefore prayed that Oneſiphorus might find mercy in the day of Chriſt: for Timothy knew in how many things he had tended on, and ſerved him at Epheſus; and he had now proved the genuine conſtancy of his affection.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The promiſe of eternal life to ſinners, who believe in Jeſus Chriſt, is the leading ſubject, in the preaching of thoſe miniſters, who are employed according to the will of God: and though outward diſpenſations vary; yet his real people have in every age the ſame religion, as to the ſubſtance of it; and ſerve God after the manner of their fore-fathers and predeceſſors, with a pure conſcience;

CHAP. II.

Contains exhortations to Timothy 1ſt. To courage, diligence, fidelity, and patience; in remembrance of Chriſt; in imitation of the apoſtle's example; and in the exerciſe of an aſſured faith, 1---12. *2d. To beware of, and warn others againſt falſe teachers and vain controverſies; and to approve himſelf to God in his miniſtry: with an aſſurance of the Lord's care of his people, and admonition to them to depart from iniquity,* 14---19. *3d. To ſeek to be a veſſel of honour: to flee youthful luſts, and to follow after holineſs; to ſhun captious queſtions; and to inſtruct oppoſers with meekneſs, and hope of recovering them,* 20---26.

being partakers of the ſame "grace, mercy, and peace, "from God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." The tears of loving chriſtian friends, when ſeparated at the call of duty, make way for their fervent prayers for each other; their earneſt deſires of meeting again on earth, lead to the chearful hope of a bleſſed re-union in heaven, and the fulneſs of joy to which they will then be admitted; and their remembrance of the clear evidences of unfeigned faith, which they have witneſſed in each other, excite their thankſgivings to God for his grace beſtowed upon them. The pious inſtructions and fervent prayers of believing parents are often the means of converſion to their children: yet they, who enjoy this advantage, ſhould be reminded, that they will derive no benefit from the unfeigned faith of the neareſt relations; unleſs the ſame dwell in them alſo. We ſhould remind thoſe of whom we have the beſt opinion "to ſtir up the gift of "God, that is in them," and to occupy with it in the duties of the ſtations allotted them. The tendency of the new nature is, to liberty from, and victory over the fear of man, and of thoſe reproaches, contumelies, and injuries, which may be expected in the path of duty: whenever, therefore, we find our hearts diſcouraged, our hands weakened, or our earneſtneſs in the work of the Lord abated; we ſhould aſcribe it to the remains of unbelief and a carnal mind, and to the temptations of ſatan; and we ſhould ſtrive more fervently in prayer for ſupplies of the Spirit of Chriſt, to invigorate our faith and hope, to ſhed abroad the love of God in our hearts, to animate us with zeal, and holy affections, and to produce in us a ſound mind and heavenly wiſdom. (Note, *Phil.* c. i. v. 9—11.) Then we ſhall not be aſhamed of, but glory in, the teſtimony of the Lord, even among his moſt ſcornful enemies; we ſhall not heſitate to join ourſelves to his moſt deſpiſed and perſecuted ſervants; and we ſhall willingly become partakers of the afflictions of the goſpel, in dependance on the power of God to ſupport and comfort us. In proportion as the Spirit witneſſes with our ſpirits, that we are the children of God, and we know, "that he hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his "purpoſe, and grace, given us in Chriſt, before the world began;" we ſhall feel ourſelves conſtrained by love to devote our all to his glory: thus we ſhall manifeſt the holy nature of our calling, and of that doctrine, which is ſo much oppoſed and abuſed by the pride and carnality of the human heart.

Let us then bleſs the Lord continually for the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, for what he hath done and ſuffered to aboliſh death; and for his goſpel, by which he hath brought life and immortality to light. As we have ſuch deciſive aſſurance of a future ſtate, ſuch full information concerning the nature of it, and ſo clear a proſpect of immortal felicity, by faith in him "who is "the Reſurrection and the Life:" let us give the more diligence in making our perſonal intereſt in his ſalvation ſure to our ſouls: and let ſuch of us, as are appointed to publiſh theſe important tidings to mankind, and to inſtruct the nations in the truths of Chriſt, prepare for ſufferings; knowing that his moſt honoured ſervants have always been moſt conformed to him in this reſpect. If then we are deſpiſed and perſecuted for "this cauſe," let us neither give place to fear nor ſhame: for he, in whom we have believed, is able to bear us out, and to keep us ſafe to that day, when he ſhall appear to perfect our felicity. The hope of the meaneſt real chriſtian reſts on the ſame baſis with that of the greateſt apoſtle. He too hath learned the value, and the danger of his ſoul, and his eternal intereſts; he too entruſts them, by daily faith and prayer, in the Redeemer's hands, as the only ſecurity that he can be ſatisfied with: he too hath believed in him, and hath ſome experience of his power, truth, and compaſſion; the anſwers he hath received to his prayers, and the change that hath been wrought in his ſoul, increaſe and confirm his confidence; and thus he is "perſuaded that the Lord "Jeſus will preſerve him unto his heavenly kingdom," whatever dangers, trials, and enemies he may meet with, in his way thither. In order to poſſeſs this good hope, we muſt adhere ſtedfaſtly to the form of ſound words, which the apoſtles have taught us; not only rejecting new notions, but new fangled expreſſions; which are often employed to exalt one part of religion, by drawing the attention from others of equal importance. We muſt alſo be careful to hold even an orthodox creed, in faith and love, which are in Chriſt Jeſus: this, as well as miniſterial faithfulneſs, muſt be attempted, "by the Holy "Spirit, which dwelleth in us;" and will never be performed by thoſe, who truſt in their own hearts, and lean to their own underſtandings. We need not wonder that ſelf-wiſdom, and a contempt of the influences of the holy Spirit, united with a diſlike to the humbling truths of the goſpel, and to bear the croſs for Chriſt's ſake, ſhould turn ſo many in theſe latter ages from regarding the writings of the apoſtles: when ſimilar cauſes turned many from them when they were living, and confirming their authority and doctrine by the moſt undeniable miracles! But if others chooſe to follow the example of Phygellus, and Hermogenes: let us copy that of Oneſiphorus; by ſeeking out, refreſhing, and miniſtering to the afflicted ſervants of Chriſt; not being aſhamed of their poverty, or diſgrace, though laid in dungeons or work-houſes; and doing them all the good we can, with a conſtant affection for the Lord's ſake. Then ſhall we have an intereſt in their prevalent prayers; we may hope for the mercy of God upon our families; and may reſt aſſured of finding mercy of the Lord in that day, when we ſhall moſt know

THOU therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

2 And the things that thou haſt heard of me among many witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo.

3 Thou therefore endure hardneſs, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himſelf with the affairs of *this* life; that he may pleaſe him who hath choſen him to be a ſoldier.

5 And if a man alſo ſtrive for maſteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he ſtrive lawfully.

6 The huſbandman that laboureth muſt be firſt partaker of the fruits.

7 Conſider what I ſay; and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jeſus Chriſt of the ſeed of David was raiſed from the dead, according to my goſpel:

9 Wherein I ſuffer trouble, as an evil-doer, *even* unto bonds: but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elects ſakes, that they may alſo obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus with eternal glory.

11 *It is* a faithful ſaying, For if we be dead with *him*, we ſhall alſo live with *him:*

12 If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with *him*; if we deny *him*, he alſo will deny us:

13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himſelf.

14 Of theſe things put *them* in remem-

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its unſpeakable value. And let thoſe, who are thus comforted and relieved by their brethren, not be backward to acknowledge their obligations, nor negligent in praying for them and all their connexions.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1, 2.] (*Eph.* c. vi. v. 10.) The apoſtle proceeded to exhort his beloved ſon Timothy, to be bold and vigorous in preaching "the grace, that was "in Chriſt" for ſinners; or to be ſtrong in dependance on the grace of Chriſt. In order to continue, and ſpread the knowledge of the goſpel among men, he directed him to commit thoſe doctrines, which he had heard from him, in the preſence of many witneſſes, (or *by* many witneſſes, who all concurred in atteſting them,) "to faithful men, "who might be able to teach others alſo!" This doth not prove, that the people had no choice, in the appointment of their own paſtors, or of miniſters to preach the goſpel in dark places: but it ſhews, that Timothy had a ſuperintending authority; and not only ordained and charged ſuch, as the people ſelected; but was empowered to take heed, that they were faithful men, able to inſtruct others alſo. In ſhort we can ſcarce ſuppoſe, that there was any competition at that time: the apoſtles and evangeliſts would doubtleſs encourage proper perſons to take this office upon them; and the people would ſeldom fail to approve of them: at the ſame time we cannot imagine, that any paſtors were placed over particular churches, contrary to the general inclination of the people. (Note, 1 *Tim.* c. v. ver. 21, 22.)

V. 3—7.] Timothy was again called upon to conſider himſelf as the good ſoldier of Chriſt: having enliſted under his banner, he was bound to follow him, and obey his orders; he muſt be ready to expoſe his life in the cauſe of the goſpel, and at all hazards to endeavour to promote it: as therefore ſoldiers, in actual ſervice muſt expect toil and hardſhips, as well as danger; ſo he ought to be prepared for ſufferings and difficulties of every kind: and as no man, who engaged in the military life, entangled himſelf with the management of huſbandry, commerce, or ſuch like concerns, but left them to others, that he might be wholly at liberty to pleaſe the commander, under whom he ſerved, and ſo to obtain preferment and honour: ſo Timothy muſt not engage in any ſecular buſineſs, or any of the affairs of life; ſo as to interfere with his pleaſing Chriſt, who had choſen him to be his ſoldier, and was able abundantly to make up all loſſes to him. It is plain from Paul's own example, that miniſters may on ſome occaſions earn their bread by labour: but this widely differs from ſeeking to grow rich by trade, or ſuch employments, as engroſs the mind and the time, and introduce them into ſuch connexions, and involve them in ſo many pecuniary engagements, as greatly endanger their own characters, and the honour of the goſpel. Moreover, in the public games, the man, who ſtrove for maſtery was not crowned victor, unleſs the conteſt had been managed according to preſcribed rules: it therefore behoved Timothy and his brethren, to regulate their diligence and earneſtneſs by the word of God, otherwiſe they could not expect the conqueror's crown. And as the huſbandman muſt *firſt labour*, before he partake of the fruits of the field; ſo they muſt *firſt* diligently and patiently execute their miniſtry; before they received their gracious recompence. This ſeems the moſt obvious conſtruction, and meaning of the verſe: but it may ſignify, that the labouring huſbandman muſt *firſt* be ſupported by the fruits of the earth, or he cannot perform his work; nor can the office of the miniſtry be duly exerciſed, except by thoſe, who live upon Chriſt by faith themſelves, as well as preach Him to others. Theſe illuſtrations Timothy was well to conſider, *for* thus the Lord would give him underſtanding in reſpect of all things pertaining to his work and circumſtances. Thus it may be explained; though our verſion renders it as a prayer for him.

V. 8—13.] Amidſt all dangers and ſufferings it behoved Timothy to "remember Jeſus Chriſt," the promiſed Saviour, "of the ſeed of David, who had been "raiſed from the dead." This ſeems the proper tranſlation: for Timothy was not only called on to remember the reſurrection of Jeſus, but all the ſufferings which brance, charging *them* before the Lord, that they ſtrive not about words to no profit, *but* to the ſubverting of the hearers.

15 Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But ſhun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increaſe unto more ungodlineſs.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, ſaying, That the reſurrection is paſt already; and overthrow the faith of ſome.

19 Nevertheleſs the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity.

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preceded this great event, and his conduct under them, &c, (*Heb.* c. xii. v. 1—3.) This could not fail to ſuggeſt proper motives and encouragements, to perſeverance, and conſtancy. For preaching that goſpel, which related to theſe events, Paul was then ſuffering trouble, as a malefactor, even unto bonds, and in priſon: yet as the word of God was not bound, but was ſucceſsfully preached by numbers, he was ſatisfied. For he willingly endured all things, that he was called to ſuffer, from love to the elect of God; and in order to be an inſtrument in bringing thoſe to complete deliverance from all evil, and the enjoyment of eternal glory, for whom Chriſt had ſhed his precious blood. Thus he at once ſought their ſalvation, and his own: for it was a faithful ſaying, (probably in frequent uſe among chriſtians;) that if they were indeed dead with Chriſt to ſin and the world, and ready to die for his goſpel; they would aſſuredly live with him in that glory, which he entered upon after his crucifixion, and reſurrection: if they denied him, from dread of ſufferings and death, or other carnal motive; and perſiſted in this denial; Chriſt would alſo deny them, and leave them to periſh with his enemies: if they dared not to rely on his word, would not credit his teſtimony, or were unfaithful to him; they would ruin themſelves; but he would ſtill abide faithful to his covenant engagements to his true diſciples, and true to his word of executing vengeance on unbelievers. For he could not deny himſelf, or act contrary to his word, and his own eſſential perfections, out of partial favour to, or weak compaſſion for any one: ſo that it behoved them all, to hold faſt the beginning of their confidence ſtedfaſt to the end.

V. 14—18.] Timothy was directed to remind chriſtians and miniſters of theſe important practical truths: and to charge them moſt ſolemnly, as in the preſence of the Lord, not to ſtrive and diſpute about words, and ſuch frivolous matters, as a fondneſs for controverſy magnified into important diſtinctions. Such diſputes could anſwer no good purpoſe; but on the contrary they tended to ſubvert the hearers; perplexing them about empty ſpeculations, feeding their ſelf conceit and contempt of others, and drawing them off from the ſimplicity of faith and obedience. At the ſame time Timothy was enjoined ſtudiouſly to endeavour to approve himſelf to God in all his conduct and miniſtrations; he was reminded to beſtow pains, that he might perform his miniſterial ſervices, as a workman, who knew how to go about his buſineſs, and needed not to be aſhamed of his performances, or afraid of having them moſt accurately examined. In preaching the goſpel, he was directed "rightly to divide "the word of truth;" giving to every perſon his proper portion, according to his ſtate, character, and circumſtances; by a particular application of it to the hearts, and conſciences of the hearers. In this expreſſion the apoſtle is ſuppoſed to allude to the ſkill uſed by the prieſts, in cutting in pieces the victims, and dividing them according to the legal preſcriptions. To this he was required to adhere; and to avoid the "profane and vain babblings," to which many paid undue attention: for however frivolous they ſeemed; yet the apoſtle foreſaw, that they would increaſe, and produce more ungodlineſs among men profeſſing chriſtianity. As the words of ſuch perverters of the truth, being of a poiſonous nature, though not much ſuſpected, would imperceptibly diffuſe their noxious influence, till they had eat out the life and power of true religion; even as a gangrene ſpreads in the human body, till it corrupts and deſtroys the whole of it. Of theſe vain diſputers there ſeem to have been various deſcriptions: but the apoſtle mentioned Hymeneus and Philetus in particular; who had wandered far from the truth of the goſpel: for they explained the doctrine of the reſurrection in ſome myſtical and allegorical manner; as if it only meant the introduction of a new diſpenſation, or ſome moral change in men's characters; which were events in themſelves, or in reſpect of chriſtians, already paſt; and thus they denied the future reſurrection of the dead. (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xv. 1 *Tim.* c. i. v. 19, 20.) In this manner they had perverted the faith of ſome, and ſeduced thoſe into fatal hereſies, who had once made a promiſing profeſſion of the goſpel.

V. 19. *Nevertheleſs*, &c.] Notwithſtanding ſuch apoſtacies and deluſions, by which many were ruined; it was to be firmly believed, that "the foundation of God "ſtood ſure." Some have interpreted this of the doctrine of the reſurrection, and others of election: bu Chriſt himſelf, or the promiſe of eternal life to every one, that believeth in him, is doubtleſs "the foundation of God," which the apoſtle meant. This ſtand ſure; the gates of hell cannot prevail againſt it; nor ca any one, who has truly built upon it be fatally deceived. According to the ancient cuſtom of ſealing the foundation ſtones of magnificent ſtructures, and engraving ſom inſcription upon them; this myſtical foundation had th ſeal of God and a double inſcription upon it. On th one ſide it was, as it were, engraved for the believer's encouragement, "The Lord knoweth them that are his:" he knoweth whom he hath choſen; he approveth, is acquainted with, and takes ſpecial care of thoſe, whom h hath called, and who are his believing, and obedien people: he diſtinguiſhes the meaneſt of them from th moſt ſpecious hypocrites; and he will preſerve every on

20 But in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and of ſilver, but alſo of wood and of earth; and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe, he ſhall be a veſſel unto honour, ſanctified, and meet for the maſter's uſe, *and* prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee alſo youthful luſts; but follow righteouſneſs, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But fooliſh and unlearned queſtions avoid, knowing that they do gender ſtrifes;

14 And the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves: if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And *that* they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

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of them, whilſt others are deceived and periſh. On the other ſide, it is engraven for the admonition of all profeſſors, and to mark the characters and direct the conduct of true believers; "let every one, that nameth the name of Chriſt, "depart from iniquity." Thus men muſt ſeek the aſſurance of their calling and election; thus they ſhould evidence the ſincerity of their faith and love, and ſhew their gratitude for diſtinguiſhing grace; thus they will beſt avoid the ſnares of deceivers, and mark the difference between themſelves and mere profeſſors. (Notes, &c. *Zech.* c. iii. v. 9. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 24—27. 1 *Cor.* c. iii. v. 11.)

V. 20—22.] Still further to ſhew that ſuch abuſes and defections were entirely conſiſtent with God's covenant engagements to believers, the apoſtle obſerved, that in a great houſe, the habitation of ſome wealthy perſon, there uſed not only to be veſſels of gold and of ſilver, but others of baſer materials; the former for honourable, and the other for meaner uſes. In like manner, in the viſible church not only true chriſtians and faithful miniſters were found, as willing inſtruments in the honourable work of glorifying God, and promoting the good of men; but perſons alſo of a different character, whoſe hypocriſy and iniquity were over-ruled, contrary to their intentions, to fulfil his righteous purpoſes, though to their own ruin and everlaſting contempt. If a man therefore carefully purified himſelf from theſe evil things, and ſimply adhered to the truth and will of God; he ſhould be a veſſel of honour, ſanctified and prepared for the ſervice of Chriſt, and ready to be his willing inſtrument in every good work. Timothy therefore was warned, not only to avoid falſe doctrines, but "to flee youthful luſts;" both the ſenſual indulgences, to which young perſons are moſt liable to be tempted; and alſo thoſe impetuous paſſions, that raſhneſs, and love of novelty or controverſy, and that deſire of being diſtinguiſhed, to which they are equally propenſe: and he was exhorted to purſue every holy temper, and diligently to practiſe every good thing himſelf, as well as to inculcate them on others: eſpecially he was to follow after peace, with all thoſe, who called on the Lord out of a pure heart, or in ſincere faith and love; notwithſtanding their infirmities, and miſtakes in leſſer matters.

V. 23—26. Again, the apoſtle ſaw it neceſſary to caution his beloved Timothy againſt fooliſh and unlearned queſtions; ſuch curious, preſumptuous, or uſeleſs queſtions, as often appear to ſpring from a depth of diſcernment, reflection, and erudition; but in fact they are ſuggeſted by folly, and a want of ſolid acquaintance with the majeſty of God, with man's true condition and character, and with other ſubjects of ſimilar importance. The apoſtle well knew that ſuch queſtions, as different perſons would reſolve in different ways, muſt engender fierce and hoſtile conteſts amongſt conceited and obſtinate profeſſors, which would be managed with ſuch acrimony, and mutual revilings or even injuries, that they might be called "*fightings.*" Whatever Jewiſh or Gentile diſputes did, "the ſer-"vant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive" in this manner, or with ſuch weapons. On the contrary, he muſt be gentle in his addreſs and conduct to all men, even to the moſt virulent and unreaſonable oppoſers, or perverters of the truth: he muſt be apt and ready to inſtruct men in the doctrines of Chriſt, with clear explanations, cool diſcuſſions, concluſive arguments and teſtimonies, pertinent illuſtrations, and kind language: at the ſame time he muſt patiently bear revilings, ridicule, and ill uſage, without recrimination or reſentment. Thus in a meek, diſpaſſionate, forbearing and forgiving temper, he muſt continue to inſtruct ſuch as oppoſed themſelves againſt the truth, however perverſe and obſtinate they were, provided they would attend to the word: ſtill hoping that "God, peradventure, would give them repentance." This might yet be the caſe; and then they would humbly receive, and profeſs the truth, and depend on the mercy and grace of God in Chriſt for pardon, aſſiſtance and deliverance. Thus "the ſervant of the Lord" ſhould hope and wait for their coming to themſelves, "awaking as from "ſleep," or recovering as men from intoxication; and ſo eſcaping the ſnare of the devil, in which he had entangled them by his artful devices and ſuitable temptations; even as fowlers draw the birds into the fatal ſnare: and that they might recover their liberty, though taken captive by ſatan, as priſoners are after a battle, who may be diſpoſed of at the victor's will; being conſigned to death, to chains, or to ſlavery, as he pleaſes. For ſuch men would remain entirely in the power of ſatan; unleſs God ſhould mercifully pleaſe to give them repentance, and ſo effect their deliverance.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The falls of ſome, and the good examples of others, ſhould excite us, to be ſtrong in the grace of Chriſt, and zealous in his cauſe. None ought to be choſen or appointed to the miniſtry of God's holy word, who are not faithful men, and competent to inſtruct others alſo: and all concerned in this important truſt ſhould be careful, to whom

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Predicting grievous corruptions of chriſtianity, through the atrocious wickedneſs of profeſſors and preachers, and propoſing his own example to Timothy's imitation, 1---13. *2d. Exhorting him to continue in the faith, and ſhewing the excellency, authority, and ſufficiency of the holy ſcriptures.* 14---17.

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they commit the ſtewardſhip of the myſteries of Chriſt: for if they wilfully, negligently, or partially chooſe, or ordain improper perſons; they will be condemned for it before many witneſſes, however they here concealed their motives, or excuſed their conduct. The good ſoldier of Chriſt muſt be ready at his Captain's word, to venture into the moſt perilous ſituations, and to endure the extremeſt hardſhips. He ought therefore to be hardy, ſelf-denying, and courageous; one who loves his Leader, and firmly believes he can make up all loſſes to him; even the loſs of his life, which no other prince or general can do for his ſoldiers. It is deſirable, that they who are engaged in this holy warfare, ſhould be exempted from the neceſſity of attending to ſecular buſineſs: but all, who would pleaſe their Lord, muſt avoid whatever is not abſolutely neceſſary, and every thing that is entangling to them. Whilſt numbers wholly diſregard theſe rules; ſome, who are active, and ſeem to ſtrive for the maſtery, are not careful to "ſtrive lawfully;" for they either ſpend their zeal about outward forms, human inventions, and doubtful diſputations, or they uſe unſanctified weapons furniſhed by bigotry and reſentment. We muſt alſo labour in patience and hope, aſſured "that in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not," without vainly expecting to receive our reward, till we have given proof of our perſevering diligence. In all our hardſhips, conflicts and temptations, we muſt remember the Lord Jeſus, and meditate daily on his ſufferings, his reſurrection, and his ſubſequent glory. Thus we ſhall learn to expect trials, and be the leſs diſquieted, "if we ſuffer trouble as evil-doers, even unto bonds;" knowing that no power can bind the word of God, or prevent the ſpread of the goſpel, as he ſees good. And, if the mind of Chriſt be in us, we ſhall be willing "to endure all things, for the elect's ſake," and to promote their ſalvation and eternal glory, for whom Chriſt willingly laid down his life. It is a faithful ſaying, that if we are thus dead with Chriſt, we ſhall alſo live with him; if we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him. But he will deny thoſe before his Father's throne, who deny him before men, and his truth as much enſures the unbeliever's condemnation, as the believer's ſalvation; for he cannot deny himſelf, and "heaven and earth ſhall paſs paſs away, but his words ſhall not paſs away!"

Whilſt we remind men of theſe things, we muſt alſo charge them before the Lord, not to ſtrive about words, or the *Shibboleths* of a party; which tends to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the hearers. In this part of our work we ſhall be likely to give offence to men; for eager controverſy is exceeding reliſhing to the vitiated taſte of the carnal mind, which lothes plain practical inſtruction. We ſhould therefore "ſtudy to ſhew ourſelves approved to God," and to obtain his ſeal to our miniſtry: we ſhould beſtow pains to become ſkilful, as well as faithful preachers, workmen that need not be aſhamed; inſtructors "that know how rightly to divide the word of truth," and to give every man the portion that belongs to him, with cloſe experimental application to his conſcience and affections. This will lead us to a diſtance from profane and vain babblings, which continually increaſe to more ungodlineſs: for many a ſpecious error is allowed without notice, to be intruded among profeſſors, which gradually eats like a canker, and deſtroys the power of godlineſs in an imperceptible manner. Scarce any thing hath done more miſchief within the church, and among thoſe that retain a regard for the ſcriptures, than the manner of Hymeneus and Philetus, in allegorizing away its plain doctrines and precepts, and ſo cauſing them to evaporate in ſome viſionary myſtical notion. This, ſome call *ſpiritualizing*: but it well anſwers the purpoſe of deceivers, (though often uſed by well-meaning injudicious perſons). It excites the wonder of the ignorant, and the diſguſt of rational men: and thus it takes off the one from the ſubſtantial part of religion to amuſe themſelves with fancies; and it increaſes the prejudices of the other againſt evangelical religion. Nothing can be ſo crude, fooliſh, or evidently erroneous, but it will ſubvert the temporary faith of ſome profeſſors: for of all the numberleſs deluſions which have been, or may be invented; there is not one, but is more congenial to the pride and luſts of men, than the ſimple truths of God's word are. But amidſt all theſe confuſions and apoſtacies, the "foundation of the Lord ſtandeth ſure;" ſecure and happy are they who build thereon by an obedient faith: the Lord knows them as his own people; and they may know it themſelves, by their diligent care to depart from iniquity, and to honour the name of Chriſt by an holy converſation. Theſe are the veſſels of gold and ſilver, which the Lord hath before prepared unto glory, whom he hath ſanctified and made meet for his own uſe, and ready for every good work: and when the veſſels of diſhonour ſhall be conſigned to deſtruction, theſe will be filled with all the fulneſs of God. Let us then ſeek to be cleanſed from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit: let young chriſtians and miniſters flee from youthful luſts: let all follow after righteouſneſs, faith, love, peace, with all them, that call on the Lord out of a pure heart: and let the frequent repetitions of the apoſtle teach us the vaſt importance of avoiding fooliſh, curious and frivolous queſtions, and whatever can produce ſtrifes, and angry controverſies. Alas, how little has it been remembered, that "the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle towards all men, apt to teach, patient!" Numbers ſeem to think that the reverſe ſhould be his character and conduct, and that zeal for ſuppoſed doctrinal truths is incompatible with gentleneſs, meekneſs, patience, and love! This fondneſs for angry controverſy, both in teachers and hearers of the goſpel, is one grand hindrance to our recovering ſinners out of the ſnare of the devil; for to exaſperate oppoſers is by no means the way to convince them. The artful enemy of our ſouls knows how to bait his hook, and ſpread his net for ſinners, according to their different taſtes, humours, and ſituations. He conceals the danger, and allures them with the proſpect of gain or pleaſure. They ſuſpect not the deception, till they have ſwallowed the bait, or are caught in the net: then they are taken captive by him at his will; and they

CHAP. III.

THIS know alſo, that in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come.

2 For men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleaſures more then lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof: from ſuch turn away.

6 For of this ſort are they which creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women, laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

ſometimes appear under a kind of neceſſity of proceeding in their ruinous courſes. Yet ſome are recovered from out of the ſnare: for when God gives them repentance, they come to themſelves, they acknowledge the truth, they confeſs their guilt, they cry for mercy and deliverance, they obtain pardon and grace, they are ſet at liberty, and walk in newneſs of life; and ſatan can never more regain his dominion over them. There is no *peradventure* in reſpect of God's pardoning thoſe, who do repent: but we cannot tell whether he will give repentance to thoſe, who ſtill continue to oppoſe his will: yet, as he ſometimes gives it even to the moſt obſtinate of his enemies; it is our duty to hope and pray for them; and in meekneſs to inſtruct them as long as we have the opportunity. And, if any feel themſelves taken captive by ſatan, and long for deliverance; let them remember, that they can never recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, except by acknowledging the truth of God in the goſpel; that this they never can do without repentance; that repentance is the gift of God; and finally, that they muſt aſk it of him by earneſt perſevering prayer.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—5.] The apoſtle foreſaw, and gave warning to Timothy, that in the laſt days, or under the chriſtian diſpenſation, perilous or difficult times would arrive; in which it would be extremely hard for chriſtians to eſcape the contagion of bad examples, and corrupt principles; or for miniſters to preach the unadulterated truth of the goſpel; and in which they, who retained their integrity, would be expoſed to the hatred and perſecution of their profeſſed brethren. For, whereas the love of Chriſt, of one another, and of all men, diſtinguiſhed real chriſtians from others; a race was about to ariſe, who would, in general, "be lovers of their ownſelves," in a carnal, inordinate, and excluſive manner; being covetous and greedy in getting and keeping wealth at any rate, and idolatrouſly truſting in it. Or they would be vain-glorious "boaſters," and "proud" of their abilities, attainments, and ſuppoſed merits; blaſphemers of the perfections, truths, and ways of God; diſobedient to their parents, who had endeavoured to train them up in piety; ungrateful to the Lord, and their earthly benefactors; unholy and profane; ready to violate promiſes and covenants, being unfaithful to every truſt repoſed in them; falſe accuſers of others, as a pretext for abuſing them; given up to the exceſſive indulgence of their appetites; fierce and ſavage in their tempers; not loving, but deſpiſing good men and good things; betrayers of thoſe who truſted them; of a ſeditious and turbulent ſpirit reſpecting their rulers; raſh, and impetuous; haughty and imperious; and lovers of ſenſual or diſſipated pleaſures, more than lovers of God; delighting in ſuch gratifications, and not in the Lord and his holy ſervice. Yet even theſe men would retain "the form of godlineſs," profeſſing chriſtianity, attending on ſacred ordinances, and pretending to be religious; whilſt they renounced "the power of it," and at leaſt practically denied, that it ought to have any ſanctifying influence upon their affections, tempers, and conduct. From perſons of this character Timothy was directed to turn away, and to have no fellowſhip with them. We are not to ſuppoſe that the ſame individuals would anſwer to the whole of this deſcription: but men would ariſe, called chriſtians, who would be guilty of theſe vices, ſome being more notorious in one way, and ſome in another; even as the heathens were, and differing from them only in name. (*Rom.* c. i. v. 29—32.) Such perſons have abounded within the viſible church in every place, and through all ſucceeding ages hitherto; and ſome have been found, even amongſt thoſe, that moſt zealouſly contended for the peculiar doctrines of the goſpel. Many ſuch were ſoon perceived in the primitive church: but matters grew worſe and worſe, (v. 13.) till they iſſued in the antichriſtian apoſtacy. The ſelfiſhneſs, covetouſneſs, high ſwelling words of vanity, and blaſphemous claims and titles of the church of Rome have generally been ſuppoſed to be peculiarly pointed at: their countenancing children to diſobey their parents, and parents to withdraw their natural affection from their children, in their method of repleniſhing their religious houſes: their diſregard to the moſt ſolemn leagues and covenants, and their want of all faith and mercy towards thoſe, whom they *falſely accuſed* of hereſy; their contempt of, and enmity againſt true chriſtians; the licentiouſneſs countenanced by indulgences and diſpenſations; their fierce perſecutions; their arrogant conduct towards princes and emperors, &c, exceeded every other corruption of chriſtianity that hath yet appeared; and under all of it they maintained, and were very exact in their "form of "godlineſs." But we need not go from among Proteſtants, or out of our own land, to witneſs the accompliſhment of this prediction.

V. 6—9.] There were even in the apoſtle's days, men of the ſort he had deſcribed, who in a covert manner, and with ſubtle inſinuation, crept into families, prying into their affairs, winding them into confidence, gaining aſcendancy over the conſciences, and perverting the ſouls of unſtable profeſſors, for their own intereſt, or that of their party. Such deceivers ſingled out the weakeſt, and

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they ſhall proceed no further: for their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all *men*, as their's alſo was.

10 But thou haſt fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpoſe, faith, long-ſuffering, charity, patience,

11 Perſecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lyſtra; what perſecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution.

13 But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving, and being deceived.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned and haſt been aſſured of, knowing of whom thou haſt learned *them*;

15 And that from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

16 All ſcripture *is* given by inſpiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works.

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moſt credulous women, whom they could find; that they might take advantage of their want of information and diſcernment, to work upon their imaginations and paſſions. Their ſucceſs was alſo chiefly among ſuch "as were "laden with ſins, and led away with divers luſts:" theſe would be moſt ready to hearken to their flatteries, and ſoothing deluſions, and to embrace a carnal, ſelf-indulgent religion; which would at once give eaſe to their conſcience, and licence to their ſinful paſſions. They were alſo ſuch as were "ever learning," beſtowing pains to become acquainted with religion; but running after every new teacher, and hearkening to every novel notion; continually ſhifting from one thing to another, and thus "never "able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (*Eph.* c. iv. ver. 14.) Theſe were the perſons, whom the falſe teachers firſt aſſailed; and by their inſinuations and flatteries, they reduced them into a kind of captivity to them; that by their means they might accompliſh their covetous, ambitious, or licentious purpoſes. Now as the Egyptian magicians, (whoſe names were reported by tradition, and ſome ancient writers, to have been Jannes and Jambres,) withſtood Moſes, by counterfeiting his miracles; and thus endeavoured to bewilder Pharaoh's mind, that he might not regard the meſſage of Jehovah: ſo theſe perſons withſtood the truth, by deceiving men with a falſe goſpel, and by various lying pretences: being corrupt and depraved in their minds, utterly alienated from the faith of Chriſt, and rejected of God as hypocrites, or apoſtates. But they would not be able to proceed any further in their oppoſition to the goſpel, than the limits preſcribed to them, in the ſovereign wiſdom of God; and at length their folly would be publiſhed to all men, even to their moſt devoted adherents; as that of the magicians was, when the boil was upon them as well as on the other Egyptians. (*Exod.* c. ix. v. 11.)

V. 10—13.] As a contraſt to the baſe ſpirit of the deceivers before-mentioned, the apoſtle called Timothy's attention, to his own conduct and miniſtry. He had fully known what doctrine he had in all places preached; the manner in which he had lived; the leading aim and purpoſe, that he had purſued in the moſt determined manner, &c. He had eſpecially obſerved the patience, with which he had endured perſecutions in ſeveral places, (Notes, &c. *Acts*, c. xiii, xiv;) and how the Lord had delivered him out of them all. And indeed it was a general rule, that if any man was determined to live a godly life, in dependance on the atonement, and grace of the Lord Jeſus, and according to his precepts, he would certainly be expoſed to perſecution. A form of godlineſs, without any direct connexion with the doctrine of faith in a crucified Saviour; or a profeſſion of that faith, without the offenſive example of a godly life, would be endured and tolerated: but the open profeſſion of the truth as it is in Jeſus, and a reſolute attention to all the duties of vital godlineſs, muſt needs excite the ſcorn and enmity of mankind; nor could any abilities, amiableneſs, or beneficence ſecure a man from ſome effects of their perſecuting animoſity. Inſtead of matters taking a more favourable turn, the apoſtle predicted that wicked men and ſeducing teachers would grow more and more ſubtle, daring, callous, malicious, cruel, covetous and ambitious; deceiving others, and being themſelves deceived by their own deluſions, and ſatan's rules. The hiſtory of the chriſtian church, through all the ſubſequent ages, form an awful demonſtration, that he ſpake as he was moved by the Holy Ghoſt: ſo that all the outcries of infidels, againſt the impoſtures, perſecutions, wars, maſſacres and miſchiefs occaſioned by chriſtianity are only ſo many atteſtations to the truth of that religion which is contained in the holy ſcriptures, and in the profeſſion and lives of a remnant in every age; and they really condemn nothing, but that ſpurious chriſtianity, which was long before condemned by the Spirit of prophecy.

V. 14—17.] The apoſtle therefore called on Timothy vigilantly to maintain, and perſevere in, the profeſſion and preaching of that doctrine which he had learned, and aſſuredly believed; knowing that he had received it from the Lord through his miniſtry: and remembering, that it accorded to the holy ſcriptures, or writings of the prophets, with which he had from his childhood been acquainted. Theſe, when

CHAP. IV.

Contains the apoſtle 1*ſt. Solemnly charging Timothy to be diligent and faithful in his miniſtry; as ere long, men would not endure ſound doctrine; and as he had nearly finiſhed his work, was about to ſuffer martyrdom, and was going to receive the crown of righteouſneſs,* 1---9. 2*d. Deſiring him to come to him, as he was almoſt left alone; and giving him information, directions, and caution in ſome particulars,* 10---15. 3*d. Shewing him how his brethren had forſaken him, and how the Lord had ſupported him, when called on to anſwer before his perſecutors; expreſſing his confidence in Him for the future, and concluding with ſalutations and benedictions,* 17---22.

properly underſtood, were ſufficient to render him wiſe unto ſalvation, and to inſtruct him in all things pertaining to it; as they all ſpake of the promiſed Meſſiah, and prepared the mind for receiving him in faith, and ſubmitting to his authority. For all the writings of Moſes and the prophets, (as well as thoſe parts of the New Teſtament, which were then extant) were given by inſpiration of God, to inſtruct men in divine things: and every part of them was not only perfect truth, but profitable, to teach them ſound doctrine reſpecting God and themſelves, the eternal ſtate, the way of acceptance, and other intereſting and difficult ſubjects; to reprove and convince them of their errors and ſins, that they might learn their guilt and danger, and ſo value and embrace the remedy propoſed; to correct and regulate their affections, diſpoſitions and conduct; and to inſtruct them in every part of univerſal righteouſneſs, with the obligations, motives and encouragements to it. Thus they were ſuited, and ſufficient, not only to make the chriſtian wiſe unto ſalvation, and to direct his whole behaviour; but to perfect "the man of God," the faithful miniſter of Chriſt; and fully to ſupply him with knowledge and wiſdom, and whatever could tend to his fitneſs for every good work in his private conduct and his public ſervices. Doubtleſs this is ſtill moſt emphatically true of the ſacred ſcriptures, now the canon of the New Teſtament alſo is completed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The gravitation of a ſtone to the earth is not more natural, than men's propenſity to turn away from God: whatever means are uſed to bring them to love him, and one another; the end will not be attained, unleſs by the continual influence of his new creating Spirit. We need not, therefore, wonder, that, in the laſt days, under the fulleſt external revelation which God hath made to man, perilous times ſoon came; and profeſſed chriſtians became "lovers of themſelves, lovers of money, of honour, and of pleaſure; rather than lovers of God!" Our land at this day is full of ſuch nominal diſciples, as are here deſcribed; ſome are ſelfiſh and covetous; others proud boaſters and blaſphemers, or regardleſs of their duty to parents, or children, relatives and rulers; being unthankful and unholy: others are ſlanderous, treacherous, intemperate, fierce, implacable, deſpiſers of good men, traitors, heady, high-minded: and who can number thoſe, "who are lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God?" Can any man ſeriouſly think that theſe crimes are leſs abominable in men called Chriſtians, than they were in heathens! Can any doubt but they will be more terribly puniſhed? In fact, the more the form of godlineſs is retained, when the power of it is denied; the more criminal and dangerous men become, and the more ſhould they be avoided, and proteſted againſt. For when any form or notion of religion is made a cloak, or an excuſe from wilful tranſgreſſions of God's law; the danger becomes greater, than from men, who openly caſt off all regard to God. Hypocriſy, ſuperſtition, enthuſiaſm, and antinomianiſm are infectious beyond other mental maladies: the poiſonous draught is moſt dangerous when mingled to reſemble ſome valuable medicine: and a wolf in ſheep's clothing is moſt dreadful to the unſuſpecting flock. Of this *genus*, (which is divided into various *ſpecies*, popiſh and proteſtant, ancient and modern, learned and unlearned;) there have ever been artful men, who have wormed themſelves by pompous pretenſions and flatteries, into the favour and confidence of the weakeſt, moſt credulous, moſt ignorant, and imaginative of the human ſpecies; and have taken them captive, by ſoothing them into quietneſs, "when laden with ſins, and led away with divers luſts." Such weak and deluded perſons, who want a ſafe and comfortable religion, without ſelf-denial, humiliation, and mortification of their luſts, "are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;" and readily fall in with artful and intereſted deceivers of every deſcription. For as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes by mimicking his miracles: ſo do ſuch men reſiſt the truth; by a counterfeit goſpel; and by ſubſtituting viſions, ſuperſtitions, curious ſpeculations, &c, inſtead of repentance, faith, and holy obedience. Such deluſions act like opiates; they lull the conſcience into a pleaſing ſleep, and increaſe the diſeaſe: and they are adminiſtered by men of corrupt minds, who are reprobate concerning the faith of whom all ſhould beware. But, though it is grievous to perceive, that evil men and ſeducers grow worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived: yet we may rejoice that they cannot exceed their limits; that they cannot fatally delude the upright believer; and that at length, their folly will be made manifeſt to all men, as that of their predeceſſors hath been.

In order to eſcape, and oppoſe ſuch ſeductions, let us ſtudy to become well acquainted with the doctrine and example of the apoſtle; let us copy his manner of life, his purpoſe, faith, long-ſuffering and patience; let us frequently reflect on his perſecutions, ſupports, and deliverances: let us count our coſt, and know aſſuredly, that "if any man will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, he muſt ſuffer perſecution, in one way or other; as far as providence will permit the enmity of men's hearts to break forth againſt him. Let us then continue in the things, which we have learned, and profeſſed to believe, endeavouring to get further acquaintance with the holy ſcriptures, "which are able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt," who is the principal ſubject both of the Old, and New Teſtament: and let

I Charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure ſound doctrine; but after their own luſts ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they ſhall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and ſhall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangeliſt, make full proof of thy miniſtry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

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us learn to reverence the whole Bible, as every ſentence in it was given by inſpiration from God, and is profitable, to inſtruct, reprove, correct, and guide us in the way of peace and holineſs. Nothing more can be wanting to render the chriſtian, or the miniſter, perfectly qualified for every ſervice required of him, and throughly furniſhed unto every good work; that a complete, believing, experimental, and practical knowledge of the whole ſcriptures, in their genuine meaning, and connexion, and the proportion of one part to another. All religious error ſprings from ignorance, perverſion, or miſunderſtanding of the ſcriptures; from overlooking, objecting to, or explaining away ſome part of them; or from adding men's notions, inventions, ſuperſtitions, or new revelations to them, as of equal, or ſuperior authority. The way therefore to oppoſe error is by promoting the ſolid knowledge of the word of truth, eſpecially by the faithful preaching of the goſpel: and the greateſt kindneſs we can do our children, is to make them early acquainted with the Bible. Thus we ſhall do ſomething, that may tend to preſerve religion in the world, when we are removed out of it; and to perpetuate a ſucceſſion of thoſe, who are eſtabliſhed in the faith, wiſe unto ſalvation, and throughly furniſhed unto every good work.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—5.] Theſe repeated ſolemn charges of the apoſtle, to ſo zealous and faithful a miniſter as Timothy, moſt emphatically ſhew how difficult it is to fill up this important office, in a proper manner even to the end; eſpecially in dangerous times. Again, he called on his beloved Timothy, by the authority, and as in the preſence of God; and in that of the Lord Jeſus, who was appointed to judge the living and the dead, at his laſt glorious appearing to complete the deſign of his mediatorial kingdom, and to gather his ſaints into his heavenly kingdom; that he ſhould preach the word of God as one in earneſt, being inſtant and unwearied in his work; "in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon," at ſtated times, and occaſionally; when the opportunity was more, and when it was leſs favourable; to large congregations, in private circles, in obſcure places, before friends or enemies; to one, or to ten thouſands of hearers; when it might be done with ſafety and credit, and when it expoſed him to hardſhip, reproach, peril, or loſs. Timothy, to whom this exhortation was given, had an infirm conſtitution; ſo that this excuſe for remiſſneſs ſhould not be too readily admitted. In thus preaching the word of God, he was charged to reprove with authority the ſins and negligences of profeſſors; to rebuke with more ſharpneſs thoſe who were guilty of groſſer evils; and to exhort, perſuade, and beſeech his hearers to attend to every part of the divine meſſage with the obedience of faith; and in this he was to perſevere "with all long-ſuffering," though many were unruly, ungrateful, or ſlow to underſtand his inſtructions; and he muſt enforce his exhortations, by explaining and applying the doctrines of the goſpel in the ſimpleſt and moſt convincing manner. In this he ought to be the more aſſiduous: as the time was about to come, when profeſſed chriſtians would not endure ſound doctrine, the faithful, ſalutary truths, and practical inſtructions of God's word; but, being led away with divers luſts, they would be exaſperated or diſguſted thereby; and deſire a doctrine, which gave them no diſturbance or offence, whilſt they indulged their ſeveral inclinations. They would therefore ſeek for, and find "teachers after their own luſts;" and they would "heap ſuch unto themſelves," to gratify their love of novelty and variety, and to keep them in countenance in their deluſions. Thus "their itching ears" would be humoured and pleaſed; and they would turn them away from the truth with contempt and diſguſt, and pay all their attention to cunningly deviſed fables and ſpecious hereſies. To oppoſe the progreſs of this corrupt leaven, which was even then beginning to work, Timothy was called upon to "be vigilant in all things," watching againſt the fallacies, with which ſatan and his ſervants would in varied ways endeavour to ſeduce men from the ſimplicity of Chriſt; to endure chearfully all the afflictions, to which his zeal and faithfulneſs might expoſe him from falſe brethren, as well as avowed enemies; to perform the office of an evangeliſt, in the ſeveral places, to which he might have acceſs; and to make full proof of his miniſtry, by trying to the uttermoſt every method of doing good to the ſouls of men, in the exerciſe of all its duties. Timothy is ſaid, in the poſtſcript, to have been "ordained the firſt biſhop of the church of the Epheſians:" but it ſeems *to me at leaſt*, that the office of an evangeliſt was ſuperior to that of a dioceſan biſhop, as exerciſed in the earlieſt ages of chriſtianity. The evangeliſts appear to have been extraordinary aſſiſtants to the apoſtles, who exerciſed great authority in their abſence, over the ſeveral churches which they viſited: and dioceſan epiſcopacy was probably ſubſtituted in the place of that authority, when that extraordinary office began to ceaſe in the church.

V. 6—8.] It behoved Timothy to act with the greater vigilance and fortitude, as the apoſtle foreſaw that he ſhould ſhortly ſuffer martyrdom, and pour out his blood as a drink-offering, to the honour of the Lord. For this approaching event he was ready: and he knew the time was at hand, when he ſhould be removed out of the world, as the fo-

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed *my* courſe, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing.

9 Do thy diligence to come ſhortly unto me:

10 For Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world, and is departed unto Theſſalonica; Creſcens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the miniſtry.

12 And Tychicus have I ſent to Epheſus.

13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comeſt, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* eſpecially the parchments.

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journer took up his tent and departed to another place. He conſidered himſelf therefore as one who had finiſhed his public miniſtry, and as having only the concluding ſcene to paſs through: and ſince the time when Chriſt had choſen him to be his ſoldier, he was conſcious that he had "fought a good fight;" he had valiantly contended againſt ſin, the world, and ſatan; he had, at Chriſt's command, through labours, perils, and ſufferings, ſought the ſubverſion of the kingdom of darkneſs, the deliverance of ſatan's captives, and the advancement of the kingdom of Chriſt: this he had done with the appointed weapons of his warfare by faithful preaching, a holy example, fervent prayers, and patient ſufferings. He had alſo "finiſhed his courſe." He had ſet out to run the chriſtian race, he had laid aſide every weight, he had preſſed forward through every obſtacle to the mark, and he was now about to ſeize the prize. "He had alſo kept the faith," both in his profeſſion, and in the execution of his important miniſtry. He therefore aſſuredly expected the "crown of righteouſneſs, that glory and immortality, which were prepared for all true believers in Chriſt, according to the meaſure of their grace, their ſervices and ſufferings in his cauſe. This the apoſtle knew had been "laid up for him," and *therefore* he had little more to do, than to receive and enjoy it. The *righteous* Judge would openly award it to him "in that day," to which he conſtantly called men's attention: for, though as a ſinner, e merited condemnation, according to the law; yet as a eliever, whoſe faith had been ſhewn by his works, he was entitled to the reward of righteouſneſs, according to the goſpel. He expected indeed, "when abſent from the body, to be preſent with the Lord," and to have pre-libaions of his perfect felicity with "the ſpirits of juſt men "made perfect:" but the public declaration of his right o the Conqueror's crown, and his admiſſion to the full njoyment of immortal glory, would be in that day, when hriſt ſhall appear to ſhew his righteouſneſs, as well as his ercy, in rewarding his faithful followers. (2 *Theſſ.* c. i. 5—10.) Nor was this crown of righteouſneſs laid up or him *only*, or for other eminent miniſters, or martyrs; but or all believers, in every age and place, even for all "who love Chriſt's appearing:" for they all expect, prepare, nd wait for his ſecond coming; they look for their graious recompence from him at that period; they endure ardſhips, and deny themſelves many worldly pleaſures and ntereſts in hopes of that recompence; they regulate their abitual conduct, as thoſe who believe "that he will come to be their Judge," they long to ſee him as he is, to be freed by him from all ſin, and to witneſs his triumph over all his enemies; and as far as faith and hope exclude anxious doubts of their acceptance, they love the thoughts of his appearing to raiſe the dead, and judge the world.

V. 9—13.] Paul greatly deſired Timothy to come to him, as he was ſolitary in his impriſonment; and had ſcarce any with him, whom he could employ in needful ſervices. Demas, of whom he ſeems before to have judged favourably, had forſaken him in his perilous ſituation, "having "loved this preſent world." He had not courage to venture his life, by continuing with the apoſtle, under his perſecutions: he loved the world too much, to give up all for Chriſt; and perhaps ſome proſpect of ſecular advantage offered itſelf, with which he was caught, and he departed to Theſſalonica in purſuit of it. Whether he finally apoſtatized or not, we cannot tell: but the apoſtle ſtood in doubt of him. (1 *John*, c. ii. v. 15.) Two other helpers, known to Timothy, were gone to other places, about the Lord's work, with the apoſtle's approbation: ſo that only Luke, his faithful companion in all his ſufferings, continued with him. He therefore deſired Timothy to bring Mark with him, who was employed in the ſame parts. He once had forſaken the apoſtle "having too much loved this preſent world;" but he had repented, and was now in great confidence with him; and might be profitable to him for the miniſtry at Rome, as he had been in other places. He alſo informed Timothy, that "he had ſent Tychicus to "Epheſus." This hath been deemed a deciſive proof, that Timothy was not at Epheſus at that time: but *poſſibly* Tychicus might be ſent by another way, than the bearer of this epiſtle; and calling at other places might not arrive till afterwards; and the apoſtle might mean, that he had ſent Tychicus to ſupply his place at Epheſus, that he might come to him the ſooner. Among theſe informations and directions, we find Paul deſiring Timothy, to bring his cloak to him, &c. If the word means a cloak, or upper garment, (as it ſeems to do,) which he ſuppoſed he might want at the approach of winter, it is a remarkable proof of his poverty to the laſt, that he ſhould need to ſend ſo far for a garment to keep him warm, during the remnant of his days! What books and parchments were meant Timothy would know; but it is vain for us to conjecture. As Troas was not in the direct road from Epheſus to Rome, this may be urged as a proof that Timothy was not then at Epheſus: but it is not certain, that he might not go by another way, to call upon ſome of the churches that he was connected with.

14 Alexander the copperſmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

15 Of whom be thou ware alſo; for he hath greatly withſtood our words.

16 At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me, but all *men* forſook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithſtanding the Lord ſtood with me, and ſtrengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work, and will preſerve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 Salute Priſca and Aquila, and the houſehold of Oneſiphorus.

20 Eraſtus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum ſick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with thy ſpirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

V. 14, 15.] We are not ſure, that this was the ſame Alexander, that we have before read of. (Acts, c. xix. v. 33. 1 *Tim.* c. i. v. 20.) The apoſtle knew him to be an incurable apoſtate, or enemy to the goſpel. Perhaps, after having been excommunicated, he openly renounced chriſtianity, and did every thing he could to ſtir up perſecution againſt Paul and the believers; and to obſtruct the ſucceſs of the goſpel. The "apoſtle therefore ſpake by the Spirit of prophecy, declaring the Lord would reward him according to "his works;" or denouncing this awful ſentence upon him, for a warning to others. We cannot *certainly* know, who are given up to final obduracy; and muſt therefore perſevere in praying for our enemies and perſecutors. Timothy was moreover warned to beware of the malignant and ſubtle machinations of this wicked man; as he would do as much to injure him, and withſtand his words, as he had againſt the apoſtle, and his doctrine.

V. 16—18.] When the apoſtle was firſt called before the emperor, (or the prefect of the city in his abſence, as ſome think,) none of the chriſtians at Rome had courage to ſtand by him, but they all forſook him to provide for their own ſafety; as the apoſtles had done, when Chriſt was apprehended. The cruel perſecutions of the chriſtians at Rome, under Nero, preceded the writing of this epiſtle. Numbers had then been put to death, or driven from the city; and the reſt ſeem to have been greatly intimidated: ſo that on this important occaſion none were found, who dared to attend him to the tribunal. This was a criminal weakneſs, the effect of remaining unbelief; but the apoſtle prayed, that it might not be laid to their charge. Notwithſtanding he was thus deſerted by man, the Lord was graciouſly pleaſed to ſtand with him, and make him ſenſible of his preſence, favour, and protection: thus giving him ſtrength of faith, courageouſly to bear witneſs to the truth before his perſecutors; that ſo the doctrine of the goſpel might be fully known by thoſe in authority, and by all preſent; and that thus it might be circulated among the Gentiles into diſtant nations. Moreover, though his judge was powerful and outrageous, yet he had been for that time delivered from him, as out of a lion's mouth. He did not indeed expect to eſcape martyrdom: but he was confident that "the Lord would deliver him from every evil work," not ſuffering ſatan to prevail againſt him to cauſe him to do any thing inconſiſtent with the honour of the goſpel, o the benefit of his ſoul; and, "that he would preſerve him "to his heavenly kingdom:" inſtead therefore of complaints or dejection, he was ready to aſcribe "glory to th "Lord for ever and ever. Amen."

V. 19—22.] Priſca, or Priſcilla, and Aquila were nea to the place where Timothy then reſided: but as they frequently changed their abode, this does not determine where he was. (c. i. v. 16—18.) The apoſtle had probably been attended by Eraſtus, and Trophimus, when he laſt parted with Timothy: but the former abode at Corinth, and the latter was left ſick at Miletum, the Lord not ſeeing good to enable him to work a miracle for his recovery. Having again deſired Timothy to come to him before winter; (probably apprehending that he might otherwiſe come too late to ſee him:) he concluded with repeated prayers and benedictions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The importance of the work of miniſters, the peculiar temptations to which they are expoſed, and the multiplied evil effects of their unfaithfulneſs, or negligence, concur in rendering it needful to charge the moſt zealous of them, as in the preſence of God, and of the Lord Jeſus, before whom they muſt ſhortly appear to give an account of their ſtewardſhip: that "they preach the word, "inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon," to few or many, a opportunities offer; like men engaged in the work, wh make it their one great buſineſs and pleaſure; without conſulting their eaſe, intereſt, or reputation, or ſhrinking from hardſhip, reproach, or perſecution; and that they reprove, rebuke, exhort, with forbearance and perſeverance, with plain inſtructions, and cloſe application. This is the more indiſpenſable, as the time is come when even many profeſſors of the goſpel "will not endure ſound doctrine:" they are offended by the heart-ſearching, diſtinguiſhing, practical truth of God's word, which detects their ſins, and ſhews the neceſſity of mortifying their peculiar luſts: and they deſire to be ſoothed and flattered in the indulgence of them; and to have "teachers according to them." Hence ſome admire emollient, complaiſant, ingenious, or eloquent harangues; others are for curious ſpeculative diſquiſitions; others fo virulent invectives on men of different ſects and ſenti ments. Thus their conſciences are compoſed, and their proud ſelf-preference and contempt of others are humoured; together with a curious, fanciful, and captious temper: and becauſe "they have itching ears," the pruriency of which is not eaſily quieted; "they heap to them-"ſelves ſuch teachers," and always want new voices, new gifts, new notions; till their ears are wholly turned from the truth, and they are turned unto fables. This ſhould induce thoſe who love ſouls, to watch in all things, to venture and endure all painful effects of their faithfulneſs; to take all opportunities of preaching the pure goſpel; and to make full proof of their miniſtry, that they may do all the good in it that they poſſibly can. In doing this they ſhould be quickened by the conſideration, that their brethren, one after another, are taken away, or laid aſide, from their work; and that their own term of uſefulneſs will ſoon expire. In this way we may hope to be ready for the ſtroke of death, when the time of our departure arrives: for the diligent chriſtian, or faithful miniſter, who is conſcious of having acted in good meaſure conſiſtent with his profeſſion, may with comfort ſay at the cloſe of life, "I have fought the good "fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the "faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of "righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge "will *give* me at that day; and to all, who love his "appearing." He will give all the praiſe to ſovereign grace, and expect acceptance only by faith in Chriſt: but his conduct will prove, that "he hath loved the "Lord, who firſt loved him," and that he hath exerciſed the faith of God's elect. Such a man may therefore, amidſt poverty, contempt, pain, ſickneſs, and the agonies of death, rejoice in hope of the glory of God: but this triumphant language cannot properly be adopted, when moſt needed, by thoſe, who have been negligent, lukewarm and unfaithful in the Lord's ſervice, from the time of their ſuppoſed converſion. In proportion as the duties of a man's place and ſtation are neglected, his evidence of an intereſt in Chriſt will be obſcured; and uncertainty and diſcouragement may probably diſtreſs his cloſing ſcene.

There are various characters in the viſible church, and various changes take place among miniſters. Some, who have apparently run well, are hindered, and forſake their work, "loving this preſent world:" others are recovered from grievous backſlidings, and become profitable for the miniſtry: others turn open apoſtates, or virulent oppoſers; doing much harm to the ſervants of Chriſt, and greatly withſtanding their words; whom the Lord will reward according to their works. Others bring their characters into doubt, or incur diſgrace, by their cowardice in times of danger: and their brethren are called on to pray for them, that the Lord would not lay that ſin to their charge. But others proceed with diligence and courage in every circumſtance: though no man ſtands by them, the Lord is with them to ſtrengthen and comfort them; he gives them a mouth and wiſdom, which all their enemies cannot gainſay; he delivers them from outward dangers and enemies, as long as it is good for them; he preſerves them from the mouth of the lion that would deſtroy their ſouls; and he keeps them from every evil work, even unto his heavenly kingdom. Many ſuch are now before the throne, giving glory to his name; may we be followers of them; may the Lord Jeſus be with our ſpirits, to comfort, and ſanctify them; and may his grace be with all his diſciples and miniſters in every place! Amen.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to TITUS.

This ſhort epiſtle is ſuppoſed to have been written, between the time when the apoſtle was releaſed from his firſt impriſonment at Rome, and that of his ſecond confinement there. He had made a progreſs through Crete, now Candia, a large iſland in the Mediterranean ſea: and having planted ſeveral churches there, he left Titus, as an evangeliſt, to ſettle their affairs, and to ordain elders, &c. Soon after, he ſent him this epiſtle; the inſtructions of which are ſimilar to thoſe, which have been conſidered in the two preceding epiſtles.

Anno Domini 66. *Anno Domini* 66.

CHAP. I.

Contains Paul 1ſt. Speaking of his apoſtolical office, and ſaluting Titus, 1--4. *2d. Shewing for what purpoſe he had left him in Crete, and what manner of perſons chriſtian paſtors ought to be,* 5--9. *3d. Repreſenting the dangerous principle, and ſelfiſh conduct of the falſe teachers, and the vicious character of the Cretans; and directing Titus how to rebuke, and inſtruct them,* 10--16.

PAUL, a ſervant of God, and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godlineſs;

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began;

3 But hath in due times manifeſted his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour:

4 To Titus, *mine* own ſon after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.

5 For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

6 If any be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife; having faithful children, not accuſed of riot, or unruly.

7 For a biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God; not ſelf-willed, not ſoon angry, not given to wine, no ſtriker, not given to filthy lucre

8 But a lover of hoſpitality, a lover of good men, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate;

9 Holding faſt the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by ſound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainſayers.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, eſpecially they of the circumciſion:

11 Whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſubvert whole houſes, teaching things which

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NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—4.] Paul was the ſervant of God, as he was an apoſtle of Chriſt; the former was his general character, the latter his ſpecial employment. His apoſtolical office accorded with, and related to the faith of God's elect. He was appointed to propagate thoſe doctrines, which ſome of them had been taught to believe, and to bring others of them to partake of the ſame precious faith: that ſo they might profeſs and hold forth the truth, which tended to bring ſinners to Godlineſs, and which alone was made effectual for that purpoſe. This truth he preached, and they acknowledged, amidſt manifold trials, "in hope of eternal life, with God, who cannot lie," break his word, or deceive thoſe, that truſt in him, "had promiſed" to Chriſt, the ſurety of his people, "before eternal ages, (Note, 2 *Tim.* c. i. v. 9, 10;) which purpoſe or promiſes had been concealed, or but in part revealed, in former ages; but in due time God "had manifeſted it, as his word," that cannot be broken, by the preaching of the goſpel, which had been committed to Paul, "according to the commandment, or appointment of God our Saviour." He therefore, as the apoſtle of Chriſt, wrote to Titus "his *genuine* ſon, in the faith," (which was common to all true chriſtians;) as he had been converted by his miniſtry, and trained up under him for the work of an evangeliſt; and in his behalf he preſented his uſual devout deſires of "grace, &c." The expreſſion "God our Saviour," ſeems here to relate to the Godhead, without diſtinction of perſons; and in ſome places it refers to the perſon of the Father, as ſaving us by his beloved Son, (c. iii. v. 4—6.)

V. 5—9.] Titus had been left in Crete to ſet in order what was wanting in the government, worſhip, and diſcipline of the churches; and eſpecially to ordain elders in every city. (Notes, &c. 1 *Tim.* c. iii. c. v. ver. 21, 22. 2 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 5;) according to the directions, which had been given him. There were many cities in this populous iſland, and the apoſtle ſeems to have been very ſucceſsful during his ſhort ſtay there; but probably ſome had been converted to chriſtianity before this time. The character and qualifications of theſe paſtors, (which are called elders or biſhops indiſcriminately,) correſpond to what hath before been conſidered: but it is here added, that they were to be ſuch, as "had "believing children, &c." They who had children grown up, who had not embraced chriſtianity, or who were accuſed of riot and licentiouſneſs, or who could not be governed by their father, and reſtrained from ſcandalous vices; were not to be admitted into the paſtoral office. The paſtors were to be choſen from thoſe, who had for ſome time profeſſed the goſpel, (when that could be done:) but if their children were ſo untractable, it would at leaſt *appear*, that they knew not how to govern their own families; and the miſconduct of their children might reflect diſgrace upon the chriſtian religion, as well as weaken the hands of their parents in the public miniſtry. For the overſeer and ſteward of God's houſehold, (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. iv. ver. 1—3) muſt be an irreproachable perſon, and not of an overbearing, ſelf-willed dogmatical temper, that could not endure to be oppoſed or contradicted. To the other excellencies of his character, it was needful that he ſhould be a man, who "held "faſt" in a ſteady, conſiſtent profeſſion, "the faithful "word" of the goſpel, according as it had been taught him by the apoſtle; without having warped or ſophiſticated it, as many did; that ſo he might be a judicious, ſolid, experienced defender of it's truths; able, by ſubſtantial, ſalutary and holy doctrine, in every particular, to exhort the diſciples to ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith, and an honourable conduct; and to confute, convince, or ſilence gain-ſayers, who oppoſed, or perverted the truth.

V. 10—13.] The laſt mentioned qualification wa the more requiſite as there were in every place, (eſpecially in Crete,) a number of ungovernable talkers; an intereſted deceivers, who could not be kept from doing they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake.

12 One of themſelves, *even* a prophet of their own, ſaid, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beaſts, ſlow bellies.

13 This witneſs is true. Wherefore rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the faith;

14 Not giving heed to Jewiſh fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled.

16 They profeſs that they know God; but in works they deny *him*; being abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

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much miſchief, by any cenſures or admonitions. Some of theſe were of other deſcriptions; but the Judaizers were the moſt buſy, unruly, and pernicious; they ſubverted whole families, turning them aſide from the ſimplicity of faith in Chriſt, to attend to legal ceremonies, and human traditions; by teaching ſuch things as they ought not; and "this, for filthy lucre's ſake," rather than from miſtake or ignorance. For in this manner they humoured the pride and prejudices of ſome, and flattered others in their ſins; till they got to be the heads of a party, and found means of enriching themſelves. The mouths, therefore, of theſe deceivers muſt be ſtopped, by ſound doctrine, and concluſive arguments and teſtimonies from the word of God; that the tendency of their principles, and the baſeneſs of their deſigns might be manifeſt to every man, and that they might have nothing to ſay in their own defence. The character of the Cretans indeed was ſo bad, that numbers of ſuch perſons, both deceivers, and deceived, might be expected in their churches: for Epimenides, a native of Crete, a poet of ſome reputation, who might be "called a prophet of their own;" and who perhaps was deemed a prophet, had ſaid, "the Cretans are always liars, evil beaſts, &c;" they had in all ages been notorious for lies, frauds, and impoſtures; they were like poiſonous, or ferocious animals; and gluttonous, and indolent to exceſs; ſo that, whilſt much of their time was employed in eating and drinking, they were rendered torpid and inactive by their exceſſes, and made no good uſe of the reſt. They therefore united the ſubtlety of the fox, the venom of the ſerpent, or the fierceneſs of wolves and tygers, with the greedineſs and inactivity of ſwine. From what concurrence of circumſtances they obtained ſo odious and contemptible a national character, cannot here be enquired: but the inſpired apoſtle atteſted the truth of this teſtimony; and the effects of it appeared in the conduct of many falſe teachers and profeſſors of chriſtianity. Titus was therefore directed "to rebuke them ſharply," or with "cutting reproofs, and awful warnings; that the churches might be ſound in the faith;" when the mouths of deceivers were thus ſtopped, hypocrites detected, and uneſtabliſhed chriſtians put upon their guard. Timothy had been taught to inſtruct oppoſers with meekneſs, and to rebuke with long-ſuffering; but Titus was ordered to rebuke with ſharpneſs. Some have conjectured that Timothy was more vehement in his natural ſpirit, and Titus too timid and pliant: others aſcribe the difference to the oppoſite characters of the perſons to be rebuked. But in fact, chriſtian meekneſs is as diſtant from puſillanimous connivance at ſin and error, as from impetuous anger, and impatience. This the apoſtle's conduct, and even that of our Lord himſelf, demonſtrate.

V. 14—16.] In order to the Cretan churches being ſound in the faith, Titus was to warn them, with ſharp rebukes if neceſſary, (*Gal.* c. iii. v. 1,) not to give heed to Jewiſh fables, human traditions, or legal obſervances, which were then entirely the commandments of men, who "turned from the truth," and wanted to impoſe them on chriſtians. Theſe related greatly to diſtinctions of clean, and unclean meats, and the phariſaical inventions of waſhing their hands, &c; (Notes, *Matt.* c. xv. v. 1—20:) whereas to the pure, the real believer, who had peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt, and had his heart purified by faith, all ſuch things were pure in themſelves, and uſed in a holy manner, by the allowance, according to the precepts, and for the glory of God: but to thoſe "that were defiled" with the guilt and pollution of unrepented ſin, and who, through unbelief, remained ſtrangers to the purging of the conſcience with the blood of Chriſt, "nothing was pure:" for as their hearts were unſanctified, and their conſciences were erroneous, partial, callous and unclean; ſo all their enjoyments and actions, however innocent or good in themſelves, were corrupted by their pride, carnality, enmity againſt God, ſelfiſhneſs, &c. They indeed profeſſed to know God, and to be his people: but in works they denied him, and manifeſted a diſregard to his authority, his favour, and his indignation: for their conduct in all reſpects, eſpecially in crucifying Chriſt, perſecuting chriſtians, and endeavouring to ſubvert the churches of the Gentiles, proved them to be abominable and diſobedient; and as to every good work, rejected of God, and given up to judicial blindneſs, and incapacity of performing any, that were deſerving of that name. The unbelieving Jews were primarily intended; but the judaizing teachers ſeem to have been purpoſely put among them, as unbelievers alſo, though they pretended to believe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All are the ſervants of God, who are not ſlaves of ſin and ſatan: "this honour have all his ſaints;" and this dignifies their meaneſt employments: though the office of miniſters is confined to a few, and that of apoſtles and evangeliſts to a very ſmall number. But ſinners cannot ſerve God, except "by the faith of God's elect: and by "acknowledging the truth, that is according to godlineſs," (Note, 1 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 8;) nor can they be ſtedfaſt in the midſt of trials and temptations, ſave "in

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Directing Titus to inſtruct the people in their ſeveral duties; to exemplify them in his own conduct, and to take heed to his doctrine, &c, 1---10. *2d. Enforcing theſe exhortations, by ſhewing the holy tendency of the goſpel, and charging Titus to ſpeak with authority and firmneſs,* 11---15.

BUT ſpeak thou the things which become ſound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be ſober, grave, temperate, ſound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3 The aged women likewiſe, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holineſs, not falſe accuſers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things:

4 That they may teach the young women to be ſober, to love their huſbands, to love their children.

5 *To be* diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own huſbands, that the word of God be not blaſphemed.

6 Young men likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.

“hope of eternal life.” This was promiſed in Chriſt, before the world began: and though he, who gave this promiſe, can do all things elſe, he cannot lie, he cannot deny himſelf; not from a *natural*, but a *moral* inability. In his due time he hath manifeſted his word of truth by preaching: and all, to whom this is committed, muſt take heed to perform it, “according to the commandment of “God our Saviour,” that the common faith may thus be wrought in thoſe, whom they may rejoice in as their own children; and to whom, “grace, mercy and peace “may be given from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus “Chriſt our Saviour.” When a multitude of captives are brought forth from the dark dungeon of ſatan into the glorious light and liberty of the goſpel; many things will be wanting, and much require to be ſet in order; before their worſhip and ſervice can be performed in a ſuitable manner, the beſt methods uſed for their edification, and the moſt effectual defence made againſt the aſſaults of their ſpiritual enemies. Then the preſence, counſel, and influence of ſome experienced and faithful ſervant of God will be peculiarly uſeful; eſpecially in reſpect of the choice and ordination of paſtors to preſide over, and teach them. They, to whom this important truſt is committed, are bound, as they ſhall anſwer for it before God, to appoint blameleſs and faithful men to this ſtewardſhip; ſuch as are of pliant tempers reſpecting *their own humours and intereſts*, peaceable, ſober, temperate men; ſuperior to the grovelling love of filthy lucre, lovers of hoſpitality, and of good men; juſt and holy, prudent managers of domeſtic concerns, attentive to relative duties; conſtant and bold in profeſſing the truth, as taught in God's word, and able by ſound doctrine to exhort, and to convince gain-ſayers. As it is peculiarly incumbent on miniſters to educate their children with diligence and piety, and to rule them with prudence and firmneſs; ſo the children of miniſters ſhould conſider what they will have to anſwer for, if their unbelief, their riot, and unruly behaviour, bring an imputation on their fathers characters, and interfere with their uſefulneſs. There always have been unruly and vain talkers and deceivers; by whom ſatan ſows tares in the Lord's field: but this ſhould teach the ſervants to be vigilant and diligent, that they may counteract the enemy. For unleſs the mouths of ſuch perſons be ſtopped, they will ſubvert whole families of hopeful perſons, and teach any doctrine, for filthy lucre's ſake. To prevent this miſchief is the moſt difficult part of a miniſters work; and his wiſdom muſt eſpecially be ſhewn in diſcerning men's characters; diſtinguiſhing between the weak, and the wicked; and knowing when to exhort with gentleneſs, and when to rebuke with ſharpneſs, that men may be ſound in the faith. For though there may be national differences of character; yet the heart of man in every time and place, is deceitful, and deſperately wicked: and whilſt ſome need the gentleſt guidance, others muſt be expoſed, and warned with decided ſeverity; or they will turn men away from the faith to fables and human inventions. The true chriſtian learns to exerciſe his liberty in a pure and holy manner; all things are pure to him, and grace teaches him “to eat and to drink, and “to do all things to the glory of God;” and when he fails, he has humble recourſe to the purifying blood, and ſanctifying grace of Chriſt. But unbelievers are defiled in their minds and conſciences; their ordinary actions, and religious duties are unclean to them; whether they riot in licentiouſneſs, as if that were liberty; or whether they enſlave themſelves to ſuperſtitious obſervances. For alas numbers, of various deſcriptions, profeſs to know God, but in works deny him; being abominable, diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Yet at laſt the tree will be known by its fruit; and every tree, that beareth not good fruit ſhall be hewn down and caſt into the fire.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—6.] To ſhew the people the difference between falſe teachers and the ſervants of Chriſt, Titus was directed to “ſpeak ſuch things as became ſound “doctrine,” or the ſalutary healing truths of the goſpel, from which all the motives and encouragements to holy obedience muſt be deduced. It therefore “became this ſound doctrine,” that the preachers of it ſhould inculcate on their hearers the practice of their various duties from evangelical principles. Titus muſt therefore teach “the aged men,” whether paſtors in the church or not, “to be ſober” ſerious, prudent, vigilant, “grave, temperate” in every kind of indulgence, and “ſound,” ſtedfaſt in the profeſſion of ſound doctrine, and in the exerciſe of faith in Chriſt, love to him and their brethren, and patience amidſt trials and perſecutions. He muſt alſo admoniſh aged women, to behave conſiſtent with their holy profeſſion, and that

7 In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works: in doctrine *ſhewing* uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity,

8 Sound ſpeech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of you.

6 *Exhort* ſervants to be obedient unto their own maſters, *and* to pleaſe *them* well in all *things*; not anſwering again:

10 Not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

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devotedneſs to God which it implied; to caution them againſt ſpeaking ſlanders, or calumnies, a ſin to which human nature is peculiarly prone, and to which the national character of the Cretans muſt give them a peculiar propenſity. The original word here uſed is the ſame, that is in ſome places rendered "devils;" which ſhews what an hateful example ſlanderers and back-biters imitate. He was moreover to charge them not to addict themſelves to drink much wine: to which ſome of them might have been accuſtomed, when heathens; and which it would need much ſelf-denial to refrain from. They were alſo to be required to be teachers of good things, in their families, and to their juniors: that ſo they might be employed in teaching the younger women to be ſober and prudent, without levity or giddineſs, affectionate to their huſbands and children, and taking pleaſure in the duties of wives and mothers; diſcreetly to avoid all appearance of evil, or ground of ſuſpicion, as well as every actual violation of their conjugal fidelity; to be "keepers at home," and diligent in managing their domeſtic affairs, (for both are implied;) not delighting to gad abroad; nor yet loitering away their time at home; to be good or kind to all around them, "and "obedient to their own huſbands," even if they were not chriſtians, and in many things behaved improperly to them; for this would frequently be the caſe. Theſe things were to be attended to, that the word "of God "might not be blaſphemed," or evil ſpoken of, among the Gentiles, through any improper conduct of chriſtians in relative life. Moreover Titus was directed to exhort young men to be ſober minded, to act in a prudent and conſiderate manner; avoiding all youthful luſts and vanities, and attending to their ſeveral duties in the fear of God.

V. 7, 8.] In all theſe things, and in every part of practical godlineſs, Titus was admoniſhed to give, in his own conduct, a pattern of all thoſe good works, to which he exhorted others, that they might have his example for a comment on his inſtructions. In his doctrine alſo, he was to preſerve "uncorruptneſs," not admitting any of thoſe additions, or vain conjectures, by which the holy nature, and efficacy of divine truth might be altered; "gravity," avoiding every thing ludicrous, all affectation of wit, or whatever conſiſted not with the ſolemnity becoming the great concerns of God and eternity; and "ſincerity," or an upright, evident, and ſingle aim to the glory of God, and the good of ſouls; without ſeeking applauſe, or worldly advantage, or even appearing to have any ſelfiſh deſigns in what he did. He was therefore to uſe "ſound ſpeech, that could not be con-"demned" as erroneous, ambiguous, unintelligible, or of bad tendency; that thus ſtating divine truth in evident, convincing, and ſcriptural language; they, who were of the contrary part, whether heathens, or heretics, might find nothing weak, frivolous, or unguarded, to cavil at or object to; but that they might be put to ſhame, who attempted to find fault with what was ſo evidently good and beneficial, having no evil thing to ſay of him.

V. 9, 10.] (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. vi. v. 5—8. 1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 1—4.) In general, ſervants were to be exhorted to be obedient to their maſters, and to make it their conſtant endeavour to pleaſe them well, and give them full ſatisfaction, in every part of their conduct: and in particular, they muſt not "anſwer again," with rudeneſs or warmth, when found fault with, even though they had not been to blame; but rather bear an unmerited rebuke, than engage in angry altercations, and give further offence, or incur the charge of impertinence. They were alſo ſcrupulouſly to avoid "purloin-"ing," or pilfering, behind their maſters back, ſuch things as were put under their care, or within their reach; either to apply them to their own uſe, or to beſtow them on their companions. This was ſo common among the heathen ſervants, that the ſame word ſometimes ſignifies a ſlave, which is generally rendered a thief! And it is to be apprehended that it is extremely common even with ſuch ſervants, as are called chriſtians; few of whom are very ſcrupulous about uſing, or diſpoſing of, the proviſions of the family, contrary to their maſters intentions and intereſts: nay ſometimes they affect the praiſe and pride of generoſity, by giving away the property of their maſters to diſhoneſt hangers on, who acknowledge the obligation by reciprocal favours. But chriſtian ſervants were to be taught ſtrict honeſty in theſe things, and "to "ſhew all good fidelity," by uprightly uſing or ſaving, whatever was entruſted to them, according to the will of their maſters; being ſatisfied with the proviſion allotted them, and countenancing no degree of waſte or embezzlement. Thus they muſt "adorn the doctrine of God our "Saviour in all things:" for though the doctrine of ſalvation by faith in the divine Saviour had unſpeakable glory and beauty in it; yet unconverted men could not diſcern this, but rather deemed it fooliſh, abſurd, and pernicious: and the miſconduct of profeſſed chriſtians muſt confirm them in theſe ruinous prejudices. On the other hand, honeſty, fidelity, induſtry, a peaceable obliging conduct, and exact conſcientiouſneſs in ſervants profeſſing the goſpel, would put an ornament and a luſtre upon the doctrine, in the eyes of their heathen maſters: This argument of its excellency would be intelligible, and excite their attention; and they would thus be rendered more favourable to the truth, and might be induced at length to hear, and embrace it. The ſame obſervation might be equally applied to other inſtances of relative and ſocial good behaviour.

11 For the grace of God, that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world;

13 Looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt;

14 Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15 Theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority: Let no man deſpiſe thee.

V. 11—15.] The nature of chriſtianity required, that ſuch exhortations ſhould be given, and obſerved: for "the grace of God, which bringeth ſalvation," or the *ſaving* mercy and grace of God, and his abundant love to loſt ſinners, as diſcovered in the goſpel of Chriſt, "had appeared to," or had illuſtriouſly been diſplayed before, "all men," Jews and Gentiles, of every rank and character without exception; and the preachers were directed to preach to, and invite all to whom they could obtain acceſs. This doctrine emphatically taught all, who heard it, "to deny ungodlineſs, &c;" as it exhibited in the cleareſt light the divine holineſs and juſtice, the obligations and requirements of his perfect law, the evil of ſin, the future ſtate of retributions, man's loſt eſtate, his need of mercy and grace, and the encouragement he had to repent, turn to God, and do works meet for repentance, &c. So that it both taught men, that they ought to deny ungodlineſs, &c, how they might be enabled to do, and what motives they had to ſet about it. Moreover when this ſaving grace of God cometh into the heart by regeneration, the new nature, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, inwardly and efficaciouſly teaches men the ſame leſſons; the law is written in their minds; whilſt new, and more conſtraining motives to obedience are drawn from the obligations of redeeming love, the comforts of communion with God, and the hope of heavenly felicity. Thus the goſpel teaches men in general, and grace teaches believers in particular, "to deny ungodlineſs," to refuſe compliance with any inward and outward ſuggeſtions to neglect God and their duty to him, or to treat him with irreverence, ingratitude, contempt, rebellion, or enmity; and conſtantly to reſiſt and counteract that principle of alienation from God, whence all infidelity, impiety, and irreligion, in thought word and deed, originate: "and to deny "worldly luſts," refuſing to gratify thoſe impetuous, carnal, and ſelfiſh deſires of the human heart, which influence men to ſeek their happineſs in, and from the world, and not from God; ſuch as pride, ambition, avarice, ſenſuality, wrath, malice, envy, &c.; whence ſpring all kinds of contentions, wars, cruelties, injuſtice, frauds, oppreſſions, murders, intemperance, licentiouſneſs, &c. which diſturb, deſolate, and plague the earth: theſe they were taught conſtantly and reſolutely to deny, reſiſt, counteract and mortify; refuſing them every kind of indulgence, oppoſing their firſt riſings in the heart, and avoiding all temptations to them. Moreover, grace taught them "to live ſoberly," in the conſcious government of every appetite and paſſion; refraining from every unlawful, inexpedient or exceſſive indulgence, and from whatever could be injurious to themſelves, or others, in body or ſoul, or in reſpect of ſocial and relative comfort: "and righteouſly; according to the requirements of univerſal juſtice, to all ranks and orders of men; in all commercial tranſactions, in all relative duties, to ſuperiors, equals and inferiors; in an equitable and humane treatment of ſervants, labourers, and poor dependants; in a meek and forgiving conduct towards enemies; in exact truth, ſincerity and fidelity, reſpecting their converſation, profeſſions, promiſes and engagements; in a compaſſionate, kind and liberal behaviour to the poor, afflicted and diſtreſſed; and a conſtant endeavour to promote the peace, comfort, and happineſs, temporal and eternal, of all men, according to their ability and opportunity: "and godly;" attending on all the ordinances of God with reverent devotion, as means of grace, and as rendering him the tribute of adoration, praiſe and gratitude due to his name; worſhipping him in ſecret, in the family, and in public; hallowing his day, reverencing and ſtudying his word; honouring his name; fearing, loving, believing in, ſubmitting to, obeying, and delighting in, God, according to the requirements of his holy law, and expreſſing theſe affections of the ſoul, in a conſtant deſire and aim to pleaſe and glorify him. The grace of God taught men to live after this manner, "in this preſent world," notwithſtanding all its ſnares, temptations, corrupt examples, and the ill uſage to be expected by thoſe, "who *will* live godly "in Chriſt Jeſus;" and the remaining power of ſin in the believer's heart, with all their manifold infirmities and hindrances. In this cauſe they were taught to perſevere, looking for that bleſſed "object of hope," which the promiſes of the goſpel taught them to expect at the end of their courſe of obedient faith; and waiting in patient preparation, for the appearing *of the glory* of the great God, *even* of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to judge the world, and perfect the ſalvation of his people. The inviſible God, the divine Eſſence, "which no man hath ſeen or can ſee," will not be manifeſted at that ſolemn period: but Chriſt will be diſplayed, "in his own glory" as Mediator, "and in the glory of his Father:" and thus will appear "*the glory* of the great God, even of "our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt;" when through his human nature he ſhall exerciſe omnipotence, omniſcience, and all the perfections of the Godhead, in aſſigning by a word the everlaſting ſtate of unnumbered millions, whilſt none ſhall be able to withſtand the power, or object to the juſtice of that ſtupendous deciſion! This will be done by him. "who gave himſelf for us," to die in human nature as a ſacrifice in the ſtead of his people, to atone for their ſins, and purchaſe their ſalvation; that through his expiation he might redeem them from the puniſhment of all "their iniquity;" and by his power deliver them from the dominion and pollution of all their ſinful propenſities; and that he might gradually "purify them, by his word and Spirit, from all remains of defilement, that they might be devoted *to him,*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Inculcating ſubjection to Rulers, and good behaviour to all men; from the conſideration of their own ſinfulneſs, and ſalvation by God's mercy, 1--8. *2d. Cautioning Titus to avoid diſputes; ſhewing him how to deal with heretics; giving him directions to meet him at Nicopolis, and about other matters; and concluding with ſalutations, &c,* 9—15.

as their Lord and God, to be his worſhippers and ſervants, to live to his glory, and to recommend his ſalvation; as "a peculiar people," under ſingular obligations and of a ſingular diſpoſition, peculiarly pious, ſpiritual, pure, humble, kind, upright, &c.; not conformed to the cuſtoms and faſhions of the world; but "zealous of good works," taking delight in obedience, waiting for, and embracing gladly, opportunities of doing good; and not regarding trouble, expence, or ſelf-denial, in performing works of piety, righteouſneſs, and charity, from zeal for Chriſt and love to mankind. Theſe things, being a compendium of the important truths and duties of chriſtianity, Titus was directed to ſpeak and exhort, in the plaineſt and moſt urgent manner; and to rebuke with all authority, in the name of Chriſt, thoſe perſons who neglected, perverted, or oppoſed them: that acting with ſuch firmneſs, prudence, and faithfulneſs, no one might treat him or his words with contempt, without being evidently a deſpiſer of Chriſt who ſent him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It becomes ſound doctrine, and it is indiſpenſably incumbent on miniſters, to teach chriſtians all their ſeveral duties, in connexion with evangelical principles. Aged men and women, profeſſing godlineſs, are peculiarly called upon to "be ſober, grave, temperate; ſtable, ſound in "faith, love, and patience;" and leſs allowance will be made for them than for others, if they indulge in levity, vanity, and intemperance, or are betrayed into raſhneſs, inſtability, or ſelfiſhneſs. In proportion as chriſtians advance in years, they are ſuppoſed to underſtand better, whoſe behaviour, appearance, attire, &c. becometh holineſs; they will have need to watch againſt cenſoriouſneſs and peeviſhneſs; and they ſhould be taught to ſeek their comfort under the decays of nature from a nearer communion with God, and not from "much wine," or any undue indulgence. The excellence of true religion is manifeſted, when every one is thereby taught and induced to attend on the duties of their ſituations; and aged perſons ſhould be teachers of good things to their juniors, by word and deed. Thus aged and pious women may with peculiar propriety inſtruct young women in their duties as wives and mothers, "teaching them to be ſober, to love their huſbands and children," and to ſhew that love in a proper behaviour towards them; "to be diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home," diligent in their domeſtic employments, and "obedient to "their own huſbands;" and to perſevere in this uſeful and honourable conduct, though they meet with trials, hardſhips, or unkind uſage; "that the word of God may not "be blaſphemed." "Young men alſo muſt be exhorted "to be ſober minded;" and to copy the ſeriouſneſs, piety, purity, diſcretion, and temperance of thoſe who are grown older in the ſervice of Chriſt; and not the levity, exceſs and folly of ſuch as are preparing themſelves anguiſh for riper years, or treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath. But they, who would with energy inculcate theſe practical ſubjects, muſt "in all things ſhew themſelves patterns of "good works;" or elſe their moſt ſcriptural admonitions will be diſregarded, or expounded by their own conduct. Uncorrupt and pure evangelical doctrine ſhould alſo be manifeſtly made the baſis of ſuch practical exhortations; and they ſhould be delivered with *gravity*, as well as with ſincerity; that ſound ſpeech, which cannot be condemned, may put to ſhame and ſilence, captious and malicious oppoſers. As no rank in the community raiſes men above the miniſter's admonition, ſo none places them beneath his attention. The conduct of the meaneſt ſervant may diſgrace, or it may "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." The latter will be the happy effect, when ſervants, profeſſing that doctrine, are obedient to their maſters, obliging in all things, "not an"ſwering again, not purloining, but ſhewing all good fide"lity." In this manner they may acceptably and effectually recommend the goſpel, and perhaps be inſtrumental to the ſalvation of the ſouls of their ſuperiors. In theſe, and all other things, it behoves every profeſſor to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; and this alone can enſure that doctrine its proper reſpect in this evil world.

The law teaches us godlineſs, righteouſneſs, temperance, and univerſal holineſs: but the grace of God, which bringeth ſalvation, can alone "teach ſinners to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world." How greatly then are they miſtaken who would inculcate ſuch practical ſubjects, without leading men's attention to the mercy and grace of God in Chriſt, for inſtruction, motives, help, and encouragement! As this ſaving grace of our God hath appeared to all men, and to us in particular, by the word of truth; let us enquire whether our whole dependance be placed upon that grace, which ſaves the loſt, pardons the guilty, and ſanctifies the unclean? And whether we have inwardly been taught by it to repent of, hate, forſake, and deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world? Whether we are daily mortifying our ſins, following after holineſs, and practiſing all our duties to God and man, in expectation of Chriſt's coming to be our Judge; and patiently continuing in well-doing, whilſt we look for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to "number us with his ſaints in glory everlaſting?" If we indeed believe, that Emmanuel "gave himſelf for us," to redeem us "from deſerved and eternal miſery," that he might alſo deliver us from ſatan and from "all iniquity, and purify us *unto himſelf* "a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" we can want no inducement to any kind or degree of ſelf denying obedience; provided we duly eſtimate his love, our obligations, and the aſſurance given us of all ſufficient help, and of every needful good. The more evidently we are redeemed from all iniquity, and purified unto Chriſt as a peculiar people, zealous of good works; the clearer will our evidence be of an intereſt in his ſalvation, and the brighter our hope of

PUT them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To ſpeak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs unto all men.

3 For we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

4 But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared;

5 Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt;

6 Which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour;

7 That being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 *This is* a faithful ſaying, and theſe things

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eternal felicity; and the further we are removed from boaſting of, or truſting in, imaginary good works, that we may glory in Chriſt alone; the more zealous ſhall we become of abounding in real good works, performed in an upright, humble, believing manner, to the glory of our Lord, and the benefit of his people, and of mankind. May all miniſters ſpeak theſe things decidedly, enforce them with earneſtneſs, and rebuke oppoſers with all authority; and may their doctrine and example ſecure them from the contempt of all, except that of the avowed deſpiſers of Chriſt and his free ſalvation!

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1, 2.] (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xiii. v. 1—8. 1 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 2.) Titus was further inſtructed to remind the Cretans to obey thoſe principalities and powers, or civil governors, whom the providence of God hath placed over them; and even the inferior magiſtrates appointed by them. Theſe were heathens, and generally oppreſſive and injurious: yet the apoſtle, during his ſhort abode in Crete, had taught an unreſerved ſubjection to them, except in matters of conſcience towards God: but as the Cretans would be apt to forget his admonitions, they were to be reminded of them, that ſo no diſgrace might be brought upon chriſtianity, by the turbulent ſpirits and conduct of profeſſors. They were alſo to be directed "to be ready to every good work," ſhewing a willing mind for any kind action even to their heathen neighbours; not reviling or ſlandering any man, nor even propagating diſadvantageous reports, when true, unleſs there were a neceſſity; not "brawling," or diſputing with acrimony and vehemence even againſt thoſe, who injured them; but acting with gentleneſs and meekneſs to all men.

V. 3—7.] The preceding exhortations would be ſure to run counter to the natural inclinations of the Cretans; and therefore the apoſtle enforced them by an argument, which related to the ſtate of chriſtians in general, before their converſion. (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 1—10.) They ought to bear with, and be kind to their enemies, and patiently to endure their perverſeneſs and injuſtice: for they themſelves had experienced far greater patience and kindneſs from God; for "they had ſometime," even previous to their converſion, "been fooliſh," ignorant of God, of themſelves, and of divine truth; and they had perverſely preferred worldly things to true religion. In different ways they had all been "diſobedient" to God, in their habitual conduct; having been "deceived" by ſatan and their own hearts to wander out of the right way. They had been "ſlaves to divers luſts," and the love of worldly "pleaſures;" ſome being under the power of one ſinful paſſion, ſome of another; they had lived in malice and envy; from the various competitions, animoſities, and reſentments, which their eager purſuit of worldly objects, and their pride of heart gave riſe to: thus they had been "hateful" in their diſpoſition and conduct in the ſight of God, "and had hated one another," eſpecially in the reciprocal contempt and enmity borne by the Jews and Gentiles to each other. So that God might juſtly have cut them off, or left them to periſh in their ſins, as deſerving, and being fit for deſtruction: but he had not only ſpared them, but had effected a bleſſed change in their ſtate and character. For the kindneſs and philanthropy of God, (his love to ſinful men, whilſt he left ſinning angels to periſh,) had made it proper for them to call him "God our Saviour;" in that he had purpoſed, planned and effected men's ſalvation, by giving his only Son to be their Redeemer. After this love of God to man had been diſplayed in the incarnation, obedience, death, and reſurrection of the eternal Son of God, and by the preaching of the goſpel; he had alſo brought them to partake of this ſalvation; not by means of "works of righteouſneſs, "which they had done;" but according to his exceeding rich and free mercy, and compaſſionate good-will to them, and by "the waſhing of regeneration," that new-birth of the Spirit, of which the laver of baptiſm was the ſacramental ſign; which was not only a waſhing of the heart from the prevailing love and pollution of ſin, but a renewal of the ſoul to the divine image, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt; which God the Father had richly and abundantly poured forth upon them, under the goſpel-diſpenſation, in all the variety of his gifts, graces and conſolation, through "Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour," whoſe atonement had purchaſed, and whoſe mediation had obtained this ineſtimable gift for ſinners, in order to apply his ſalvation to their ſouls. Thus being brought to repent, and believe in the Son of God, they had been juſtified in him, of mere mercy and grace, without any of their own merits; and ſo they became the adopted children and heirs of God, according to the hope of eternal life, which his promiſe had taught them to entertain. Seeing then all their hopes and privileges had been conferred upon them wholly by the mercy of God, contrary to all their own deſerts; it was proper for them to be followers of God, in their conduct towards their brethren and neighbours.

V. 8—11.] "The ſaying," which the apoſtle had juſt

I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: theſe things are good and profitable unto men.

9 But avoid fooliſh queſtions, and genealogies, and contentions, and ſtrivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an heretic, after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject;

11 Knowing that he that is ſuch, is ſubverted, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf.

12 When I ſhall ſend Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to

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delivered, concerning free ſalvation to vile ſinners, was true and faithful: and the doctrines he had ſtated, as well as the exhortations before given, (for both ſeemed to be referred to,) he would have Titus inſiſt upon with conſtancy, and without wavering; in *order that* "they, who had be- "lieved in God," and had come to truſt in his mercy, grace, truth, and power, through Jeſus Chriſt, might be rendered careful to maintain, or *to ſtand foremoſt* in the practice of good works; being influenced by love and gratitude, and encouraged by the promiſes of the goſpel, to abound in them. For though the things, before ſtated in various practical admonitions, could not juſtify ſinners before God; yet they were good in themſelves, and profitable to men, in reſpect of their temporal and eternal intereſts; both to thoſe who performed them, and to others. But he muſt by all means avoid frivolous and fooliſh queſtions, or ſubtle, nice diſtinctions, and "genealogies," which the Jews were attached to, as if men were the better for being deſcended from the patriarchs, &c. Theſe matters, and the conteſts and angry diſputes of the Jewiſh teachers, about the Moſaic law, and the obligations of its ceremonies, &c. were utterly under the chriſtian diſpenſation; and only amuſed men with vain reaſonings, which took them off from the great doctrines and duties of chriſtianity.

V. 9, 10.] A heretic, in St. Paul's ſenſe, ſeems to have been a profeſſed chriſtian, who obſtinately denied and oppoſed ſome fundamental doctrine of the goſpel, as taught by the apoſtles; eſpecially if he were earneſt to propagate his notions, from a vain deſire of being the head of a party, and ſo made diviſions in the church, (Note, *Gal.* c v. ver. 20.) Titus was ordered to admoniſh ſuch a man, once, and again: ſhewing him the error, and evil tendency of his principles, and their corrupt ſource; warning him of his guilt and danger, and exhorting him to retract them. If this failed of effect, he was afterwards to reject him, as an excommunicated perſon; being aſſured that his dangerous errors, and his proud and pertinacious adherence to them evinced him "to be ſubverted," or turned aſide from Chriſt the foundation of the church, by the artifices of ſatan: that they aroſe, not from unavoidable ignorance, but from proud and carnal prejudices, ſo that he ſinned in them; and that "he was condemned of himſelf;" as his avowal of ſuch hereſies rendered further proof againſt him unneceſſary: he was therefore not to be conſidered as a chriſtian, or allowed to continue in the communion of the church. (*Job.* c. xv. v. 6. c xxxiv. v. 5—9. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 41, 42. *Luke*, c. xix. v. 22.) The ſcriptures referred to, and many others, ſhew, that when a man's own words ſuffice for his condemnation without further evidence, he may be ſaid to be "condemned of him- "ſelf:" nor does great difficulty appear in this much diſputed text, except in explaining it in conſiſtency with ſome men's ſyſtems. In leſſer matters the apoſtle inculcated mutual forbearance: but all his epiſtles ſhew that he ſuppoſed ſome errors to be fundamental, and abſolutely inconſiſtent with faith in Chriſt. For avowing theſe, men were to be excommunicated, even as for groſs immoralities: and were matters reſtored to their primitive ſtate in the church of Chriſt; there can be no doubt, but they, who deny the loſt eſtate of man by nature, the Deity of Chriſt, the real atonement of his death; juſtification by faith in the merits of Chriſt, of grace and not of works; the need of ſanctification by the Holy Spirit; and of obedience to God's commandments, as the effect and evidence of juſtifying faith, with other doctrines of ſimilar importance, would, after proper admonition, be rejected by believers, and excluded from their communion. No doubt would remain in their minds, but that ſuch heretics were ſubverted and ſinned; and their profeſſion of tenets, ſo deſtructive of chriſtianity, would be deemed a kind of "ſelf-condemnation;" without ſuppoſing them to be leſs ſincere in oppoſing the truth, than Saul of Tarſus was. They would not deem them proper perſons to aſſociate with thoſe, who believed the doctrines of grace: but they would not do them any injury in their temporal concerns; or neglect to pray for "God "to give them repentance, for acknowledging of the "truth &c." The connexion ſo long ſubſiſting between excommunication, and perſecution, has cauſed a latitudinarian candour, and a laxity of diſcipline to aſſociate with men's ideas of toleration. But the fulleſt toleration does not at all imply, that all opinions ſhould be deemed alike right, or probable: nor does excommunication imply, that any alteration ſhould be made in men's civil circumſtances. Learned and ingenious men have indeed at length diſcovered, that it is no ſin to treat God's word with neglect, contempt, or proud oppoſition! And that it is of little or no conſequence what doctrines men believe! No wonder that they cannot explain the ſcripture into an agreement with ſuch tenets; or bring God's word to declare its own inſignificancy, without amazing labour and pains! But they, who believe that "men "love darkneſs rather than light, *becauſe their deeds are* "*evil*," and treat God's truth as a lie, becauſe it oppoſes their *pride*, or their luſts, will not find great difficulty in underſtanding why ſuch heretics ſhould be ſeparated from the ſociety of believers: and they will chiefly lament, that it is not more generally practiſed, and more eaſily practicable; ſeeing it is evident, "that a little of this "leaven leaveneth the whole lump," in many churches, that heretofore ſeemed to flouriſh.

Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting to them.

14 And let our's alſo learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful.

15 All that are with me ſalute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

V. 12—15.] There were ſeveral cities called Nicopolis, and it is not certain which was here meant: but it hence appears that Paul was at this time at liberty. Had he written from Nicopolis, as the ſpurious poſtſcript aſſerts, he would have ſaid, "*here* to winter." He meant to ſend Artemas or Tychicus to inform Titus when to meet him there, and deſired him to come without delay. But he was to bring, or to *ſend before*, Zenas, (who was either a converted Jewiſh doctor of the law, or one who had been a Roman lawyer,) and Apollos, who ſeems to have been then in Crete; and he was ſtudiouſly to help them, that by the kindneſs of the churches, their wants and travelling expences might be ſupplied: he was alſo directed to remind the immediate friends of the apoſtle to "learn to maintain," or to ſtand forth in the practice of good works, for ſuch uſeful and neceſſary purpoſes; that they might not be unfruitful, but might ſet a good example to the new converts. With this admonition, and cuſtomary ſalutations and benedictions he concluded the epiſtle.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It hath at all times been neceſſary to remind chriſtians to be ſubject to principalities and powers, and to obey magiſtrates: but it is peculiarly ſo at preſent, when moſt valuable privileges and liberties, which ought to have rendered chearful ſubjection and peaceable obedience univerſal among all that name the name of Chriſt, have given occaſion to a contrary ſpirit and conduct in numbers, who ſeem to forget that ſuch precepts are found in the ſcriptures. But real religion, in proportion as it prevails, will render men quiet ſubjects as well as good neighbours and relations, and ready to every good work: it will repreſs the turbulent and cenſorious temper, and cure men of ſpeaking evil of others, and of reviling and wrangling with them, and it will teach them to be gentle and meek to all men. Theſe diſpoſitions and this conduct are the genuine effects of a deep conviction of our own guilt, united with an experimental knowledge of the free ſalvation of the goſpel; we ſhall not diſdain, deſpair of, or be wearied out by the miſconduct of the moſt unreaſonable of our enemies; if we duly conſider that we ourſelves were formerly fooliſh, diſobedient and deceived, ſlaves to divers, baſe luſts, and a fondneſs for carnal pleaſures, "that we lived in malice and envy, and in ſhort were hateful to God, and diſpoſed to hate one another, and thus veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction, till divine grace effected the bleſſed change. Let us then often contemplate the diſcoveries, that have been made of the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour towards our fallen apoſtate race, in giving his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins; his patience in ſparing us during the years of our fooliſhneſs and rebellion; his goodneſs in ſending us the word of ſalvation; and above all, his mercy in making us to partake of the "waſhing "and regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt," which he poured upon our ſouls, of his plenteous grace, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. Surely we know that none of theſe things were procured "by works of righteouſneſs, that we had done!" And that we were juſtified freely by his grace, and ſo made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Having been therefore brought into a ſtate of ſafety, and made partakers of a joyful hope by the mere mercy of God the Father, through the redemption of his incarnate Son, and by the new creation of the Holy Ghoſt, it certainly behoves us to take the lead in every good work, by which we can glorify God our Saviour, or benefit mankind. Miniſters ſhould inſiſt upon theſe faithful ſayings, and affirm theſe things conſtantly; and ſhew the tendency of the truths of the goſpel to holineſs of life: and chriſtians ſhould be ambitious of exceeding all other men in every good thing, for the honour of the truth, through which they are ſaved. Attending to theſe good and profitable things, we ſhall learn to avoid fooliſh queſtions, and contentious diſputations, which are unprofitable and vain. But though we muſt not ſtrive about words, or magnify every difference of opinion into a damnable hereſy: yet we ſhould carefully watch againſt fundamental errors, which are inconſiſtent with the life of faith in the Son of God, and of grateful obedience to him. Many are ſubverted by ſuch heretics, and we ſhould therefore withdraw from them, if proper admonitions are neglected: and though they be not ſeparated from the communion of believers here, yet, continuing impenitent, they will at laſt be rejected by the omniſcient Judge of all men. Whatever chriſtians find to do, they ſhould attend on it diligently: they ſhould be ever ready to help one another, and to prevent thoſe from want, who are labouring to promote the goſpel. They, who exhort others to ſuch good works, muſt learn to maintain them in their own conduct; and on neceſſary occaſions to ſet a decided and conſpicuous example. Then they will not be unfruitful in the knowledge of Chriſt; mutual love in the faith will be increaſed; and grace will be with them all. Amen.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to PHILEMON.

Philemon ſeems to have been a chriſtian of ſome eminence reſiding at Coloſſe. (Col. c. iv. ver. 9;) *who had been converted under Paul's miniſtry, perhaps during his abode at Epheſus. When he was impriſoned at Rome, Oneſimus, a ſlave of Philemon, having been guilty of ſome diſhoneſty, left his maſter, and fled to that city, though at the diſtance of ſeveral hundred miles! When he came thither, curioſity, or ſome ſuch motive, induced him to attend on the apoſtle's miniſtry; which it pleaſed God to bleſs for his converſion. When he had given ſatisfactory proof of a real change, and of a moſt gracious diſpoſition, which had greatly endeared him to Paul; he deemed it proper to ſend him back to his maſter; to whom he wrote this epiſtle; that he might procure Oneſimus a more favourable reception, than he could otherwiſe have expected. It ſeems to have been ſent at the ſame time with that to the Coloſſians: and the moſt competent judges have given it a decided preference, as a model of good writing in the epiſtolary kind, to the moſt approved remains of antiquity. Indeed we can ſcarce conceive how ſuch a cauſe, as that of Oneſimus, could have been pleaded in a more intereſting, obliging, prudent, pathetic, and maſterly manner: the epiſtle is alſo replete with uſeful inſtruction.*

Anno Domini 64. *Anno Domini* 64.

This epiſtle contains 1*ſt. The addreſs, with prayers, thankſgivings, and commendations,* 1---7. 2*d. Recommendations of Oneſimus to Philemon's favour,* 8--21. 3*d. Concluding ſalutations, &c,* 22---25.

PAUL a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer;

2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-ſoldier, and to the church in thy houſe.

3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou haſt toward the Lord Jeſus, and toward all ſaints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Chriſt Jeſus.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—3.] As the apoſtle meant not to write authoritatively to Philemon, he only ſtiled himſelf "the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt" which tended to procure an affectionate regard to his requeſts; and he joined Timothy with him, that they might be preſented as the united deſire of him and his brethren. Though Philemon be ſtiled "a fellow labourer," yet it is not certain that he was a miniſter; perhaps he ſerved the cauſe of Chriſt by active diligence, in another manner. The beloved Apphia is ſuppoſed to have been his wife, though ſome think that ſhe was his ſiſter. Archippus, whom the apoſtle called his fellow ſoldier, and to whom he ſent a ſpecial charge in another epiſtle, (*Col.* c. iv. v. 17.) is thought to have been the ſon or near relation of Philemon, and he ſeems to have reſided in his family; which was ſo pious and well regulated, that it was in ſome ſenſe a chriſtian church, to whom the apoſtle expreſſed his pious good will, by his uſual benediction.

V. 4—7.] The apoſtle thanked God continually for his grace beſtowed on Philemon, and made mention of him in his prayers. His gratitude was excited from time to time, by the good accounts he received of his "love and "faith," even his faith toward the Lord Jeſus, and his love to all ſaints for his ſake. This obvious meaning of the paſſage requires a tranſpoſition of the words, which

7 For we have great joy and conſolation in thy love, becauſe the bowels of the ſaints are refreſhed by thee, brother.

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Chriſt to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

9 Yet for love's ſake I rather beſeech *thee*, being ſuch a one as Paul the aged, and now alſo a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt.

10 I beſeech thee for my ſon, Oneſimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

11 Which in time paſt was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have ſent again: thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels.

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy ſtead he might have miniſtered unto me in the bonds of the goſpel.

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit ſhould not be as it were of neceſſity, but willingly.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a ſeaſon, that thou ſhouldeſt receive him for ever;

16 Not now as a ſervant, but above a ſervant, a brother beloved, eſpecially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the fleſh, and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myſelf.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account;

19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own

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ariſe from an arrangement, not at all unſuitable to the Greek language, though it be harſh in an Engliſh tranſlation. The apoſtle alſo prayed, "that the communication of Philemon's faith might become effectual," &c. Some explain this of his liberal communication from his temporal affluence, being made effectual for the relief of the ſaints, and the evident demonſtration of his faith, from which it ſprang. Others ſuppoſe the apoſtle to mean, that his *communion*, or participation of faith in Chriſt, might be effectual in regulating his whole temper and conduct. But though we allow both theſe ſenſes to be contained in the words, they ſeem to have a ſtill further meaning: and the apoſtle probably prayed, that his endeavours to communicate his faith to thoſe around him, might be rendered effectual, through the evident excellency of his example, and that of his family: ſo that men might be induced to acknowledge the reality and value of every good thing, which was in them, by means of their union with Chriſt; and thus to entertain a favourable opinion of that religion, which produced ſuch effects upon the conduct of thoſe, that embraced it. This he hoped would be the caſe; for he had great joy and comfort in the accounts he heard of his liberal love, by which the urgent neceſſities of chriſtians and miniſters were ſupplied: ſo that whilſt their bodies were refreſhed at his expence, their hearts were alſo rejoiced by his good example and pious converſation: and therefore the apoſtle cordially owned, and greatly loved him, as his brother in the goſpel.

V. 9—21.] We now enter upon the immediate buſineſs of the epiſtle. When Paul conſidered his own apoſtolical authority, and Philemon's character, &c, he ſuppoſed that he might with propriety and ſafety have enjoined him, in the name of Chriſt, to do what was ſo evidently convenient or agreeable to the loving ſpirit of chriſtianity: yet he preferred the language of a ſupplicant in the preſent caſe, and beſought him for love's ſake, even the love of Chriſt to them, and their love to him and each other through him, that he would grant him one ſpecial favour, which he had it much at heart to obtain. He would remind him that his humble ſupplicant was ſuch a one, "as Paul the aged" miniſter of the goſpel, (for he was probably above ſixty years old at this time); who having encountered numberleſs afflictions and perils in ſeeking the ſalvation of men's ſouls, was then enduring the hardſhips of a tedious impriſonment in the cauſe of Chriſt; and he could not doubt of Philemon's readineſs to do any thing, that might mitigate the ſeverity of his ſufferings. His petition indeed was not preſented for himſelf; but it was in behalf of "his Son," even of one, "whom he had begotten in his bonds," the ſon of his old age, for whom he had the moſt tender parental affection; and this ſon was named "Oneſimus." In the original the name is mentioned at the cloſe of the ſentence; that the ſuſpenſe and moſt affectionate introduction might prepare Philemon to read a name, which could ſcarce fail of being aſſociated in his mind with unfavourable ideas. *Oneſimus* ſignifies *profitable*; in alluſion to which, the apoſtle allowed, that he had not formerly deſerved that name, having been *unprofitable*; probably he had been unfaithful, diſhoneſt, and unruly, perhaps addicted to other vices: this the apoſtle ſeems to have known from his own confeſſion. But he ſpake of his faults in the gentleſt language, and haſtened to mention the change that had taken place; by which he was then made to anſwer the meaning of his name, and to become profitable both to Philemon and to Paul. He was prepared to be an uſeful ſervant to the former; he had been ſerviceable to the latter, and he hoped that he would be ſtill more ſo. But as Oneſimus was Philemon's legal property, Paul had enjoined, and prevailed with, him to return home to him, having made ſufficient trial of his ſincerity; and he requeſted Philemon to receive him with the ſame kindneſs, as he would his own ſon according to the fleſh, being equally dear to him, as his ſpiritual child. He would gladly have kept him at hand, I will repay *it:* albeit I do not ſay to thee how thou oweſt unto me even thine own ſelf beſides.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refreſh my bowels in the Lord.

21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt alſo do more than I ſay.

22 But withal prepare me alſo a lodging: for I truſt that through your prayers I ſhall be given unto you.

23 There ſalute thee Epaphras, my fellow-priſoner in Chriſt Jeſus;

24 Marcus, Ariſtarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.

25 The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with your ſpirit. Amen.

Rome, to miniſter to him in his confinement, which Oneſimus would willingly have done in the bonds of the goſpel, being attached to him from chriſtian love and gratitude: and as he knew that Philemon would gladly have done him any ſervice in perſon, if he had been at Rome; ſo he would have conſidered Oneſimus as miniſtering to him in his maſter's ſtead. But he would not do any thing of this kind without his conſent, leſt he ſhould ſeem to have extorted the benefit, and Philemon ſhould appear to have acted from neceſſity, rather than from a willing mind. And though he had hopes of deriving benefit from Oneſimus faithful ſervice, at ſome future period, by Philemon's free conſent: yet he was not ſure, that this was the Lord's purpoſe reſpecting him; for perhaps he permitted him to leave his maſter for a ſeaſon in ſo improper a manner, in order, that being converted, he might be received on his return with ſuch affection, and might abide with Philemon with ſuch faithfulneſs and diligence, that they ſhould chooſe to live together the reſt of their lives, as fellow-heirs of eternal felicity. (*Exod.* c. xxi. v. 5, 6.) In this caſe he knew that Philemon would no longer conſider Oneſimus merely as a ſlave, but view him as "above a ſlave, even as a brother beloved:" this he was become to Paul in an eſpecial manner, who had before been entirely a ſtranger to him; how much more then might it be ſuppoſed, that he would be endeared to Philemon, when he became well acquainted with his excellency; ſeeing he would be near to him, both in the fleſh, as one of his domeſtics, and in the Lord, as one with him in Chriſt by faith. If then he deemed Paul a partner, or partaker of the ſame grace, and dear to him for Chriſt's ſake; let him expreſs his love to him by receiving Oneſimus with as much kindneſs as he would Paul himſelf, if he had come in perſon: and in caſe Oneſimus had wronged Philemon, or was in his debt; let him place that to his account; and, as he wrote the epiſtle with his own hand, he gave, as it were, a promiſſory note, that he would repay it upon demand. It is generally obſerved that this is a plain inſtance of that being imputed to one, which was contracted by another; and of one by a voluntary engagement becoming anſwerable for another; that he might be exempted from the puniſhment due to his crimes, and partake of benefits, which he had no right to; according to the doctrine of Chriſt's voluntarily bearing the puniſhment of our ſins, that we might receive the reward of his righteouſneſs, by a reciprocal imputation. Perhaps the apoſtle underſtood that Philemon had expreſſed ſome ſharpneſs concerning Oneſimus's conduct; or, knowing him to be *naturally* ſomewhat ſevere in his temper, he might fear leſt he ſhould puniſh him, as the laws permitted maſters to do their ſlaves in ſuch caſes; which would not only have been grievous to Oneſimus, but diſgraceful to the goſpel, and to Philemon himſelf. He therefore ſo far intereſted himſelf in the matter; though he could ſcarce ſuppoſe that payment would be demanded of him; and added, that although he made this propoſal, yet in doing ſo, he had forborne to bring into the account, that Philemon owed to him his ownſelf, beſides other benefits, as God had made him the inſtrument of his eternal ſalvation: thus intimating that he never could ſufficiently requite that obligation. He therefore pathetically beſought him, to let him have an opportunity of rejoicing on his account, in the Lord's kindneſs to him; and to grant him this requeſt, which would as much refreſh his compaſſionate heart, as his liberality did the bowels of the ſaints. Having confidence that he was ready to obey the Lord's will, intimated by him, he had written to him; being aſſured, that he would do even more than he had requeſted. Our curioſity is not gratified by being informed of the effect of this epiſtle: but we can hardly doubt, but that Philemon forgave Oneſimus, received him with kindneſs, remitted what he owed to him, and afterwards gave him his liberty, that he might attend on the apoſtle. His appointment with Tychicus to deliver the epiſtle to the Coloſſians ſeems to intimate, that Paul meant to employ him as a miniſter; which probably was afterwards done.

V. 22—25.] The apoſtle had an expectation of being ſoon releaſed, when he wrote this epiſtle; and he purpoſed to viſit Philemon and the Coloſſians, when that took place: he was perſuaded they forgot not to pray for his liberty, that he might be enabled to viſit them, and he truſted, that in anſwer to their prayers, this would ſoon be effected; and therefore he deſired them to prepare him a convenient lodging. Epaphras attended Paul ſo cloſely, that he might be deemed his fellow-priſoner. (*Col.* c. i. v. 7. c. iv. ver. 12.) Of the others we have before read. (2 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 10, 11.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The fellow-labourers and fellow-ſoldiers of Chriſt, ought to love, to pray, and to thank God for each other, with the greateſt conſtancy and fervency; for faith in, and love to Chriſt, ſhould unite ſaints more cloſely, than any outward relation can the people of the world. They, who partake of theſe graces, muſt and will deſire and endeavour the communication of them to others; and their endeavours will be rendered effectual, through fervent prayer, and by an uniform courſe of piety, purity, integrity and benevolence; which will conſtrain men to acknowledge the good things, which are in them, as believers in Chriſt. Faithful miniſters have great joy and comfort in ſuch affluent chriſtians, whoſe love abounds in liberality to all men; and when the bowels of the ſaints are refreſhed by them, and their wants generouſly ſupplied. It is by no means proper to exerciſe authority on every occaſion; even when miniſters may be bold to enjoin what is convenient. It is often far more prudent for love's ſake to beſeech even juniors and inferiors; eſpecially when it may be ſuppoſed, that they will be reluctant to what is required, and when it may be difficult to convince them of its indiſpenſable obligation. Theſe requeſts, from ſuch a One, as in any meaſure reſembles Paul the aged, will have the energy of injunctions, and engage compliance, without riſquing a ſubſequent diſtaſte; which is always in ſuch caſes to be feared from the remaining ſelf-love of the human heart; even in reſpect of godly men, who would do much to alleviate the ſufferings, or increaſe the comforts of their faithful paſtors. In ſuch circumſtances, wiſdom and humility will teach the aged and experienced to become willingly the obliged parties, when they might aſſume a higher tone. In ſpeaking to men of their ſins for their humiliation, the heinous nature and manifold aggravations of them ſhould be inſiſted on: but in mentioning them to others, who are diſpoſed to ſeverity or reſentment, we ſhould ſoften and extenuate as far as truth will permit: and ſuch ſubjects ought to be introduced with all the tenderneſs and caution imaginable; that every thing may tend to conciliate, and nothing to exaſperate. When penitents ſhew their ſincerity by works meet for repentance; they ſhould be treated by miniſters with parental tenderneſs, and taken under their patronage, in reſpect of the temporal conſequences of their former ſins. For in this manner, they, who were unprofitable to their relatives and neighbours, and a trouble to all connected with them, are made profitable to the community and to the church of God. They often become greatly uſeful to their miniſters, and their families, and a bleſſing to all among whom they reſide; they ſupply other men's lack of ſervice to the ſuffering diſciples of Chriſt, by tending on them in their ſtead; they promote the goſpel by their example, converſation, and prayers; and many of them become preachers of the word of life to their fellow ſinners; for behold all things are become new! But no proſpect of their uſefulneſs ſhould induce miniſters to counſel their converts to neglect relative obligations, or to fail of their obedience to their ſuperiors: one great evidence of true repentance conſiſts in returning to the practice of thoſe duties, which had been neglected; and even liberty to engage in other ſervices, ſhould be ſought from thoſe concerned, not as it were of neceſſity, but by their willing conſent. We know not for what ſervices God may intend thoſe, whom he hath marvelloufly converted: having therefore given our judgment, and uſed proper means, we ſhould leave matters to his determination.

Little do men know for what purpoſes the Lord leaves them to change their ſituations, or engage in enterprizes, from worldly, or criminal motives. We ſhould have thought that Oneſimus's departure from his maſter, would have been final, and his journey to Rome ruinous; yet the Lord had far other, and more gracious purpoſes concerning him: and had He not over-ruled in a ſimilar manner, ſome of our ungodly projects, the writer, and many readers may ſay, with humble gratitude, our deſtruction muſt have been the inevitable conſequence; though they proved the means of our being brought into the way of ſalvation. And when we read of Oneſimus's converſion at Rome, after having grown worſe and worſe in Philemon's pious family: we ſhould learn to deſpair of none; but ſtill to uſe means, and offer prayers for them; and we ſhould ever be ready to receive the penitent, with the kindneſs, that God ſhews to his returning prodigals. This ſhould eſpecially be attended to in our conduct towards our relations, or domeſtics; whoſe converſion ſhould be doubly welcome, notwithſtanding their paſt miſconduct; that they may be near to us in the fleſh, and in the Lord. Miniſters ſhould in ſuch caſes love to be peace-makers; and they ſhould give up their own intereſt, in order to prevail with offended parents, maſters, &c; to be reconciled to their penitent children, or ſervants; that ſo the ſeverity, animoſity, and diviſion may be prevented, by which the goſpel is often diſgraced. If ſuch offenders have wronged others, or owe what they cannot pay, it may ſometimes be proper for us to pay it for them, if we can; as followers of Chriſt, who bare our ſins in his own body on the tree. Thus we ſhall beſt prevail with our brethren to uſe lenity and forbearance; eſpecially when we deal with thoſe, who owe their ownſelves to God's bleſſing on our miniſtry: and ſuch ought to be reminded to let their loving paſtors have joy of them in the Lord, to refreſh their hearts, to anſwer their confidence, and even to do more, than modeſty will permit them to requeſt. Then their prayers for each other will be more fervent; and in anſwer to them their meetings on earth will be comfortable and cordial: and even if this be denied, the grace of the Lord Jeſus will be with their ſpirits, and they will ſoon meet before the throne, to join for ever in admirng the riches of redeeming love.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle to the HEBREWS.

The general teſtimony of antiquity, the current tradition of the church, and the judgment of the moſt competent modern critics, determine this epiſtle to have been written by the apoſtle Paul; though ſome, both in former, and later times, have thought otherwiſe. But the method in which the argument is conducted, the penman's connexion with Timothy, and his reſidence in Italy, lead us to aſcribe it to him; though not with abſolute certainty, yet with a high degree of probability. (c. xiii. v. 23, 24.) *The general prejudice of the Jews, and even of the Jewiſh chriſtians, againſt Paul, and for the Moſaic Law, might induce him to with-hold his name, when writing to them upon the ſubjects contained in this epiſtle: though it is evident, that he ſuppoſed ſome of the perſons addreſſed would know from whom it came. It was written to the* Hebrews, *or thoſe deſcendants of* Abraham, *&c, who dwelt in the land of Judea: and, as they generally uſed a dialect of the* Hebrew *tongue; ſo it is not improbable, but the epiſtle was written both in Greek and in their dialect, under the immediate inſpection of the writer; whence the tradition might ariſe, that the Greek copy was only a tranſlation from the original epiſtle. The Hebrews profeſſing chriſtianity were immediately addreſſed; yet the writer evidently expected, that the unconverted Jews alſo would read it; and their conviction and inſtruction ſeem to have been a leading part of his object in writing it. The epiſtle opens with a declaration of the perſonal and mediatorial dignity of Chriſt; and a ſcriptural proof that the Meſſiah was to be far greater than the angels: the writer then proceeds to ſhew his ſuperiority to Moſes, and other eminent men of their nation; and to prove, that in him the types of the law had their full accompliſhment, that he was the ſubſtance of all thoſe ſhadows; and that the ſcriptures taught them to expect an entire new diſpenſation, prieſthood, and covenant under the reign of the Meſſiah. Theſe reaſonings are every where interſperſed with warnings and exhortations addreſſed to different deſcriptions of perſons. At length he ſhews the nature, efficacy and triumphs of faith, by which all the ſaints in former ages had been accepted of God, and enabled to obey, ſuffer, and do exploits in defence of their holy religion; after which he adds various inſtructions, admonitions, encouragements, and exhortations; and then concludes with the cuſtomary ſalutations, and benedictions. The internal excellency of this epiſtle, added to other arguments, puts the divine inſpiration of it beyond all doubt: we here find the great doctrines, that we have elſewhere been conſidering, ſtated, proved, illuſtrated, and applied to practical purpoſes, in the moſt clear, and convincing manner; and every part of it is peculiarly replete with inſtruction. It is ſuppoſed to have been written towards the end of the apoſtle's firſt impriſonment at Rome.*

Anno Domini 65.

CHAP. I.

Contains 1ſt. *A declaration of the original, and mediatorial glory of the Son of God, by whom the Father ſpeaks to men under the goſpel diſpenſation,* 1--4. 2d. *Several ſcriptures adduced to prove, that the Meſſiah was to be far greater than the angels, and worſhipped by them as their Creator and Lord, &c,* 5--14.

Anno Domini 65.

GOD, who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the world;

3 Who being the brightneſs of *his* glory, and the expreſs Image of his perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himſelf purged our ſins, ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high;

4 Being made ſo much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels ſaid he at

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—4.] The Hebrews allowed the divine authority of the Old Teſtament; and therefore the ſacred penman of this epiſtle waved the mention of his apoſtolical authority, and reaſoned with them principally from their ſcriptures: at the ſame time he probably deemed it moſt prudent to conceal his name; that none might thereby be deterred from reading his arguments, or induced to receive them with prejudice: ſo that he entered upon his ſubject without any introduction. That God, who in former ages had ſpoken to their progenitors, from the calling of Abraham, to the latter times of their nation, by prophets, who were mere men, of the ſame fallen nature with their brethren; who had gradually made known his truth and will, from time to time, through ſucceſſive generations; and who had ſpoken to them in divers methods, by perſonal conference, by dreams and viſions, or by ſupernatural impulſes upon the minds of the prophets; had in the laſt days, under the goſpel diſpenſation, ſpoken to them by his own Son, appearing perſonally among them in human nature. The eternal Word, or Son of God had indeed appeared, and ſpoken to the patriarchs, prophets, &c: but he then ſpoke as Jehovah, as God, to a few individuals, by whom his will was made known to their brethren: whereas he had at length become fleſh, and dwelt among men, to fulfil ancient prophecies and promiſes, and to give the moſt complete and explicit revelation of God, and his truth and will to mankind; as well as to purchaſe ſalvation for them. So that, whilſt Moſes, and other mere men, were the prophets of the old diſpenſation; the only begotten Son of God, appearing in human nature, was the great Prophet of the new diſpenſation. This glorious Perſon the Father had appointed Heir of all things," as the co-equal Son of God, the government of all worlds, of original right veſted in him: poſſeſſing the perfections of his eſſential Deity, he was capable of properly exerciſing univerſal authority, which no mere creature could have done; and he had been appointed of the Father, in reſpect of his aſſumed manhood, to rule over all worlds upon the mediatorial throne, with uncontrolled dominion, and unrivalled glory. Thus he inherits all things, and no creature can have any inheritance of power, honour, or felicity; except as derived from, and held in ſubordination to him. (Notes, &c. *Phil.* c. ii. v. 6—11.) This appointment had the more evident propriety, in that "by him alſo God made the worlds": being One with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, in eſſence, power and counſel, he had been the immediate Creator of the heavens and the earth, and of every order of beings in the univerſe. The idea of a created Agent, by whom God made all things, which ſome have endeavoured to ſupport from this text, is ſo abſurd in itſelf, as well as contrary to other ſcriptures, that it is aſtoniſhing it could ever have been adopted! The apoſtle evidently meant, that God now ſpake to, and redeemed, ſinners, by that ſame glorious Perſon, who had been the immediate Creator of the world; and who was alſo exalted to the mediatorial throne, as Heir of all things. (Notes, &c. *John*, c. i. v. 1—18) Furthermore, as the eſſence of the Deity is inviſible to man; ſo the only begotten Son, of whom he ſpake, had been appointed to make known his glory and perfection: being one with, and equal to the Father, in his divine nature, and ſhining in the form of God, with all the effulgency of his glory; and being alſo diſtinct from the Father as to his perſonal ſubſiſtence; by aſſuming human nature he became "the "effulgency of the divine glory" to men, and made known the perfections of the Godhead to them, ſo that he who ſaw Him, ſaw the Father alſo. For the Son was *the expreſs image*, or *the character* of the Father's *perſon*, or *ſubſiſtence*; and ſhewed every part of the character, nature, and perfections of God to man, with the greateſt exactneſs, and in the beſt manner poſſible; ſo that in proportion as any man knows Chriſt in his Perſon, character, and ſalvation, he knows the Father alſo; and he that knows not Chriſt, hath no real knowledge of God at all. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xi. v. 25—27. 2 *Cor.* c. iv. ver. 3—6. *Col.* c. i. v. 15—19.) And not only did the Father create the world by the Son, but the ſame divine Agent ſtill upholds all things by the word of his power, as one in power and Godhead with the Father; (ſo that it is of no importance whether the pronoun *his* be ſuppoſed to relate to the Father or to the Son;) and he even upheld all things in being, and in their ſettled order, by his almighty word and will, when he appeared on earth as the viſible effulgence of "the Father's glory, and the character of his ſubſiſt-"ence," of which he gave many proofs in his miraculous power over the courſe of nature, legions of evil ſpirits, diſeaſes and death. And this ſame Perſon, who created and upholds all worlds, as the High Prieſt of his people, purged away the guilt of their ſins, *by himſelf*, and the ſacrifice of his death upon the croſs. Then, having riſen as a mighty Conqueror over death and hell, he aſcended in human nature, to be ſeated as Heir of all things upon the mediatorial throne: at the right hand of the Father, where he diſplays his glorious majeſty; there is the incarnate Son enthroned in pre-eminent dignity, as the Head of all things to his church, which he purchaſed with his own blood. For he was made ſo much better than, or ſuperior in authority to, the angels; that they any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaith, And let all the angels of God worſhip him.

7 And of the angels he ſaith, Who maketh his angles ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son *he ſaith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a ſceptre of righteouſneſs *is* the ſceptre of thy kingdom:

9 Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated

were all made ſubject to him as reigning in human nature; ſeeing he *inherited*, as the only begotten Son of God, a more excellent name, or nature, than they: for however exalted any of them were, in capacity or authority, they were only mere creatures, and He their infinite Creator. This interpretation coincides with that which hath already been given of ſimilar paſſages; but it ſomewhat differs from that of ſeveral eminent evangelical expoſitors: for they ſuppoſe that the expreſſions "the brightneſs of his "glory, and *the character of his ſubſiſtence*," are illuſtrations taken from external object, of the eternal generation of Chriſt, and his equality with the Father, in the Godhead. But though I am decidedly of opinion, that Chriſt is called the only Son of God, in reſpect of his divine nature; and therefore, allow the eternal generation, as well as the equality of the Son with the Father. Yet I do not think that the ſcripture contains any illuſtrations of theſe myſteries; or that we are taught to form any ideas of the *modus*, in which they ſubſiſt; but rather to receive them in implicit faith, as the revelation of God, and to adore them as abſolutely incomprehenſible by us, in our preſent ſtate. I therefore ſuppoſe theſe expreſſions to ſignify the manifeſtation of the glory, character, and perfection of the inviſible God to man, in and by the perſon of his incarnate Son; whoſe original equality with the Father, by the participation of the divine nature; and his voluntary aſſumption of the human nature, concurred in rendering him the proper medium, ſo to ſpeak, through which we might ſee the effulgency, or ſhining forth of the divine glory, and become acquainted with the character and ſubſiſtence of God, in the beſt manner, of which in our preſent condition we are capable.

V. 5—7.] In the preceding verſes the apoſtle ſtated the outlines of that doctrine, on which he meant more largely to diſcourſe: and having declared the perſonal and mediatorial ſuperiority of Jeſus the Son of God, above all angels; he proceeded to ſhew, that the Old Teſtament prophecies ſpake of the promiſed Meſſiah in ſimilar language. As we are ſatisfied by abundant evidence, that the writers of the New Teſtament were equally inſpired with thoſe of the Old; their expoſitions are of equal authority with the originals, which they quote; though the context may ſometimes lead us to conclude, that they rather adduced the paſſage, with an inſtructive and proper accommodation, than in its primary meaning. But when the apoſtle reaſoned with the Hebrews out of their ſcriptures: he doubtleſs quoted them in that ſenſe, in which many of them had been uſed to underſtand them, or in which they might be convinced they ought to be underſtood. We have briefly conſidered theſe quotations before: yet it is neceſſary here again to examine them. The firſt is brought from an evident prophecy of the Meſſiah's kingdom, (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* ii.) Jehovah had therein addreſſed him in ſuch language, as had never been uſed to any angel. The words quoted were ſpoken long before his incarnation, and were the declaration of an eternal decree: they muſt therefore relate to his Sonſhip or eternal generation; for the ſubſequent production of his human nature, by the power of the Holy Spirit, would not give him that eſſential and original ſuperiority to the angels, which the argument here required; nor could his appointment to the office of the Meſſiah be meant by the words "thou "art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," as that appointment was conſequent to, rather than the cauſe of, his ſuperiority to the angels; he was advanced above, as he had inherited a more excellent name than, they: and his Sonſhip is plainly denoted to be ſuch a participation of the Father's nature, as any ſon partakes of that of his father in the ordinary courſe of things. The next quotation appears primarily to have been meant of Solomon, (Note, &c. *2 Sam.* c. vii. v. 14.) but Solomon was a moſt remarkable type of the Meſſiah, as the Jews in general muſt know: ſo that when Jehovah ſaid of him in ſo peculiar a ſenſe "I will be to him a Father, &c;" it muſt be obvious that this in its fulleſt meaning was to be underſtood of the antitype rather than the type. The next proof was brought from a prophecy of the eſtabliſhment of the Meſſiah's kingdom, (Note, &c. *Pſ* xcvii.) in which it is ſaid, (v. 7,) "worſhip him all ye Gods" Jehovah there ſpake of bringing in the Meſſiah, to rule over the world; whom he had elſe-were declared to be his firſt begotten Son, (*Pſ.* ii. v. 7;) appointed to be as Heir of all things: and at the ſame time he called upon the moſt exalted of his creatures to ſubmit to, adore, and honour the Son, even as they honoured the Father that ſent him. For though the magiſtrates and grandees of the earth might be included; yet all the angels of God were evidently intended alſo. But Jehovah had never ſpoken in ſuch language concerning angels; of whom it had been ſaid, that He made them ſpirits, or *winds*, (for ſo ſome render it,) and as flames of fire to be his miniſtering ſervants. (Note, *Pſ.* civ. v 4.) He had indeed formed them active, powerful, pure, and ſpiritual intelligences; to perform his mandates, with inexpreſſible force, and fervent love: but he had never commanded other rational creatures to worſhip them; nay he had moſt peremptorily forbidden the worſhip of any creature: yet he required the moſt exalted of them to worſhip his Son, even when brought into this world to dwell in human nature! A moſt decided proof of an infinite diſparity between Chriſt, and the higheſt angels! (*Rev.* c. xix. v. 10,)

V. 8, 9.] A paſſage is next adduced from a moſt remarkable prophecy of the Meſſiah, (Notes, &c. *Pſalm* xlv;) in which Jehovah ſaid to him, as his Son, "Thy "throne, O God, is for ever and ever:" he addreſſed iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.

10 And Thou Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

11 They ſhall periſh; but thou remaineſt: and they all ſhall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool?

14 Are they not all miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?

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him as God, declaring the perpetuity of his mediatorial kingdom to the end of the world, and over his redeemed people to all eternity. (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 24—28.) As the ſceptre, with which he would rule his people, and all nations, for their benefit, was a ſceptre of righteouſneſs: the exerciſe of his pardoning mercy would be moſt honourable to divine juſtice, and moſt effectual to promote righteouſneſs in the world; his laws and adminiſtration would be altogether righteous; whilſt he acted as the Friend and Saviour of ſinners, he would moſt perfectly love righteouſneſs and hate iniquity; as the Son of God he was eſſentially and unchangeably holy; his human nature would be produced, and preſerved entirely free from all pollution of ſin; his whole conduct even unto death would be perfectly righteous, and the government of his kingdom would ever after be the ſame. On which account God, even his God and Father, would anoint him, (for the future was ſpoken of, as if it had already taken place,) with the oil of gladneſs, or the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, (the ſource of all ſubſtantial gladneſs in the heart of man,) in a more abundant manner than any of thoſe prophets or ſervants of God had received, whom he owned as his fellows, companions, or brethren in the human nature. The Holy Spirit was given without meaſure to Chriſt, for the benefit of his church, in conſequence of his undertaking, incarnation, obedience to death, and exaltation to the mediatorial throne: from this fulneſs all his fellows received their appointed meaſure; by which they were qualified for theſe ſervices, to which they were called, comforted in the trials appointed for them, and prepared for their future happineſs in heaven. Some ſuppoſe, that angels were meant by Chriſt's fellows; becauſe the apoſtle was proving his ſuperiority to angels: but he never bare the nature of angels, which ſeems the meaning of the expreſſion. (*Zech.* c. xiii. v. 7.) And the quotation was full to the apoſtle's purpoſe, by proving that Jehovah ſpake of the Meſſiah in ſuch language, as he never uſed of angels: and the pſalmiſt, from whom he adduced his proof, ſpake of the Meſſiah as incarnate, of his eſpouſing the church to himſelf, and of believers as the companions of the glorious King. They were indeed anointed with the oil of gladneſs for his ſake; but he far more than they all, even as his excellency and dignity exceeded theirs.

V. 10—13.] (Note, *Pſ.* cii. 25—27.) The pſalm, whence theſe verſes are quoted, ſeems to be a prayer of the afflicted church of Iſrael, for the coming of her expected Deliverer: yet we might not have diſcovered that the Son was perſonally addreſſed in this paſſage, had not the apoſtle led our attention to it in this view: but conſidering it in connexion with other ſcriptures, and remembering that the ancient prophets continually ſpake of their expected Meſſiah; we ſhall perceive a propriety in the church under affliction addreſſing herſelf to him as her unchangeable Friend. He had in the beginning created the heavens and the earth; theſe would at length wax old and wear out as a garment; but he would remain poſſeſſed of infinite power and perfection: at the appointed period, therefore, he would lay them aſide, with as much eaſe as a man folds up a garment, and changes it for another; and ſo introduce new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs: and ſtill he would continue the ſame "yeſterday, to-day, and for ever." (c. xiii. v. 8.) Probably many of the Hebrews were prepared to underſtand this pſalm of the Meſſiah, as well as the others: however, it is *to us* a moſt explicit teſtimony to the Deity of Chriſt, as One with the Father, the Creator of all things: and they, who labour to prove that the Father was ſpoken of by the apoſtle, muſt think that he reaſons inconcluſively indeed, yea abſurdly: for what had the quotation in that caſe to do with Chriſt's ſuperiority to the angels?

V. 13, 14.] (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* cx.) Jehovah had never ſpoken to any angel in ſuch language, as was contained in another well-known prophecy of the Meſſiah; in which he called him to ſit as a mighty Prince on his right-hand, till he had cruſhed and put under his feet all thoſe, who preſumed to rebel againſt, or oppoſe his authority. Did not the Hebrews well know, that all the angels, even the moſt exalted of them, were ſo far from poſſeſſing ſuch ſupreme and univerſal authority; that they were miniſtering ſpirits, mere ſervants of the Lord, to execute his commands with unreſerved ſubmiſſion; and that they were ſent forth of him to miniſter to, and wait upon thoſe of the human race, who were appointed to be the heirs of ſalvation? Their willing and delightful obedience to ſuch commands, and their loving ſervices to ſuch inferior and ſinful creatures for the Lord's ſake, ſhewed an excellent diſpoſition, and was worthy of imitation: yet no homage or worſhip were due to them on that account. Whilſt all their worſhip and ſervice were rendered to Chriſt, as the incarnate Son of God, and the Saviour of ſinful men. As therefore ſuch things were ſpoken of the Meſſiah, above what was ſaid of angels, in the ſacred ſcriptures; it was abſurd to expect a mere man, or a temporal kingdom; or to ſuppoſe that he would come to confirm and continue that diſpenſation, which had been given by the miniſtration of angels.

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. An earneſt call to attend to the goſpel; enforced by the conſideration of the danger of neglecting ſo great a ſalvation, thus revealed to mankind, 1---4. *2d. Further ſcriptural proof of Chriſt's ſuperiority to the angels, notwithſtanding his temporary humiliation in our nature,* 5---9. *3d. An explanation of the motives, reaſons, condeſcenſion, and benefit of his incarnation, temptations, ſufferings, and death; as connected with his being the High-prieſt and Saviour of his people,* 10---18.

THerefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let *them* ſlip.

2 For if the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward:

3 How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation; which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

4 God alſo bearing *them* witneſs, both

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We can never ſufficiently bleſs our God, that he hath in ſo many ways, and with ſuch increaſing clearneſs, ſpoken concerning ſalvation to us fallen ſinners: and eſpecially that he hath ſent the meſſage of mercy to us by his well-beloved Son, whoſe dignity gives authority to every appointment, and certainty to every truth and promiſe. That the Firſt-begotten of the Father, the Heir of all things, by whom all worlds were created, and by the word of whoſe power all things are upheld; who is the effulgency of the divine glory, and the manifeſtation of the divine perfection, ſhould "by himſelf purge our "ſins," is a myſtery of love, which baffles all our admiration, praiſe and gratitude. Being now ſet down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high; angels, principalities and powers, being ſubject to him, who inheriteth a far more excellent name than they; let us not abſurdly and ungratefully refuſe him our adorations, whilſt the angels of God worſhip him! For our ſalvation he abaſed himſelf, that he might redeem us to God with his blood; and ſhall we on that account refuſe to adore and honour Him, even as we honour the Father that ſent him? Let us alſo remember, that all his enemies will at length be put under his feet; and that all, who will not have him to reign over them, will be condemned as his enemies. Let us then ſeek mercy of our God, in that way, which glorifies his juſtice alſo: let us bow to the ſceptre of our Redeemer's grace, put our ſouls under his protection, and ſeek that renewal of our hearts, which will make us to delight in obeying his holy commands, and render us like him; in "loving righteouſneſs and hating iniquity." In proportion as we are anointed with the oil of gladneſs from his fulneſs, and as members of his myſtical body, this will be our character: and "if any man have not "the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his." We cannot indeed ſerve him, as angels do, who excel in ſtrength, and are like a vehement wind, or the ſwift lightning, in executing his mandates: but we may copy their love, their alacrity and humility, in miniſtering, at his word, to the pooreſt of the heirs of ſalvation, who are thus more royally attended than the mightieſt of ungodly men. Surely then we ſhould deem none of our brethren, nor any of their concerns, beneath us; but like theſe pure ſpirits ſhould count it our honour to do them good for Chriſt's ſake. Such humiliation and ſelf-abaſement will make way for our exaltation to be equal with the angels, yea to ſit down with Chriſt upon his throne; when he, who at firſt created the world, ſhall with unchangeable power deſtroy it, as a worn-out garment, and make all things new: and when all they, whoſe hearts and hopes were placed on ſuch periſhing treaſures and fading glories, will be driven from his preſence into everlaſting miſery.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtle pauſed, after his proof of Chriſt's pre-eminent dignity, to make ſome application of his doctrine. The Hebrews, and all to whom the goſpel came, ought to give the more earneſt believing and obedient attention to what they heard; becauſe of the majeſty of the Speaker, and the gracious nature of his words. It was incumbent on thoſe, who profeſſed chriſtianity, to apply their minds with increaſing reverence to theſe important ſubjects; leſt at any time, through temptation, worldly cares and pleaſures, or through perſecution, they ſhould be induced to let them ſlip, or *run out*, as water from a leaky veſſel. This aptly repreſents the treachery of the memory reſpecting ſpiritual things: and the way, in which good inſtructions, convictions, or affections gradually vaniſh, and no abiding change is made, or effect produced by them. The Jews deemed the authority of the law to be the greater, and its perpetuity the more indubitable; becauſe it was ſpoken by angels, as employed by Jehovah in delivering it to their fathers from mount Sinai; (Notes, *Acts*, c. vii. v. 53.) But if the word ſpoken by miniſtering ſpirits was ſtedfaſt, ſo that Jehovah would not permit any of the people to tranſgreſs in any way, without inflicting on them merited puniſhment; how could they eſcape his vengeance, who neglected the great ſalvation of the goſpel? The greatneſs of the Saviour, who created, and upholds all things; the immenſity of the price paid by him for this ſalvation; the depth of the miſery from which he ſaves his people, and their periſhing need of it; its entire freeneſs to the chief of ſinners who apply for it, without limitation or exception; the infinite proviſion made for the ſupply of all their wants; and the glorious felicity, in which it iſſues; all theſe things unite in rendering it worthy to be called the *great ſalvation*, even ſo great a ſalvation, that it ſurpaſſes all conception. To refuſe this invaluable bleſſing, from pride, love of the world and ſin, or attachment to ſuperſtitious vanities; to neglect it through ſloth, procraſtination, an averſion to the means of grace, or a fear of the croſs; and to oppoſe or abuſe it, from enmity to God and holineſs, not only leave men under the curſe of the law, but incur the condemnation of with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come, whereof we ſpeak.

6 But one in a certain place teſtified, ſaying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him?

7 Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedſt him with glory and honour, and didſt ſet him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet. For in that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we ſee not yet all things put under him.

9 But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings.

11 For both he that ſanctifieth, and they

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treating the truth of God as a lie, of deſpiſing his mercy, defying his juſtice and power, and rejecting his moſt gracious and urgent overtures to a reconciliation. How then can ſuch perſons eſcape the wrath to come? This ſalvation was firſt begun to be publiſhed, in the fulleſt diſplay of it under the goſpel-diſpenſation, by the Lord himſelf appearing in human nature, as the great Prophet of the church. He deigned to be the Preacher of this great ſalvation; and after his aſcenſion into heaven to appear in the preſence of God for us, it was confirmed to the Jews and others by his apoſtles and evangeliſts, who had been eye-witneſſes of his glory, had heard his doctrine, and received their commiſſion immediately from him. Moreover God bore witneſs to their doctrine, as that of his beloved Son, by various miraculous powers exerciſed by them, and conferred on others alſo; and by the gifts of his Holy Spirit, diſpenſed to them according to his own ſovereign will. So that the condeſcenſion of the Son of God, in becoming incarnate, and in firſt publiſhing his doctrine by his own perſonal miniſtry; his exaltation, and the ſubſequent ſending of his ambaſſadors with ſuch divinely-atteſted credentials, to preach ſalvation to ſinners, concurred in calling their attention from the abrogated Moſaic diſpenſation, to chriſtianity.

V. 5—9.] The argument, concerning Chriſt's ſuperiority to the angels, is here reſumed. *The world to come*, or *the future age*, or *diſpenſation*, was a Jewiſh phraſe denoting the times of the Meſſiah, of which the apoſtle was diſcourſing: theſe were not ſubjected to angels, but to him whom all the angels worſhipped and obeyed; nor were they miniſterially employed in the introduction of it, as they had been in the giving of the law. This had been implied in what was ſpoken by one in a certain place, with which the Hebrews were well acquainted, (Notes, &c. *Pſalm* viii.) In a view of the ſtarry heavens, thoſe majeſtic diſplays of God's creating power, David had exclaimed, "What is man, &c.?" The words might indeed be explained of the Lord's attention and kindneſs to ſo little and inconſiderable a creature as man, amidſt the immenſity of his works. He had made him ſomewhat inferior to the angels, but he had crowned him with glory and honour, and made him Lord of this lower creation: yet as man had ſoon fallen from his original dignity, had loſt his crown of honour, and retained but an imperfect dominion over the creatures; and as the Meſſiah was intended to be the chief glory and bleſſing of the fallen race: ſo the pſalmiſt might properly be conſidered, as *in Spirit* ſpeaking of him; and of Jehovah's being mindful of, and viſiting the human race, by giving his own Son to become the Son of man for their ſalvation. And if the words were exactly weighed, it would be found that they had not a full accompliſhment in any other ſenſe: for if God put *all things* in ſubjection under the feet of the Son of man, it muſt follow that there was nothing left that was not put in ſubjection under him: whereas it was manifeſt, that all things, even here on earth, were not thus put in ſubjection to man, for many of the creatures ſcorned to bear his yoke, and ſome even made war againſt him. But believers, looking to Jeſus, ſaw the accompliſhment of the words in his exaltation, and the event of it: he had become a little, or *for a little ſpace*, lower than the angels, by appearing in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, that he might be capable of ſuffering death; but ſpeedily he had been, as the Son of man, crowned with glory and honour, placed on the mediatorial throne, inveſted with univerſal dominion, and made Head of all things to his church. So that in fact, all things in heaven and earth and under the earth were put in ſubjection to him; and, though ſome for a time might be reluctant to ſubmit to him, they muſt all at length either be his willing ſervants, or be cruſhed under his feet as enemies, (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 24—29.) Thus, by means of his humiliation, he became capable of dying; and, by his ſubſequent exaltation, he was enabled to apply the benefits of his death to his people: and ſo he taſted death in all its bitterneſs for the benefit of every man, who came to truſt in his ſalvation; which conſtitution was the effect of the plenteous mercy and free favour of God to our rebellious race, as the pſalmiſt intimated; nor could that grace ever be ſufficiently admired.

V. 10—13.] Whatever the carnal Jews might object to the ſufferings and crucifixion of him, who was preached to them as their Meſſiah; yet it certainly became the eternal God, for whoſe glory, and by whoſe power all who are ſanctified *are* all of one: for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midſt of the church will I ſing praiſe unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my truſt in him. And again, Behold I and the children, which God hath given me

14 Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame; that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the ſeed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-prieſt in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people.

18 For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.

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things were created, and are upheld, and governed, to adopt this method. It was illuſtrative of all his perfections, yea neceſſary for the harmonious diſplay of them; that in bringing millions of fallen ſinners, as his adopted children to glory, through all the obſtructions of their courſe; he ſhould make the Author of their ſalvation; their Commander, (*Iſaiah*, c. lv. v. 4,) who leads them forth to conflict, and victory over ſatan, ſin, the world and death, perfect through ſufferings; that is perfectly authorized to, as well as qualified for every part of that moſt important work. For by aſſuming human nature, and humbling himſelf to the death upon the croſs for our ſins, he made our ſalvation conſiſtent with divine juſtice, and ſhewed us the way of fighting the good fight of faith, and preſſing forward to the conqueror's crown. Thus Jeſus, who purifieth his people from guilt and ſin, and conſecrateth them to God, and they who are thus ſanctified by him, are all of one; he is become One with them in human nature; in order that his ſufferings might atone for their ſins, and that they might be juſtified by his righteouſneſs: for which cauſe, he is not aſhamed to own them as his brethren, notwithſtanding his glorious majeſty and perfect holineſs, and their meanneſs, guilt and pollution. Thus, in a remarkable prophecy of his ſufferings, and ſubſequent glory, (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* xxii;) "he had been introduced as ſaying, (v. 22,) "I will declare thy name to my brethren," and engaging to celebrate the praiſes of Jehovah in his church of redeemed ſinners. In another place, where the Meſſiah's deliverances, victories, and kingdom were predicted under the type of David, he ſpake as man, of "truſting in the "Lord" amidſt his trials, even as his brethren did, (*Pſ.* xviii. v. 2:) and by another prophet, he had ſaid "behold I, and the children, which God hath given "me;" (Note, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. viii. v. 18;) this implied the ſame equality of nature and endeared affection as the relation of brethren. (Note, *Matt.* c. xxviii. v. 10. *John*, c. xx. v. 17. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 29.)

V. 14, 15.] As therefore the children, of whom Chriſt ſpake by the prophet, even his elect people whom he had undertaken to redeem, were partakers of fleſh and blood, or of the human nature; he alſo voluntarily condeſcended to partake of the ſame; in order, that he might ſtand in the neareſt relation to them, and ſo moſt properly become their Surety and repreſentative; as well as be made capable of ſuffering and dying for them: that by ſo doing he might, as to them, aboliſh the reign of death, by deſtroying the dominion of the devil, who hath the power of death. For ſatan, by ſeducing man into ſin firſt brought him under the ſentence of death: and every man muſt be expoſed to the ſting, the terror, the ſtroke, and the conſequences of death, whilſt he continues unpardoned and unconverted: and ſatan, as accuſer and executioner, may have much power in inflicting, or aggravating them. But Chriſt's atonement made way for his people's deliverance from ſatan's bondage, and for the pardon of their ſins through faith; then he loſes his power inreſpect of death alſo, they are delivered from its ſting, its terror, and its conſequences: whilſt inward peace and hope reconcile them to its ſtroke, and the whole will iſſue in their glorious reſurrection to eternal life. Thus Chriſt "delivered thoſe, who all their "life-time had been ſubject to bondage through fear of death." Whatever pride, ambition, and deſperate paſſions may ſometimes affect, or pretend to; the fear of death is univerſal, and in ſome degree enſlaves all mankind: the juſter apprehenſions men have of God, and eternal things, the greater will be their dread of death, except as faith in Chriſt deliver them: many of thoſe, who have been enſlaved by it, during the former part of their lives, are actually delivered from their terror, by the goſpel; and habitually think of dying with compoſure and ſatisfaction: many, who do not before get the better of their terrors, are entirely freed from them at that critical ſeaſon; and even thoſe believers, who fear death to the laſt, (as ſome perhaps do,) will be the more amazed at their deliverance, when by the ſtroke, which they dreaded all their life-time, they find themſelves perfectly freed from all they groaned under and hated, and admitted to a felicity exceeding their largeſt expectations; (*Cor.* c. xv. v. 55—58.)

V. 16—18.] It ought verily to be well obſerved on this ſubject, that the Son of God did not *take hold* on fallen angels, to preſerve them from ſinking into hell; but he mercifully *took hold* on thoſe of Adam's fallen race, who were, like Abraham, to be made partakers of

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. Chriſt's ſuperiority to Moſes evinced and illuſtrated, 1---6. 2d. The Hebrews warned not to copy the example of their unbelieving anceſtors, who periſhed in the wilderneſs, 7---19.

WHerefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, conſider the A-

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faith in God's promiſes through him: and therefore he did not aſſume the nature of angels into perſonal union with his Deity; but by a condeſcenſion ſtill more inconceivable, he aſſumed the human nature of the ſeed of Abraham. Wherefore it appeared, that it behoved Him, and he *muſt*, in order to the honourable ſalvation of thoſe ſinners, whom he graciouſly owned as his brethren, be made like them in the human nature, and in all thoſe ſinleſs infirmities, to which ſin had ſubjected them. This was needful, in order that he might become their High-prieſt, making atonement and reconciliation for their ſins, by his ſacrifice of himſelf, and his ſubſequent interceſſion for them; and that he might give them the firmeſt ground of aſſurance of his compaſſion, love, and faithfulneſs, in this endearing, and important character. For thus he became One with them as man, who was One with the Father as God; and ſo aſſured them that he would attend to their intereſts in the moſt condeſcending, merciful, and faithful manner; even as he would regard the glory of God the Father, before whom he acted as their High-prieſt. And by ſuch voluntary humiliation, and ſufferings for them when enemies, he gave the moſt endearing pledge of his love to them; and taught them moſt emphatically, that he would not fail them, when they were brought to truſt in him; and when his omnipotent arm could effect the purpoſe, for which he had ſhed his precious blood. For in that he ſuffered, being tempted of ſatan in the wilderneſs, and during his laſt conflicts, (whoſe unholy ſuggeſtions muſt have tortured his mind in proportion as he abhorred, and could not be defiled by them;) in that he endured ſharp *trials* from man's contemptuous malice and cruelty; and in that he bare the wrath of the Father for our ſins: he was able to ſuccour ſuch as were tempted, tried, or afflicted of God; being authorized as Mediator to exert omnipotence in ſupporting, comforting and reſcuing them; and having a ſympathizing, and moſt tender love for them: ſeeing he had paſſed through the ſame temptations himſelf, as far as he could do it, continuing perfectly free from ſin.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The excellency, importance, and clearneſs of the goſpel, and the dignity and grace of the Redeemer, concur in calling on us to give the more earneſt heed to the things, which we have heard: for unleſs ſerious recollection, fervent prayer, and reverent attention, with ſubſequent meditation and practice, prevent; we ſhall ſurely let divine truths run out of our minds, as water from a veſſel with holes. Alas, how many hearers of this kind are found in all our congregations! And indeed we are all in ſome meaſure criminal and fooliſh in this matter. Let us then beg of God to ſanctify our memories and hearts, that we may become leſs forgetful, and more practical hearers of the word of life. The Lord's judgments under the new diſpenſation are chiefly ſpiritual: but they are on that account the more to be dreaded; and if they, who deſpiſed Moſes' law, died without mercy; how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, as Chriſt hath purchaſed and revealed? Bleſſed be God, this ſalvation is ſo great, that nothing but our neglect of it, in one way or other, can exclude us from its eternal advantages: ſo that the trembling penitent, who is ready to think himſelf too vile to be pardoned, or too filthy to be cleanſed, may come to Chriſt with chearful confidence, and expect from Him the free gift of all, that can be needul for him: and even they, who are conſcious of having hitherto neglected ſo great ſalvation, may hope for the pardon of that atrocious guilt in the ſame manner; being aſſured, that where ſin hath abounded, grace ſhall much more abound. Yet even partial neglects will not eſcape rebukes: and they often weaken *their* evidence, and bring darkneſs upon *their* minds, whoſe ſouls they do not finally ruin. Let us then mind this one thing needful: for though we cannot ſit at the Lord's feet, as they did, to whom he firſt began to ſpeak the word; yet in duly attending to thoſe writings, which were penned by thoſe, who heard the words from his gracious lips, and which have been abundantly atteſted to us by God himſelf; we ſhall be bleſſed with that good part, which cannot be taken from us. The glorious God hath done wonderful things for us, in creation and providence; for which, alas! we have made the baſeſt returns: but he hath been mindful of us, and viſited us in the moſt ſurpriſing manner; when he gave his own Son to be made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death in our nature, and for our ſalvation; that being crowned with glory and honour, and having all power given to him in heaven and earth; he might reſcue every man, who believeth in Him from all the effects of original and actual ſin, and raiſe him to far higher dignity, than what was loſt by Adam's tranſgreſſion. By the grace manifeſted in the incarnation of the Son of God, and the exaltation of the Son of man, the honour of our nature is eternally ſecured; and all our concern ſhould be to ſecure an intereſt in this ſalvation. Whatever the proud, carnal, and unbelieving may imagine, or object; the ſpiritual mind will perceive peculiar glory in the croſs of Chriſt, and be ſatisfied, that it became Him, who in all things maketh the diſplay of his own perfections his chief end, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the Author of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings. Wiſdom, power, juſtice, holineſs, truth and love, beyond expreſſion or conception are diſplayed by our God, in that union which was voluntarily formed between Him that ſanctifieth, and them that are ſanctified; when the Word was made fleſh, and tabernacled among us; and when He, whom all angels worſhip, vouchſafed to become our Brother, and to own, and glory in, that condeſcending relation to us ſinful worms! What advantages may we not expect from ſo powerful and gracious a Friend and Brother? When he ſaw the children, whom he had undertaken to redeem, partakers of fleſh and blood; he alſo was pleaſed poſtle, and High-Prieſt of our profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as alſo Moſes *was faithful* in all his houſe.

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes, inaſmuch as he who hath builded the houſe hath more honour than the houſe.

4 For every houſe is builded by ſome *man*; but he that built all things *is* God.

5 And Moſes verily *was* faithful in all his houſe, as a ſervant, for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were to be ſpoken after;

6 But Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe; whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

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to partake of the ſame; though he knew, that he muſt not only dwell in their nature, but bear their curſe, pay their ranſom, and through death, deliver them from the old ſerpent, by whom ſin and death entered into the world to make havock of the human race. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took upon him the ſeed of Abraham; that we might be made the children of Abraham, and the friends of God through him! Let then ſinners, who dread death, and uſe a variety of methods to get the better of their terrors; no longer attempt to outbrave, or ſtifle them; let them not grow outrageous, or licentious through deſpair; nor let them expect help from the world, or human inventions: but let them ſeek pardon, peace, grace, and lively hope of heaven, by faith in him, who died and roſe again; that being reſcued from ſatan's power, they may be made ſuperior to the fear of death, which hath always hitherto held them in bondage. Let the trembling believer frequently meditate on the love of Chriſt, and on his croſs, his ſepulchre, his reſurrection, and his glory; and thus in ſimple dependance and obedience, let him wait for more complete deliverance from the fear of death, and from that laſt enemy himſelf, in the Lord's appointed time. Let us all remember, that ſo deep was our ruin, and ſo heinous our guilt, that it behoved Jeſus to become in all things like unto us; that he might be our faithful and merciful High-prieſt, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of his people; that we may come to the Father only in his name, and pleading his atonement and interceſſion, not in the leaſt doubting of his faithfulneſs and mercy towards all, who come to God by him: and let the afflicted and tempted, inſtead of yielding to deſpondency, or giving place to the devil, (as if their harraſſing temptations rendered it improper for them to come to the Lord with their prayers,) remember, that the Saviour ſuffered being tempted, on purpoſe, that he might be able to ſuccour them that are tempted; that he hath infinite power and compaſſion; and that he only waits to be called in to their help, by fervent perſevering prayer. May we then hear him declare to us the name of God, and teach us to celebrate his praiſes; and may we learn to paſs through all trials and temptations, truſting in the Lord, and ſtaying ourſelves upon our God; that we may at length be found among thoſe, whom the incarnate Saviour will preſent before the Father's throne, ſaying, "behold I, and the children, whom thou haſt given me!"

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—6.] From what had been urged concerning Chriſt's ſuperiority to the angels, &c, as the incarnate Son of God, the apoſtle took occaſion to call the attention of the Hebrews to the offices, which he performed for the benefit of his church. He addreſſed them as "holy brethren," either as belonging to that nation, which was relatively holy; or as profeſſors of chriſtianity, and "partakers of the heavenly calling," by which the Lord from heaven called them to leave the vain purſuit of earthly things, and to ſeek thoſe things that were above. He exhorted them to conſider, and attend impartially and ſeriouſly to his words, reſpecting Jeſus Chriſt, as the Apoſtle, and the High-prieſt of their profeſſion. He had been ſent of the Father as his Apoſtle, even as he had ſent others to be apoſtles, or meſſengers from him to mankind; (*John.* c. xx. v. 21:) in this reſpect, he more eſpecially ſuperſeded Moſes, in his prophetical office, as the law-giver of Iſrael; as in his high-prieſthood he ſuperſeded Aaron and his poſterity. Of this latter office the ſacred writer meant afterwards to diſcourſe more fully; he therefore proceeded to ſhew how ſuperior Chriſt was to Moſes, as might be proved from the prophecies of his being the Son of God. He had been faithful to the Father, who had appointed him to this office: and had revealed to mankind the character, truth, and will of God, in the moſt perfect manner: and indeed Moſes had been faithful to his truth, in delivering to Iſrael all the commandments and ſtatutes God gave to him; and in ruling over his church, which might be called his houſe, or holy habitation. (*Num.* c. xii. v. 7.) Yet Chriſt was to be conſidered as vaſtly ſuperior to Moſes; "for he was counted worthy" by the Father of more glory and honour, than Moſes could be entitled to; even as the builder of an houſe, is more honourable, than the building or any part of it. Thus Moſes had been only a part of the houſe of God, or a member of his houſhold: but Chriſt had created him and his whole nation; he had formed them into a church; had arranged every thing with ſupreme authority reſpecting their civil and religious conſtitution; and had given all the believers among them their ſpiritual life, grace, wiſdom, and ability: So that he was as God, the Former, Owner, and Head of the church, even before his incarnation; though in a different manner than afterwards. For as every houſe is contrived, erected, furniſhed, and prepared for an habitation, by ſome perſon, whoſe ſkill and intelligence are viſible therein: ſo He, who built all things as Creator, and arranged all things in the church of Iſrael, could be no other than God himſelf: yet this honour the Meſſiah poſſeſſed; and this glorious Perſon had at length appeared in human nature as the Apoſtle or Prophet of the Father

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation, in the wilderneſs:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and ſaw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and ſaid, They do alway err in *their* heart, and they have not known my ways.

11 So I ſware in my wrath, They ſhall not enter into my reſt.)

12 Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

14 For we are made partakers of Chriſt, if we hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end.

15 While it is ſaid, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For ſome, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moſes.

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to introduce a new diſpenſation, and terminate the old one. In ſtill plainer language Moſes had been faithful as a ſervant in the houſe of the Lord, to introduce the legal diſpenſation, which prefigured, and bare witneſs to thoſe things, which were to be more clearly revealed in future times: but Chriſt was faithful as a Son placed in authority over his own houſe; for the church belonged to him equally as unto the Father, though he voluntarily acted as the Prophet of the Father to mankind. This ſpiritual houſe conſiſted of thoſe, who had been choſen in, given to, and redeemed by, him; and who were called by his grace, and ſo made an habitation of God through the Spirit; ſo that the apoſtle, and the Hebrews whom he immediately addreſſed, were a part of that ſacred temple, in which God would delight to dwell, to manifeſt his preſence, and to communicate his bleſſings, for ever; if they held faſt their profeſſed confidence in Chriſt, their hope of ſalvation by him, and their joy and glorying in him; and were firm and ſtedfaſt in dependance on, and obedience to him, amidſt the various temptations and perſecutions, to which this would expoſe them: as this perſeverance would be the proper evidence of their ſincerity.

V. 7—13.] This addreſs was directed to ſuch profeſſors of chriſtianity, as were in danger of apoſtatizing, or who ſeemed not in earneſt in their religion: but it was peculiarly ſuited to excite the attention of ſuch Jews alſo as might read it. The example of their unbelieving progenitors, and the words of their own ſcriptures reſpecting them, were adduced with great propriety on this occaſion. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* xcv.) The warning given by the Holy Ghoſt in the days of David, with reference to more ancient events, was equally applicable to the Jews in the days of the apoſtle. On the preſent day, which might terminate their lives, or the ſeaſon of the Lord's long-ſuffering, or deprive them of the means of grace; they were urgently intreated to attend to, and obey the voice of God, if they ever meant to obtain his favour, and eſcape his wrath; and not obſtinately to harden their hearts and ſtupify their conſciences in wilful ſin, by carnal prejudices and pleaſures. This, their fathers had done in that provocation of Jehovah, which had taken place in the wilderneſs; when after all the demonſtrations of his power and goodneſs to them, they ungratefully wearied out his patience by their aggravated rebellions. That ſeaſon was peculiarly "the day of temptation;" for their fathers acted as if they meant to try how much provocation God would bear with, before he took vengeance upon them. (Note, *Exod.* c. xvii. v. 2.) Wherefore he was at length ſo angered and grieved by their perverſe returns for his manifold favours, that he would no longer bear with that generation of Iſrael; for he ſaid of them that their wicked hearts always led them to depart from him, as they had never known, approved, and choſen his holy ways, but had always preferred their own evil devices: he therefore irrevocably determined, and confirmed it by an oath, that they ſhould never enter into the reſt of Canaan, the type of heavenly felicity. (Notes, &c. *Num.* c. xiii, xiv.) It therefore was incumbent upon the Hebrews to look well to themſelves, leſt there ſhould be in any of them the ſame evil heart, the ſame proud, carnal, rebellious and ungrateful temper, whence the unbelief of their anceſtors had originated; and leſt this ſhould be manifeſted by their apoſtatizing from the living God, either in rejecting chriſtianity, or in apoſtatizing from it; for in both caſes they would be deemed apoſtates from the living God, who now ſpoke to them by his beloved Son, and in no other way; and they would be puniſhed accordingly. To prevent this, they ought alſo, day after day, to exhort one another to embrace, and adhere to the goſpel of Chriſt; whilſt the day of their perſonal and national probation continued: as they were ſhortly to be caſt off from being the people of God; and that generation was about to be viſited in a far more tremendous manner, than their fathers had been in the wilderneſs. This was needful to every one, "leſt any of them ſhould "be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin:" for their ſinful propenſities tended to deceive them into a perſuaſion, that ſatisfaction and impunity might be found in the world and in diſobedience; and that the ſelf-denial and ſuffering connected with chriſtianity were unneceſſary and intolerable; and thus to delude them into negligence, procraſtination, and ſinful indulgence, which, producing frequent violations of the light of their own conſciences, would gradually render them callous; and God might thus be provoked to give them up to fatal deluſions or final obduracy.

V. 14—19.] They, who had profeſſed the goſpel, 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had ſinned, whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs?

18 And to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that believed not?

19 So we ſee that they could not enter in becauſe of unbelief.

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1*ſt. An admonition to humble fear, and againſt unbelief,* 1, 2. 2*d. The certainty, and excellency of the heavenly reſt, as typified by that of the ſabbath, and that of Canaan,* 3--11. 3*d. The energy of the word of God, the omniſcience of the Judge, and the compaſſion of the great High-prieſt, uſed as motives to ſtedfaſtneſs, and earneſtneſs in coming to the throne of grace,* 12--16.

were made partakers of Chriſt, and of all the bleſſings of his kingdom and ſalvation; provided they maintained the beginning of their *confidence,* (or their *ſubſiſtence* in him, by faith,) ſtedfaſt unto the end; and thus ſhewed that they really were what they profeſſed to be. Conſidering therefore the immenſe advantages of perſeverance, and the tremendous conſequences of apoſtacy; they ſhould conſider the words of the Holy Spirit to be addreſſed to themſelves. For though the whole nation of Iſrael had been brought out of Egypt, to hear the will of God from Moſes; yet ſome of them, (how vaſt a proportion need not be ſaid,) did provoke God to exclude them from Canaan. However, there were ſome exceptions even in that devoted generation; as Joſhua and Caleb, and probably ſome of the Levites: and thus, in the apoſtles time, a remnant of Jews believed in Chriſt, whilſt the bulk of the nation were about to periſh in their unbelief. Neither did God fail of performing his promiſes, when he excluded that generation from Canaan; nor was it inconſiſtent with his juſtice: for with whom was he grieved, but with thoſe obſtinate tranſgreſſors, who always rebelled againſt him? He therefore cut them off, and their dead bodies lay by heaps in the wilderneſs; whilſt his promiſes were performed to the remnant of believers, and to the children of the rebels; as they would alſo be, in the preſent caſe. And in that particular inſtance, when he ſware in his wrath, that they ſhould not enter into his reſt; the tremendous ſentence included none but the unbelievers; ſo that they could not enter into Canaan, becauſe of their unbelief; nor could the Hebrews then enter into heaven, if they believed not in Jeſus Chriſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All that hear and profeſs the goſpel ſhould be "holy "brethren," and all who are "partakers of the heavenly "calling," will be ſanctified and united in love, according to their meaſure of faith. This calling is from heaven, and brings men thither: yet we all need to be excited to conſider more frequently the condeſcending Apoſtle, and compaſſionate High-prieſt of our profeſſion Jeſus Chriſt: and every renewed contemplation of his Perſon, and his ſalvation, will ſuggeſt new inſtructions, or new motives to love, confidence and obedience. The ſtewards and ſervants of God are required to be faithful, in all things entruſted to them, and many have been approved to be ſo by their common Lord. But the eternal Son of God is counted worthy of more honour, than any, or all of his ſervants: they are only a part of the ſpiritual houſe, of which he is the great Builder, Proprietor, and Ruler: and his new creation of the church proclaims his eternal power and Godhead, even as do his formation and upholding of the univerſe. As therefore they are moſt abſurd, who allow every houſe to be builded of ſome man, and yet atheiſtically aſcribe the glorious creation around them to chance, or neceſſity: ſo they reaſon little, if at all, better, who allow Chriſt to be the Author of life, holineſs, wiſdom, ſtrength and ſalvation to the multitudes of his people, and yet deny his real Deity. All prophets and apoſtles acted, as ſervants in the houſe of another, to bear teſtimony to, and honour Chriſt; but he appeared, to direct and govern all things with unlimited ſovereignty, as a Son over his own houſe: may we belong to this ſpiritual building, and manifeſt that we do ſo, by holding faſt our confidence and the rejoicing of our hope in Chriſt, ſtedfaſt through all trials even to the end! Alas what numbers of profeſſed chriſtians are as far from this ſpiritual religion as the Iſraelites were in the days of Moſes, or the Jews in thoſe of Pauls! The Holy Ghoſt therefore ſtill ſays to them "to day if ye will hear the voice of God, and "ſubmit to his righteouſneſs and authority; do not harden "your hearts." Whilſt ſinners are procraſtinating, God may be about to ſay "this night ſhall your ſouls be required of you:" how infatuated then muſt they be to cloſe their eyes, and harden their hearts againſt conviction, to run into diſſipation and worldly luſts, and to yield to ſloth and make delays, in ſuch a perilous ſituation! Thus, like the ancient rebels in Iſrael, they provoke and tempt God, till being grieved by their obſtinacy, and their carnal enmity to him and his ways, he ſwears in his wrath, that they ſhall never enter into his reſt. Let then ſuch triflers, and loiterers on the brink of the bottomleſs pit look well to themſelves; for evil is before them. Let them remember that their unbelief ſprings from the wickedneſs of their hearts; for they muſt be conſcious that their excuſes, their delays, and even their objections to doctrines and preachers ariſe from ſenſuality, pride, and an averſion to the life of faith and holineſs. Even hopeful profeſſors ſhould daily exhort one another, whilſt the day of life and grace continues; leſt ſin ſhould firſt deceive, and then harden them: till leſſer negligences and offences terminate in more daring crimes or open apoſtacy. The happineſs of being partakers of Chriſt and his complete ſalvation, and the fear of God's wrath and eternal miſery, combine to put us upon our guard againſt hypocriſy and apoſtacy, and to excite us to perſevere in the life of obedient faith. Let us then beware of truſting to outward privileges or profeſſion; remembering that unbelief and diſobedience will exclude men from God's promiſed reſt; and that nothing elſe can do it: and let us pray to be numbered with that remnant of believers, who ſhall enter heaven; when all others ſhall be refuſed admiſſion, becauſe of their unbelief.

LET us therefore fear, leſt, a promiſe being left *us* of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.

2 For unto us was the goſpel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

3 For we which have believed do enter into reſt; as he ſaid, As I have ſworn in my wrath, If they ſhall enter into my reſt: although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world.

4 For he ſpake in a certain place of the ſeventh *day* on this wiſe, And God did reſt the ſeventh day from all his works.

5 And in this *place* again, If they ſhall enter into my reſt.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that ſome muſt enter therein, and they to whom it was firſt preached entered not in becauſe of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, ſaying in David, To-day, after ſo long a time; as it is ſaid, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jeſus had given them reſt then would he not afterward have ſpoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his reſt, he alſo hath ceaſed from his own works, as God *did* from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that reſt, leſt any man fall after the ſame example of unbelief.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1, 2.] The ſevere juſtice of Jehovah towards his ancient people, when they believed not, called aloud on their deſcendants "to fear," with a humble and jealous diſtruſt of their own hearts, a diligent ſelf-examining attention to every means of grace, and a careful watchfulneſs againſt temptation; leſt they ſhould fall under a more terrible condemnation. A promiſe indeed of entering into reſt, under the Meſſiah, and in heaven, had been left to them in the ſcriptures, as a legacy from their believing progenitors, for whoſe ſake they had been thus favoured; and they were called on by the preaching of the goſpel to partake of that promiſed benefit: but it behoved them to fear, leſt any of them ſhould *be ſeen* to come ſhort of it, and ſo be excluded from heaven, as their fathers had been from Canaan; or even leſt they ſhould *ſeem* to themſelves, or to others, to be in danger of doing this, either during their lives, or when they came to die: as if they rejected, or renounced the goſpel; or grew remiſs and wavering in their profeſſion of it. For the glad tidings of entering into God's reſt had been preached to the Hebrews; even as they had more obſcurely been declared to their fathers; whoſe unbelief and conſequent diſobedience had excluded them from Canaan, and from that better reſt of heaven typified thereby. For the *word of hearing* had not profited them, becauſe they were deſtitute of faith, by which they might receive it into their hearts, for the appropriation of the benefit, and to render it a principle of obedience: and in like manner the clearer revelation of the goſpel would be unprofitable to the Hebrews; unleſs they had faith in it, and ſo received it in a dependant and obedient manner.

V. 3—11.] The apoſtle laid it down as a principle, that they, who had believed, and they only, did enter into the reſt, which was eſpecially intended: they had the title to, and earneſts of, that inheritance, in peace with and confidence in God, delight in his love and ſervice, hope and joy through the power of the Holy Ghoſt, and a full perſuaſion that happineſs could only be found in the favour and ſalvation of the Lord Jeſus. It was evident that more was meant than the reſt of Canaan, in the ſcripture referred to: as God had called it *his* reſt, with alluſion to the appointment of the ſabbath; although the works of creation, from which he ceaſed, and in which he reſted with infinite ſatisfaction, as being "very "good," had been finiſhed from the foundation of the world; above 2,500 years before he ſpake thus of the unbelieving Iſraelites: according as it was written in a paſſage of ſcripture well known to the Hebrews, concerning the original inſtitution of the ſabbath, (Note, *Gen.* c. ii. v. 1, 2.) And yet he ſpake ſo long after, that they ſhould not enter his reſt; which implied that the reſt of Iſrael in Canaan would be a type, of a more ſpiritual and ſacred reſt, ſatisfaction and felicity, in him and his glory, (ſomewhat like his complacency in his own perfect work of creation;) which was to be conferred on his believing people. The excluſion of that generation from Canaan, to whom that reſt was firſt preached or propoſed, implied that it remained for ſome others to enter in, which their poſterity accordingly did; and the language implied, that though through unbelief they came ſhort of the better reſt of heaven, yet it was purpoſed that ſome ſhould enter in by faith. In confirmation of which, another day was limited by the Holy Spirit in the prophet David, after many ages, during which, believers would enter into reſt, but after which unbelievers would be irrevocably excluded: now as this was addreſſed to thoſe, who were actually in poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, and at the height of their proſperity as a nation; it evidently related to another, and better reſt than that of Canaan; from which, unbelief would exclude even the inhabitants of that good land. For if Jeſus, (or Joſhua, as it would have been much better rendered, to prevent miſtake and ambi-

12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have a great High-prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus

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guity,) had given them all the reſt intended for believers; God would not ſo long after have ſpoken of another day of his patience, &c. Though Joſhua therefore had given Iſrael reſt from the fatigues and wanderings of the deſert, and from the hardſhips and perils of war, by their ſettlement in Canaan; yet there evidently remained for the true people of God another, and better reſt, even the keeping of a perpetual and moſt bleſſed ſabbath; for the word is changed to expreſs the idea the more ſtrongly. This is reſerved for them in heaven, where they will have done with ſin, temptation, pain, conflict, fear, death, labour, diſappointment, &c; and enjoy uninterrupted, unalloyed, ineffable and eternal delight in God and his holy worſhip and ſervice. This point the apoſtle argued from the Old Teſtament ſo carefully; becauſe the Sadducees entirely denied that any better recompence than temporal proſperity was to be expected; and the Jews in general were prone to overlook the ſpiritual bleſſings propoſed to them in the promiſes made to their fathers, and to reſt wholly in the temporal ſanctions of the national covenant made with them at mount Sinai. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xix.) He therefore added, that he, who had entered into his reſt, had ceaſed from his own works, in which he had previouſly been occupied; even as God ceaſed from creating, when he reſted on the ſabbath-day. Thus Jeſus had finiſhed his work on earth, and had entered into his reſt in heaven, as the Fore-runner of his people: thus the ſouls of the righteous have ceaſed from their ſelf-denying labours, &c, and are enjoying their gracious recompence: and thus the believer, when brought to reſt in the mercy and love of God, through Jeſus Chriſt, ceaſes from all his allowed works of ſin and folly, as well as from his haraſſing endeavours to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs, or to effect his own happineſs. As ſuch bleſſings therefore were ſurely attainable by thoſe, who diligently ſought them; and as the promiſed reſt would ſo abundantly repay their previous hardſhips and conflicts: it behoved them to labour in the uſe of all appointed means, and in the perſevering attendance on every duty, to enter into his reſt, and to obtain the aſſurance and earneſt of it; fearing leſt any one of them ſhould fall under condemnation, after the ſame example of unbelief, by which their anceſtors had been excluded from Canaan.

V. 12, 13.] It hath been greatly controverted, whether the holy ſcriptures, or the perſonal Word of God be meant in theſe verſes: but it appears to me, that the apoſtle meant the written word; and that he gradually paſſed from the word ſpoken to him who ſpake it. The Hebrews need not be ſurpriſed to find ſuch deep and intereſting truths couched under the typical events of their hiſtory, or contained in other parts of their ſcriptures; for they were the word of God. This was no lifeleſs, feeble, or formal inſtruction, like the traditions, and gloſſes of their ſcribes: but it was a living, active, energetic word; ſuited to be the inſtrument of the Holy Spirit in quickening thoſe, that were dead in ſin; and in awakening, convincing, and alarming the moſt careleſs, and ſtupid of mankind. It was even ſharper than any two-edged ſword, which would cut each way: for it would pierce the heart and conſcience, like the irreſiſtible lightning; forcing convictions and alarms upon the moſt haughty, and obſtinate; ſhewing men their paſt and preſent ſins in all their odiouſneſs, and ill deſert; detecting the unſuſpected pride, enmity, rebellion, ingratitude, and other evils of the heart; diſtinguiſhing men's characters with the cleareſt evidence; and expoſing the baſe motives of their moſt ſpecious actions. Thus, by exhibiting the glory of the divine perfections, men's relations, and obligations to the great Creator; the ſpirituality, extent, excellency and ſanction of the law; the evil and deſert of ſin; and the depravity of man's heart, &c, in a variety of ways, and a multiplicity of experiments; it forces conviction of guilt and danger upon the ſinner, and compels him, as it were, to condemn himſelf, and ſeek deliverance: nor can any kind of deluſion, or hypocritical profeſſion ſtand before its penetrating energy, when experimentally and fully preached, and applied to the hearts of men, according to their various characters. It is, as it were, a ſword, which can pierce ſo deep, and cut ſo keenly, as to divide between ſoul and ſpirit, (1 *Theſſ.* c. v. ver. 23,) and to penetrate the joints and marrow; which no other ſword can reach: being in plain language a diſcerner of men's moſt ſecret thoughts and intentions; ſo that it often ſhews them their moſt hidden purpoſes, and makes them afraid of being openly named and expoſed; as if the preacher knew their hearts far better than they did themſelves, and had a regiſter before him even of thoſe ſins which they had forgotten. (Note, *Jer.* c. xxiii. v. 29. 1 *Cor.* c. xiv. v. 24, 25.) For in fact the Lord himſelf is the Speaker, when his own word is properly declared and applied: he diſcerns, and by his words detects the thoughts and intentions of the heart; nor is there any creature, who is not wholly manifeſt in every reſpect in his ſight; before whom all things are naked, as ſtripped of all diſguiſe, and open, being fully underſtood by Him, with whom we have to do, as with our Lawgiver and Judge, and to whom we muſt at length render an account of all our conduct, and of all our ſecret thoughts and intents. The expreſſions "*naked and open*," are ſuppoſed to refer to the ſacrifices, which were flayed, and opened; and then the whole of the inteſtines, that were before concealed, were expoſed to the exact inſpection of the prieſt.

V. 14—16.] As therefore conviction and condemnation were inevitable to ſinners before ſuch an omniſcient Judge, whoſe quick and powerful word forced men even the Son of God, let us hold faſt *our* profeſſion.

15 For we have not an High-prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without ſin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

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here to condemn themſelves; it was the more needful for the Hebrews to regard the great High-prieſt, whom he was recommending to them; even Jeſus, the Son of God, who having appeared in human nature, as in the court of the ſanctuary, to offer his atoning ſacrifice; had paſſed *through* the intervening heavens, into the immediate preſence of the Father; as the high-prieſt paſſed through the firſt ſanctuary into the holieſt of all, to ſprinkle the blood, and burn the incenſe on the great day of expiation: being thus accepted in his miniſtrations, and inveſted with all power in Heaven and earth; to ſave or to deſtroy; it behoved them to hold faſt their profeſſion in all dangers and perſecutions. For they had not an High-prieſt, who diſregarded, or could not ſympathize with them, in their pains and ſufferings for his ſake; or who would make no allowance for their infirmities, or refuſe aſſiſtance in their temptations: but he was One, who to purchaſe their pardon and ſalvation, had voluntarily ſubmitted to be tried and tempted, even as they were: as far as he could be without a ſinful nature, or the leaſt ſin in his life: and this exemption was needful, in order that he might be their ſacrifice, and their Advocate. As therefore there was a mercy ſeat above the ark of the covenant, in the moſt holy place, before which the high-prieſts once a year appeared in behalf of the people; and over which the glory of God appeared, as propitious to them: even ſo, God the Father was, as it were, placed on a throne of grace, a mercy ſeat, in the heavenly ſanctuary, before which Jeſus appeared as the High-prieſt of his people, through whom he waited to receive petitions, to grant pardons, and to communicate bleſſings to all, who applied for them in humble faith, and by fervent prayer. Let then every one of them, before they were ſummoned to the throne of judgment, come with humble confidence in Chriſt, and in the love of the Father through Him; to ſupplicate forgivneſs and mercy; and to aſk for ſeaſonable, and ſufficient grace, to ſupport, comfort, ſtrengthen, and ſanctify them, as their trials and ſervice required: not fearing a refuſal, but boldly enlarging and multiplying their requeſts; as fully aſſured of their heavenly Father's readineſs to do for them even more than they could aſk or think.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Bleſſed be God, that the goſpel is preached to us, even as to the primitive chriſtians,. and far more clearly than to Iſrael of old! Exceeding great and precious promiſes are given to us of entering into the heavenly reſt: yet we may rejoice with trembling in our outward advantages; leſt any of us ſhould be found at laſt to come ſhort of the bleſſing, and to ſink under proportionably deeper condemnation, through unbelief. Nay, it is a very dreadful conſequence of partial neglect, and a looſe and wavering profeſſion; that they often cauſe men to *ſeem* to come ſhort, even when they are launching into eternity; and they leave the world in gloomy doubt, and their ſurvivors in diſtreſſing uncertainty, whether they are gone to heaven or to hell: let us then give diligence, that we may have an abundant entrance into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord. Under every diſpenſation God hath declared man's reſt to be in Him, and his love as the only ſuitable and ſufficient happineſs of the ſoul; and faith in his promiſes, through his Son, as the only way of entering into that reſt. His rich mercy, the plenteous redemption of Chriſt, and the word of the goſpel will not profit thoſe, who do not unite faith with his gracious meſſage: many have heard and profeſſed the truth, who are finally excluded from the promiſed reſt becauſe of their unbelief: their ſtate is determined, and all their ſabbaths and ordinances have only ſerved to increaſe their condemnation. But the Lord ſtill ſays to us, "To-day if ye will "hear my voice, &c.;" and the preſent is an accepted time and a day of ſalvation: many are continually entering into the earneſt and beginning of this reſt by faith; many are entering upon the full poſſeſſion of it, by dying in the Lord. Then they have done with all their ſorrows, ſins and temptations, and their groans and tears for unalloyed and perfect ſerenity and ſatisfaction. Let ſinners then labour to enter into this reſt, leſt they ſhould fall after the example of ancient unbelievers, and periſh with heaven before their eyes: let believers keep cloſe to Chriſt in faith and obedience, and learn to delight in his holy day and ſacred ordinances, as earneſts of, and preparations for their expected eternal ſabbath: let them bear up under fatigues and hardſhips, in the proſpect of heavenly reſt; and if ever drawn aſide, let them recollect theſe things, and ſay to themſelves, "Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul, &c." (*Pſ.* cxvi. v. 7.)

Whilſt we find, by experience, that the word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, to penetrate the heart and conſcience: let us remember, that the Lord himſelf is the Diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; before whom all creatures are manifeſt, and all things are naked and open. With him we have to do, and to him we are accountable: and if, under faithful preaching, we find our hearts condemn us, we are ſure that God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. Inſtead therefore of quarrelling with the heart-ſearching miniſtry, and chooſing ſuch lifeleſs feeble inſtructions, as are more like the ſhaking reed, than a two-edged ſword: let us lay open our inmoſt ſouls to the piercing ſtrokes of the diſtinguiſhing word of God; that we may learn our need of that great High-Prieſt, even the Son of God, who now pleads for us before his Father's throne in heaven. In proportion as we know and condemn ourſelves, and abhor our ſins; he will become more precious to our ſouls, and we ſhall cleave to him more conſtantly. The thoughts of the holineſs and heart ſearching knowledge of God, and our conſciouſneſs of guilt and infirmity, will endear to us the Redeemer's condeſcenſion and compaſſion; and we ſhall rejoice that he can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and that he knows what ſore temptations mean, though he was perfectly free from ſin. Let us then approach continually to the throne of grace, where our reconciled God deems it his peculiar honour to pardon rebels, and anſwer the prayers of thoſe, who ſupplicate his favour, in the

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Contains 1ſt. The duty of, and requiſites for the high-prieſthood; and the pre-eminent call, and qualifications of Chriſt for that office, &c, 1---10. *2d. A reproof of the Hebrews for their ſmall proficiency in chriſtianity,* 11---14.

FOR every High-prieſt taken from among men, is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins:

2 Who can have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himſelf alſo is compaſſed with infirmity.

3 And by reaſon hereof he ought, as for the people, ſo alſo for himſelf to offer for ſins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himſelf, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.

5 So alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an High-prieſt; but he that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he ſaith alſo in another *place*, Thou *art* a Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

7 Who in the days of his fleſh, when he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard, in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he ſuffered.

9 And being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God an High-prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec.

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name of his beloved Son: let us improve the day of his patience, and approach in his appointed way; let us come with believing boldneſs, as well as with adoring reverence and humble repentance; let us apply for mercy to pardon our ſins, to compaſſionate our miſeries, and to ſupply our neceſſities; and let us ſupplicate grace ſufficient for us, in all our trials and temptations, and to enable us for every day's ſervice; thus waiting as humble penſioners at the throne of grace, which is our beſt preparation for appearing before the tribunal of our omniſcient and holy Judge.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—6.] In order more fully to ſhew the nature and efficacy of the high-prieſthood of Chriſt; the apoſtle made ſome obſervations on that of Aaron, &c; which tended to ſhew its inſufficiency and typical meaning, as well as to illuſtrate his ſubject. Every high-prieſt, ſelected from among men, was ordained and appointed for the benefit of man, in the great concerns of religion: for their office required them to preſent before God the oblations and the ſin-offerings of the people; nor would he accept of any ſervices, that were not offered in this way; which continually teſtified that ſinners were unworthy to approach their offended Creator, ſave through an expiatory ſacrifice, and an interceſſor. For as the high-prieſt was the head of the whole prieſthood; ſo were all the other prieſts deſcended from, and in a ſenſe, one with Aaron, who had firſt obtained this office in Iſrael. It was moreover proper that the high-prieſt ſhould be capable of bearing with, and compaſſionating, in a proportionate and reaſonable manner, his brethren, who had ſinned through ignorance and infirmity; for which their ſin-offerings were appointed: and this was provided for, by ordaining men of like paſſions with others to that office; who being compaſſed with natural and moral infirmities, were as liable to miſtake or ſin as they. It was therefore preſcribed, that they ſhould offer ſacrifices for their own ſins, as well as for thoſe of the people; (c. vii. v. 27, 28. *Exod.* c. xxix. *Lev.* c. iv. 8, 9. 16), which was a plain intimation, that they could only be typical high-prieſts; being not worthy to appear before God in their own caſe, but with the ſhedding of blood, &c. Nor might any man aſſume this honourable office of his own will, or by human appointment: but it was confined to thoſe, whom God expreſsly called to the execution of it, as he did Aaron and his poſterity after him: and if any one elſe preſumed to any part of its peculiar duties, he did it at the hazard of his life: which ſhewed, that it derived all its efficay from God's appointment, and not from its own intrinſic value. Thus Chriſt had not taken honour to himſelf, by acting as the High-prieſt of his people, without expreſs warrant: but the Father had in the Old Teſtament openly declared that the Meſſiah ſhould ſuſtain that office; for as he ſaid in one place, "Thou art "my Son, &c," when announcing his decree concerning the Meſſiah's kingdom, (Notes, &c. c. i. v. 5. *Pſalm* ii.) ſo had he as expreſsly made known his appointment to the prieſthood, in another prophecy, (Notes, &c. *Pſalm* cx.) though the Jews had paid more regard to the predictions of his kingdom, than to thoſe of his prieſthood; through their prejudices for the levitical law. Some expoſitors, interpreting the expreſſion "This day have I begotten thee," of Chriſt's reſurrection; (though that was only the proof, and not in any ſenſe the cauſe or origin of his Sonſhip;) have ſtrangely argued, that he acted not as a prieſt, till after he aroſe from the dead! But the typical meaning of the legal ceremonies will ſufficiently expoſe the groſs abſurdity of this ſuppoſition, as we proceed with the ſubject.

V. 7—10.] Though Chriſt was free from all ſinful infirmity; yet he came as near the condition of a ſinner, as he poſſibly could: he was compaſſed about with the ſinleſs infirmities of our frail nature; he appeared in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh; he was dealt with as a ſinner, both by God and man; he endured the moſt violent temptations, ſufferings and agonies; and even his ſoul was full of conſternation and of horror unſpeakable. This was "in the

11 Of whom we have many things to ſay, and hard to be uttered; ſeeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the firſt principles of the oracles of God; and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat.

13 For every one that uſeth milk, *is* unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs: for he is a babe.

14 But ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* thoſe who by reaſon of uſe have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil.

“ days of his fleſh,” ſubſequent to his incarnation; and previous to his exaltation, when his human nature became incapable of ſuffering, and was made moſt glorious, (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 50.) His humiliation and diſtreſſes were at their criſis in his agonies in the garden. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 36—42.) Then eſpecially he offered up to his Father moſt earneſt prayers and ſupplications, accompanied with ſtrong cries and tears, as vehement expreſſions of his inward anguiſh: he addreſſed himſelf to God, as able to ſave him from death, and he was heard and anſwered, “ *becauſe of his piety,*” his reverence of the divine Majeſty, his love, and his zeal for the glory of the Father, &c. For though he was not delivered from dying, or ſpared from any part of his expiatory ſufferings, concerning which he ſaid, “ Thy will be done,” (notwithſtanding the ſtrong reluctancy of his holy human nature to ſuch exquiſite and complicated ſufferings;) knowing that it was not poſſible for that cup to paſs from him, conſiſtent with the Father's glory and the ſalvation of his people: yet the horror of his mind was allayed; he was ſtrengthened to ſupport the immenſe weight of ſuffering, that was laid upon him; his ſacrifice was accepted for his people; he was raiſed from the dead, and exalted to the mediatorial throne, and inveſted with the power of ſaving all ſinners to the uttermoſt, who come to God through him. So that even when the Son of God himſelf was appointed to the high-prieſthood, he yet learned the difficulty of obeying God's commandments, in the preſent circumſtances of human nature, amidſt the temptations and trials, to which men are expoſed: of this he acquired an experimental knowledge, as far as could conſiſt with ſinleſs perfection: and even his perfect obedience became more exalted and honourable, through his whole life, by the enlargement of his human powers, and by the things, which he ſuffered; ſo that his zeal, love, &c, were never ſo admirable and aſtoniſhing, as when he agonized in the garden, and hung upon the croſs. Thus, by his appointment to the high-prieſthood, by the obedience he finiſhed amidſt ſufferings and unto death; by the efficacy of his ſacrifice; and by his ſubſequent exaltation, he was made *perfect* as Mediator, being fully authorized and qualified for his gracious work: and ſo he became the Author of eternal ſalvation to all thoſe, of the whole human race, who obey his call to repentance, to faith, to come to him and to take his yoke upon them; mercifully giving them all things pertaining to that deliverance, as the purchaſe of his own blood, and leading them forth to all thoſe conflicts, and ſervices, which are connected with their laying hold of eternal life. For all this ſprings from his having been nominated and acknowledged of God as an High-prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec; a King as well as an high-prieſt, and ſo of a nobler order than that of Aaron:

V. 11—14.] Concerning Chriſt as an High-prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec the apoſtle meant to diſcourſe more fully: but the things which he had to ſay of him were ſuch, as it would be difficult to ſtate in a proper manner; not ſo much becauſe they were in themſelves ſo abſtruſe, as becauſe the Hebrews were dull of hearing, through their prejudiced attachment to the levitical law and prieſt-hood. For when they had heard and profeſſed the goſpel during ſo long a time, that it might have been expected they would have been inſtructors, of others in the great doctrine of redemption by Chriſt: they had ſo cloſed their minds to the truth, or turned aſide from the purity of the faith; that they wanted ſome one to teach them anew the very rudiments of that religion, which was contained in the oracles of God, when rightly underſtood. They were become ſuch chriſtians as had need to be fed with milk, or to be taught the plaineſt, and moſt obvious truths of the goſpel, being incapable of relieving and profiting by its deeper, and more ſpiritual doctrine. (1 *Cor.* c. iii. v. 1, 2.) For indeed every man, who could only receive the ſimpler and more common truths of religion, without applying his mind to the more experimental and exalted parts of it; muſt be conſidered as a babe in Chriſt, how long ſoever he had been a profeſſor of the goſpel; being evidently unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs. But the more ſublime doctrines of chriſtianity, that immediately related to the counſels of God for his own glory, and the diſplay of his perfections by the redemption of Chriſt, were as ſtrong meat for thoſe, who were matured in knowledge, judgment and experience; being the proper nouriſhment of their faith, hope, love and ſpiritual affections: for ſuch chriſtians, by reaſon of uſe, or habit, acquired by aſſiduous meditation, and unbiaſſed attention to the truth, had attained to a ſpiritual taſte and reliſh for divine excellency: they had their ſpiritual ſenſes exerciſed to diſtinguiſh between good, and evil, truth, and falſehood; they could readily perceive the nature and tendency of the things propoſed to them and the comparative excellency, or worthleſſneſs of them; even as natural men by a ſound judgment, and long continued habits, decide at once upon natural things, with great accuracy; or as the bodily ſenſes diſtinguiſh and judge of their proper objects.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Fallen men cannot approach God, except on a mercy ſeat, through a high-prieſt, and by a ſacrifice of ſin: but a prieſt, who was compaſſed with infirmity, and needed to offer ſacrifice for himſelf, however he might compaſſionate the ignorant, and tranſgreſſors, could never be an effectual advocate with God for them. Indeed in the work of the miniſtry the

CHAP. VI.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Propoſing to lead the Hebrews forward to a greater perfection in the knowledge of Chriſt; and ſhewing the deſperate ſtate of certain apoſtates, &c, 1---8. 2d. Expreſſing his favourable opinion of the Hebrew chriſtians, and his deſire of their fruitfulneſs, diligence, and aſſured hope to the end, 9---14. 3d. Shewing the ſecurity of the covenant of grace, as confirmed of God by the promiſe made, and the oath ſworn to, Abraham; for the ſtrong conſolation of all future believers, 13---20.

THerefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptiſms, and of laying on of hands, and of reſurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

4 For *it is* impoſſible for thoſe who were

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conciouſneſs of our own wickedneſs and unworthineſs is well ſuited to render us tender to the weak, the erroneous, the tempted, and the fallen; ſeeing we ourſelves are compaſſed with infirmity: and though the ordinary office of miniſters differs widely from that of the prieſts under the Law; yet no man ſhould take even this office upon himſelf, till it appear to others, as well as himſelf, that he *is* called of God to it. But Chriſt alone is qualified and authorized to be our High-prieſt: his dignity and excellency as the Son of God; and his appointment by the Father to that office, give efficacy to his miniſtration: his voluntary humiliation, and ſufferings in the days of his fleſh, when he offered up prayers, and ſupplications to the Father, with ſtrong crying and tears, &c, aſſure us of his tender love and compaſſion to his afflicted people; and the anſwer of his meritorious prayers makes way for the granting of our weak and defiled petitions, when offered in his name: his obedience in our nature encourages our attempts to obey, and our expectations of ſupport and comfort under all the temptations and ſufferings, to which we are thereby expoſed; for being made perfect for this great work, he is become the Author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him But are we of that number? Do we obey his inſtructions as our Prophet, truſt in his ſacrifice and interceſſion as our Prieſt, and make his commandments the rule of our conduct, as it becomes the ſubjects of his kingdom? In this way he will be the Author of eternal ſalvation to all thoſe, that ſeek to him for ſo great a benefit. Of this great High-prieſt, and of his merits, grace, and authority, miniſters have many things to ſay, which they will not be able to utter in a proper manner, unleſs he give them a mouth and wiſdom for that purpoſe: for men's prejudices are ſo many, hat they are generally more ready to take offence, than o receive inſtruction. Nor are profeſſors, even old profeſſors, ſo docile as might be expected: many are far from hat ſpiritual maturity, which is proportioned to the time, hey have attended to the goſpel; inſtead of teaching others hey need to be taught themſelves the firſt principles of the racles of God; they need milk, and not ſtrong meat; they re babes in underſtanding, but not in teachableneſs; they re unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs; yet often reſume to dictate to their paſtors! Theſe things are very iſcouraging: but we ſhould ſtill exerciſe patience and eekneſs, and ſeek out acceptable words in which to convey inſtructions in the beſt manner we can. Aged profeſſors, as well as babes in Chriſt ſhould beware of prejudice, d pray for a mind open to conviction; we ſhould begin with ſimpler truths, and ſo gradually proceed to ſuch as are more deep and perplexing; we ought to employ ourſelves much about ſuch matters, in an experimental and practical improvement of doctrinal truth; thus we ſhall gradually be matured in judgment, and enabled to digeſt ſtrong meat; and our ſpiritual ſenſes will be habituated to a juſt and exact diſcernment of good and evil, which will greatly tend to our ſtability, comfort and fruitfulneſs in the faith of Chriſt. (Note, *Phil.* c. i. v. 9—11)

NOTES.

CHAP. VI,] V. 1—3.] The apoſtle here propoſed to lead the Hebrews into a fuller acquaintance with the deep myſteries of redemption, of which he had ſpoken, (c. v. ver. 11—14:) and, in order thus to go on to perfection, he would leave the *elements* of the doctrine of Chriſt, without ſpecially inſiſting on them; and he thus expreſſed his deſire of their attentive and candid peruſal of his arguments, &c. The neceſſity of repentance from dead works, ſuch as are done by men dead in ſin, and which expoſe them to the condemnation of eternal death, was indeed fundamental to true chriſtianity: but they had been inſtructed in it from the firſt dawning of the new diſpenſation. (Note, *Matt.* c iii. v. 2.) Nor would he ſpeak of the nature and neceſſity of faith towards God, or a belief of his word, and a dependance on his mercy, grace, and faithful promiſes, in, and through Jeſus Chriſt. Nor did he purpoſe to diſcourſe concerning "the doctrine of bap-"tiſm;" either the legal waſhings, John's baptiſm, or that of Chriſt, which were diſtinct from each other, and much diſputed of by many in their nation: nor of the laying on of the apoſtles hands, by which miraculous powers were conferred, as evidential of the truth of the goſpel; or the laying on of hands in the ordination of miniſters, as a ſignificant token of the authority entruſted to them. Neither would he inſiſt upon the important doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, or that of future judgment, the conſequences of which will be eternal happineſs or eternal miſery. But paſſing over theſe ſubjects for the preſent, he meant to explain to them the deeper and more ſpiritual myſteries of redemption by Chriſt; and he would proceed to execute his deſign in the ſubſequent part of the epiſtle, if the Lord would permit him. Some expoſitors would explain theſe "principles of the doc-"trine of Chriſt," as relating wholly to inſtructions contained in the Old Teſtament, concerning the Meſſiah's kingdom; and others would confine them excluſively to the new diſpenſation. Others favouring the latter ſcheme once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt,

5 And have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 If they ſhall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put *him* to an open ſhame.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain

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interpret the doctrine of baptiſms, and of laying on of hands, to ſignify the legal purifications, and the laying on of the hands of the offerer upon the head of the ſacrifice, as typical of repentance and faith; including the words in a parentheſis. But underſtanding by *principles*, not *the moſt fundamental truths*, or parts of chriſtianity; but *the elements*, the lower and eaſier beginnings of it, as letters are the firſt principles, or elements of learning; we may ſee a propriety in the interpretation above given: ſome of the things mentioned were, though moſt important, yet the more obvious, and ſimple parts of chriſtianity; and the others were externals connected with their firſt profeſſion of it, which the Jews were apt to lay far more ſtreſs upon, than they ought to have done. So that there does not ſeem that difficulty in the paſſage, which many learned men have imagined: but it was obvious for the apoſtle to mention ſuch things as theſe, when he would call them off from the introductory elements of chriſtianity, to its more ſublime and ſpiritual doctrines.

V. 4—6.] It was the more proper to write in the manner propoſed to the Hebrews; as thoſe, who adhered to the principles of chriſtianity, had dwelt long enough upon theſe introductory leſſons; and they, who had renounced them, were in a moſt hopeleſs condition. The verſes that we now conſider have cauſed immenſe perplexity and diſtreſs to many timid and conſcientious chriſtians, and they have been ſuppoſed to contain a cogent objection to the doctrine of the believer's final perſeverance: theſe things muſt be adverted to in our examination of them. We muſt remember that the apoſtle wrote in an age of miracles, and to the Hebrews, among whom the Holy Ghoſt was firſt poured out, in his extraordinary operations. The perſons, whoſe caſe is deſcribed, had been enlightened, and had obtained that meaſure of knowledge concerning the truth, and nature of chriſtianity, which enabled them to make a ſatisfactory profeſſion of it, in order to their admiſſion into the church; "they had taſted the heavenly gift, and been "made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt;" being at their baptiſm, or afterwards, by the laying on of the apoſtles hands, endued with ſome meaſure of ſpiritual gifts, or miraculous powers, ſuch as ſpeaking with tongues, or diſcourſing with ſupernatural fluency on divine ſubjects: ſo that, in this reſpect their own experience proved *to them* the truth of the goſpel. They had moreover "taſted "of the good word of God," and their convictions, impreſſions, and tranſient affections made them ſenſible that it was a good word, of an holy and ſalutary tendency, and that it was for their good to attend to it; and their purpoſes of doing ſo had produced ſuch hopes and joys, as have been deſcribed in the caſe of the ſtony ground hearer. (Note, *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 21, 22.) Thus they taſted of "the powers of the world to come, in their temporary realizing apprehenſions of a future ſtate, and of its happineſs or miſery. All theſe things, (except miraculous powers,) often take place in the hearts and conſciences of men in theſe days, who yet continue unregenerate. They have knowledge, gifts, convictions, fears, hopes, joys, and ſeaſons of apparent earneſtneſs, and deep concern about eternal things: but they are not truly humbled, they do not become ſpiritually minded; religion is not their element and delight; they do not cordially receive Chriſt in all his offices; they do not ſincerely love the ſpiritual excellency of his people, his ordinances, and his commandments. In ſhort the old nature, the principle of ſelfiſhneſs, is impreſſed, affected, intereſted, alarmed, or pleaſed, but a new nature is not produced, and therefore in time of temptation they fall away. In reſpect of ſpiritual gifts, or the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghoſt, Chriſt will reject many, who had been partakers of them, declaring that He *never* knew them. (*Matt.* c. vii. v. 21—23.) But they, who received ſuch gifts from Chriſt, through the laying on of the hands of his apoſtles, had a perſonal demonſtration of the truth of chriſtianity, which the moſt enlightened apoſtate in thoſe days can ſcarce be ſuppoſed to have had: and therefore but very few caſes can now occur, in which an inference concerning their ſtate, can be unreſervedly drawn in the apoſtle's awful words; though the caſe of ſome few may be nearly ſimilar; and they alone are immediately concerned in it. If the perſons, *whom the apoſtle had thus characterized*; (for he ſpake of none elſe,) had totally apoſtatized from chriſtianity, and were become it's avowed enemies, it was not the miniſters duty to beſtow pains about them; for it was generally found impoſſible to "renew them to "repentance," and thus to reſtore them with the ſpirit of meekneſs. For, conſidering the clear light againſt which they ſinned in ſo deſperate a manner; it might be concluded, that they had committed the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and had aſcribed his operation by themſelves, and by others, to a ſatanical influence. (Note, *Matt.* c. xii. v. 31, 32.) In fact, as far as they could, they crucified to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, deſpitefully acting, as if they approved the conduct of thoſe who nailed him to the croſs, aſſented to their deed, and apparently wiſhed it in their power to repeat his ignominy and torture; and they put him to an open ſhame, by renouncing his religion, blaſpheming his name, joining his enemies, and doing evil to his diſciples. They were therefore to be conſidered as given up to final obduracy, and left to the awful judgment of God. But this concluſion by no means authorized miniſters finally to exclude from the communion of the church thoſe apoſtates, who profeſſed, and appeared to be, true penitents: much leſs did it authorize ſuch rigour in leſs aggravated caſes. In general, encouragement is to be held forth to all, who that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth bleſſing from God:

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto curſing; whoſe end *is* to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are perſuaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though we thus ſpeak.

10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtered to the ſaints, and do miniſter.

11 And we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end:

12 That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.

13 For when God made promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf,

14 Saying, Surely bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And ſo after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promiſe.

appear penitent; and means are in moſt caſes to be uſed for the recovery of ſuch, as have moſt lamentably turned aſide; though ill ſucceſs will often conſtrain us to deſiſt. But the very words of this awful paſſage ſhew, that all who are renewed unto repentance ſhall be pardoned; and that God leaves all to final impenitence, whom he determines not to ſave: ſo that the trembling ſinner, who pleads guilty, and cries for mercy, can have no ground for diſcouragement from this paſſage, fairly interpreted whatever his crimes have been: nor can it prove that one, who is in Chriſt a new creature, ever becomes an apoſtate from him.

V. 7, 8.] The different ſorts of profeſſed chriſtians might be compared to fruitful and barren land. The believer reſembled a field, which being well watered by the rain from heaven, yielded an uſeful produce to repay the huſbandman's toil; the fertile appearance, and valuable fruits of which ſhewed that it had received a bleſſing from God: thus the real chriſtian by divine grace being enabled to improve ordinances and advantages, ſo as to become fruitful in genuine good works, honourable to the Lord and profitable to men, was bleſſed, and would be ſtill more ſo. But as the ſterile ſoil would, neither by the rain, nor the huſbandman's toil, be made to produce any thing but thorns and briers; and was therefore generally left as a neglected deſert, under the original curſe, (*Gen.* c. iii. v. 18;) being fit for nothing, with all its produce, but to be burned: ſo the mere profeſſor of the goſpel, continuing under the means of grace unfruitful, or producing nothing but hypocriſy, ſelfiſhneſs and iniquity; was likely to be left under the curſe of the law, was near to the awful ſtate above deſcribed; and everlaſting miſery in the flames of hell was the end reſerved for him, if he continued in his preſent unfruitfulneſs. This was a ſolemn warning to profeſſors to beware, that they were not left to apoſtatize, as a puniſhment of their unfruitfulneſs.

V. 9—12.] Whilſt the apoſtle ſpake ſuch awful and alarming truths, with reference to the caſe of thoſe, to whom he knew them to be ſeaſonable; he would not have it thought that he had ſo unfavourable an opinion of the Hebrew chriſtians in general, or of thoſe whom he immediately addreſſed in particular: on the contrary, he was perſuaded better things of them, even ſuch as accompany ſalvation, namely, that they were real penitents, humble believers, ſpiritually minded, &c. He eſpecially referred in this, to thoſe of them, who had manifeſted their love to the name of God as revealed in Chriſt by their works, yea their laborious ſervices, and in miniſtering to the ſaints for his ſake. Of this, a moſt admirable ſpecimen had been given after the day of Pentecoſt, and many of them ſtill continued the ſame diſintereſted ſelf-denying conduct. Theſe genuine evidences of faith working by love, God would not reject or forget: he was not unrighteous; and therefore he would not fail to deal with them according to his promiſes and covenant-engagements to believers, who have, through grace, a claim upon him in ſuch a caſe. This the apoſtle mentioned, becauſe his deſire was, that every one of them, whatever they had formerly done, might thenceforth ſhew the ſame attentive and diſintereſted diligence in good works, which ſome of them had heretofore ſhewn: that ſo evidencing their faith to be genuine, beyond all reaſon for doubting, they might obtain and poſſeſs the fulleſt aſſurance of hope, in reſpect of their final ſalvation, to comfort them under all trials, even to the end of their lives. Thus they would be diſtinguiſhed from ſlothful and worthleſs profeſſors, and be approved as imitators of their pious progenitors; and of thoſe chriſtians, who by faith in God's promiſes, and patient continuance in well-doing, and in waiting his time of deliverance from their trials, had at length entered into reſt, and were actually enjoying that perfect felicity, in which all the promiſes of God to his people centered. This is a concluſive proof of the *immediate* happineſs of believers after death.

V. 13—20.] There could be no reaſon to doubt of God's performing his promiſes to thoſe who thus truſted in, and waited for him: for the covenant, ratified with Abraham, in ſome reſpects typified, and in others was ſubſtantially the ſame with, that, which was made with every believer: and when God gave the promiſes to the father of the faithful, he at length was pleaſed to confirm them with an oath, ſhewing his irrevocable purpoſe of accompliſhing them; and as he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf, and ſo pledged the honour of his great name and all his perfections, as the ſecurity of that engagement. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xii. xv. xvii. xxii. v. 16.) Accordingly, Abraham patiently waited the Lord's time, 16 For men verily ſwear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all ſtriſe.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed *it* by an oath;

18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impoſſible for God to lie, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us:

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entereth into that within the vail:

20 Whether the Forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jeſus, made an High-prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

and the promiſed bleſſings to him and his ſeed were at length vouchſafed. When old and full of days, he died, and was perſonally bleſſed in God as his "exceeding great "reward:" his poſterity alſo increaſed, the promiſes made to them were accompliſhed, the Meſſiah at length came, and all the nations of the earth were about to be bleſſed in him. For men indeed ſwear by thoſe, that are greater than themſelves, whom they call upon to witneſs their atteſtations or engagements, or to avenge their unfaithfulneſs if they fail of them: and when important concerns require it, and the omniſcient God is thus reverently and uprightly appealed to, it may be conſidered as an act of worſhip to him: and an oath for the confirmation of covenants and treaties is the means of terminating diſputes of every kind, by eſtabliſhing mutual confidence between the parties; from the perſuaſion, that men in general will not defy the vengeance of heaven by deliberate perjury. The Lord therefore, in condeſcenſion to man's weakneſs and proneneſs to unbelief, and purpoſing to give his people the moſt abundant aſſurance, that his counſel reſpecting their ſalvation was immutable; confirmed the promiſe and covenant reſpecting it with the moſt ſolemn ratification of an oath. That ſo by two immutable things, even the Word, and the Oath of God, who cannot lie, either by being deceived or induced to deceive others, or by ſeeing cauſe to alter his purpoſes: they all, (in the apoſtle's time, and conſequently in all times,) might have a firm foundation for aſſured confidence, and the powerful conſolations ariſing from it; who fled for refuge from the wrath to come, to lay hold on the hope of pardon and eternal life, which were ſet before them in the goſpel. Theſe perſons, to whatever nation they belonged, were the "heirs of promiſe," the ſpiritual children of Abraham, and intereſted in the covenant ratified to him and to his ſeed, (Notes, *Rom.* c. iv. *Gal.* c. iii;) and therefore the oath ſworn to Abraham irrevocably confirmed the ſpiritual bleſſings of that covenant to each of them. (Note, *Luke* c. i. v. 67—80.) In order to aſcertain that they were of this number; it was needful to enquire, whether they had diſcovered their danger of falling under the curſe of the broken law, and under the deſerved wrath of God, as loſt ſinners? And whether they had renounced all other confidences, and broken through all hindrances, to flee for refuge, (as the man-ſlayer ſpeeded towards the appointed city,) to the free mercy of God, through the redemption of Chriſt, according to the covenant of grace; laying hold on this object of a ſinner's hope and confidence by faith in Chriſt, and a humble perſevering reliance on the promiſes of God through him; producing alſo a devoted attachment to his cauſe, and obedience to his precepts. (v. 10—12.) They, who had thus fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before them for that purpoſe, had a ſource of ſtrong conſolation given them in the oath and covenant of God: and their conſcious unworthineſs, depravity, and weakneſs; their experience of the deceitfulneſs of their hearts; their conflicts with inward and outward enemies; and the various temptations, trials and perſecutions, to which their profeſſion would expoſe them, rendered ſuch ſecurity, conſolation and hope in God, needful to them; even as the anchor is to the ſhip. Thereby they would be preſerved in their proper ſtation, without being driven from their profeſſion or duty by any ſtorms; whilſt mere profeſſors would be induced to apoſtacy by carnal fears and hopes, or be drawn aſide by manifold deluſions; even as the ſhips, that have no anchor, will be driven by the tempeſt from their ſtation on the rocks, or ſands, forced out to ſea, or daſhed in pieces one againſt another. But, whereas no anchors can at all times ſecure the ſhip from driving, or being wrecked: this hope in the divine promiſe, oath, and covenant was ſo ſure in itſelf, and kept the poſſeſſor ſo ſtedfaſt in his adherence to the truth and cauſe of God; that it always enſured him from final ruin, and, in proportion to it's vigorous exerciſe it ſecured him from temporary failures, and againſt the ſtorms of incumbent temptations. For, this hope entered into, and fixed the heart in a ſtable union with, and joyful expectation of thoſe things, which were within the vail, in the true Holy of Holies, in heaven itſelf; and cauſed the believer to ſtay himſelf on God's power, truth, and love to ſinners in Chriſt Jeſus, to bring him to the enjoyment of that felicity. For thither its great Object, Jeſus the divine Saviour, had already entered, and continually miniſtered in the Father's preſence, for the benefit of all believers; being their Fore-runner and Repreſentative; who, as their High-prieſt, had on earth atoned for their ſins by the ſacrifice of himſelf; and being riſen from the dead, was gone before them to heaven, to prepare a place for them, to remove all obſtacles to their admiſſion, to take poſſeſſion in their ſtead, and to reign and plead in their behalf; being conſtituted an High-prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec, of which order the apoſtle was about to diſcourſe more fully.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The principles and rudiments of the doctrine of Chriſt ſhould be accurately underſtood, before men attempt to learn the ſublimer myſteries of the goſpel: yet they ought

CHAP. VII.

Contains 1ſt. An illuſtration and proof of the ſuperiority of Melchiſedec's typical prieſthood to that of Aaron, 1---10. *2d. Various arguments, ſhewing that the prieſthood, and conſequently the Moſaic law were intended to be changed, and diſannuled; that a better covenant and high-prieſthood were to be introduced; and that theſe were neceſſary for the more perfect ſtate of the church, and for the ſalvation of ſinners, &c.* 11---28.

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not always to be confined to them, but ſhould be led on towards perfection both in knowledge, experience, and holineſs. Even the fundamentals of repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the reſurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment ſhould not always engroſs men's whole attention: but every part of the truth and will of God ſhould in due order and proportion be ſet before, and enforced on the profeſſors of goſpel: much leſs then ſhould we perpetually be diſcourſing on, or diſputing about "baptiſms, and laying on of hands" and other externals, which have their place and their uſe, but often occupy far too much of the attention and time of thoſe, who might be more profitably employed. We cannot but lament to ſee thoſe, who once made a credible profeſſion of the goſpel, turn back into the world and ſin, and thus in a meaſure "crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, "and put him to an open ſhame;" as if upon trial they found nothing in his ſalvation worthy of their conſtant regard! In general we ſhould warn, and pray for ſuch perſons: but there are caſes, in which we muſt let them alone, as having no proſpect of their being renewed to repentance. We ſhould beware, and we ought to caution others, of every approach to ſo tremendous a precipice: yet in doing this, we ſhould keep cloſe to the word of God, and be careful not to wound and terrify the weak, or diſcourage the fallen, and penitent. Knowledge, gifts, convictions, and very ſtrong impreſſions muſt *precede*: or an apoſtacy of this kind cannot take place: great obſtinacy and malignity *muſt follow*, before we are warranted to conclude it fatal or final. The general invitations and promiſes of the goſpel include all, who are humbly willing to embrace them; humiliation, and ſelf-condemnation for ſuch falls, when united with ſome hope, and cries for mercy, are ſuch tokens of God's renewing a man to repentance, as ſhould be pointed out to him for his encouragement in expecting forgiveneſs: on the other hand the ſelf-confident ſhould be taught, that knowledge, gifts, terrors, ſubſequent joys, and high affections, are no certain evidence of a man's converſion, without brokenneſs of heart, hatred of ſin, a ſpiritual mind, and faith which worketh by love; and that they, who do finally apoſtatize, were never in Chriſt new creatures, whatever man might judge of them. But they, whom it is indeed impoſſible to renew unto repentance, are commonly the laſt to think themſelves in ſo awful a ſtate: and ſuch as are moſt harraſſed by fears of this kind, may generally be aſſured that this is not their caſe, whatever they have been, or done; unleſs they actually run into ungodlineſs and wickedneſs through total deſperation. However, a looſe and unfruitful profeſſion lead to this, or to ſomething like it: for when abundant means of grace, and even the ordinary ſtrivings of God's convincing Spirit, leave men unchanged, and produce not the fruits of holineſs, which prove that they have received bleſſing from God, and are bleſſed of him; they are often given up, like waſte land, to bear briers and thorns only; their ſtate is nigh unto curſing; and the end of all unfruitful profeſſion will be "the furnace of fire, where is wailing and "gnaſhing of teeth."

Let us then fear with humble caution and watchful prayer, in reſpect of ourſelves: and let us hope the beſt of others, that the caſe will admit. Whilſt we warn ſuch as are in evident danger: we ſhould encourage thoſe, in whom we ſee the things, which accompany ſalvation. Miniſters ſhould frequently ſpecify theſe in an experimental, and diſtinguiſhing manner: and concerning ſuch matters diſcouraged profeſſors ſhould examine themſelves ſeriouſly; inſtead of perplexing themſelves about thoſe texts, which were inſerted to ſerve as beacons to warn the preſumptuous againſt fatal rocks, and not to affright the humble and cautious. Of thoſe things, which accompany ſalvation, none is more free from ambiguity, than laborious, ſelf-denying love to the name of the Lord, ſhewn by miniſtring with perſevering affection to his ſaints: and though God is no man's debtor, and will reward no works, that proceed of pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, however ſplendid and laborious they are: yet he is not unrighteous, nor will he forget one ſervice, that ſprings from humble grateful love: he hath ſpoken, and will be as good as his word, that not a cup of cold water, given to a diſciple from regard to his Lord, ſhall in any wiſe loſe its reward. We ſhould therefore deſire, that we, and all who are called chriſtians, may give the ſame diligence in ſuch good works, as the moſt eminent ſaints in the primitive ages did. This is the ſcriptural way of acquiring, and preſerving the full aſſurance of hope, to the end of our lives. Many have thus, by faith and patience, inherited the promiſes; but no ſlothſul profeſſor can know that he is following them. This privilege belongs to the diligent and fruitful, who walk in the ſteps of Abraham, to whom the promiſes were made. Theſe obtain an inward teſtimony, by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit; and give abundant proof in their lives, that they are the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promiſe. This inward ſeal confirms to them perſonally that covenant, which God hath ratified with an oath to the heirs of promiſe in general. Becauſe their infirmities are many, and their trials great, their condeſcending and compaſſionate Father, is willing more abundantly to ſhew them the immutability of his counſel; that by his faithful word, and irrevocable oath, they might have a ſtrong conſolation, having fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before them. Indeed the Lord having ſworn by himſelf, that he hath no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner, but that he ſhould repent and live; holds out abundant encouragement to all, whom he warns to flee from the wrath to come, and invites to lay hold for refuge on the hope ſet before them. And, as he "cannot lie," the deſtruction of the unbeliever, and the ſalvation of the believer are alike certain. Let then ſuch, as have fled to Chriſt, and have their hope ſealed to them, "in the love of God ſhed abroad in their hearts through

FOR this Melchiſedec, king of Salem, prieſt of the moſt high God, who met Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings, and bleſſed him;

2 To whom alſo Abraham gave a tenth part of all; firſt being by interpretation King of righteouſneſs, and after that alſo King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without deſcent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a prieſt continually.

4 Now conſider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the ſpoils.

5 And verily they that are of the ſons of Levi, who receive the office of the prieſt-hood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, through they come out of the loins of Abraham:

6 But he whoſe deſcent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and bleſſed him that had the promiſes.

7 And without all contradiction the leſs is bleſſed of the better.

8 And here men that die receive tithes: but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witneſſed that he liveth.

9 And as I may ſo ſay, Levi alſo, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchiſedec met him.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Le-

"the Holy Spirit," rely confidently on the power, truth and mercy of their covenant God, amidſt all the oppoſition of earth and hell. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 29—39:) let them pray for faith and hope equal to their ſecurity: thus let them caſt anchor within the vail, ſtaying their ſouls on the word of God, and on the mediation of their great High-Prieſt, in all dangers, afflictions and temptations: let them follow the ſteps, as well as truſt in the merits of the great Fore-runner of his people: let them by faith realize his appearance before the Father's throne for them, as their conſtituted High-Prieſt and King; and thus let them ſet their affections on things above, and wait patiently for his appearance, when they alſo ſhall moſt certainly appear with him in glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—3.] The apoſtle had repeatedly referred to the prophecy, that the Meſſiah was to be "a Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec," (*Pſ.* cx. v 4;) ſignifying that his prieſthood would far more reſemble that of Melchiſedec, than that of Aaron: he therefore next proceeded to illuſtrate, and argue more explicitly from that prophecy, as compared with the ſcriptural account of that extraordinary Perſon. (Note, *Gen.* c. xiv. v. 18.) Being king of Jeruſalem, or Salem, and prieſt of the moſt high God, by an appointment of which we have no information, he came to meet Abraham, after he had vanquiſhed and ſlain the invading kings, who had carried Lot captive from Sodom: and as God's prieſt he bleſſed Abraham, and received of him a tenth part of the ſpoils taken from his conquered enemies. His very name, being by interpretation, "king of righteouſneſs" and doubtleſs correſponding with his character and adminiſtration, marked him out as a type of the Meſſiah, and his kingdom. (Note, c. i. v. 8, 9.) The name of his city ſignified peace, and as king of peace, he typified Chriſt the Prince of peace, the great Reconciler of God and man, and of men to one another, in perfect conſiſtency with the intereſts of righteouſneſs, and the honour of the divine juſtice: and the union of royal authority with the prieſtly office, (which were divided between the family of Aaron, and that of David, in the caſe of Iſrael,) plainly pointed to the royal prieſthood of the Meſſiah. (*Zech.* c. vi. v. 13.) We have no account of his parentage, or pedigree, as in the caſe of the prieſts appointed by the law: who muſt all be deſcended from Aaron, and exact rules were given concerning their marriages, &c: ſo that he was introduced into the ſacred hiſtory as a prieſt of the moſt high God, who had no father or mother, or genealogy; that he might the more exactly typify that High-prieſt, who, as the Son of man had no human Father, as the Son of God was without mother, and who was appointed to the prieſt-hood, without deducing his pedigree from Aaron, as the other prieſts muſt do. Moreover, nothing was ſaid of Melchiſedec, reſpecting the beginning of his life, or the end of his days and prieſt-hood; that he might reſemble the Son of God, whoſe exiſtence is from eternity to eternity, and who hath had no predeceſſor, and will have no ſucceſſor, in his efficacious, meritorious, and perpetual Prieſt-hood. In all theſe reſpects the ſilence of the ſcripture being intentional, and with reference to the great Anti-type, is mentioned in language taken from the inſtruction to be conveyed, rather than from hiſtorical fact; of which learned men have brought inſtances from other writers of antiquity.

V. 4---10] The argument, from there having been a perſon ſuperior to Abraham, living at the ſame time with him, was very concluſive againſt the perpetual obligation of the Levitical law, and the perpetuity of the Aaronic prieſthood, or that of the covenant of peculiarity with the nation of Iſrael. The apoſtle therefore exhorted the Hebrews to conſider how great a perſon their inſpired Lawgiver had repreſented Melchiſedec to be, not ſo much in reſpect of his regal authority, as of his prieſt-hood: when even Abraham the patriarch and honoured father of their whole nation owned his ſuperiority, and paid him tythes vitical prieſt-hood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another prieſt ſhould riſe after the order of Melchiſedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For the prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the law.

13 For he of whom theſe things are ſpoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord ſprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concerning prieſthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedec there ariſeth another prieſt,

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life.

17 For he teſtifieth, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

18 For there is verily a diſannulling of the

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as God's repreſentative! The Levites indeed were ordered in the law, as the Lord's tribe, to take tythes of their brethren, the deſcendants of Abraham, of which the prieſts had a tenth part for their portion: but Melchiſedec, a perſon, who was not of Abraham's family, received tythes of that Patriarch himſelf; nay, as God's prieſt, he pronounced the benediction upon him, to whom the promiſes were made, concerning the Meſſiah, and all nations being bleſſed in him, &c. Now it was well known, and certain beyond contradiction, that the inferior character is uſed to be bleſſed, in this authoritative manner, by the ſuperior and more honourable; as children by their parents, and the people by the prieſts: (*Num.* c. vi. v. 22—27.) So that ſome One higher and better, than Abraham, or Aaron, or any mere man of his race, was evidently to be expected, as a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec. Moreover, under the law mere ſinful dying men took tythes of their brethren; and ſo one generation after another roſe up to receive them: but in the caſe under conſideration, a certain perſon received tythes of Abraham, the Repreſentative of all his poſterity, concerning whom it was only witneſſed that he lived; by which it was intimated that a Prieſt ſhould ariſe, to whom the whole Iſrael of God would pay their devoted homage, and from whom they would receive the bleſſing: ſo that, *to ſpeak it in a word*, the apoſtle might ſay, that even Levi, and all the prieſts deſcended from him, paid tythes to Melchiſedec; for they were in the loins of their Father and Repreſentative, when Melchiſedec met him: which ſufficiently proved the inferiority of the Levitical prieſthood to that of the Meſſiah; yea, its abſolute dependance on, and ſubſerviency to Him. Indeed it may be ſaid, that Chriſt alſo was in the loins of Abraham, &c; but his divine nature, his miraculous and immaculate conception, and his being the intended and predicted Antitype, ſufficiently ſhew that he was to be accepted, as the Seed to whom eſpecially the promiſes were made. This argument of the apoſtle illuſtrates the nature of our union with, and repreſentation by, Adam, and our participation of the conſequences of his apoſtacy; as well as the method of our recovery by the ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven."

V. 11—17.] If then the moſt perfect ſtate of the church on earth had been purpoſed of God to have been under the Levitical prieſthood; and if complete ſalvation could have been obtained by that inſtitution without reference to the prieſthood of the Meſſiah; what occaſion was there for another prieſt to ariſe, and of another order? Or why ſhould the Holy Spirit dictate ſuch a prediction, and excite ſuch an expectation. The people had received the law under that prieſthood; for the whole of the ceremonial inſtitutions were connected with, and ſuppoſed, the officiating of prieſts of the line of Aaron, nor could any part of it be properly and exactly fulfilled without them: in conſequence therefore, the change of the prieſt-hood muſt neceſſarily imply a change of the law too; and the raiſing up of an high prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec, muſt abrogate the ceremonial law, and terminate the legal diſpenſation. For the Meſſiah was predicted to ariſe from another tribe, even that of Judah; and though their kings had been principally of that tribe, yet none of them had ever preſumed to officiate at the altar; except Uzziah, who was ſeverely rebuked for his temerity. (2 *Chron.* c. xxvi. v. 16—21:) Thus diſtinct were the kingdom and the prieſthood kept under the law; whilſt their union in the Perſon of the Meſſiah of the tribe of Judah, was predicted in the moſt explicit manner. And indeed it was evident, and ſufficiently proved, that, "Our Lord" and Saviour, to whom the apoſtle called his brethren's attention, was deſcended from Judah, and of the family of David; of which Moſes in the law had ſaid nothing concerning their admiſſion to the prieſthood; ſo that the prediction, and its accompliſhment concurred in proving, that the Aaronic Prieſthood, and the Moſaic law were abrogated, and and of no further validity, or efficacy: for the prophecy before-mentioned made this moſt evident, even to a demonſtration, yea more evident, than any other argument could do: as this High Prieſt was not conſtituted after, or according to, the law of Moſes, or any of its actual preſcriptions, which were in themſelves carnal commandments, relating to mere externals, and incapable of ſecuring ſpiritual excellency to the appointed high prieſts; but he was conſtituted, "according to the power of an endleſs life," as a prieſt for ever, &c. For though Chriſt willingly died for the ſins of the people, yet that was a part of his prieſtly office, and he had power to reſume his life, and to preſerve it for ever; that ſo he might perpetually execute his office, as the only one, to whom it belonged, and who alone was capable of duly performing it.

V. 18, 19.] Indeed, this prediction and its accompliſhment implied a diſannulling or abrogation of the preceding commandment, concerning the prieſt-hood, ſacrifices, &c. And this was intended by the Lord, becauſe they were in themſelves weak and unprofitable; for though they had a temporary and typical uſe and benefit, in reſpect of the nation of Iſrael, till the coming of the Meſſiah, and to believers, as means of faith and grace: yet they had no in-commandment going before for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

20 And inaſmuch as not without an oath *he was made Prieſt*:

21 (For thoſe prieſts were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that ſaid unto him, The Lord ſware and will not repent, Thou *art* a Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec;)

22 By ſo much was Jeſus made a Surety of a better teſtament.

23 And they truly were many prieſts, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death:

24 But this *man*, becauſe he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable prieſthood.

25 Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.

26 For ſuch an High-prieſt became us *who*

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herent efficacy to purge the conſcience, or the affections, and they did not at all profit thoſe, who reſted in them. For the ceremonial law made nothing perfect, either in the ſtate of the church, or the hearts and conſciences of the worſhippers; but the introduction of a better hope, even that of acceptance with God, through the ſacrifice and interceſſion of Chriſt brought the church to its higheſt ſtate of liberty, and its worſhip to the moſt entire ſpirituality, that its condition in this world admits of; and provided moſt effectually for the complete juſtification, the inward peace and the ſanctification of all believers. For by that hope, men are allowed to draw near to God, even to his mercy-ſeat, with humble boldneſs; and are not wholly excluded as the Gentiles during the law, or kept at a great diſtance as the Iſraelites themſelves were.

V. 20—22] The very great ſuperiority of the prieſthood of Chriſt above that of Aaron, was evident from another particular. Jehovah appointed the Levitical prieſthood *without an oath*, by which he ſhewed, that the appointment was revocable, and that it was not always to continue. But in conſtituting the Meſſiah to be a perpetual High Prieſt, he moſt ſolemnly confirmed the appointment with an oath: thus declaring moſt evidently, that it was never to be diſannulled. In proportion therefore to this immenſe difference, it was to be concluded, that Jeſus was the Surety of a better covenant than that of Aaron. The word rendered "Surety" ſignifies a perſon that is bound with another for the payment of a debt, or the performance of an engagement. Jeſus, the Surety of his people, became anſwerable for their debt of ſin, and engaged to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and magnify the holy law, as their repreſentative; as well as to bring them to that repentance, faith and holineſs, which are requiſite to their intereſt in, and participation of the bleſſings of his covenant: and by entering into, and fulfilling this engagement in their behalf, he became the Surety of the Father to them for the performance of all the promiſes of the covenant; being authorized and exalted in human nature, to confer on them all the bleſſings ſtipulated therein. The word rendered teſtament is commonly rendered covenant; its import hath been repeatedly conſidered; and we ſhall have occaſion ſhortly to ſpeak of it, as uſed for a teſtamentary appointment. The better covenant, of which Jeſus is the Surety, is not here contraſted with the covenant of works, by which every tranſgreſſor is ſhut up under the curſe; but diſtinguiſhed from the Sinai covenant with Iſrael, and the legal diſpenſation, under which the church was ſo long held: for the covenant of works had no connection with the Aaronic prieſthood, or the ceremonial law, which exhibited in ſhadows the bleſſings of the covenant of grace. But the covenant, of which Jeſus was Surety, was far better than that of which the Jewiſh high prieſts were typical ſureties; and brought the church, and every believer into far clearer light, more perfect liberty, and more abundant privilege, than that could do: it was therefore proper, that the temporary legal covenant with Iſrael ſhould be abrogated, that the irrevocable prieſt hood of Chriſt, and the better covenant ratified to him, might be openly introduced, and eſtabliſhed for the benefit of the nations of the earth. (Notes, *Exod.* c. xix.)

V. 23—25.] The ſacred writer here adduced another proof of the ſuperiority of the Meſſiah's prieſt-hood above that of Aaron: in the latter caſe, there were many prieſts; becauſe, being ſinful dying men, they were ſoon removed from their ſtation, and others ſucceeded them in it; and the office paſſing ſo frequently from one to another ſtrongly marked it's weakneſs and inefficacy. But the Perſon of whom the prophet had ſpoken, and concerning whom the apoſtle was diſcourſing, poſſeſſed an unchangeable prieſthood, that was never to paſs out of his hands, and never would be liable to interruption, or ceſſation. For as his death was the appointed ſacrifice for the ſins of all his people; ſo heaven was the true ſanctuary, in which his ſubſequent miniſtrations were to be performed; and there poſſeſſing immortality, he muſt exerciſe his prieſtly office in the moſt perfect manner, till the conſummation of all things. On which account he is able, not only by his omnipotence, but in virtue of his prieſtly character and ſacrifice, to ſave *perfectly, to the end*, in all poſſible emergencies and extremities, from all guilt, pollution, and temptation; in all dangers, and againſt all enemies, every one, and the whole company, of thoſe, through all ages and nations, who come to God, as ſinners, for ſalvation, by Him; believing in his name, depending on his atonement and interceſſion, and aſking all bleſſings for his ſake, and as the free gift of God through Him. This he is able to do, becauſe he is not like a mere man, who undertakes to protect or deliver another, and perhaps dies in the critical ſeaſon; but he ever liveth, and reigneth, as a Prieſt upon his throne, to make interceſſion for thoſe, who come to God by him to plead his merits and ſacrifice in their behalf; to preſent their *it* holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as thoſe high prieſts, to offer up ſacrifice, firſt for his own ſins, and then for the people: for this he did once, when he offered up himſelf.

28 For the law maketh men high-prieſts which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was ſince the law, *maketh* the Son, who is conſecrated for evermore.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains further evidence 1ſt. Of the ſuperiority of Chriſt's prieſthood above that of Aaron, 1--6.

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perſons, ſervices and prayers for acceptance, through the ranſom of his blood; to protect and deliver them by his Almighty Power, and to give all things to them of his unſearchable riches.

V. 26—28.] Indeed, the conſiderate enquirer would ſee, that only ſuch an High Prieſt as Chriſt could ſuit the caſe of loſt ſinners, who were to be reſtored to the favour, and image of an holy God, conſiſtent with, and to the glory of his name. Such a one *became*, or was proper for them, as was perfectly holy in his nature; harmleſs and ſpotleſs in his own obedience, that no charge might be brought againſt him; undefiled in his miniſtrations, ſeparate in diſpoſition and conduct from the ſinners, in whoſe behalf he was to interpoſe; and made higher than the heavens, and all their glorious inhabitants; that the dignity of his Perſon, and the pre-eminence of his exaltation might give efficacy to his miniſtrations, and diſplay the juſtice and holineſs of God in ſaving ſinners for his ſake, and through his merits. He muſt be one, who had no need to offer ſacrifices for himſelf at all, or repeatedly in behalf of others; as the Levitical prieſts, (who were the coadjutors of the high-prieſt,) did *daily*; and the high-prieſt did on every return of the great day of expiation. But ſuch an High Prieſt could not be found, except Jeſus, whoſe one oblation of himſelf, being of infinite value, rendered further ſacrifices for ever needleſs. For the law made infirm and ſinful men high prieſts, whoſe perſons and ſervices always needed atonement and forgiveneſs, and many of whom were men of very bad characters: but the word of the Lord, which he had ratified with an oath, and which had been ſpoken long after the giving of the law, and reached far beyond it; had appointed the eternal Son of God to that office, who was in all reſpects competent to it, as he alone could be; and he was moreover conſecrated to it for evermore. It was therefore evident, that the Levitical prieſthood was intended to typify, and prepare the way for that of Chriſt; which was purpoſed in due time to ſuperſede and diſannul it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every part of ſcripture was intended, in one way or other, to honour our King of Righteouſneſs and Peace, our glorious High Prieſt and Saviour: and the more accurately we examine it, the fuller will be our conviction, that the teſtimony of Jeſus is the Spirit of prophecy. May we then learn in ſimplicity to truſt in, and ſubmit to him, to copy his righteouſneſs, to ſeek the peace of his kingdom, to devote our all to his ſervice, and to expect the bleſſing from him alone: may we go forth in our ſpiritual conflicts, at his word and in his ſtrength; aſcribe all our victories to his grace; and deſire to be met, and bleſſed by him in all our ways! Patriarchs, prophets, apoſtles, and angels, own Him to be far better, and greater than they all: preceding events and diſpenſations from the beginning prepared the way for his appearance, and introduced his royal prieſthood: thoſe inſtitutions which had divine authority, and eminent uſefulneſs for the time, after his coming were diſannulled, becauſe of the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs of them; for a better hope was then introduced, by which we draw nigh to our offended God, and call him Abba, Father. No further change ſhall now take place in the prieſthood, or the worſhip of the church, by any further revelation of God's will to man: but he will overturn, overturn, overturn, the kingdoms of the earth, till that of our Melchiſedec be every where eſtabliſhed. As the Surety of a far better covenant, than that connected with the Levitical prieſthood, he hath given his church and every believer the greateſt advantages, for following after perfection: may he ſtir up the hearts of his miniſters and people, and pour out his Spirit throughout all his church; that more ſpiritual worſhip, and holy obedience may every where abound: and that the congregations and ſervices of his ſaints on earth may more reſemble thoſe of heaven! For it becomes us to aſpire after a degree of ſpirituality and holineſs, as much ſuperior to thoſe of old teſtament believers, as our advantages exceed theirs. No man who knows God, and his holy law of love, and who underſtands the evil of ſin, and the difficulty of ſaving ſinners, to the glory of God, could deſire the continuance of a prieſt-hood, according to a carnal commandment; which appointed thoſe to that office who were themſelves ſinners, and needed to offer ſacrifices for themſelves firſt, and then for the people; nor could they wiſh thoſe to retain that ſtation, who generally filled it. But now, that the Son of God is made the High Prieſt of his believing Iſrael; even ſuch an High Prieſt as became us, being "holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens;" we may well rejoice that he is conſecrated for evermore, and that he hath an unchangeable prieſthood. As he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all who come to God through him: let the vileſt of ſinners approach in this way to the mercy ſeat of our forgiving God; ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them. None need be diſmayed, but they, who will not come unto God; or who will not come in the name of his beloved Son: and the caſe of thoſe will ſoon become hopeleſs, how great ſoever their preſent preſumption may be. But let believers meditate on the power and grace of their great High-Prieſt; and on his univerſal and abſolute ſovereignty, and let them copy his holy, harmleſs, and undefiled conduct and ſeparation from ſinners; then they may confidently expect, that he will ſave them to the uttermoſt, and "deliver them, in "all time of their tribulation, in all time of their wealth, "in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment."

2d. That the Sinai covenant was to be abrogated, to make way for a new and better covenant, 7—13.

NOW of the things which we have ſpoken *this is* the ſum: We have ſuch an High-prieſt, who is ſet on the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens;

2 A miniſter of the ſanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every high-prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices: wherefore *it is* of neceſſity that this man have ſomewhat alſo to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he ſhould not be a prieſt, ſeeing that there are prieſts that offer gifts according to the law:

5 Who ſerve unto the example and ſhadow of heavenly things, as Moſes was admoniſhed of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, ſaith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much alſo he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1, 2.] The principal matter, or the ſubſtance of what had been argued was this; that chriſtians had ſuch an High-prieſt, as became, and was needful for them; who having finiſhed his work on earth, had aſcended into the heavens, and was exalted to pre-eminent dignity and authority, at the right hand of God, in that place, where He diſplays his glorious majeſty, and which may be called his royal throne; (*Iſaiah*, c. lxvi. v. 1.) Thus Chriſt was Miniſter to officiate *in holy things*, or in the moſt holy place, of which that in the tabernacle had been a type: and in this office he preſided over, or he miniſtered in, the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched by his almighty power, and which was not conſtituted by human ſkill or labour, as the tabernacle in the wilderneſs had been. Some explain *the true tabernacle*, of heaven excluſively, as ſignifying the ſame with the ſanctuary, others interpret it of the human nature of Chriſt, in which He tabernacled among men, and in which he officiates as High-prieſt, in the holy of holies above: yet, as this is rather a conſtituent of his Perſon as High-prieſt, than the place of his miniſtrations, the figure ſeems harſh. But, as the whole tabernacle compriſed the inner and the outer ſanctuary; and as the high-prieſt alone went into the former, whilſt the other prieſts officiated in the latter, in ſubordination to him, whoſe typical ſervices rendered their's accepted; and as the tabernacle typifyed the whole church of God, (though it typified the human nature of Chriſt alſo:) ſo it ſeems moſt obvious to explain the true tabernacle, to ſignify the whole church of the redeemed on earth and in heaven; who ſeparately and collectively, "are the habitation of "God through the Spirit" Chriſt miniſters perſonally in the holy place above, as ſole High-Prieſt; he preſides over the whole true tabernacle, and ſo the prayers and ſervices of the ſpiritual prieſt-hood on earth are rendered acceptable and efficacious, through his meritorious interceſſion in heaven.

V. 3—6.] (Note, c. v. ver. 1.) As every high-prieſt, according to the law, was appointed to offer gifts, and ſacrifices: ſo it was requiſite that *this Perſon*, even Chriſt, ſhould have ſomewhat to offer; that the Anti-type might correſpond with the type; and for ſtill more cogent reaſons. He therefore aſſumed human nature, appeared on earth, and there gave himſelf a ſacrifice to God for the ſins of his people; and then he aſcended into heaven to appear before God, as with the blood of the ſacriſice, in their behalf: all which exactly correſponded to the method preſcribed to the high-prieſt on the great day of expiation. (Note, &c. *Lev.* c. xvi.) It was not proper for him to continue on earth after he had offered his one all-ſufficient ſacrifice: for in that caſe he would not have been a prieſt; ſeeing, in reſpect of the legal ſervices, there were prieſts appointed to perform them; and Chriſt, not being of the prieſtly tribe, could not properly have interfered in them: and as to the ſpiritual prieſt-hood, heaven was the appointed ſanctuary, in which he muſt perform the reſt of his meritorious and efficacious miniſtrations; being the true holy of holies, the place, in which Jehovah diſplays his glory, and diſpenſes his bleſſings from the mercy ſeat. The prieſt indeed, who offered ſacrifices, &c, in the earthly ſanctuary, miniſtered in God's worſhip after a ritual, which was formed to be an exemplar and ſhadow of heavenly things; this had been intimated to Moſes, when he was charged to form every thing relative to the tabernacle, &c, according to the exact pattern ſhewed to him in the mount. (Note, *Exod.* c. xxv. v. 40.) The various particulars reſpecting Chriſt and his ſalvation, which were typified by the tabernacle, its furniture, and worſhip, have already been explained. (Note, &c. *Exod.* c. xxv—xxxi.) There ſeems no reaſon for reſtricting the meaning of this charge to the human nature of Chriſt; ſeeing his Perſon, prieſt-hood, ſacrifice, interceſſion, &c, were evidently predicted in the directions given to Moſes on that occaſion. Inſtead of interfering with the prieſts in the typical ſervices of the temple, Chriſt had obtained a far ſuperior miniſtry, of real intrinſic value and efficacy, in the heavenly ſanctuary: in which he was as much ſuperior to the prieſts after the order of Aaron; as the covenant of which he was the Mediator was a better covenant, founded and eſtabliſhed on better promiſes, than the final covenant with Iſrael. It hath repeatedly been obſerved, that all unbelievers continued *perſonally* under the covenant of works; and that believers were *perſonally* intereſted in the covenant of grace, by faith in the Meſſiah that was to come. The Moſaic diſpenſation contained in it a typical goſpel, and its ordinances were to believers means of grace, as well as acts of worſhip. But the covenant here referred to, was that made with Iſrael as a nation, ſecuring the poſſeſſion

7 For if that firſt *covenant* had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond.

8 For finding fault with them, he ſaith, Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael and with the houſe of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; becauſe they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people:

11 And they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord: for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he ſaith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the firſt old: Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vaniſh away.

of Canaan, and various temporal benefits to them, on preſcribed conditions: and the promiſes of all ſpiritual bleſſings and of eternal life, to believers of all nations, and through all ſucceeding ages, which were openly revealed by the goſpel, and ratified through Chriſt, are of infinitely greater value, than any temporal advantages to a ſingle nation can be.

V. 8—13.] The Hebrews might learn from their own prophets, that their national covenant, and the legal diſpenſation were not intended to be perpetual: for if that covenant had been free from defect, and ſuited to bring the church to the higheſt ſtate of perfection, to which it was to be advanced on earth; there would have been no place for, or occaſion of introducing, a ſecond; or propoſing any plans for another covenant: as the Lord never changes his methods without reaſon, or his appointments unleſs for the better. But though the Moſaic law, and the Sinai covenant were well ſuited to introduce the promiſed Meſſiah and the goſpel diſpenſation, and to form, as it were, a proper ſcaffolding for that magnificent edifice: yet they did not ſecure the ſanctification and ſalvation of the people; nor did they even prevent ſuch national apoſtacies, as were a forfeiture of all their privileges. About the time of the Babyloniſh captivity, therefore, the Lord by his prophet, reproved the people for their violations of his covenant, and promiſed to make a new covenant with his people. The paſſage quoted has already been explained, and a few hints may here ſuffice; (Note, *Jer.* c. xxxi. v. 31—34.) The words, tranſlated from the Hebrew, "although I was a huſband unto "them," are here rendered, "and I regarded them not." Learned men have ſhewn that they may be rendered either way: and as both propoſitions contain truth and inſtruction; ſo the difference is to us immaterial. The prophecy was fulfilled in the converſion of multitudes of Judah and Iſrael, in the primitive times of the goſpel: but it is alſo fulfilled to all the ſpiritual Iſrael, who are *really* a holy nation, as Iſrael according to the fleſh was *relatively*: the repentance, faith, divine and efficacious teaching, and ſanctification of the choſen people of God, as well as their complete forgiveneſs, were provided for in the better promiſes of this new covenant: and thus their holy obedience, their final perſeverance, and their eternal ſalvation were ſecured. The apoſtle, therefore, inferred concluſively from this prediction; that the promiſe of a new covenant, in effect had made the firſt old, or antiquated; and this was as much as to ſay, that it was decaying, and about to vaniſh away. So that the abolition of their national covenant, and the abrogation of the Moſaic law, were to be expected at the coming of the Meſſiah, according to their own prophets.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we bleſs God, that of his plenteous mercy he hath provided, for us loſt ſinners, ſuch a High-prieſt, as ſuited our helpleſs condition; that he hath accepted his one oblation of himſelf; that he hath exalted him to the right hand of his Majeſty in the heavens, to be a Miniſter of the ſanctuary, and of the true tabernacle; and that he hath made a better covenant with him in behalf of his true people, and eſtabliſhed it on better promiſes, than thoſe given to Iſrael: let us ſee to it, that we draw nigh to him in this appointed way; as ſpiritual worſhippers, in humble faith, and ſubmiſſion to his righteouſneſs, relying on his mercy and truth, and praying for all his promiſed bleſſings. If it were dangerous for thoſe, who had the example and ſhadow of heavenly things, to deviate in the leaſt from the divine preſcriptions: how can they eſcape condemnation, who have the clear diſcovery of the heavenly things themſelves, yet worſhip other mediators, prefer human traditions, come to God in their own name, as if righteous perſons; or refuſe to come at all, as if ſufficient for their own felicity? In every part of our worſhip and obedience, we ſhould keep cloſe to the only and perfect ſtandard of God's word; and every deviation muſt be proportionably injurious: but a miſtake in the way of a ſinner's acceſs and acceptance cannot but prove fatal in the end, if not previouſly diſcovered and rectified. We ſhould alſo enquire whether the new covenant be really ſealed and ratified to us? for though the goſpel diſpenſation be faultleſs; and though the Lord hath, as it were, taken us by the hand to caſt us forth from pagan and antichriſtian idolatry: yet he will have no ſpecial regard to us at laſt; unleſs he now puts his laws into our minds, and writes them in our hearts; as a principle of genuine repentance and willing obedience: unleſs we expect our happineſs from Him as

CHAP. IX.

Contains 1*ſt. An account of the tabernacle and its furniture, and of the typical meaning of its ordinances,* 1---10. 2*d. An application of the ſubject to the Prieſthood, ſacrifice, and covenant of Chriſt, &c.* 11---28.

THEN verily the firſt *covenant* had alſo ordinances of divine ſervice, and a worldly ſanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made: the firſt, wherein *was* the candleſtick, and the table, and the ſhew-bread; which is called the ſanctuary:

3 And after the ſecond vail the tabernacle which is called the Holieſt of all;

4 Which had the golden cenſer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, the Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over it the cherubims of glory ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat: of which we cannot now ſpeak particularly.

6 Now when theſe things were thus ordained, the prieſts went always into the firſt tabernacle, accompliſhing the ſervice *of God.*

7 But into the ſecond *went* the High-prieſt alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himſelf, and *for* the errors of the people:

8 The Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt, while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding:

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then preſent, in which were offered both gifts and ſacrifices, that could not make him that did the ſervice perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience;

10 *Which ſtood* only in meats and drinks,

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our God, and worſhip him ſpiritually as his people; and unleſs we are taught by his holy Spirit, to know him in ſuch a manner, as uprightly to fear, love, truſt in, and obey him. Thus all true Iſraelites, from the leaſt to the greateſt, are taught of God, and ſealed as his people; and thus they are aſſured, that he hath been merciful to their ſins, and will remember their iniquities no more. This righteouſneſs ſhall be for ever, this ſalvation ſhall not be aboliſhed, and the bleſſings of this irrevocable covenant will be the eternal portion of every true believer. But all other things, whether they be worldly vanities, external privileges, or mere forms and notions of religion, will ſoon decay, wax old, vaniſh away, and leave thoſe who have truſted in them moſt miſerable for ever more.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—5.] The apoſtle, knowing the exceſſive and dangerous attachment of the Hebrews to the legal ceremonies, proceeded more particularly to ſhew them their typical reference to Chriſt. The firſt covenant had indeed ordinances of divine worſhip, the obſervance of which conſtituted a conſiderable part of the legal righteouſneſs of Iſrael as a nation: and it had a ſanctuary, built of ſuch materials, and decorated with ſuch magnificence, as this preſent world affords, and as carnal men admire. For Moſes at God's command, cauſed the tabernacle to be erected, which, beſides the courts and the porch, conſiſted of two parts; in the firſt diviſion, called the holy place, or the ſanctuary, were the candleſtick, &c; and within the ſecond vail, in the holieſt of all, were the ark, &c. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xvi. v. 32---34. c. xxv---xxvii. xxxvii---xl. *Numb.* xvii.) The golden cenſer, on which the high-prieſt burned incenſe within the vail on the day of expiation, ſeems to have been left in the moſt holy place during the reſt of the year. The rod of Aron and the golden pot of manna, were *within* the holy of holies, and by, or near the ark; but they ſeem not to have been put *within it.* (1 *Kings.* c. viii. v. 9.) The typical import of all theſe things have been ſhewn: and it is not neceſſary to ſpeak of them particularly in this place; even as it was not for the apoſtle. The golden altar of incenſe is not mentioned in this catalogue; for what reaſon we know not: but the conjecture of ſome expoſitors, that the words rendered "the golden cenſer," meant that altar, is groundleſs: for that was ſtationary, in the firſt ſanctuary; and ſeems not to have been uſed by the High-prieſt, on the day of atonement: who appears to have burned incenſe on a portable cenſer within the vail.

V. 6—10.] When all the particulars above mentioned were prepared, according to God's appointment, the ordinary prieſts performed the ſeveral parts of their office in the firſt ſanctuary at all times, without further limitation. But the high-prieſt alone was allowed to go into the moſt holy place; nor might he enter thither more than once, or on one day in the year; nor even on that day, till he had offered ſacrifices for his own tranſgreſſions, and thoſe of the nation, and then took the blood with him within the vail, to ſprinkle before the mercy-ſeat, (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. xvi.) So that of Iſrael, that holy nation, one holy tribe was ſelected; of that tribe one holy family; and of that family one perſon to be "holineſs to the Lord:" yet even this perſon, ſo carefully ſelected from the whole race of men, might not approach God on a mercy ſeat, without atoning blood, and only one day in a year; on pain of death for his preſumption, if he tranſgreſſed theſe rules! By all theſe reſtrictions and limitations, which kept even the worſhippers of Jehovah at ſo awful a diſtance; the holy Spirit, by whoſe inſpiration they were revealed and recorded, ſignified this important inſtruction: namely, that the way into the ho-

and divers waſhings, and carnal ordinances, impoſed *on them* until the time of reformation.

11 But Chriſt being come an High-prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us.*

13 For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh:

14 How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God?

15 And for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the New Teſtament, that by means of

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lieſt was not yet made manifeſt: which leſſon muſt be conſtantly inculcated, as long as the firſt tabernacle was ſtanding, and the ceremonies of that worſhip continued in force. A few believers indeed, under the divine teaching, ſaw a little of the way of acceſs to God, of communion with him, and of admiſſion into heaven, through the promiſed Redeemer: but the Iſraelites in general looked no further than theſe external forms; and ſcarce any perſon conceived an idea, that ſinners of every nation ſhould have that boldneſs of acceſs to God through Chriſt, and all the privileges and hopes, which believers enjoy under the goſpel diſpenſation. The difficulty of guilty polluted rebel's being thus admitted into the preſence and favour of an holy God, was declared by thoſe appointments: but the ſacrifice and prieſt-hood of the incarnate Son of God at once diſannulled them all, when he hung upon the croſs, the vail of the temple was rent, by his doctrine the way into the holieſt was made manifeſt; and thenceforth it was only neceſſary that ſinners ſhould be made willing by regenerating grace, to avail themſelves of ſuch an invaluable privilege. The legal ordinances therefore, eſpecially thoſe of the great day of atonement, were figures for the time they laſted, or *of the happy time*, which was arrived when the apoſtle wrote; in which were offered various gifts and ſacrifices, that could not give the worſhippers genuine, ſolid peace of conſcience, or make a perfect reconciliation between the ſinner and his offended Judge. The offerers, who reſted in them, and did not by faith rely on the promiſed Saviour, could not obtain forgiveneſs of ſins, or ſpiritual bleſſings; but were only exempted from temporal puniſhment, and admitted to external privileges, as members of the kingdom and church of Iſrael, which was in a peculiar ſenſe under the government of Jehovah. And as to the other ordinances of that covenant, which were connected with its ſacrifices; they conſiſted principally of regulations concerning meats and drinks, and divers *baptiſms* or waſhings *with*, or *in* water, as typical of ſanctification; and ſuch like inſtitutions; which were carnal in themſelves, though for wiſe purpoſes they were impoſed till the coming of the Meſſiah, which was to be a time of reformation, by the introduction of a more ſimple and ſpiritual worſhip: ſo that they could be of no uſe to the Jews, who rejected Chriſt out of zeal for them, and it was abſurd for the Hebrew chriſtians to adhere ſo pertinaciouſly to them.

V. 11—14.] After long expectation, their promiſed Redeemer was at length come, to be an High Prieſt, capable of procuring and beſtowing, to future ages, and to all eternity, the bleſſings of ſalvation on all believers, and to fulfil to them all the ancient promiſes of God. This he was appointed to do, by officiating as an High Prieſt, in a greater and better tabernacle, than that prepared by Moſes, or even that of Solomon's temple, or any made with hands: that is to ſay, in one, not builded after the manner of men, or even like the lower creation; being the contrivance of infinite wiſdom, and the work of almighty power. This may either be explained of his holy human nature, in which he tabernacled on earth, and officiates as Prieſt in heaven; or of the heavens themſelves, where he appears in the preſence of God for us. Nor did he attempt to atone for ſin, by the blood of goats, bulls, or calves, &c; and to enter into the moſt holy place with it: but, having ſhed his own moſt precious blood on earth, as in the court of the ſanctuary; he entered in once for all, into the true holy place in heaven, to plead the merit of it before the Father's throne, as the complete atonement for all the ſins of his people; having thus purchaſed for them "eternal redemption" from wrath and ſin, and all the conſequences thereof; and being aſſured, that no further atonement would ever be required in their behalf. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and ſuch irrational creatures, could by any means avail to expiate the guilt of the nation, or of individuals, on the day of atonement, or on other occaſions. (Notes, &c *Lev.* c. xvi;) and if the aſhes of an heifer mixed with water, and ſprinkling thoſe, who were unclean through the touch of a dead body, could produce a typical external ſanctity, by which they might be admitted into the congregation of the Lord; (Notes, &c, *Num.* c. xix:) How much more efficacy might there be ſuppoſed to be in the blood of Chriſt, actually to remove guilt and defilement? the exalted dignity of his divine nature, the entire purity of his human nature, the honour put on the law of God by his moſt perfect obedience to all its requirements; and the voluntary offering of himſelf, under the immediate influences of the eternal Spirit, as a ſpotleſs ſacrifice to divine juſtice in the ſtead of ſinners, concurred to render it glorious in God, for his ſake, fully to pardon and freely to accept all, who were intereſted in him by faith. If then there was the leaſt efficacy in external expiations and purifications, through the appointment of God, and becauſe they ſhewed the guilt and pollution of ſin, and typified the method of its removal; ſo that it became proper for God, through them, to confer temporal benefits on criminals: how much more efficacious muſt the blood of Chriſt death, for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions, *that were* under the firſt teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a teſtament *is* there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator.

17 For a teſtament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all whilſt the teſtator liveth.

18 Whereupon neither the firſt *teſtament* was dedicated without blood:

19 For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and ſcarlet wool, and hyſſop, and ſprinkled both the book and all the people,

20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the teſtament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover he ſprinkled likewiſe with blood both the tabernacle, and all the veſſels of the miniſtry.

22 And almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood: and without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.

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be, to purge the believer's conſcience from the guilt of thoſe evil works, that were committed by ſuch as were dead in ſin, and that deſerved death, or that really polluted the ſoul, even as the touch of a dead corpſe did the body? As therefore it was abundantly ſuited to render the exerciſe of mercy conſiſtent with the moſt perfect juſtice and holineſs; when apprehended by faith, it would remove the burden of guilt from the conſcience, and give the trembling ſinner peace, confidence, and comfort in approaching to, worſhipping, and obeying the living God; and chriſtians could therefore have no occaſion to cleave to the abrogated typical expiations of the Moſaic law.—Some expoſitors, by the eternal Spirit, ſuppoſe the perſonal Deity of the Son to be meant: but this ſeems rather to be implied in the word *Chriſt:* and as the holineſs, obedience, powers, and ſupports of his human nature are conſtantly aſcribed to his immeaſureable unction with the Holy Ghoſt, ſealing his appointment to his mediatorial offices: and as he was made willing for, and carried through his laſt ſcene of ſufferings, by his moſt perfect zeal and love, &c. which alſo gave value to his ſacrifice: ſo the Holy Spirit ſeems to be intended, and his eternal Deity, (as well as the everlaſting value and efficacy of Chriſt's atonement,) is atteſted by the epithet here employed.

V. 15—18.] Becauſe of the unceaſing, and inexhauſtible efficacy of his ſacrifice, Chriſt was appointed to be the Mediator of the new *covenant.* He had undertaken the cauſe of ſinners, which muſt otherwiſe have been relinquiſhed as deſperate; as he alone was capable of offering a ſacrifice of ſufficient value, to make a real atonement for ſins: and he had come into the world in human nature, for that purpoſe; in order, that by means of his death, to atone, and pay a ranſom to God for the tranſgreſſions, that had been committed by believers under the old *covenant,* or the legal diſpenſation; even they, who lived before his coming, as well as all others, who were called by the grace of God to faith in Him, might receive the promiſe of an eternal inheritance, (*Rom.* c. iii. v. 21—26.) For the temporal inheritance alone was ſecured to the Iſraelites by their obſervance of the legal expiations; and they among them, who ſought, and obtained ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, were made partakers of them through the anticipated efficacy of Chriſt's redemption. Yet that grace was finally confirmed to them by his death: ſo that in this reſpect, the *covenant* he mediated might alſo be conſidered as *a Teſtament,* by which a man bequeaths certain legacies to perſons ſpecified therein, to be given to them in conſequence of his death. Thus Chriſt might be conſidered as having acquired in his mediatorial office, a conditional right to diſpoſe of ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, as by his will, and Teſtament: theſe he bequeathed to all ſuch as ſhould apply for them in faith: and though, by a ſpecial favour, ſome were made partakers of them, in conſequence of his unfailing engagements to aſſume human nature, and make redemption for their tranſgreſſions; yet even their right to them was, in ſome ſenſe, incomplete, till after his death; and all others muſt be admitted to claim them on that ground only. For when a Teſtament is made, the death of the teſtator muſt of neceſſity take place, before the legacies can be claimed: it is of no validity, till he be dead; for, as he may change it at pleaſure, whilſt he liveth, ſo it hath no force till afterwards. Thus Chriſt died, not only to purchaſe the bleſſings of ſalvation for us; but to give efficacy to his teſtamentary diſpoſal of them: though he is different from all other teſtators, in that he roſe again, and ever liveth to be the executor of his own Teſtament, for the benefit of all that are intereſted in it. As this is the only place, where the word generally rendered *covenant* ſeems expreſſly to be uſed for a Teſtament, or the will of a dying Perſon; ſome expoſitors have laboured hard to find out another conſtruction of the paſſage: as if the apoſtle had meant, that the ratification of the covenant, of neceſſity required the death of *him,* or *them, over,* or *on account of whom* it was ratified, or appointed; meaning the ſacrifices under the old covenant, and Chriſt as the atonement under the new covenant. But the conſtruction is very harſh and obſcure, on this ſuppoſition: and as both the Hebrew and Greek words rendered *a covenant,* ſignify alſo *a Teſtament,* or any other abſolute appointment without reſtipulation; ſo there ſeems a peculiar propriety in the apoſtle's illuſtrating his important ſubject, by every idea that the word could convey to the minds of his readers; that he might ſhew the neceſſity and benefit of the death of Chriſt, in every view, that the ſubject would admit of. The interpretation has in other reſpects been purpoſely arranged to obviate ſome leſſer objections, which are not important enough to require a particular conſideration.

V. 18—26.] To prefigure the neceſſity of the bloodſhedding of Chriſt, even the firſt, or the Sinai covenant, 23 *It was* therefore neceſſary that the patterns of things in the heavens ſhould be purified with theſe; but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe.

24 For Chriſt is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often, as the high-prieſt entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others:

26 For then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many; and unto them that look for him ſhall he appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation.

had not been dedicated or ratified without blood. For after the law of ten commandments had been delivered from the mount, and Moſes had ſpoken every precept to the people, according to the outlines of that law, on which their national covenant was to be eſtabliſhed, and they had conſented to it; he wrote them in a book, and proceeded to the ſolemn ratification of the covenant, as a typical mediator between God and the nation. (Notes &c. *Exod.* c. xxiv.) The apoſtle ſpecified ſome particulars, which are not found in the hiſtory; probably taking them from the traditionary uſages of his people on ſimilar occaſions. To prevent the blood from coagulating, it was cuſtomary to mix it with water, that it might ſprinkle the better, (which was an apt emblem of the twofold; benefit of Chriſt's atonement;) and then putting ſcarlet wool upon a ſtalk of hyſſop, they therewith ſprinkled it. (Notes, *Lev.* c. xiv. v. 7. *Pſ.* li. v. 7.) Moreover the Hebrews knew, that Moſes ſprinkled the tabernacle and all its furniture with blood, to conſecrate them for the worſhip of God. (*Exod.* c. xxix. v. 12. 36. *Lev.* c. viii. v. 15. c. xvi. v. 14---16.) In ſhort it was a general rule, that almoſt every thing was by the law purified with blood; which ſhewed, that nothing could be clean to a ſinner, not even his religious duties; except as his guilt was expiated by the death of a ſacrifice of ſufficient value for that end, and unleſs he continually depended on it. And indeed it was abſolutely an univerſal rule, that without the ſhedding of blood, no kind or degree of ſin could be pardoned, or the puniſhment due to it be remitted. It was then neceſſary, by the appointment of the law, for the exemplars, or types of heavenly things, to be purified by the ſacrifice of innocent animals, and by the application of their blood; or they could not be acceptably uſed in the worſhip of God: but it was neceſſary, for more durable, and immutable reaſons, that the heavenly things themſelves ſhould be purified by ſome things better than ſuch ſacrifices; even by the One ſacrifice of the death of Chriſt, which was infinitely more valuable than they all. In order to his efficaciouſly interceding for ſinners in heaven, and opening for them the way to the mercy ſeat; that they might commune with their reconciled Father in his ordinances, and at length be admitted into heaven; it was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould on earth, in our nature, ſhed his blood, and die a ſacrifice on the croſs; that he might have the infinite merit of that ſacrifice to plead before the throne, in behalf of all, who come unto God by him: otherwiſe mercy ſhewn to ſinners would diſhonour the juſtice and holineſs of God, and their admiſſion into heaven would, as it were, defile that holy place. For Chriſt had not entered into a worldly ſanctuary, made by the hands of men to be the figures of the true, for which the blood of animals might be a ſuitable conſecration: but he had entered into heaven itſelf, to appear in the immediate preſence of God, as the Advocate for rebels and enemies, and in order to procure them full pardon, abundant grace, and eternal life: and a ſacrifice of proportionably ſuperior value was neceſſary, that he might perform this miniſtration to the glory of God, and the ſalvation of his people. This had been provided for, in the ſacrifice of himſelf: and there was no need, that he ſhould frequently repeat his atoning ſufferings and death; after the manner of the high-prieſt, who every year went into he holy place with the blood of others, even of the animals ſlain for ſin-offerings: for in that caſe Chriſt muſt often have ſuffered, ſince the firſt entrance of ſin, ſoon after the foundation of the world, when the efficacy of his gracious interpoſition in behalf of ſinners began. This he muſt have done if the ſacrifice had been of ſmall, or even of finite value; as it would have been if he were only a mere man, or a mere creature. But on the contrary, the intrinſic, and infinite value of his ſacrifice appeared, in that, after He had been predicted and promiſed for 4000 years, and ſinners had all along been ſaved by faith in him; he at length appeared in human nature, once, in the laſt period of the world, when the concluding diſpenſation was to be introduced: that by the One ſacrifice of himſelf he might make an all-ſufficient atonement for ſin, and both provide for the full pardon of all the ſins of the numberleſs multitudes of believers, through every age and nation; and alſo for the deſtruction of ſin out of their hearts and nature, by their gradual ſanctification: that ſo they might at laſt be made as righteous, holy and happy, as if they never had been ſinners: ſo vaſt was the value and efficacy of his one oblation!

V. 27, 28.] As by the ſentence denounced on the human race in Adam, the ſurety of the covenant of works, it had been appointed for men once to die (from which Enoch and Elijah alone had been excepted, nor was that favour to be hoped for by any others, till the end of the world;) and as it was alſo appointed to all men, without one exception, that after death, they muſt appear in judgment before God, and receive an eternal recompence of their conduct, during their lives on earth; which judgment muſt be unto condemnation to

CHAP. X.

Contains 1ſt. The inſufficiency of the legal ſacrifices argued from their frequent repetition, and the neceſſity and efficacy of the ſacrifice of Chriſt proved from the prophets, 1---18. *2d. Encouraging exhortations to faith, prayer, conſtancy in the profeſſion of the goſpel, and the practice of its duties, and patience under trials; with ſolemn warnings and admonitions againſt apoſtacy,* 19---39.

FOR the law, having a ſhadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never, with thoſe ſacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceaſed to be offered: becauſe that the worſhippers once purged ſhould have had no more conſcience of ſins.

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all ſinners, who have not previouſly obtained a pardon; and as without ſhedding of blood there can be no remiſſion of ſins, nor could the legal ſacrifices really atone for them: ſo Chriſt the ſecond Adam, the Surety of his people, had once offered himſelf to bear the ſins of many, even of all the multitudes that ever did, or ever ſhall believe in him; that thus he might fully expiate them, and make way for their entire pardon and complete ſalvation. So that, though they are not exempted from the ſtroke of death; yet they are delivered from the penalty, the ſting, and the conſequences of death: they will at length be made conquerors over that terrible enemy, and thus be juſtified in Chriſt at the day of judgment, and inherit eternal life through him. He therefore need not to appear on earth again in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, to be numbered with tranſgreſſors, and be made ſin for us: but he will at laſt appear in another form, in all his mediatorial, and perſonal glory, as the omnipotent, omniſcient, and righteous Judge of the world; in order to complete the ſalvation of all thoſe, who believe in Him, expect and wait for his coming, and prepare to meet him, by faith, hope, love, and patient obedience. "Did he not appear the firſt time without ſin? Yes certainly, as to "any inherent guilt; for the ſcripture ſays, "*He had* "*no ſin.*" What then is the meaning of this oppoſition, "that at his firſt coming *he bare our ſins*, but at his ſe"cond coming *he ſhall appear without ſin unto ſalvation?* "Theſe words can have no other imaginable ſenſe but "this, that at his firſt coming he ſuſtained the perſon of "a ſinner, and ſuffered inſtead of us: but his ſecond "coming ſhall be on another account, and he ſhall ap"pear, not as a ſacrifice, but as a Judge, &c." (Tillotſon.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ordinances of divine ſervice, and the worldly ſanctuary of the Moſaic covenant point out to us Chriſt as our Light, and the Bread of life to our ſouls; and remind us of his divine Perſon, his fruitful prieſthood that flouriſhes for ever, his perfect righteouſneſs, and his all-prevailing interceſſion: which things the angels deſire to look into, with admiring praiſe and adoration! At what a diſtance hath ſin placed us from our holy Creator; when all the preparatory ſacrifices of the law ſtill left the worſhippers ſecluded, and, in a ſenſe, baniſhed, even from the preſence of God, upon his mercy-ſeat! All theſe ſacrifices and ſervices could no more purge the guilty conſcience; than diſtinctions in meats, and divers baptiſms could cleanſe the filthy heart, or new create the fallen nature of man. Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that the way into the holieſt is now manifeſted by the coming, ſacrifice, and aſcenſion of our great High-Prieſt! Now we ſinners of the Gentiles may come with more boldneſs to the throne of grace, than Iſrael's pontiff himſelf could: and now the gate of heaven is thrown open to all believers! Eternal redemption and the promiſe of eternal inheritance are purchaſed for us by the blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God. This effectually purges the moſt guilty conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God; whilſt the grace, that ſeals the pardon, new creates the polluted ſoul. May we then be made partakers of this heavenly calling, and ſeek remiſſion of our ſins, only through the ſhedding and ſprinkling of the blood of the New Teſtament, which God hath enjoined unto us! May we never preſume to approach Him, except upon a mercy ſeat, and in the name of our great High-prieſt, who is entered into heaven to appear in the preſence of God for us! May we receive all our hopes and bleſſings as the purchaſe of the agonizing, yet voluntary death of our gracious Saviour; the legacy of his dying love, and the gift of his royal munificence to rebellious creatures! May we aſcribe even our ſanctification, and all our real good works to the ſame all-procuring cauſe; and attend on divine ordinances, and offer our ſpiritual ſacrifices as ſprinkled with his blood, and ſo purified from their defilement! And may we expect admiſſion into heaven, as the place he has prepared for us, through the preſenting of his blood, as the ranſom of our ſouls, and the purchaſe of our inheritance; which would otherwiſe have been contaminated by our entrance into it. Thus we ſhould in all things learn the ineſtimable value of the one ſacrifice, which Chriſt once appeared on earth to offer for us; that we may know our intereſt in his covenant, and be conſtrained by his love to the moſt devoted, and unreſerved obedience. In this manner we ſhall be reconciled to the appointed ſtroke of death, and look forward to judgment with chearful hope; and ſo wait prepared, and expect his coming the ſecond time without ſin to perfect our ſalvation. But as no wiſdom, learning, virtue, wealth, reputation, or authority can exempt one of our race from the ſentence of death; ſo nothing can deliver a ſinner from condemnation at the day of judgment, except an intereſt in the atoning ſacrifice of Chriſt; nor will one be ſaved from eternal puniſhment, who hath deſpiſed, refuſed, or neglected this great ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—4.] As the Hebrews would be backward in acceding to the apoſtle's inferences, con-

3 But in thoſe *ſacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of ſins every year.

4 For *it is* not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins.

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cerning the inefficacy of the legal [illegible] ions, &c; he proceeded ſtill further to argue tha[illegible]mportant ſubject with them. He obſerved, that the ceremonial law had only a ſhadow of the good things to come to the church by the Meſſiah, and not ſo much as the very image of them: its ordinances rather reſembled faintly and obſcurely, the way of ſalvation through Chriſt; as a ſhadow, or the rude ſketch of a picture does a man: than gave a lively, or adequate idea of it; as the reflection in a mirror, a good portrait, or a ſtatue do of the perſon thus repreſented. So that it could not, by the ſacrifices, which were conſtantly offered every year on the great day of atonement, make the very perſons, who came into the courts of the temple on that ſolemn occaſion, free from the guilt of their offences, or perfectly accepted with God. He was pleaſed, indeed, to exempt Iſrael from national puniſhment, and to continue their external benefits, whilſt they adhered to the preſcribed worſhip: but they, who were actually pardoned and ſaved, received thoſe bleſſings by faith in the promiſed Meſſiah. This muſt be allowed to have been the caſe; for if theſe ſacrifices could have completely atoned for the ſins of the people, would they not have been diſcontinued, as no further neceſſary? Seeing the worſhippers, having been once purged from their guilt, would have no more been burdened with ſuch a conſcience of ſins, as required more and further ſacrifices to take it away. This is the privilege of chriſtians: for Chriſt's ſacrifice, being of intrinſic, and infinite value and efficacy; there is no occaſion for it to be repeated: but believers, having once had their conſciences purged from dead works, by faith in his blood, are perfectly juſtified and accepted unto eternal life: thenceforth they ſeek no other ſacrifice, they are no more brought under condemnation; they continually apply, in the exerciſe of penitent faith, the unfailing efficacy of that atonement to their conſciences; and thus they preſerve inward peace, connected with humiliation, and tenderneſs of conſcience, notwithſtanding the remains of ſin in their hearts, and the guilt they thence contract in their daily conduct. This argument implied, that no ſacrifice could really atone for ſin, or bring ſinners into a ſtate of acceptance with God, unto eternal life, which did not make full ſatisfaction to his offended juſtice, and render it honourable to him to remit the puniſhment of it. But the legal ſacrifices were ſo far from being thus efficacious, that they did not ſuffice for the individuals, or the generation of Iſrael, who preſented them, even in reſpect of a permanent exemption from temporal judgments: for the moſt ſolemn of them, at the day of atonement, was rather an annual remembrance of their ſins, than a removal of the guilt of them: ſo that they had only a reſpect to the year that was paſt; and the ſame remembrance was made of ſins, when the day returned the next year. For indeed it was not poſſible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away ſin, by making an actual atonement to divine juſtice for it. As divine appointments, ſuch ſacrifices might be a ſuitable acknowledgment of guilt, and profeſſion of repentance, and reliance on God's mercy, on account of which he might bear with them, and give them temporal benefits; and they aptly typified the ſacrifice of Chriſt: But they could not *poſſibly* render pardoning mercy in its moſt plenteous exerciſe conſiſtent with the infinite juſtice and holineſs of God; without which nothing can poſſibly take away ſin, according to the apoſtle's reaſoning. The ſame argument equally proves, that the blood of a mere man, or of a mere creature, cannot take away ſin: a guilty creature deſerves wrath for his own crimes: if a perfectly holy man had the full diſpoſal of his own life and ſoul, and could be willing to devote them to deſtruction, in the ſtead of a ſingle guilty perſon; his life might be an adequate ranſom for the other's life, his ſoul for the the other's ſoul; but this muſt be all: and even in this caſe, we cannot conceive that God would appoint, allow of, or accept ſuch an atonement. If we conſider the moſt exalted of mere creatures willingly aſſuming our nature to ſuffer temporal death in its moſt horrible forms for our ſalvation; we muſt perceive that the atonement would be very ſmall value, when compared with the guilt to be pardoned, and the puniſhment to be remitted for the ſake of it; nor could this render it conſiſtent with the perfect juſtice of God to pardon the atrocious, and innumerable rebellions, of ſo many millions, and to give them eternal life, on ſuch a trivial conſideration. If "without ſhedding of blood there could be no "remiſſion," it muſt have been, becauſe God ſaw that ſin fully deſerved his wrath, and curſe denounced againſt it; and that it could not conſiſt with perfect diſtributive juſtice to remit the puniſhment, except through a vicarious ſacrifice: and if the blood of bulls and goats could not poſſibly take away ſin: it muſt have been, becauſe they were not a ſufficient ſatisfaction to divine juſtice, or in other words, a ſufficient declaration of God's holy hatred of ſin, his judgment of its deſert, and his determination to maintain the honour of his broken law; to render it conſiſtent with his glory finally to pardon ſinners on account of it. Now it muſt be evident, that the crucifixion of Peter, or of Paul, even, if they had been free from ſin, would have exhibited nothing deciſive in this matter; there would have been no equality between the ſufferer or his ſufferings, and the criminals to be pardoned, or the puniſhment to be remitted, for the ſake thereof: and the caſe muſt ſtill be the ſame, how high ſoever we aſcend in the ſcale of created being. But when "God manifeſted in the fleſh," became the ſacrifice, and his death upon the accurſed tree the ranſom; when God purchaſed the church with his own blood: the Sufferer being of infinite dignity, his voluntary ſufferings were of infinite value. The perfect juſtice and holineſs of God, and the honour of his law, are as legible in the croſs of Chriſt, as his love to ſinners: infinite purity, and infinite mercy are in perfect and eternal harmony; whilſt unnumbered millions of hell-deſerving rebels are pardoned, and made heirs of eternal felicity, through this ſatisfaction of ineſtimable value. We ſee, that this was an expedient adequate to its object; and that ſuch a ſacri-

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he ſaith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and *ſacrifices* for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure.

7 Then ſaid I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he ſaid, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for ſin thou wouldeſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure *therein*; (which are offered by the law;)

9 Then ſaid he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond.

10 By the which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once *for all*.

11 And every prieſt ſtandeth daily miniſtering, and offering oftentimes the ſame ſacrifices, which can never take away ſins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footſtool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.

15 *Whereof* the Holy Ghoſt alſo is a witneſs to us: for after that he had ſaid before,

16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them:

17 And their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remiſſion of theſe *is*, *there is* no more offering for ſin.

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fice would ſuffice for the ſins of the whole world; if all men were made willing to come to God through it. It is neceſſary for us to inſiſt upon this, not only as compriſing an unanſwerable argument for the real Deity, and the proper atonement of Chriſt; but becauſe many, who profeſs to believe both theſe doctrines, under colour of blaming metaphyſical niceties in ſtating doctrines; (though none dabble more in metaphyſics than they do:) and affecting to treat the orthodox reformers, and doctrinal puritans &c, as men of narrow minds; advance many things contrary to the apoſtle's reaſoning in this paſſage: as if Chriſt's ſacrifice derived *all* its efficacy from the appointment of God, and not from his perſonal Deity and excellency; (which was the altar that ſanctified the gift;) and as if, had the Lord ſo pleaſed, an inferior ſacrifice might have equally anſwered the purpoſe. But ſurely they forget that God appointed the ſacrifices of bulls and goats, as well as that of his Son: yet it was not poſſible for the former to take away ſin, but the latter at once effected it, becauſe of its intrinſic value. It behoves us to be aware of ſuch ſpecious deviations from the good old way; which in this day of affected improvement, ſuperficial reaſoning, ſceptical enquiry, and laxity in religion, both as to principles and practice, are likely to do great miſchief. “ To the law, and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not “ according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light “ in them.”

V. 5—10.] To prove his doctrine incontrovertibly, the apoſtle referred the Hebrews to a remarkable prophecy of the Meſſiah: which ſhewed that his coming was the neceſſary conſequence of the inefficacy of the legal ſacrifices, and of God's purpoſe of ſaving ſinners. (Notes, *Pſ.* xl.) The Meſſiah ſpeaking to Jehovah concerning his coming into the world, remarked that he had no delight in the ſacrifices of the law; (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* l. v. 7—15. *Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 10—15:) but “that he had prepared a body for him.” The words in the Pſalm are, “ mine ears haſt thou opened,” or “ *bored*,” (*Exod.* c. xxi. v. 5, 6;) and it hath perplexed many to determine why the apoſtle writing to the Hebrews ſhould quote from the Septuagint, where thoſe tranſlators ſeem to have given an erroneous rendering of the original. But he probably ſuppoſed that the words conveyed the meaning, though not the exact import of the paſſage: and that the production of the holy human nature of Chriſt was the preparation for his mediatorial obedience, which the holy Spirit intended by the expreſſion, “ mine ears haſt “ thou opened.” When Jehovah had no ſatisfaction in the legal ſacrifices, as not ſufficiently diſplaying the honour of his juſtice, in pardoning ſinners; Chriſt declared his readineſs to come into the world, in human nature, for that purpoſe; according as it had been written of him in the volume of the book, or in the *opening of the roll* of prophecy, in which he had been promiſed as the ſeed of the woman. Now the apoſtle argued from this, that the oppoſition between the ſacrifices, in which Jehovah had no pleaſure, and the obedience of Chriſt to his whole will, in which he would be fully ſatisfied, was an evident intimation, that he intended to remove the former, that he might eſtabliſh the latter in its full glory, and as the only ground of ſinners being pardoned and ſaved. By the which will of God, perfectly performed by Chriſt, in his obedience unto the death upon the croſs, chriſtians were ſanctified and conſecrated to God as accepted and ſpiritual worſhippers; even through the offering of his body once for ſin, with which his mediatorial obedience had been completed.

V. 11—18] Every prieſt of Aaron's order, ſtood as a ſervant at his work, offering repeatedly the ſame infinite ſacrifices: ſome of the prieſts did this every day; and the high-prieſt did it every year on the day of atonement. But *this perſon*, or *this prieſt*, even Chriſt after the of-

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us, through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh;

21 And *having* an High-prieſt over the houſe of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water.

23 Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of *our* faith without wavering; for he *is* faithful that promiſed:

24 And let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works;

25 Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome *is*; but

fering of one ſacrifice (becauſe that was of infinite value, and eternal efficacy,) ſat down as a royal Prieſt upon his throne, at the right hand of God; from that time waiting the fulfilment of the prophecy or promiſe, which engaged, that all his enemies ſhould be put under his feet. For by his one oblation, he had provided effectually for the perfect juſtification unto eternal life of all thoſe, who were intereſted in his atonement, by that faith, that ſprings from regeneration, and is evidenced by the ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience; and who were thus ſet apart for, and conſecrated to the ſervice of God. To this the Holy Ghoſt had borne teſtimony in the ſcripture, which had been before quoted. (Note, c. viii. v. 7—13:) according to the covenant there ſpoken of; when the laws of God are written in the heart, every kind and degree of ſin will be for ever pardoned; for Chriſt by his one offering hath perfected for ever, them that are ſanctified: and where ſuch perfect remiſſion is vouchſafed, there needs no more ſacrifice for ſins. For though juſtified perſons continually contract new guilt, and their beſt ſervices want forgiveneſs; yet they never fall from a juſtified ſtate, the ſacrifice of Chriſt continually applied to, in the exerciſe of penitent faith, preſerves their peace; and if the exerciſe of theſe graces be intermitted, through temptation and ſin; corrections, rebukes, and terrors, bring them back again to the ſame remedy: and thus their juſtification is, as it were, a permanent act of God, continued in their daily pardon and acceptance for Chriſt's ſake, through life even unto death, and ſo in judgment, and to eternity.

V. 19—25.] The apoſtle, having cloſed the argumentative part of his epiſtle, proceeded to apply his doctrine to practical purpoſes. As believers had liberty, and acceſs with boldneſs, into the immediate preſence of God, in the moſt holy place, and to the mercy-ſeat, even beyond what was permitted to the High-Prieſt himſelf under the law: it behoved them to make uſe of this privilege; for they were in no danger of being puniſhed as preſumptuous, notwithſtanding their ſinfulneſs, and the holineſs of God, how often ſoever they came before him; provided they humbly depended on, and pleaded the blood of Jeſus, by which this privilege had been purchaſed for ſinners. They might now have acceſs into the holieſt, "by a *new* way:" the original way of acceptance and communion with God, through the righteouſneſs of works, had been finally ſhut up by the entrance of ſin. (Note, *Gen.* c. iii. v. 24:) and the typical ſacrifices could not open another way; as the reſtrictions and excluſions before ſtated evidently ſhewed: whilſt even the partial admiſſion of the High-Prieſt, being preceded with recent ſacrifices, and blood *newly ſhed*, ſhewed that the way into the holieſt was not yet manifeſted; as the blood of all the former victims was become wholly unfit for that uſe. But the blood of Jeſus is always, as it were, *newly ſhed*; it never loſes its efficacy, and may at any time, and by any ſinner be preſented in faith before the mercy-ſeat, and never fails to procure all, who thus plead it, a free and acceptable acceſs to God. This way is alſo *living:* as Jeſus, the High-Prieſt, ever liveth to intercede before the throne of God for us; as the way itſelf gives life, as it were, to thoſe, that come in it; and as it leads to eternal life. (Note, *John* c. xiv. v. 6.) This new and living way Chriſt hath conſecrated, authorized, and ſet apart for this purpoſe, that we may come to God in the holieſt upon a mercy-ſeat, "through "the vail, that is, his fleſh." Jehovah diſplayed his glory above the mercy-ſeat, in the holy of holies, before the coming of Chriſt; but this glory was covered and concealed by the vail: that is, the harmony of infinite holineſs with pardoning mercy, in the divine conduct and character, was not clearly diſcovered or underſtood: but when the human nature of Chriſt, the Son of God, was wounded and bruiſed for our ſins, the vail was rent from top to bottom, the obſcurity was removed, and *a juſt God and a Saviour* was openly revealed to mankind, diſplaying his glory from the mercy-ſeat, and exerciſing moſt abundant grace to the vileſt of ſinners, in a manner moſt honourable to his infinite purity. Having ſuch a way to God, and ſuch a High-prieſt over the true ſanctuary; it was not proper that the Hebrews ſhould ſtand at a diſtance, as if afraid to approach, or averſe to the moſt cordial reconciliation and friendſhip. The apoſtle therefore joined himſelf to them, and called on them to accompany him in drawing near to the Lord, with fervent deſires, large expectations, and continual prayers and thankſgivings: this muſt be done with ſincerity and integrity of heart, as real penitents, and upright worſhippers, fearing nothing but hypocriſy; and "in full aſſur"ance of faith," moſt firmly believing, that God would accept the perſons and ſervices of, and fulfil his promiſes to, all thoſe, who came to him in this appointed way. For, though they might properly examine themſelves whether they were true believers or no, and ſo admit a doubt of their own ſincerity or perſonal acceptance; and therefore the *full aſſurance of hope* could not always be a *duty*, any more than always attainable: yet they muſt never allow themſelves to doubt of the truth of God's teſtimony, or his faithfulneſs to his promiſes; ſo exhorting *one another*: and ſo much the more, as ye ſee the day approaching.

26 For if we ſin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.

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that the *full aſſurance of faith* was always their duty; though in that, as in other things, they would be liable to come ſhort of it. In order to come in this manner, they muſt "have their hearts ſprinkled from an evil "conſcience," by a ſpecial reliance on, and application of, the atoning blood of Chriſt; to take away their ſenſe of guilt, and fears of wrath, and to give them ſolid peace, connected with the purifying of their conſciences from error, ignorance, partiality and ſtupidity, or whatever might render them quiet in the allowance of any kind or degree of ſin; which would alſo be connected with the cleanſing of their hearts from carnal and corrupt affections. Their "bodies alſo were to be waſhed with pure "water:" as the prieſts were waſhed with water before they were admitted to enter upon their office, and continually waſhed themſelves, in ſome meaſure, before they officiated; and as divers waſhings were appointed to the worſhippers, by the law: ſo the uſe of water in baptiſm was to be a conſtant memorial to chriſtians, that their outward conduct ſhould be pure and holy before men, as well as their hearts and conſciences cleanſed in the ſight of God. Thus they would approve themſelves to be ſpiritual worſhippers, (1 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 8:) and whilſt they derived comfort and grace from their reconciled Father into their own ſouls; they would adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. The apoſtle further called upon them, to unite with him, in holding faſt the profeſſion of their faith, and hope in Chriſt; without wavering in it, faultering about it, or ſhrinking from the perſecutions to which it would expoſe them: being aſſured, that God would vouchſafe them the preſent comforts, ſupports, and the future felicity, which he had promiſed; and depending on his faithfulneſs for them. And moreover, they ought to conſider one another's intereſts, dangers, and ſituations, and by what means they could be of ſervice to each other: eſpecially they ſhould endeavour, by their example and exhortations to ſtimulate each other to the more vigorous, and abundant exerciſe of love, and zealous practice of good works. Nor ought they, from fear of the reproaches and perſecutions of their enemies, to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together, on the Lord's day, or at other times, to worſhip God in his ordinances, and to hear his word: as the manner of ſome chriſtians was, who were induced through timidity, or lukewarmneſs, to decline ſuch attendance on public worſhip. On the contrary, they ought to exhort one another continually to be bold, conſtant, and diligent in their holy religion, in honouring God before his enemies, and in ſeeking their own and each others edification, and eſtabliſhment in the faith. This they ought the more reſolutely to perform; as they muſt plainly ſee the ſigns of Jeruſalem's approaching deſolation, which the Lord Jeſus had mentioned in his predictions of that cataſtrophe, and which was evidently approaching. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* xxiv.) This was written only a few years before that event, and as it would
be a critical deliverance of chriſtians from the perſecution
of the Jews; ſo it would be peculiarly terrible t
apoſtates.

V. 26, 27.] (Notes, &c. c. vi. v. 4—9.) Th
Hebrews would be tempted to apoſtacy, not only by th
virulence of their perſecuting countrymen, but by thei
own undue attachment to the legal ſacrifices &c. S
long as they ſuppoſed that the blood of goats, &c, coul
take away ſin; they might hope for ſafety in renouncin
chriſtianity, and ſo eſcaping perſecution; and thus the
might be induced to "ſin wilfully after they had receiv
"ed the knowledge of the truth." The whole argu
ment ſhews, that the apoſtle principally intended a wil
ful, deliberate, and pertinacious apoſtacy; not the effe
of ignorance or ſudden ſurpriſe; but againſt the convic
tions of their own conſciences, and in a preſumptuou
and obſtinate manner: though he expreſſed himſelf i
ſuch language, as might alſo warn the readers againſt e
very kind of wilful, and preſumptuous ſin. The perſon
ſpoken of, were ſuch, as had "received the knowledg
"of the truth," and were ſo enlightened in reſpect of th
evidences, and the doctrines of chriſtianity, as to make
credible and intelligent profeſſion of it, in the apoſtle
days. When this had *preceded*; a wilful renunciation
chriſtianity to return to Judaiſm, either from averſion
the croſs, or from proud and carnal enmity to the humi
liating, and ſpiritual truth of the goſpel, would general
ly be fatal to them: for though the caſe of heathen con
verts who apoſtatized, might be referred to; yet it w
not primarily intended. In reſpect of ſuch apoſtat
"there remained no more ſacrifice for ſin:" the leg
ſacrifices had loſt all their validity and efficacy to ave
even national judgments, ſince the death of Chriſ
which was the ſubſtance of all theſe ſhadows: ſo that t
Jewiſh nation was devoted to ſpeedy deſtruction, for cr
cifying their Meſſiah, and rejecting his goſpel; nor cou
their moſt exact and zealous attention to their legal e
piations procure the leaſt reſpite from, or alleviation
their approaching miſeries; and the apoſtates wilful
choſe their portion with that accurſed generation "af
"having received the knowledge of the truth." N
could it be expected, that they would ever be renewed
repentance of this atrocious and preſumptuous wicke
neſs: for they muſt have witneſſed ſo many miracl
and even have exerciſed ſuch gifts of the Holy Gh
themſelves; that it might be ſuppoſed that they had co
mitted the blaſphemy againſt that divine Agent, by
cribing his operation to ſome ſatanical influence; and t
they would be given up to final impenitence and unb
lief, and be wholly excluded from the benefit of Chri
efficacious ſacrifice. So that nothing would remain
them, either as individuals, or as a part of the Jew
nation, in reſpect of their temporal, or their eternal ſta
but a certain, inevitable and moſt terrible expectation
the judgment and vengeance of God, and of his indig
tion, like flaming fire, to conſume them, as his implac

28 He that deſpiſed Moſes' law died without mercy, under two or three witneſſes:

29 Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompenſe, ſaith the Lord. And again, The Lord ſhall judge his people.

31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

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ble enemies, and ſacrifices to his offended juſtice; even as the fire on the altar conſumed the typical ſacrifices. There ſeems in this paſſage to be a peculiar reference to the unexampled miſeries, that came ſoon after on the Jewiſh nation, and to their deſperate rage and fury in the midſt of them: and this horror of conſcience, connected with deſperation, and all its tremendous effects, (as in the caſe of Judas,) might be expected to be moſt common among ſuch apoſtates from chriſtianity, as had done violence to their own conviction, and ſinned againſt their better knowledge, with preſumptuous enmity; when they ſaw matters evidently coming to thoſe extremities which Chriſt had predicted. But this horror and deſpair were only a ſhadow of the unſpeakable anguiſh, to which ſuch perſons would at length be reduced, when the inſulted Saviour ſhould proceed to execute vengeance upon them, from which they would ſee, that it was impoſſible to eſcape. Sometimes ſuch apoſtates have been ſhewn their deſperate condition before death, and, in all the horrors and blaſphemous rage of damned ſpirits, have ſerved as beacons to warn others, not to imitate their conduct. Probably there were few, or no inſtances of ſuch *enlightened*, and *deliberate* apoſtates being reſtored: perhaps ſeveral of them had been known to be given up to the moſt tremendous horrors of conſcience, &c; and it was peculiarly proper to ſtate this matter in ſuch ſtrong language for the benefit of others. Yet this did not imply, that any *penitent* would be excluded from mercy; or that any one would be excluded from the benefit of Chriſt's ſacrifice, who humbly, earneſtly, and *perſeveringly* ſought it, into whatever ſins he had been betrayed. The perſons ſpoken of are conſidered as *adverſaries*, which cannot properly be applied to the caſe of any trembling, weeping, praying penitent. It was not probable, that any ſuch apoſtate, as was deſcribed, ſhould, in the peculiar circumſtances of thoſe times, thus return to ſeek forgiveneſs by faith in the blood of Chriſt: and their danger conſiſted, in being given up to final obduracy, or deſperation. Moreover theſe things were written to warn thoſe, who wavered in their profeſſion; not to affright the fallen, or to diſcourage the penitent. The paſſage therefore can have nothing at all to do with the caſe of perſons called chriſtians theſe days, who had not received the knowledge either of the evidences or doctrines of chriſtianity; but who through the ignorance and artifices of wicked men, have been led to doubt of, or deny the truth of the ſcriptures, without any of the peculiar aggravations of theſe primitive apoſtates. Some of theſe perſons, being afterwards "renewed to repentance," have aſſuredly believed the goſpel, experienced the power of its truth in their hearts, and produced the fruits of it in their lives; yet ſatan has taken advantage of the ſound of this, and ſimilar paſſages, and of ſome unguarded things, that expoſitors have ſaid upon the ſubject, to harraſs them with perpetual apprehenſions that their remained no benefit for them in Chriſt's ſacrifice, becauſe they once doubted of, or denied the truth of chriſtianity: though they now value that ſalvation more than all the world. Some caſes of this kind have fallen under the writer's cognizance; and in this day of ſcepticiſm and infidelity in which multitudes aſpire to the reputation of free thinkers, by never thinking ſeriouſly at all, there may be many others of the ſame kind: for when ſatan can no longer bolſter men up in unbelieving preſumption, he endeavours to drive them into unbelieving deſperation; and he never fails to harraſs thoſe to the utmoſt whoſe deſtruction he cannot compaſs. To obviate ſuch concluſions theſe paſſages have been enlarged on; and ſhewn to be totally inapplicable to the caſe under conſideration. Even when the goſpel has been renounced, after far clearer knowledge, and with much greater malignity than in the caſe before ſtated; the apoſtacy cannot be *fatal* unleſs it be *final*. It is the peculiar honour of God's mercy and of the redemption of Chriſt, that none are excluded from them, who are willing to accept of them in the preſcribed manner: "him that "cometh unto Chriſt, he will *in no wiſe* caſt out," whatever he hath before been guilty of: but when profeſſors are tempted to apoſtacy, they may well fear, leſt God ſhould be provoked to give them up to final obduracy and a reprobate mind.

V. 28—31.] The ſacrifices of the law were principally appointed for ſins of ignorance, infirmity, or inadvertency, but preſumptuous tranſgreſſors were excluded from that benefit. (*Num.* c. xv. v. 30—31.) He therefore, who deſpiſed the law of Moſes, and deliberately violated its plain commands, in contempt and defiance of the authority and vengeance of God, was puniſhable with death, and excluded from mercy, when the fact had been legally proved; even though the crime were ſuch as might otherwiſe have been pardoned through a treſpaſs-offering. But of how much ſeverer vengeance would they be adjudged to be deſerving, who had renounced the goſpel, in that wilful, contemptuous, and preſumptuous manner, which had been deſcribed? They had indeed, as it were, trampled upon the Son of God, with inſolent defiance and diſdain, by doing all in their power to diſhonour and provoke him with the moſt deſperate ingratitude and impiety: they had eſteemed that precious blood, which purchaſed all the bleſſings of the new covenant for ſinners, and ratified it to all that believed; and by the ſhedding of which Chriſt had been ſanctified, or conſecrated to be the High-prieſt, and Advocate of ſinners in the heavenly ſanctuary, as if it had been an unclean thing, 32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

33 Partly, whilſt ye were made a gazing-ſtock, both by reproaches, and afflictions; and partly, whilſt ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed.

34 For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in yourſelves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.

35 Caſt not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompence of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſe.

37 For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the juſt ſhall live by faith; but if *any man* draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition: but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.

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leſs holy than the blood of goats, or as vile as that of a malefactor. Some apply the word *ſanctified* to the apoſtate; who had been admitted into the church as ſet apart for God, and conſecrated to his ſervice by profeſſing faith in the blood of Chriſt, which he afterwards vilified. This may refer to thoſe blaſphemies againſt Jeſus of Nazareth, which were often required of thoſe, who renounced the goſpel in order to avoid death or other ſufferings; and which apoſtates would commonly uſe, in order to gain confidence with the party they had joined. They had moreover done deſpite to the holy Spirit, the divine and gracious author of ſpiritual life, and all its conſolations in the ſouls of ſinners. They had acted in direct oppoſition to the convictions of the holy Spirit and his ſtrivings with them, when they renounced chriſtianity; they traduced with moſt virulent reproaches that religion, which was adorned by the holy fruits of the Spirit in the lives of its profeſſors; and above all, by aſcribing his miraculous power to ſatanical agency, even contrary to their own knowledge; as if they determined to provoke Him in the moſt deſpiteful manner poſſible. So that the authority and mercy of the Father, the Perſon, love, and atoning blood of the Son, and the Perſon and operations of the Holy Ghoſt were alike inſulted and blaſphemed by them, after having profeſſed the goſpel and having been baptized "into the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghoſt," yea, moſt of them at leaſt, after having received the Holy Ghoſt, by the laying on of the hands of the apoſtles, and what puniſhment could be deemed too ſevere for ſuch accumulated guilt? Nor ought any man, when tempted to ſuch a crime, to flatter himſelf with hopes of impunity from the immenſity of the divine mercy: ſeeing he had declared that vengeance belonged to him, as his peculiar perogative; and that he would judge his people, with a determination to puniſh with moſt decided ſeverity the crimes of ſuch as renounced his worſhip, or committed wickedneſs to the diſgrace of their profeſſion. (Notes, *Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 35—44.) And it would be found, and might be known, to be a moſt terrible thing, to fall into the hands of the living, the eternal, and almighty God, as ſacrifices to his juſtice, and objects of his vengeance and abhorrence; without any oblation, or Mediator to appeaſe his indignation. This was about to be the caſe of the Jewiſh nation; and it would peculiarly be the doom of wilful and malignant apoſtates from chriſtianity.

V. 32—39.] The apoſtle here proceeded to argue with, and caution, the Hebrews by other topics. To fortify their minds againſt temptations to apoſtacy, or other wilful ſins, they ought frequently to recollect the former days of their profeſſion; and to conſider what they had ventured, ſuffered, and renounced for Chriſt, and how they had been ſupported and comforted under their trials. When they were firſt illuminated in the knowledge of the goſpel, (Notes, &c. 2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 3—6;) and had been admitted into the chriſtian church; they were ſpeedily called, as ſoldiers to the combat, to contend with perſecutions and afflictions. Some of them were made a public ſpectacle to their neighbours, by the malicious accuſations brought againſt them, and the diſgrace, deriſion, and puniſhment laid upon them: and others were the companions and witneſſes of the cruelties inflicted on thoſe, who were ſo uſed; and ſo were called to unite ſympathy with their afflicted brethren, to fears on their own account. Among thoſe whom the apoſtle eſpecially addreſſed, were ſeveral that had ſhewn compaſſion to him ſome years before, when he was bound at Jeruſalem, and in his ſubſequent confinement: and when, on that or other accounts, their property was ſeized and confiſcated, they not only bare it patiently, but joyfully; having abundant conſolation from the aſſurance that they had in heaven a better, and more enduring inheritance, which could not be taken from them, but would be their *ſubſtantial* felicity for ever. Let then, none of thoſe who had acted heretofore in ſo proper a manner, at length caſt away their confidence in Chriſt, to which ſo gracious and abundant a recompence was promiſed: for ſome who once *ſeemed* to be zealous believers had apoſtatized, and the reſt would ſurely be tried; and they had need to have their minds armed with patient reſignation, and perſevering conſtancy: that having done the will of God, by ſtedfaſtly cleaving to, and obeying Chriſt they might afterwards receive the promiſed gift of eternal life. For in reſpect of their final deliverance from trouble, as well as in reſpect to the coming of Chriſt to take vengeance on the Jewiſh nation, and thus to deliver the chriſtian church from the perſecutions, which they endured from that quarter, the words of God by the prophet might properly be applied, (Notes, *Hab.* c. ii. v. 1—4:) and the *juſt by faith* would live, as had been predicted, whilſt proud unbelievers would be cut off and periſh: but if any man, who had made the moſt plauſible profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, ſhould draw back

CHAP. XI.

Contains 1*ſt. The nature, excellency, and efficacy of faith, illuſtrated by the examples of the moſt eminent ſaints, from Abel, to the cloſe of the old teſtament diſpenſation,* 1---38. 2*d. The ſuperior advantages of chriſtianity,* 39, 40.

in the time of trial, and finally apoſtatize; the Lord declared by his apoſtle, according to the tenor of his whole word, and ſpeaking after the manner of men, that "his "ſoul ſhould have no pleaſure in him," that is, he would utterly reject and entirely abhor him. Many of the Hebrews had thus evidenced the inſincerity of their profeſſion by apoſtacy; and others began to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together, who needed to be reproved and warned: but the apoſtle truſted that himſelf, and they whom he immediately addreſſed, were not profeſſors of that ſort, who drew back to perdition; but ſuch as had "believed to the ſaving of their ſouls;" even ſuch as were partakers of living faith, and would be kept through it by the power of God, unto ſalvation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

So precious are the bleſſings, which are come to us through the goſpel; that all ſacrifices and ordinances, however varied and multiplied, could only be an indiſtinct ſhadow, and not ſo much as an exact, though lifeleſs, image of them: and in like manner the moſt nervous language, the moſt lively expreſſions, and the moſt fervent affections fall immenſely beneath their real excellency. The righteouſneſs brought in, and the ſacrifice once offered by Chriſt, are of eternal efficacy, and his ſalvation ſhall never be aboliſhed: they ſuffice to make all the comers thereunto perfect; the worſhippers, once purged by his atoning blood, need ſeek no other ſacrifice, nor will they, by the conſcience of guilt, be ever driven to adopt ſuch expedients, as call ſin to remembrance, but cannot poſſibly take it away; but daily applying to the great propitiation, they both derive from it ſtrength and motives for obedience, and inward comfort notwithſtanding their ſinfulneſs; (1 *John*, c. ii. v. 1—4.) Moſt certain it is from theſe chapters, that God will not pardon any tranſgreſſion without ſuch a ſacrifice, as can really expiate the guilt of it. And if thoſe ſacrifices, which were of his own appointment, could not take away ſin, becauſe they could not ſatiſfy the demands of his juſtice; let none ſuppoſe, that human inventions, ſelf-impoſed penances, prayers, tears, amendment, moral virtues, alms-deeds, &c. can avail in the behalf of thoſe, who put them in the place of the ſacrifice of the Son of God; "for if righteouſneſs," in any way or degree, "come by the law, then Chriſt died in vain." But when the eternal Son ſaw the hopeleſs condition of fallen man, for whom no ſacrifices, or contrivances could in the leaſt avail: according as it had been written of him in the volume of the book from the beginning, with infinite compaſſion to our deſerved miſery, he came in our nature, to accompliſh the will of the Father, and to bear our ſins in his own body on the tree. Thus by one ſacrifice for ſins he effected the glorious and gracious deſign; and now ſeated on the right of God, he henceforth expects till all his enemies ſhall be put under his feet. What then remains, but that we ſeek an intereſt in this ſacrifice by faith; and the ſeal of it to our ſouls, by the ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience? That, by the law being written in our hearts, we may know that we are perfectly juſtified, and that God will no more remember any of our ſins and iniquities.

Having therefore acceſs with boldneſs into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus; by the new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us, through the rending of the vail, by his crucifixion for our ſins; and having ſuch an high-prieſt over the houſe of God: let us not ſtand at a diſtance, or turn away from him, who beſeeches us to be reconciled: let us in the firſt place, beware of hypocriſy, that we may draw near with a true heart: let us watch and pray againſt unbelief, that we may come in the full aſſurance of faith, as knowing this to be the ſure and only way of acceptance and ſalvation; let us apply his blood to purge us from guilt, and ſeek for his purchaſed and promiſed grace to cleanſe us from all our filthineſs; that ſo our hearts being ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, we may lay aſide the body of the ſins of the fleſh, and walk henceforth in newneſs of life. Thus we ſhall be enabled to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, whatever temptations, or examples we meet with; as knowing that he is faithful who hath promiſed: and, with compoſed and chearful minds, we ſhall be enabled to conſider the caſes of our brethren, that we may animate them to love and good works. But if they were not to be excuſed, who in the time of ſevere perſecution forſook the aſſembling of themſelves together: how ſhall we anſwer it to God, if in theſe favoured days, we indolently abſent ourſelves from the aſſemblies of his ſaints, and neglect to honour Him by attendance on his ordinances? Againſt ſuch evils we ſhould exhort others, and ourſelves gladly to ſuffer the word of exhortation, as knowing that ſoon the day of death, and of judgment approacheth. By negligence, pride, or carnal ſelf-love, or by gradually yielding to the fear of man, profeſſors are left to "ſin wilfully after they have received "the knowledge of the truth:" and though the fallen, the weak, and the trembling ſhould be encouraged; yet we cannot too awfully alarm the ſecure and preſumptuous; as every deliberate ſin againſt light and conſcience is a ſtep towards the tremendous precipice here deſcribed. Neither the mercy of God, the ſacrifice of Chriſt, nor the love of the Spirit, will profit that man, who tramples under foot the Son of God, treats his atoning blood with inſolent contempt, and does deſpite to the Spirit of grace. For ſuch daring rebels and apoſtates, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, to conſume them as the enemies of the Lord. To him belongeth vengeance, and his righteous recompences of the crimes committed by hypocrites and apoſtates, will be more terrible than the doom of Sodom, or even than that executed upon the devoted Jews. However men may now deſpiſe theſe warnings, they will at length know, that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, and to hear him ſay, "it is a "people, that hath no underſtanding; therefore he who "made them, will have no mercy on them." Let then every profeſſor of chriſtianity give diligence to make his

NOW faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen were not made of things which do appear.

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calling and election ſure: let us all remember our convictions, affections, and purpoſes, when we were firſt enlightened; and how we thought that we ſhould be willing to endure, or part with any thing, if we could but obtain peace with God, and a good hope of ſalvation: let us remember our conſolations and ſupports under former trials; and if we have been called to “endure a great fight “of afflictions,” and have ſuffered reproaches and loſſes with fortitude and chearfulneſs, from a perſuaſion that we had in Heaven a better, and a more enduring ſubſtance; let us not diſgrace our former conduct, or caſt away our confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For we ſtill have need of patience, whilſt we wait the accompliſhment of God's promiſes, in obedience to his will. But the time is ſhort: he that *cometh* will ſoon come, and will not tarry beyond his appointed time; and he will ſhortly end our ſorrows and conflicts, by removing our ſouls to Heaven; yea he will ſpeedily come to raiſe the dead, and perfect our ſalvation. Let us then ſhew, that we are juſtified through faith, by living and walking with God in dependance upon his promiſes, and in obedience to his commands, becauſe we are ſatisfied with the ſecurity of his word. Thus we ſhall poſſeſs the aſſurance, that we are not of thoſe who draw back to perdition; but of thoſe, who believe unto the ſaving of the ſoul.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1, 2.] The apoſtle having referred to the prophet's teſtimony concerning “the juſt living by faith,” proceeded more fully to ſhew the nature and efficacy of that principle; and to prove, that it had always been the grand peculiarity of God's ſervants from the beginning of the world. This induction of examples he prefaced by a definition of faith; in which he did not confine his views to one ſingle exerciſe of that fundamental grace, but took in all the variety of its actings, in the whole of a believer's experience and conduct. Where the general principle is implanted by the regenerating Spirit of God, it will lead a man to receive the truth, concerning juſtification by the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the meaſure of light afforded him; but it will alſo embrace the whole word of God, and expect its accompliſhment as to all the extent, in which He hath ſpoken and promiſed. This principle of divine faith is “the ſubſtance of things hoped for:” crediting God's teſtimony, reſting on his promiſes, and expecting their accompliſhment, it gives the object hoped for at ſome *future* period, a *preſent ſubſiſtence* in the ſoul, as if it were already poſſeſſed; for it is ſatisfied with the ſecurity afforded, and acts under the perſuaſion that God will not fail of his engagements. Thus the believer gives up preſent advantages, and endures preſent hardſhips, in obedience to God, and in waiting for his promiſe: even as men give ready money for an eſtate in reverſion; or endure preſent labour in hope of future eaſe and indulgence. But faith has not only reſpect to the good things hoped for: it is alſo, “the evidence of things not ſeen.” The things revealed to faith, but inviſible to ſenſe, and undiſcoverable by reaſon, may relate to the paſt, the preſent, or the future; to God and his works of Creation, Providence and Redemption; to his Omniſcient preſence, and his future judgment; to the world of ſpirits, and the eternal ſtate of happineſs or miſery; to the law and its ſanctions, or the goſpel and its privileges; and, in ſhort, to a vaſt variety of particulars, which cannot be enumerated. But faith is the evidence, the internal conviction, or the demonſtration of them all. To unbelievers they appear falſe, dubious or viſionary; as they have no medium by which to obtain ſatisfaction about them: but believers take God's plain teſtimony as an axiom, which requires no further proof: their argument is this: “God “hath ſaid it, and it muſt be true.” And in proportion to the ſtrength of their faith, their judgment and conduct are influenced by this realizing conviction, with reference to things revealed; even as if they were the objects of ſight, or capable of ſtrict demonſtration. The believer uſes his powers of reaſoning, to obtain ſatisfaction concerning the evidence, that ſuch or ſuch matters are divinely revealed; and to determine the meaning of the words, in which the revelation is conveyed. But when theſe previous queſtions are anſwered, he moſt rationally ſays, “God hath determined this point; and though I once thought otherwiſe, as multitudes ſtill do: yet infinite knowledge and truth have decided againſt our prejudices and erroneous opinion; and I ſubmit to God's teaching.” He is not ſo abſurd, as to attempt to invalidate God's teſtimony by his objections, or to give force to it by his arguments. He does not ſuppoſe that divine revelation muſt be level to man's comprehenſion, or coincide with his ſpeculations: he expects, believes, and adores myſteries; but knows that contradiction is not myſtery; nor can any evidence prove a *real* contradiction to our ſenſes, or *certain* knowledge, to be a divine revelation; ſo that myſteries *above* reaſon he humbly receives, but abſurdities *contrary* to it he aſcribes to miſconſtruction, or impoſture. This definition of faith will be illuſtrated by all the examples in this chapter. The apoſtle further obſerved, that by faith all their pious progenitors, and other eminent perſons, in former times, had obtained a good report, or an honourable character in the word of God: By faith they were all juſtified; and the ſame was the principle of all their holy obedience, and eminent ſervices.

V. 3. *Through*, &c.] (*Rom.* c. i. v. 19, 20.) The heavens and the earth, with all their furniture and decoration, and the regular order with which they were governed and directed, might, indeed, be proved by argument to be the contrivance and work of God; yet men's reaſon had never come to any ſatisfactory and practical concluſions in this matter: ſo that, “by faith,” crediting God's word, we underſtand to good purpoſe, that the worlds were contrived, framed, created, and arranged in their preſent order by the omnipotent command of God: ſo that the things which we now behold in ſuch reſplendent beauty, were made of

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet ſpeaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death; and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: for before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God.

6 But without faith *it is* impoſſible to pleaſe *him*: for he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith.

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thoſe, *which do not now appear*. They were produced from the chaotic maſs, which was without form and void; by that powerful word, which firſt called the chaos out of non-exiſtence. This was effected in the ſix days work of creation: and the ſatisfactory aſſurance, which believers derive from the ſcriptural account of the original of the world, being contraſted with the diſcordant hypotheſes, and endleſs diſputations of ancient philoſophers, and modern theoriſts, exhibits a very ſtriking illuſtration of the propoſition, "that faith is the evidence or demonſtration, of "things not ſeen." (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. i. ii.)

V. 4 *By*, &c.] (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. iv.) The original word ſignifies a greater, or more complete, as well as a more excellent ſacrifice. Cain brought the meat-offering alone: Abel brought that, and the firſtlings of his flock alſo. By faith embracing the promiſe of a Redeemer, that was to come, Abel as a ſinner, penitently, humbly, uprightly, and obediently preſented unto God the typical ſacrifice, which had been appointed and was accepted: but Cain in ſelf-will, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-righteouſneſs, impenitence, unbelief, and rebellion, brought the quit rent, as it were, of his land, but not the atonement for his ſins. He ſeemed to ſay, with modern infidels and ſceptics; In what is my ſacrifice inferior to Abel's? Why ſhould he be ſo bigotted, and fanatical, as to think God will accept none, who do not come in his peculiar way? I, *being ſincere*, ſhall be as favourably received with my ſacrifice, as he with his: and indeed it ſeems more *rational* to preſent the firſt fruits of the earth, than to ſlay an innocent lamb, to be burned upon the altar. But God rejected his offering; and his proud rage and enmity againſt Abel, the accepted worſhipper of God, produced the ſame horrid effects, which the ſame principles have in every age been producing, in cruel perſecutions, and multiplied murders of believers, by proud formaliſts and hypocrites. But God himſelf atteſted, that Abel was righteous before him, and that his oblations were accepted: ſo that, being murdered by Cain, he ſtill ſpeaketh to us; declaring that ſinners can only come to God by penitent faith in the great propitiation; that faith uniformly connects with righteouſneſs and upright obedience; that believers have their portion in a better world, and not on earth; that they muſt expect no quarter from proud unbelievers and Phariſees; and that their blood ſhed by perſecutors calls from the ground to heaven for vengeance.

V. 5, 6.] (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. v. ver. 22—24.) By faith Enoch was ſo peculiarly favoured of God, that he was tranſlated to heaven, without *ſeeing* death, or experiencing its painful ſtroke; his body having been changed and rendered incorruptible, that he might immediately enter upon his full felicity. So that he was not found by his friends, or by his perſecutors; for the Lord had taken him to himſelf. But before this took place, he received ſome evident teſtimony that God was pleaſed with him; and probably this was made known to his cotemporaries. He had walked with God for a long ſeaſon; but this was the effect of that faith, by which he pleaſed him: for it muſt be impoſſible except by faith, ſeeing every one who cometh to God to worſhip and ſerve him, "muſt believe that he is;" he muſt realize his inviſible Being, Preſence and Perfections, which can only be done by faith exerciſed on the Revelation he hath given of himſelf; otherwiſe ſome imaginary deity, ſome idol will be ſubſtituted in his place: moreover he muſt believe "that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently "ſeek him:" but as all men deſerve condemnation for their ſins, and even their ſervices need forgiveneſs; ſo no one can know, or on good grounds conclude, that God will reward his poor ſervices, or accept him in them; unleſs by receiving the teſtimony of Revelation, either immediate, traditional, or written. This Enoch doubtleſs did; and ſo he believed in, and came to, God by faith in his word and promiſe, according to his appointment, and ſo was accepted and graciouſly rewarded. But this differs widely from a mere aſſent to a conjecture or concluſion of reaſon concerning the exiſtence of a God, without any juſt notions of his character, will or worſhip; and an attempt to pleaſe him in ways of man's deviſing: which ſome imagine to be all the faith, which the apoſtle here means; though it accords to the religion of no perſon mentioned in this chapter, except that of Cain, who doubtleſs had this kind of faith, and came in this manner, but with him God was not well-pleaſed.

V. 7. *Noah*, &c.] (Notes, *Gen.* vi—ix.) The Lord by immediate revelation made known to Noah his purpoſe of deſtroying the inhabitants of the whole earth by a flood of water, and warned him to prepare for ſuch an event. Theſe things were not ſeen as yet: nothing of that kind had ever happened; no token of ſuch a deluge appeared; unbelief might conclude it impoſſible, or exclaim againſt it as inconſiſtent with the juſtice or goodneſs of God. But Noah had faith, and that was in him a demonſtration of things not ſeen: he verily believed that ſuch a deluge would come; he expected that omnipotence would execute the ſentence denounced by infinite juſtice, and fulfil the word of unfailing veracity: he therefore reverenced with holy awe the majeſty of God, and was moved with fear of fall-

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as *in* a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker *is* God.

11 Through faith alſo Sara herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed.

12 Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *ſo many* as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea-ſhore innumerable.

13 Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them

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ing under his diſpleaſure: he was aware that unbelief and diſobedience would expoſe him to future vengeance, as well as involve him in the common calamity; and therefore he was prepared to employ any means of deliverance, that the Lord ſhould ſee good to appoint. Accordingly, when directed and commanded to prepare an ark, he heſitated not to obey in the moſt entire and unreſerved manner: though the labour and expence of building ſo vaſt a veſſel, muſt have been enormous; and though the undertaking muſt have expoſed him to all kind of ridicule and obloquy imaginable, and he might be ſure that the unbelieving world around him would deride him as a viſionary, and a fanatic, for ſo ſingular a conduct. But he obeyed in faith; he ventured all conſequences, and exerciſed the needful ſelf-denial; he waited the Lord's time, and preached, though unſucceſsfully, to the men of his generation; he expected ſafety in the ark, though Omnipotence alone could ſecure him in ſuch a veſſel, through ſo tremendous a deluge. Thus he was preſerved, and was the means of ſaving his family alſo from the common deſtruction of mankind, to repeople the earth; his example and admonitions concurred in condemning the world, and in ſhewing the juſtice of God in thus puniſhing their univerſal and incorrigible wickedneſs; and, by the ſame faith, he relied on the promiſe of God concerning the Meſſiah, and became heir of the righteouſneſs of faith, and of eternal ſalvation through him. This may be ſhewn to be an exact repreſentation of the manner, in which believers, being warned of God to flee from the wrath to come, are moved with fear, take refuge in Chriſt, part with all for his ſake, are often made the inſtruments of ſalvation to their families alſo, condemn the world, and become heirs of the righteouſneſs of faith. (Notes, *Phil.* c. iii. v. 7—9.)

V. 8—10.] (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xii—xvii.) Next in order of time to the two principal characters of the old world, and the progenitors of the new world, and even ſuperior to them in eminence, was Abraham, the Father of Iſrael, of many nations, of the Meſſiah, and ſpiritually, of all believers. When he was firſt ſelected to be the repoſitory of the promiſes, he was called and commanded to leave his native country, and all its attachments, and to go out into a place, which he was afterwards to receive for an inheritance; that is, in his poſterity: this command was connected with ſeveral promiſes to him and to his ſeed; by faith he ſubſtantiated the bleſſings hoped for, and was ſatisfied concerning the things not ſeen; he therefore implicitly obeyed the call of God, and went forth, not knowing whither he was to travel. But he was ſatisfied that he was following the Lord's ſpecial guidance, under his immediate protection; and he therefore diſregarded the objections, perſuaſions, or contempt of thoſe, to whom ſuch a deſign muſt have appeared to the laſt degree viſionary and irrational. By faith in God's promiſe, he alſo continued to ſojourn as a ſtranger in that land, which was promiſed to his poſterity, without having any inheritance in it, or even building an houſe there; but paſſing his days as a traveller, dwelling in tents, that were eaſily removed, ſhifting frequently from one place to another; yet within the land of Canaan, except as he was forced out of it by famine. Thus he ſpent his life, even after the birth of Iſaac, and afterwards of Jacob; who were the heirs with him of the ſame promiſes, and who imitated his example in this manner of life, and in believing obedience to the Lord's commandment. For he was not deſirous of building, or inhabiting a city in Canaan, or elſewhere: becauſe he expected one of a more excellent nature, which alone hath foundations that can never be removed; even the permanent, ſecure, and bleſſed city of God, where he diſplays his glory, and communicates unalloyed felicity; of which He was the Architect, whoſe wiſdom and love formed the ſtupendous plan, and whoſe omnipotence executed it, for the glory of his own name, and the eternal reſidence of thoſe, whom he delighteth to honour and bleſs: and what can thoſe magnificent cities be, which proud worms have erected, compared with that, whoſe Builder and Maker is God? Abraham expected Canaan for his poſterity, and a manſion in heaven for himſelf.

V. 11, 12.] (Notes. c. xviii. xxi.) Sarah at firſt was unbelieving when a ſon was promiſed to her, in her old age; but ſhe afterwards was enabled to rely on God's faithfulneſs and power to perform his word, though contrary to the ordinary courſe of nature: and in conſequence of this faith ſhe was ſupernaturally ſtrengthened to conceive and bear a ſon. And thus, in anſwer to the expectation of the faith, both of Abraham and Sarah, there ſprang from one father, (who apparently was in this reſpect even as a dead perſon, from whom no offſpring could have been expected,) ſuch an immenſe multitude, that they were as the ſtars of heaven, or even abſolutely innumerable as the ſands on the ſea-ſhore. This principally refers to the deſcendants of Abraham by Iſrael: but thoſe deſcended from him by Iſhmael and the ſons of Keturah, render the fulfilment of God's promiſes to him, in this reſpect, ſtill more ſurpriſing.

V. 13—16.] Abraham, Sarah, Iſaac, and Jaco afa afar off, and were perſuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly that they ſeek a country.

15 And truly if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they deſire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: and he that had received the promiſes, offered up his only begotten *ſon*;

18 Of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called:

19 Accounting that God *was* able to raiſe *him* up, even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

20 By faith Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph; and worſhipped, *leaning* upon the top of his ſtaff.

22 By faith Joſeph, when he died, made

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perſevered in faith, and the obedience of faith, even unto death, and departed expecting the performance of God's promiſes to them and their poſterity. For they had not received the promiſes during their lives: as they had endured many hardſhips and trials; without any ſuch peculiar advantages, as might anſwer the ſingular favour, which the Lord declared that he bare to them. But they had ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded that they would be performed in due ſeaſon; they embraced them by faith as their portion and the inheritance of their poſterity; and they gave up preſent advantages for the ſake of them, confeſſing that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth. (Notes, *Gen.* c. xxiii. v. 4. c. xlvii. v. 9.) Now they, who conſidered themſelves, during their whole abode in this world, to be ſtrangers in a foreign land, and travellers through it, plainly declared that they were going home to their native country, the reſidence of their moſt beloved friends, and the place of their permanent abode and enjoyment. Indeed, if weary of this wandering life, they had purpoſed to return into Meſopotamia; they might have found an opportunity of doing it, and might there have ſettled among their relations: but this would have been an act of diſobedience, and a renunciation of the promiſes. Whereas, by ſojourning in a ſtrange land unto death, they declared their ſupreme deſire and hope of a better country, than could be found on earth; even of that heavenly inheritance, which Canaan typified. As, therefore, they were willing to renounce all other proſpects to follow God in obedient faith, for the ſake of an eternal and inviſible inheritance; and as he had prepared ſuch an inheritance, or permanent glorious city for them: ſo he was not aſhamed, or did not diſdain to be called their God, their Friend, and everlaſting Portion. Whereas the advantages they had from their believing dependance on him were too tranſient and little, to anſwer to ſuch a relation: as they were neither ſufficient for their final felicity, nor for the glory of his divine munificence.

V. 17—19.] Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxii.) It was peculiarly to be noted, that in the grand inſtance, in which Abraham had been tried, how far he would carry his unreſerved obedience to the Lord, he had been influenced by the ſame powerful principle of faith: even when, in his determined *purpoſe* he had offered up his beloved Iſaac, as a burnt-offering; in whom God himſelf had, as it were, laid up the promiſes: ſo that he ſeem about to render the performance of them impoſſible, by obeying this hard and myſterious command. But he left the matter to God, aſſured that he was able to reſtore his Son to life, from the aſhes, to which he was about to reduce his body; though no inſtance of that kind had ever occurred. And in fact he did receive him back, as from the dead; ſeeing he had for three days lain under the ſentence of death; which in a figure, repreſented the crucifixion, and reſurrection of Chriſt. Some explain this of Iſaac's ſupernatural conception and birth, which, by a figurative manner of ſpeaking, might be called receiving him from the dead: but it rather refers to him, as a type of Chriſt.

V. 20. *Iſaac*, &c.] Iſaac, (as well as Rebekah and Jacob,) was reprehenſible in the circumſtance of the tranſaction here referred to, (Notes. *Gen.* c. xxvii.) Yet he bleſſed his two ſons, in a firm belief that God would fulfil his promiſes to his poſterity. He alſo ſpake by the Spirit of prophecy; and he moſt entirely believed, and acquieſced in, the diſcoveries made of the future condition of the poſterity of both Jacob and Eſau, though his own purpoſes were defeated thereby.

V. 21. *Jacob.*] (Notes, *Gen.* c. xlvii v. 28—31. c. xlviii.) Jacob, when his death approached, pronounced a prophetic bleſſing on each of his twelve ſons; but that, which reſpected Ephraim and Manaſſeh, was eſpecially noted. God revealed to him his future purpoſe concerning their poſterity; and in a firm belief of his word, he bleſſed them: and though weak and infirm, he expreſſed his confidence in, and gratitude to, God, by worſhipping Him on the top of his ſtaff. Thus the Septuagint renders the words, which in our verſion are tranſlated *the bed's head*; and the variation is immaterial.

V. 22. *Joſeph*, &c.] (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c l.) Joſeph, though lord of all the land of Egypt; yet, believing the word and promiſe of God, concerning the poſterity of Abraham, expreſſed his confident expectation, that they would be performed in the removal of the Iſraelites to Canaan; and he ordered his bones to be be carried along with them, both as an expreſſion of his faith, and to ſhew that he deſired to have his lot after death with God's people, and not with the Egyptians.

mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael: and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 By faith Moſes, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, becauſe they ſaw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moſes, when he was come to years, refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon;

26 Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt: for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as ſeeing him who is inviſible.

28 Through faith he kept the paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born ſhould touch them.

29 By faith they paſſed through the Red ſea as by dry *land*; which the Egyptians aſſaying to do were drowned.

V. 23—26.] The parents of Moſes alſo acted from the ſame powerful principle. When that eminent deliverer and law-giver of Iſrael was born, they concealed him three months from thoſe, that were appointed by Pharaoh to deſtroy the male children: for they perceived ſomething uncommon in his appearance, which was ſuppoſed to indicate his future eminence. (*Acts*, c. vii. v. 20.) By faith they relied on God's promiſed care and protection; and ſo they were not afraid of the king's commandment, but preſerved the life of their ſon at the peril of their own: and they ſeem to have acted from the ſame kind of faith, when they truſted Moſes to the care of providence, in an ark of bul-ruſhes: which believing expectation was anſwered in his preſervation by Pharaoh's daughter, and his education in that tyrant's court to be the deliverer of Iſrael. In like manner, when Moſes was grown up, even to the age of forty years, and was become very eminent among the Egyptians; he refuſed any longer to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter, (though tradition reports that he was conſidered as heir of that proſperous kingdom;) but believing the teſtimony and promiſes of God concerning Iſrael, and eſpecially that reſpecting the Meſſiah; he would not take his lot amongſt Egyptians for the ſake of temporal advantages however great. On the contrary, ſeeing God's peculiar people under the moſt cruel bondage, and in the moſt abject condition; he openly avowed himſelf to be one of them: chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with them, and to ſhare the bleſſings promiſed to them; than to enjoy all the temporary pleaſures, which his high ſtation could have procured him, in the ways of ſin, and ungodlineſs. Moreover he eſteemed the reproach caſt on Iſrael, for their expectations of a glorious Redeemer to ariſe from among them, and under whoſe ſpecial care they profeſſed themſelves to be; as well as the diſgrace of their condition, to be more valuable than all the immenſe treaſures and revenues of Egypt; ſo that he renounced the latter, that he might partake of the former: for he had reſpect unto the recompence of reward; even the gracious and abundant compenſation, which Chriſt confers on all thoſe who are reproached for his ſake. In conſequence of this believing choice and purpoſe, he renounced all his proſpects and indulgences, and became a refuge, a ſtranger, and a humble laborious ſhepherd in Midian for forty years. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. ii, iii.)

V. 27. *By*, &c.] Moſes evidently feared, when he firſt forſook Egypt: but this relates to his leaving that kingdom the ſecond time, when he led forth the tribes of Iſrael. He was then ſtrengthened in faith, to diſregard the wrath, menaces, and power of king Pharaoh: he denounced the death of the firſt born, left the tyrant's preſence, and marched out of Egypt with great intrepidity. For he endured moſt conſtantly in delivering his meſſages, though he had no viſible protection againſt the vengeance of Pharaoh; becauſe, (by faith, as the evidence of things not ſeen,) he ſaw the inviſible God, as his Almighty Defender, and reſted aſſured that He was with him, to take care of, and deliver him. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. iii—xi.)

V. 28. *Paſſover*, &c.] (Notes, &c. *Exod.* c. xii.) By the ſame efficacious principle Moſes foreſaw the deſtruction of the firſt-born, and expected the exemption of Iſrael from that calamity, in the way that the Lord preſcribed unto him. He therefore influenced his people to keep the Paſſover, with the ſprinkling of the blood upon the door-poſts, &c; leſt the deſtroying angel ſhould enter their houſes alſo: by which they were preſerved; and this made way for their deliverance out of bondage. The whole hath been ſhewn to be a typical repreſentation of a ſinner's ſalvation by the death of Chriſt, and by faith in his blood, &c.

V. 29. *By*, &c.] (Notes, &c *Exod.* c. xiv. xv.) Moſes, and ſome of the people truly believed; and the reſt of the nation by his exhortations were excited to a confidence in Jehovah's power and favour for preſent deliverance from Pharaoh. But it was chiefly by the faith of Moſes their leader, that the Iſraelites paſſed ſafely through the Red Sea; even as Noah's family were preſerved in the ark by means of his faith, though they ſeem not to have all been true believers. Moreover Iſrael was the viſible church of God, and the type of the whole multitude, who by faith paſs trials and death unhurt: but the Egyptians repreſented the enemies of God, and of his people: and copying Pharaoh's pride and preſumption, they ventured into the ſea, and all periſhed; as all the enemies of the Lord will do at death, which delivers all believers from them. This ſeems not therefore to authorize us to ſuppoſe, that any of the perſons, here mentioned by name, were deſtitute of juſtifying faith; as ſome have done from the ſubſequent unbelief of many who paſſed ſafe through the Red Sea.

V. 31, 32] (Notes, &c. *Joſh.* c. vi.) Joſhua, and

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30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compaſſed about ſeven days.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab periſhed not with them that believed not, when ſhe had received the ſpies with peace.

32 And what ſhall I more ſay? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samſon, and *of* the prophets:

33 Who through faith ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, ſtopped the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raiſed to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better reſurrection.

36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and ſcourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and impriſonment:

37 They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the

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many of the Iſraelites believing God's promiſe of delivering Jericho into their hands, obeyed his command, and induced their brethren to do the ſame, in reſpect of the extraordinary means to be uſed for that purpoſe. They expected God to perform his word, and they obſerved his directions, in marching round the city, blowing the trumpets &c: and in this manner the walls fell down at the appointed time, and afforded them a ſafe and eaſy victory. The ſame principle would lead them to embrace the promiſes concerning the Meſſiah, and ſalvation by him; but in collective bodies, there hath always ſubſiſted the difference between real believers, and mere profeſſors, who concurred with them in the ſame external ſervices. In like manner Rahab the harlot, hearing that God had denounced the deſtruction of the Canaanites, and that he had promiſed manifold bleſſings to Iſrael, was by faith induced to renounce her connexion with God's enemies, and to ſeek admiſſion among his people. At the hazard of her life, ſhe entertained, peaceably, and as friends, the ſpies of Iſrael; and aſſured that Jericho would be taken by the Iſraelites, ſhe ſtipulated for her own life, and that of her friends, as if that event had already taken place. Thus ſhe eſcaped the deſtruction of her unbelieving citizens, who perſiſted in their enmity to God, and to Iſrael. Doubtleſs ſhe embraced the promiſes concerning the Meſſiah, and ſpiritual ſalvation, in the ſame obedient manner, when ſhe was made acquainted with them; and thus ſhe was incorporated among the Iſraelites, and became an anceſtor of Chriſt. But the fruits, and infirmities of her faith have been already conſidered. (Notes, &c. *Joſh.* c. ii.)

V. 32—34.] (Notes, &c. *Judg.* c. iv—xvi.) The hiſtory of the eminent perſons, here mentioned in general terms, hath already been conſidered. It would have exceeded proper bounds for the apoſtle to have ſpoken particularly concerning each of them, and of all that might have been adduced. They are not placed in the order of time, in which they lived; but as they occurred to the apoſtle's mind: and the whole company of the prophets are mentioned in a word. By faith, crediting God's teſtimony, and ſubſtantiating his promiſes, ſome of them ſubdued the nations of Canaan, and the neighbouring kingdoms, as the ſervants of God in the cauſe of Iſrael: others performed moſt eminent obedience to his commandments, or executed juſtice, and reformed the nation; and they waited for, and obtained moſt remarkable accompliſhments of God's promiſes to them, and their people. Some had even, in the exerciſe of faith in God, been enabled to ſtop the mouths of lions: Samſon, and David ſlew each of them a lion; and Daniel the prophet ſpent the night in a den of hungry lions. (*Dan.* c. vi.) Others quenched the violence of the fire. (*Dan.* c. iii) Elijah was repeatedly delivered from the perſecuting rage of Ahab, Jezebel, and Ahaziah; and Eliſha from the ſword of the kings of Iſrael and Syria. (Notes, &c. 1 *Kings*, c. xvii. xviii. xix. 2 *Kings*, c. i.—vi.) Hezekiah and others were miraculouſly recovered from ſickneſs: and Hezekiah's kingdom was reſtored from the utmoſt debility to a very flouriſhing condition; in anſwer to his confidence in God. Many inſtances occur in the hiſtory of Iſrael, of thoſe who waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens: yet it hath generally been ſuppoſed, that there is a peculiar reference to the ſucceſs of Judas Maccabeus, and his brethren, againſt the forces of Antiochus Epiphanes; when from feeble beginnings, they arrived at great power, and defeated all that perſecutor's devices, by faith in the promiſes and protection of the Lord. Whilſt we make a decided difference between the word of God, and all other writings: there ſeems no impropriety in ſuppoſing that the apoſtle had theſe events in his view, on this occaſion: as the hiſtorical facts reſpecting the perſecutions of Antiochus, and the victories of the Maccabees, were well known among the Hebrews; and really formed an illuſtrious example of the efficacy and nature of faith.

V. 35—38.] Through the ſame principle, as exerciſed by the prophets, and the perſons concerned, women had received their dead children raiſed to life again, (1 *Kings*, c. xvii. v. 17—24. 2 *Kings*, c. iv. ver. 18—37.) Others were tortured with all the horrid ingenuity, which their cruel perſecutors could exerciſe; and yet refuſed to accept of deliverance from their agonies, when offered them on condition, that they would commit idolatry. They rather choſe to expire in their torture, than to purchaſe life on ſuch terms; becauſe by faith they expected a *better* reſurrection, even a reſurrection to eternal life; which was far preferable to being reſtored again from the jaws of death, and living a while longer in this world; and better, than the reſurrections to temporal life before-mentioned. This is ſuppoſed to refer to the tortures and death of a woman and her ſeven ſword: they wandered about in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins; being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented;

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deſerts, *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And theſe all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promiſe:

40 God having provided ſome better thing for us, that they without us ſhould not be made perfect.

ſons, as recorded in the hiſtory of the Maccabees: and it is the deciſive teſtimony of Paul, that his countrymen expected a reſurrection to eternal life, and that the word of God warranted that expectation. Others in different ages, had been tried by cruel mockings, and every kind of indignity and deriſion; with ignominious and painful ſcourgings, and with lingering ſufferings, in bonds and impriſonment: yet by faith they cleaved to God and their duty, amidſt all, that could be inflicted on them. Thus Micaiah, Jeremiah, and many others had been abuſed: moreover ſeveral had been ſtoned to death; and ſome had even been cruelly ſawn aſunder, as tradition reported that Iſaiah had been. (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 1.) Others had been tempted, with the moſt complicated ſufferings, and with conditional offers of deliverance, to ſin againſt God; ſome were ſlain at once with the ſword; whilſt others were driven from their habitations, to wander as vagabonds, covered with undreſſed ſkins inſtead of ſuitable raiment; and to inhabit mountains, deſerts, dens, and caves, inſtead of commodious houſes; being deſtitute of friends, afflicted by complicated diſtreſſes, and moſt cruelly tortured, when they fell into the hands of their perſecutors: yet they ſtill truſted in, and obeyed God, with unremitting patience and conſtancy, in a realizing belief of, and appropriating confidence in, his promiſes of ſupport, comfort, and eternal ſalvation. Of theſe excellent perſons the world, that uſed them with ſuch contempt and cruelty, was not worthy; and therefore, they were ſoon removed, in mercy to them, and judgment to their enemies. The caſes of David, Elijah, and many others, recorded in ſcripture may be alluded to: but doubtleſs many others occurred, during the perſecuting reigns of the kings of Judah and Iſrael; of which particular accounts have not reached us; though ſome records, or traditions concerning them, might be extant among the Hebrews when the apoſtle wrote.

V. 39, 40.] All theſe perſons had obtained a good report in the church, and many of them had been mentioned with honour in the word of God; though the world abhorred and execrated them: but faith was that principle, by which they were diſtinguiſhed from other men, both in reſpect of God's acceptance, and their patient zealous obedience, or remarkable exploits and deliverances. Yet they received not the *promiſe*, which their faith eſpecially embraced; they lived not to ſee the accompliſhment of God's promiſe concerning the Meſſiah; though ſaved by the anticipated efficacy of his ſacrifice: for God, in his wiſe and righteous ſovereignty, had reſerved ſome better thing for his church under the chriſtian diſpenſation; (*Luke*. c. x. v. 23, 24;) that theſe ancient believers might not be complete, in their ſalvation and felicity, except in, and by Jeſus Chriſt, and by ſharing thoſe benefits, which were at length more openly revealed to God's people: that ſo the whole church, by union with Chriſt, might be perfected in one body, and not in ſeparate diviſions; though the members of it had been ſcattered, as it were, through all the ages, and nations of the earth. (*Eph*. c. i. v. 10.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The wiſdom and goodneſs of God are peculiarly manifeſted, in the appointment of divine faith to be the means both of our intereſt in Chriſt for juſtification, and the efficacious principle of our obedience: and in neither caſe, will any thing avail, but that faith, which gives the ſoul, as it were, an appropriating hold of things hoped for, and an internal demonſtration of things not ſeen. As men eaſily remove, and raiſe to a great height, vaſt bodies, by means of proper engines, which could not otherwiſe be done at all: ſo faith exerciſed on the promiſe, truth and power of God, would enable a feeble ſinner, to remove a mountain, if that were neceſſary for his ſafety and advantage. Without this no man, ſince Adam's fall, hath obtained a good report, or done any real, and acceptable good works, according to the ſtandard of God's word; though the worthies of the church are very different from the admired characters of the world! We know nothing to good purpoſe, concerning the perfections, or works of God; or the eternal ſtate, except by this evidence of things not ſeen: men's reaſonings produce amuſing ſpeculations; but God's ſure teſtimony, received by faith, brings ſatisfaction to the ſoul; and thus the Lord is ſeen in all his works. Whilſt we credit his account of the creation, we learn to adore, and obey the Creator, with humble, thankful, and admiring hearts; which philoſophers, ancient and modern, have often ſcarce appeared to do. But though faith receives the teſtimony of God concerning his creating and providential wiſdom, power, and goodneſs: yet his truths and promiſes reſpecting redemption conſtitute its peculiar province. Believing his teſtimony concerning the future judgment, and the eternal world; and even more than believing that we are ſinners expoſed to, and deſerving of condemnation, according to the tenor of his righteous law; we gladly receive the truth, concerning ſalvation by grace through the atoning blood of the divine Saviour, and wait on him for pardon, and every bleſſing, as his gift through Jeſus Chriſt. Thus we are enabled by faith to plead more excellent ſacrifice, and to preſent more acceptable worſhip, than any Phariſee or infidel can offer unto God, according to the vain devices of his proud impenitent heart: we obtain God's teſtimony in his word, and by his Spirit, that our perſons and ſervices are accepted with him: and however we may be perſecuted or driven out of the world, our felicity will be ſure; and we ſhall wiſh to declare to al around us, and to leave it upon record for thoſe that come after, that this is the only way to heaven, and that we ar thankful that we were taught to walk in it. We may no expect to eſcape the pangs of death; but we may hope t be with God, when no longer found on earth; as havin

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CHAP. XII.

Contains exhortations 1ſt. To conſtancy, patience, and diligence; from the teſtimony of former believers, and with peculiar attention to the example of Chriſt; and from the loving intent and ſalutary effect of the Lord's corrections, 1---13. *2d. To peace, and holineſs, and jealous watchfulneſs over themſelves, and each other; enforced by the caſe of Eſau,* 14---17. *3d. To an obedient reception of the goſpel, and reverential worſhip of God; from the ſuperior excellency of the chriſtian diſpenſation, and the proportionably greater guilt and danger of neglecting it,* 18---29.

pleaſed him, by coming in faith to his mercy ſeat, deſiring his favour as our portion, and not only believing that *He is*, but that he is the gracious rewarder, even of ſinners who diligently ſeek him; for without this faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. But if we poſſeſs this evidence of things not ſeen, we ſhall hear the warnings of the oracles of God, concerning the future, and eternal miſery of the ungodly; we ſhall reverence the denunciation, which unbelievers deride, object to, or blaſpheme; we ſhall be moved with fear to flee from the wrath to come; we ſhall be encouraged in hope to make Chriſt our refuge; and to leave all, to ſeek admiſſion into this ark: thus we ſhall be ſafe, during the troubles of life, the terrors of death, the ſolemnities of judgment, and when the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, even all the people that forget God; and we may, in the mean time hope to be the inſtruments of ſaving our beloved children and relatives alſo. But then we muſt be contented to bear the reproach of ſingularity, enthuſiaſm, or hypocriſy; we muſt be unfaſhionable, and the world will condemn us, if our profeſſion and behaviour condemn the world; as they certainly will, if we become heirs of the righteouſneſs, which is by faith: and we may by faith foreſee the time, when our revilers will wiſh in vain that they were with us in the deſpiſed ark. But that is not juſtifying faith, which does not obey the command, as well as rely on the promiſe, of God, we too are called to leave many of our worldly connexions, intereſts and comforts: to go in queſt of a future inheritance; and if heirs of Abraham's faith, we ſhall *obey*, and go forth, not knowing what things may befall us, or whither the Lord may lead us; we ſhall wait in the way of duty for the performance of his promiſes; we ſhall not take up our reſt in the world, or be ſatisfied with its moſt ſplendid accommodations; but we ſhall ſeek for a city that hath foundations, whoſe Architect and Founder is the Lord of Hoſts. Indeed our faith will not be always alike vigorous and efficacious; and its waverings will ſhew, that we are not ſaved *for*, though *by* it: yet, upon recollection, "judging him faithful, "that hath promiſed," we ſhall be ſtrengthened to expect the bleſſing, in defiance of apparent difficulties, and *pretended* impoſſibilities, and thus ſhall be enabled for whatever is connected with the obtaining of the promiſes. If indeed we profeſſed to ſeek a portion in the world, the advantages of religion might appear dubious: but we avow ourſelves to be ſtrangers in a foreign land, and upon our pilgrimage to our deſired home, where our treaſure, and our hearts already are: we have not yet received the promiſes, but we ſee them afar of, embrace them, and wait in hope for their accompliſhment: and we profeſs to be ſatisfied with the life of a ſojourner, and a pilgrim, and to wait till after death for our felicity. If indeed, (like apoſtates,) we were minded to return to the country whence we came out; we might find an opportunity of doing it, perhaps with ſome ſecular advantage: but faith ſhews us, that it is devoted to deſtruction with all thoſe, who chooſe their inheritance in it: we therefore deſire a better country, that is an heavenly; and as God hath prepared everlaſting manſions for us, in the city of his ſpecial abode, in which he will make us moſt bleſſed for evermore: ſo his glory in our ſalvation, and our wiſdom in chooſing Him for our portion will be moſt manifeſt in the event, whatever preſent appearances may be. This faith endures to the end, we muſt live by it and die in it; and then have its expectations anſwered, and far exceeded. But whilſt we live, our faith muſt be repeatedly, and ſharply tried, that we may be diſtinguiſhed from mere profeſſors; and we may expect, that we ſhall be ſtrengthened in proportion to the trial: nor can we reaſonably doubt of the power of faith to produce the moſt unreſerved obedience, when we remember, that by this principle, Abraham, when tried, offered his beloved Iſaac, as a burnt-offering at God's command, and truſted in him to perform all thoſe promiſes which his obedience ſeemed about for ever to diſannul. Let us then enquire how far our faith has produced a ſimilar obedience when we have been called to leſſer acts of ſelf-denial, or to make inferior ſacrifices to our duty? And whether we have given up what was called for, in an unreſerved confidence that the Lord would make up all our loſſes, and even bleſs us by means of the moſt afflictive diſpenſations? for, as "He "ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, "how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?" And what ſhall we deem too valuable to give up, at the call of ſuch a merciful and bounteous Benefactor?

Whilſt we deſire in faith, to bleſs our children and worſhip God, during life, and at the approach of death; and afterwards to have our lot with his people in the heavenly Canaan; and whilſt we attend to every relative duty, truſting in the Lord, and not fearing the wrath of man: let us particularly note the effects of the faith of Moſes; and aſk ourſelves, whether we have been influenced to a ſimilar judgment, choice, and experience? Do we by faith learn to prefer the ſanctified affliction of the people of God, to the enjoyment of the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon? Do we deem it an honour and privilege to be reproached for Chriſt's ſake, and prefer this, to the riches of this evil world, having reſpect to the great reward promiſed to thoſe, who are thus diſtinguiſhed? (Notes, *Matt.* c. v. ver. 10—12) All believers are not called to make the ſame ſacrifices, or endure the the ſame trials, for righteouſneſs ſake; nor have all the ſame meaſure of faith: yet without ſome experience, conſciouſneſs, and inſtances of this kind, we are not warranted to conclude that we are of *his* religion: for a common walking ſtick more reſembles Aaron's fruitful rod, than the faith of many modern profeſſors, does the ſelf-denying

WHerefore, ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us;

2 Looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

faith of Moſes. But the ſubject is abſolutely inexhauſtible: we muſt by faith overcome the fear of man, as well as the love of the world; we muſt endure all ſufferings, and venture all conſequences, in the way of duty, as "ſeeing Him, who is inviſible." In all things our faith muſt reſpect the true paſcal Lamb, and the ſprinkling of his blood, for deliverance from the deſtruction of the wicked; and we muſt conſcientiouſly obſerve his ordinances, as means of grace to our ſouls. Then, by faith we may paſs, at God's command, through ſeas of tribulation, and ſcenes of temptation or danger, during life, and at death; in which all unbelievers muſt ſink, and periſh for ever. By faith we muſt implicitly uſe every means, however unlikely, which God preſcribes in order to our obtaining of the promiſes; truſting in him alone to render them effectual: nor will any periſh with the enemies of God, who believe his word, and ſhew it by love to his people; whatever former crimes they have committed, or in whatever ſituation they may be found. Faith will enable a man to ſerve God, and his generation, in whatever way he may be employed, whether in governing, or reforming nations, or defending them by cruſhing the power of iniquitous aſſailants; or in preaching the goſpel, and boldly teſtifying againſt the crimes of the moſt mighty and implacable of its oppoſers; or by working righteouſneſs and obtaining promiſes in a more obſcure ſtation. It will influence a man to ſuch prompt obedience, diſintereſted diligence, and warranted expectation, as will enſure all needful ſucceſs in his undertakings. It will alſo prepare him for facing any dangers: and though we do not now expect to ſtop the mouths of lions, or to quench the violence of the fire: yet we are authorized to look for proportionable ſupports and conſolations, if called to end our pilgrimage in ſuch a manner. But we are chiefly concerned in the ſpiritual warfare: and in this, by faith, we ſhall out of weakneſs be made ſtrong, wax valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. Though we do not hope to have our dead reſtored again to life in this world: yet faith will mingle joy with our tears; and teach us to refuſe deliverance from ſuffering by ſin; whilſt we hope for the better reſurrection, which God hath promiſed to his people. Trials of cruel mockings. We may expect even in theſe favoured days; though hitherto exempted from ſcourgings, bonds and impriſonments. We ſeem not to have immediate cauſe to apprehend being ſtoned or ſawn aſunder, or ſlain by the ſword: yet we ſhall ſurely be tempted, and we cannot overcome temptation, except by that faith, which ſupported the martyrs, and made them more than conquerors over the fear of torment and death. If then we are ready to ſhrink, or droop under our leſſer trials: let us think of thoſe excellent men, of whom the world was not worthy; and reflect how deſtitute, afflicted, and tormented they were, and how they were driven out, and wandered, as outcaſts, in mountains and caves of the earth. For as our advantages, with thoſe better things that God hath provided for us, are ſo much ſuperior to theirs; ſo ſhould our obedience of faith, and patience of hope, and labour of love, be more diſtinguiſhed. Let us then pray continually for the increaſe of our faith, that we may follow theſe illuſtrious examples, and be with them at length made perfect in holineſs and felicity, and ſhine like the Sun in the kingdom of our Father for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—3.] The apoſtle called on the Hebrews to conſider themſelves as ſurrounded with witneſſes to the faithfulneſs of God, and the power of truth, as innumerable, as the drops of water in a cloud. The perſons before mentioned, and multitudes beſides, ſeemed to look down from heaven, or even to come from thence, to compaſs them about, and to bear their teſtimony in the cauſe; as well as to be ſpectators of their conduct in that arduous, perilous, and honourable race, in which they had got ſo bleſſed a victory by faith. They ought therefore with one conſent, to lay aſide every weight, (as men laid aſide their ſuperfluous garments, or moſt coſtly ornaments, when about to run in the Iſthmian games;) and not to burden themſelves with worldly care, intereſts, or indulgences; or any idolatrous attachments, carnal prejudices, or needleſs hurry of buſineſs; which might hinder their ſpiritual progreſs, and cauſe them to loiter, to move heavily, or to look back, and ſo endanger the loſs of the race. They ſhould alſo watch againſt, and ſeek a decided victory over, thoſe ſinful propenſities, which on any account had a ſpecial advantage againſt them: eſpecially they ſhould uſe every means of conquering their unbelief; through which they were ſo tempted to apoſtatize, from love of the world, and fear of ſuffering. This was the ſin, which moſt eaſily beſet them, and had extraordinary advantages againſt them, in thoſe times of perſecution: many had been caſt down by it; many more were in danger; and they were all ſure to be vigorouſly aſſaulted on that ſide. It behoved them therefore to get rid of every incumbrance, and ſeek the increaſe of their faith, and the crucifixion of their worldly luſts; that they might preſs forward with increaſing earneſtneſs, and unwearied patience, in the perſevering obedience of faith in Chriſt: this was "the race ſet "before them;" wherein they muſt either win the crown of glory, or have everlaſting miſery and ignominy for their portion. He had indeed called them to contemplate the conduct of thoſe, who had patiently run the race; and to conſider the perils, difficulties, and ſufferings, through which they had urged their courſe by faith, to ſeize the incorruptible prize: and they ought to realize their preſence as witneſſes for Chriſt, and ſpectators of their conflict. But they muſt *look off*, not only from the vain glory of the world, 4 Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children, My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with ſons; for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards, and not ſons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our fleſh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection unto the Father of ſpirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chaſtened *us* after their own pleaſure: but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holineſs.

11 Now no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheleſs afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of

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the number and power of their enemies, and their own weakneſs and ſinfulneſs; but even from theſe inferior luminaries: that they might behold that glorious Sun, from which they received all that light, which rendered them ſo reſplendent. In order to their more full inſtruction and encouragement, they muſt look more ſteadily to Jeſus; not merely as One, who had run his glorious race, and completed his work, by faith in the promiſes, and covenant engagements of the Father; but as "the Author and Finiſher "of faith" itſelf. He alone had opened the way for men to return to, and pleaſe, God, and to enter heaven, by faith; when ſin had cloſed for ever that of perſonal righteouſneſs: from him, as the great Prophet of the church, the doctrine of faith had been delivered, which none could ever be authorized to change, add to, or deduct from: he alone, by his Spirit, produces faith in the hearts of his people, which he maintains, increaſes, and perfects in its nature and fruits, till its work be finiſhed. So that they muſt look to him *for*, as well as by faith: and though he needed not that faith, by which a ſinner is juſtified; yet in finiſhing his work on earth, he led his people the way to complete victory over every enemy, by a patient obedient reliance on the word of his heavenly Father. And as he had in all things the pre eminence; ſo he entered not into his mediatorial glory, without having the precedency, in the meaſure of his ſufferings, above all others, that ever went to heaven: and "for the joy ſet before him," of his own perſonal exaltation to the mediatorial throne; of the ſalvation of many millions of loſt ſinners from deſtruction, of bringing them to endleſs happineſs; and of eternally glorifying the whole Name, and all the perfections of God thereby: he, with the utmoſt fortitude and conſtancy, endured all his other humiliating ſufferings, from his birth in the ſtable, to his agony in the garden; and at length moſt willingly ſubmitted to be ſuſpended on the croſs, and there to expire in lingering tortures: and though this method of execution was peculiarly ignominious, and by the law pronounced accurſed; and attended with unheard of circumſtances of indignity, outrage, revilings, and deriſion: yet he diſregarded the ſhame, as well as the anguiſh of it, as not worthy to be compared with the glorious event he had in view. And having endured, until his undertaking was finiſhed: he was ſpeedily raiſed from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of the Throne of God. They ought therefore to look unto him, both as an example of conſtancy and patience; as the Author of their ſtrength, encouragement, victory, and ſalvation; and as a glorious inſtance of the bleſſed effect of perſeverance amidſt reproaches and ſufferings, in cleaving unto God, and being faithful unto death. For this caſe was ſo extraordinary, that they would do well to conſider it, even with *arithmetical exactneſs*: and to eſtimate the dignity and excellency of the ſufferer; the contradiction of ſinners againſt him, who enſnared, reviled, oppoſed, and accuſed him, with moſt perverſe enmity againſt his holy doctrine and example, and with malignant ingratitude for all his love: the intenſeneſs and variety of his ſufferings; the meek and compoſed fortitude with which he endured them; the love, which moved him thus to ſuffer, and the moſt bleſſed conſequences of his humiliation. When they were weary and faint in their minds, with trials, and injuries from their malicious perſecutors; ſuch conſiderations would ſerve to quiet and encourage them: whilſt they recollected that the holy Jeſus ſuffered to ſave them from deſerved and eternal miſery; and that ſinners of the ſame nature with themſelves inflicted theſe tortures; that he had much bitterneſs in his cup, which was not in their's; that he was hated for his own ſake, and they only becauſe of their relation to him; and that his croſs ſecured an happy event to all their conflicts and trials for his ſake. In ſhort; by looking to him, every kind of humiliating and animating topic would occur to their minds, to invigorate the exerciſe of their holy affections, and to repreſs the working of every carnal propenſity.

V. 4—11.] The Hebrews had indeed ſuffered the loſs of their property, and even bonds and ſcourgings, for cleaving to Chriſt, and maintaining the conflict againſt ſin and temptation: but they had not yet reſiſted unto blood. Many of their brethren had choſen to die in this conflict, rather than yield the victory to their enemies; by renouncing the goſpel: even men of like infirmities with themſelves, had endured more by faith, in the cauſe of God, than they had been called to do; and their ſufferings, for Chriſt, were unſpeakably leſs, than his for them had been: ſo that they ought to be aſhamed of their cowardice; if they grew weary of, or fainted in, the conteſt, becauſe of their inferior trials. It would in that caſe, appear, that they had forgotten the exhortation of the Lord by Solomon, who addreſſed believers as his children, when he called on them righteouſneſs unto them which are exerciſed thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make ſtraight paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holineſs,

not to deſpiſe his chaſtening, nor yet to faint under it. Whatever inſtrument was employed; they were thus taught to recognize the fatherly correction of God in their trials; and neither to diſregard them with ſtoutneſs of ſpirit, and unfeeling contempt; as if they called for no humiliation, were capable of no improvement, had no meaning, and were eaſily ſupported; nor yet to faint; to deſpond, turn aſide, or ſeek relief from ſin, when ſmarting under them: ſeeing the Lord correcteth all the objects of his ſpecial love; and ſharply ſcourgeth every one, whom he receives as his adopted child into his family, and diſtinguiſhes by his peculiar regard. (Note, &c. *Job.* c. v. ver. 17. *Prov.* c. iii. v. 11, 12.) If then the Hebrews endured their afflictions as fatherly chaſtiſements, in a ſubmiſſive ſpirit, and with due conſtancy; it would evidently appear that the Lord was dealing with them as with children: for indeed, among men, it might be enquired "what "ſon is he, whom his father, on no occaſion, chaſteneth?" All need correction; all who are properly educated receive it: no wiſe and kind father wholly withholds it; and no children are entirely exempted from the pain of ſalutary diſcipline, except ſuch as are indulged to their ruin. So that, if the profeſſed people of God were not at all corrected, it might be inferred, that he did not own them as his children, but conſidered them as ſpurious; members of the viſible church, but not born of the Spirit, or educated for the inheritance of his ſaints. The alluſion may either be made to ſuch children, as a man deems to be ſpurious, though born of his wife; becauſe he ſuſpects her of being unfaithful, and therefore will beſtow no pains on them; or ſuch, as the real father neglects, becauſe they are illegitimate, and he is aſhamed to own them: but the former caſe ſeems more exactly to accord to the apoſtle's intent. Moreover, they had had fathers, according to the fleſh, who corrected them in their younger years: and though the chaſtiſement ſeemed grievous to them; yet they did not leave them on that account, but rather learned to ſtand in awe of their authority, and to fear giving them further offence: and when they were grown up they became ſenſible, that ſuch diſcipline had been productive of good to them. Was it not therefore much more proper for them to ſubmit to the Father of their ſpirits, the Creator of their ſouls, and the Giver of their ſpiritual life; when that ſubjection was eſſentially connected with their ſalvation, and nothing but death could be the conſequence of rebelling againſt him? For indeed the corrections of their earthly parents, during the few days of their childhood, had been inflicted "after their own pleaſure," and was often in a great degree the effect of their own paſſions, rather than of a prudent deſign for the good of their children: but their heavenly Father corrected them, though with apparent ſeverity, during the ſhort time of their continuance on earth; yet entirely with a wiſe and faithful regard to their profit; and in order to make them partakers of his holineſs, by mortifying their pride and carnal luſts, and bringing them through ſuch diſcipline, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to be conformed to himſelf, in their judgment, diſpoſitions, and conduct. For by theſe means, he ſhewed them the vanity of the world, the evil nature and effects of ſin, the depravity of their own hearts, and the preciouſneſs of his ſalvation, &c: and ſo trained them up to humility, ſpirituality, ſimplicity, tenderneſs, ſubmiſſion, love, reverence, gratitude, compaſſion, and every holy affection. Now, they were not to ſuppoſe, that theſe ſalutary corrections ever appeared pleaſant, or matter of joy to the perſons, who were enduring them; on the contrary they always ſeemed for the preſent grievous, and cauſed much anguiſh: nor could they otherwiſe anſwer their intention. So that, the ſufferers often thought, that their trials did them harm, and would end in their ruin: yet afterwards, when the tumult of their paſſions had ſubſided, and they were able to digeſt the leſſons they received under them; they amply compenſated for the anguiſh, by yielding the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs, and bringing them into a diſpoſition quietly to ſubmit to God, and meekly to bear the injuries of men; and by rendering them fruitful in all thoſe good works, which evinced them to be juſtified, and at peace with God, and which tended to give them inward peace, joy, and confidence in Him. Thus having been *exerciſed*, diſciplined, or inſtructed, by ſanctified affliction; they would afterwards poſſeſs the benefit of them, even though for the preſent they irritated their corruptions, and tended immediately to make a diſcovery of the evils of their hearts for their ſubſequent humiliation.

V. 12, 13.] Theſe conſiderations ſhould induce the Hebrews, both in reſpect of themſelves, and each other, to obſerve the counſel of the prophet, (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. xxxv. v. 3,) by endeavouring to counteract every diſpoſition to faint, deſpond, or throw up their profeſſion amidſt their perſecutions. On the contrary, they ought to conſider them as fatherly corrections for their profit, ſubmit to them as ſuch, and ſeek to have them ſanctified; and direct and encourage each other to take the ſame courſe. Thus they ought patiently and firmly to maintain their profeſſion, and go on with their work; and by proper inſtructions, admonitions and counſels, to oppoſe every falſe doctrine, and remove every ſtumbling-block; that ſo ſtraight paths might be made for their feet, though the road were rough and thorny: leſt any of thoſe, who were diſcouraged, or, like lame perſons, proceeded with difficulty and pain, ſhould be turned out of the way, to ſeek an eaſier path by concealing, or acting contrary to their profeſſion; (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. lvii. v. 14:) whereas ſuch perſons ſhould be healed, and confirmed by ſuitable encouragements and cautions, whilſt there was hope concerning them.

V. 14—17.] Whilſt they thus ſtedfaſtly adhered to, and contended for the truth; they ought alſo to avoid all diſcord and reſentment, and to *purſue* peace with all men, even though it ſeemed to flee from them. They ought, as far as truth and duty would permit them, to without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord:

15 Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of the grace of God; leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Leſt there *be* any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt,

19 And the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more:

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned, or thruſt through with a dart:

21 And ſo terrible was the ſight, *that* Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect,

24 And to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

25 See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh. For if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more *ſhall*

live peaceably with Jews and Gentiles, and to bear, or concede every thing for that purpoſe; and they ſhould ſtudy to be at peace with each other, and with their Gentile brethren. This would well connect with, and favour, their following after holineſs, and ſeeking nearer conformity to the ſpiritual law, and perfect character of God, as exhibited in the example of Chriſt: nor muſt they even ſeek peace, ſo as to neglect the practice and purſuit of holineſs; for without it, no man of any religion could ſee the Lord: none could behold his manifeſted glory, and commune with Him in comfort, whilſt in this world, without the ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience; nor could any one be admitted to, or be capable of, the beatific viſion hereaſter, without being made holy even as God is holy. It ſhould be noted, that humiliation, brokenneſs of heart, and proper affections towards the Lord Jeſus, are eſſential to the holineſs of a redeemed ſinner, and all elſe muſt be counterfeit where theſe are wanting. Thus it behoved them to look diligently to themſelves, and to each other; both in reſpect of their principles and conduct: leſt any man of them ſhould fail of an intereſt in the ſpecial mercy and favour of God, or remain deſtitute of his ſanctifying grace, and ſo be left to apoſtatize: and leſt any root of bitterneſs, any unmortified luſt in the heart, which ſeemed to be dead, ſhould ſpring up, and ſhoot forth it's bitter and poiſonous produce in heretical doctrines, or ſcandalous practices, to the trouble and diſturbance of the whole body, and the defiling and corrupting of numbers; as frequently had been done. (Note, *Deut.* c. xxix. v. 18—21.) For inſtance, leſt any one among them, ſhould commit fornication, under a miſtaken notion of chriſtian liberty; or leſt there ſhould be ſome profane perſon, who ſo deſpiſed the peculiar bleſſings of the new covenant, as to barter them away for paltry temporal advantages; like Eſau, who for one meal of meat ſold his birth-right: (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxv. v. 29—34.) That example ought to be a warning to them, not to renounce chriſtianity for the ſake of worldly eaſe, intereſt or indulgence: for when Eſau would afterwards have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected both by the Lord and his father Iſaac, (Notes, *Gen.* c. xxvii. v. 31—41:) ſo that he found no place of, or opportunity for, repentance, though he ſought *it* carefully with tears. The whole hiſtory of Eſau ſhews, that he, at that time, neither ſpiritually repented of all his ſins, nor ſought to do it: but he was grieved and vexed at being circumvented by Jacob; he was ſorry he had made ſo fooliſh a bargain; he coveted the temporal advantages, eſpecially the dominion over his brother, which belonged to the birth-right: he had altered his mind *in that particular*, and he ſought carefully, and with tears, to induce Iſaac to alter his purpoſe, to retract Jacob's bleſſing, and beſtow it on him: but he ſought this in vain, for it was then too late. Thus the time would ſhortly come, when they, who refuſed ſpiritual bleſſings for the ſake of temporal intereſts, would become fully ſenſible of their madneſs and folly; and would be glad to reverſe the fatal bargain: but that muſt be let alone for ever. This was another awful warning againſt apoſtacy: but it in no degree relates to the caſe of ſuch as do truly repent of all their ſins; or ſeek repentance of God in prayer, carefully, and with tears: for this Eſau never did. Indeed it chiefly reſpects the condition of ſinners in another world: though it alſo includes the total deſperation, and tremendous horror of ſome apoſtates in this preſent life. (Note, &c. c. vi. v. 6—8. c. x. v. 26—30.)

V. 18—25.] The apoſtle here recurred to his argument, that the ſuperior excellency of the chriſtian diſpenſation would render it proportionably more criminal, and *not* we *eſcape*, if we turn away from him that *ſpeaketh* from heaven:

26 Whoſe voice then ſhook the earth: but now he hath promiſed, ſaying, Yet once more I ſhake not the earth only, but alſo heaven.

27 And this *word*, Yet once more, ſignifieth the removing of thoſe things that

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perilous to reject it, (c. ii. v. 1—4. c. x. v. 28—31:) for his diſcourſe ſeems equally ſuited for the warning of avowed unbelievers, and of thoſe who were tempted to apoſtacy. He did not ſpeak of the ſtate of individuals, as converted or unconverted; but of the different method, in which God now ſpake to the nation, from that in which he delivered the law to their fathers. This he ſhewed by an alluſion to the two mountains, Sinai and Zion: for though God at length ſpake to his people from mount Zion and the Mercy-ſeat, through the atonements and miniſtrations of the high-prieſt, &c; yet this was only in a typical and obſcure manner; for the way into the holieſt was not made manifeſt under that diſpenſation: but the law was delivered from, and the national covenant was ratified at mount Sinai. That diſpenſation was at length aboliſhed, and another was introduced: the Lord therefore had not called them to aſſemble, and hear him ſpeak to them from the material mountain, which was capable of being touched, (though their fathers were forbidden to touch it;) from whence ſuch tremendous diſplays of the divine glory had been made: when the law given, and the terrors attending on it, made the people intreat, that Jehovah would no more ſpeak to them in that way; as they could not endure the things which were ſpoken: (Notes, *Exod.* c. xix. xx;) and the ſevere reſtraints laid on them, and the terrible things ſeen and heard by them, filled them with diſmay; and even made Moſes exclaim, that he exceedingly "feared and quaked;" notwithſtanding his typical office of Mediator, his peculiar ſanctity, and the long and intimate communion with God, that he had maintained, (Note, *Exod.* c. xix. v. 19.) The whole of this ſcene ſhewed the impoſſibility of a ſinner's coming before God with acceptance, according to the works of the law, the provoking preſumption of attempting it, and the need of a Mediator, and a better covenant: and it was to the apoſtle's purpoſe to call off the attention of the Hebrews from that diſpenſation to the goſpel, by every argument. They were therefore to conſider themſelves as ſummoned by the preachers of the goſpel to come to mount Zion, or as convened there, to hear the voice of God from the mercy-ſeat: they were *profeſſedly* become inhabitants of the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, the place of the Lord's ſpecial reſidence with his covenant people, and accepted worſhippers, of which Jeruſalem had been but a feeble type: at leaſt they were invited to enter into, and become citizens of that favoured city. This meant the church of Chriſt on earth, with all its ſpecial privileges, ordinances, and promiſes, &c; as connected with, and continually ſupplying new inhabitants to the Holy reſidence of God in heaven. (*Pſ.* xlvi. xlviii. lxxxvii. *Gal.* c. iv. ver. 21—31.) They were alſo called to hear the voice of God, in the preſence of an innumerable company of angels, who were all miniſtering ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation, whoſe happineſs they were come to participate, and whoſe worſhip they were called upon to join and emulate. Moreover, they were come to unite, (not with the congregation of Iſrael,) but with the aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, thoſe that were ſpecially devoted to God; his children, and heirs of the whole inheritance; whoſe names were not only enrolled in the genealogies or regiſters of God's profeſſed people on earth; but written in heaven as the elect of God, born of the Spirit, denizens of that heavenly city, and entitled to all its invaluable immunities. They were alſo called on, and many of them were in profeſſion come, to hear the voice of God as a Saviour and a Father; who was the impartial, omniſcient, omnipotent, and righteous Judge of all men and of all the world; and by whom all unbelievers would be condemned to everlaſting puniſhment: yea they were come to ſhare the bleſſedneſs of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; even of all the company of ancient believers, and of thoſe, who had died ſince the coming of Chriſt, and had thus been made perfect in holineſs and felicity. This is a moſt deciſive proof, that the ſouls of believers enter into a ſtate of perfect happineſs, when they die; as far as can conſiſt with being ſeparated from their bodies. They were alſo convened, as it were, to hear the voice of God, ſpeaking to them by Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant; which was founded on better promiſes, and ratified by nobler blood, than that mediated by Moſes; even by the ſhedding of that blood, through the application of which the conſcience, the heart and the duties of ſinners were cleanſed, and the heavenly things themſelves were purified; of which all the ſprinklings of blood under the law had been mere ſhadows. Nor was this blood only more efficacious, than that of bulls and goats; but Jeſus, by it, being dead, yet ſpake; and far better things than righteous Abel had done, (c. xi. v. 4:) for whilſt the blood of Abel called from the ground for vengeance on the murderer; the blood of Chriſt, applied in faith, not only took away the guilt of all other ſins, however atrocious, but even that of being his crucifiers; as multitudes of thoſe, who had been immediately concerned in that horrid crime, could thankfully witneſs. This national guilt, therefore, could not preclude them from pardon, through this great atonement; and the Lord then invited, and commanded them, to believe in the name of his Son, and ſo to ſhare all the before-mentioned moſt precious privileges: let them therefore ſee to it, as they valued his favour, and feared his vengeance, that they did not refuſe his gracious call and proffered ſalvation, who thus ſpake to them from his throne of grace, and by his beloved Son. For if *they* eſcaped not condign puniſhment, who refuſed to obey the voice of God ſpeaking to them, on earth, from mount Sinai, by Moſes; but rejected his authority and brake his covenant: much more certainly, and ſeverely would they be puniſhed, who turned away with enmity and contempt from him, who now ſpake to them from heaven, by the ambaſſadors of his Son, their Mediator and High-Prieſt in the ſancare ſhaken, as of thoſe things that are made, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear;

29 For our God *is* a conſuming fire.

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tuary above: for their guilt and condemnation muſt be proportioned to the grace and condeſcenſion, which they refuſed and deſpiſed. This ſhews, that by coming to Mount Zion, &c, the apoſtle did not mean being true believers; but having the goſpel propoſed to them, or having made a profeſſion of it. They might therefore be ſaid to turn away from God, whether they all along rejected his invitation, or after a time became apoſtates from chriſtianity: but men cannot be ſaid to refuſe what was never propoſed to them.

V. 26—29.] The voice of Jehovah from Mount Sinai had been attended with tremendous earthquakes and convulſions; but long after, in an expreſs prediction of the Meſſiah, He had promiſed, that He would once more ſhake the earth, and the heavens alſo; (Note, &c. *Hag.* c. ii. v. 6—9;) meaning that he would unhinge the whole civil and eccleſiaſtical ſtate of the Jews, and aboliſh the Moſaic diſpenſation, in order to make way for the kingdom of Chriſt. The expreſſion " once more," denoted the total removal of the things ſhaken, as of things made and conſtituted, after the manner of this lower creation, to endure but for a time: this was to be only " *once* more," and then a conſtitution would be introduced of a heavenly nature, which could not be ſhaken or removed, but ſhould continue to the end, and in its effects for ever. As they, therefore, who had embraced the goſpel, were admitted into, and made partakers of a kingdom, which could not be removed; as the reſt were invited to accept of theſe benefits, according to the diſpenſation, which was now openly introduced; and as all grace was freely promiſed to every one, who ſought it in the appointed way: ſo it was proper to exhort all of them " to have," that is to ſeek for, and ſo obtain " grace;" that they might ſerve God, not merely as his profeſſing people; but acceptably, as true believers and ſpiritual worſhippers: and not only with joy, confidence, and gratitude, but with reverence of his majeſty and authority; and a godly fear of deceiving themſelves, of falling under his wrath or frown, or of diſhonouring his name: as humbly conſcious of their unworthineſs, weakneſs and depravity; and recollecting, that the God, whoſe people they profeſſed to be, was a conſuming fire to deſtroy hypocrites, apoſtates, and enemies of every kind, however maſked and diſguiſed. (*Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 22. *Pſ.* xcvii. v. 3. *Dan.* c. vii. v. 9.) The apoſtle evidently meant ſome of his xpreſſions for one deſcription of readers, and others of hem for thoſe of a different character; though he left ach to make the application to himſelf: but he peculiarly imed to convince his countrymen, that unbelievers among hem were doomed to the moſt tremendous vengeance of God, both national and perſonal; from which there could e no eſcape, except by believing in, and cleaving to the ord Jeſus Chriſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt prophets, apoſtles, martyrs, and ancient believers ſing the praiſes of our redeeming God; they unitedly teſtify to us his faithfulneſs to his promiſes, and the preciouſneſs of his ſalvation, and exhort us to lay aſide every weight, and to run with patience the race ſet before us. We ſhould then ſeriouſly enquire, what are the weights which retard our courſe? What the ſin, or ſins, by which we are moſt eaſily beſet, and peculiarly endangered? That we may ſeek for grace to enable us to lay aſide the one, and to be upon our guard againſt all occaſions of the other. Many, who ſeemed to ſet out well, loſe the race, through the weight of increaſing trade, or affluence, with the peculiar ſnares, temptations, connexions, and incumbrances of them: this ſeems the eaſily-beſetting ſin of theſe days of liberty and peace; though every ſtate and all perſons have their peculiar dangers and hindrances, againſt which they are required to watch and pray without ceaſing: nor can we "run " with patience the race ſet before us," unleſs we be crucified to the world, and daily employed in mortifying the whole body of ſin, with all its affections and luſts; thoſe eſpecially, that education, habit, or ſituation give moſt advantage to. We ſhould imagine ourſelves ſurrounded with this cloud of witneſſes as ſpectators of our conduct, animating us to run the race without fainting, and prepared to congratulate our ſucceſs, with adoring acclamations. Yet the eye of our ſouls ſhould be principally fixed upon Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of our faith; from whoſe fulneſs they all received, by whoſe light they ſhone, and through whoſe ſtrength they contended for and obtained the victory: and we ſhould turn our attention from all other objects, to fixed contemplation on his ignominious croſs, and his glorious throne. The thoughts of the variety of his ſufferings, from love to ſinners, and his animating example of meekneſs and patience, cannot fail to exhilerate our drooping ſpirits with an aſſurance of his compaſſion, and tender regard to our good. We too ſhall then ſee, that a joy is ſet before us alſo, at the end of our ſorrows, for the ſake of which we may chearfully endure them; we ſhall perceive that it is reaſonable to diſregard the reproach and contempt of men, as the divine Saviour bare, and ſanctified this trial alſo: and the view of his glorious exaltation will inſpire us with confidence in his power to protect, ſupport, and comfort us, under all that we can ſuffer for his ſake. Let us then frequently conſider him, who endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt we be wearied, and faint in our minds. What are our little trials to his agonies, or even to our deſerts? What indeed are they to the ſufferings of many of our brethren, in different ages and places? We have not yet reſiſted unto blood in our warfare againſt ſin; as many others have done: and we ſhould be aſhamed of our murmurings and impatience, when we have ſo little cauſe of complaint. But whilſt we look to Jeſus, to reconcile us to ſuffering, to ſet us againſt ſin, and to eclipſe the vain ſplendour of this worthleſs world; we ſhould alſo learn to receive every affliction, which men's malice brings upon us, as a correction ſent by our wiſe and gracious Father, who ſpeaketh to us by his word, interpret-

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1ſt. Exhortations to brotherly love, hoſpitality, compaſſion, chaſtity, contentment, truſt in God, recollection of the faith, &c, of their deceaſed paſtors, attention to Chriſt as unchangeable, watchfulneſs againſt falſe doctrines, regard to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, willingneſs to bear reproach for him, thankſgivings to God, liberality to men, ſubjection to their teachers, and prayer for the apoſtle, &c, 1---12. 2d. Prayers for the Hebrews, and concluding ſalutations, 20---25.

LET brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers: for thereby ſome have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as

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ing his providence, as to children; and calls upon us neither to deſpiſe, nor to faint under his chaſtiſement. We ſhould therefore conſider them as precious favours, needful bleſſings, pledges of love, and the only ſpiritual good; which he hath promiſed to give us, without our praying for it. He never faileth to chaſten his children; though he often lets mere profeſſors alone, becauſe he means to deſtroy them: He will neglect the education of none, whom he receiveth into his family; and he ſets us an example how we ſhould correct our children, not for our pleaſure, but for their profit; not from paſſion, but in wiſe affection. Thus he makes us partakers of his holineſs, that we may be meet to ſhare his felicity. Let us then endeavour to receive chaſtening from the Father of our ſpirits, as we expect our children to ſubmit to our corrections: they will be over in a few days; and though for the preſent they ſeem not to be joyous, but grievous; yet we ſhall afterwards experience the benefit and comfort of them, in the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs, which have been produced and matured by our being exerciſed with them. Thus nauſeous medicines yield the pleaſant ſenſations of health, when the taſte is forgotten; and delicious poiſons cauſe extreme agony, when the reliſh of them is gone for ever. Let us then comfort ourſelves and each other with theſe topics; that we may lift up the hands which hang down, and confirm the feeble knees, and let us carefully remove obſtacles out of the way of pilgrims, and look well to the weak and tempted; leſt deceivers ſhould turn them out of the way, inſtead of their being encouraged to perſevere in the courſe, amidſt all its roughneſs, and difficulty.

To avoid ſtumbling-blocks and offences, we ſhould follow peace with all men, and leave no proper means untried to avoid contention, which ſuch numbers delight to kindle, and blow into a flame. As far as we can go, without ſacrificing truth, or duty; we ſhall find, that peace with men of all ſects and parties, will be favourable to our purſuit of holineſs; without which no man of any ſect can enter heaven, or enjoy the favour of God. Let us then look diligently to ourſelves, that we are not deceived by notions, or forms, and fail of the grace of God; and let us watch over each other, that no root of bitterneſs may ſpring up in our congregations, to diſturb their peace and to defile the ſouls of many. Thoſe looſe notions eſpecially muſt be zealouſly oppoſed, which give allowance to the fleſh, from a perverſion of evangelical principles: for a little of this leaven will ſuffice to leaven a whole lump. All profeſſors ſhould remember profane Eſau: for they will all be tempted, more or leſs, to ſell their birth-right, for worldly pleaſure, or advantage. But the time is at hand, when they, who thus renounce, or refuſe ſpiritual ſalvation, for carnal indulgence, would be glad to inherit the bleſſing, and will be rejected; nor will any place be found for reverſing the fatal bargain, though they ſhould ſeek it carefully with tears; neither can any one, who wilfully rejects the goſpel for the love of this preſent world, know to what lengths of obduracy and deſperation he may be given up, in the righteous judgment of God. We have abundant cauſe for joy and gratitude, that we are not left under the terror and curſe of the broken covenant of works, or under the darkneſs of the legal diſpenſation. The moſt holy man muſt tremble, yea deſpair, if he were to be judged according to the holy law given from Mount Sinai; and the vengeance of God would be far more tremendous, than its fire, and tempeſt. But whilſt we bleſs God, who ſpeaks to us from the mercy-ſeat, and calls us to partake of the privileges of Zion's citizens, and the happineſs of angels and glorified ſaints, through Jeſus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and the ſprinkling of his precious blood; let us ſee to it, that we have good evidence, that our names are written in heaven, with thoſe of true diſciples, and not merely on earth with thoſe of profeſſed chriſtians: let us remember that our cauſe muſt be tried by God, the Judge of all, who will determine whether we do or do not belong to the church of the firſt-born: and let it be noted, that whilſt the blood of Jeſus ſpeaketh nothing but mercy to the vileſt, who truly believe; it will call for ſeverer vengeance on thoſe, who neglect, abuſe, or deſpiſe it, than that of Abel did on his murderer Cain. Let all then ſee to it, that they do not refuſe Him, who ſpeaketh to them from heaven, with infinite tenderneſs and love, leſt they ſhould fall from a greater height of privilege to a more tremendous depth of condemnation, than ancient rebels did: for how can they eſcape, who turn away from God, in unbelief or apoſtacy, whilſt he ſo graciouſly beſeeches them to be reconciled to Him, and to accept of his everlaſting favour? No other diſpenſation is now to be introduced, till the conſummation of all things: the kingdom we are called to receive, can never be moved: the inheritance of believers is ſecured againſt all enemies and diſaſters: all things pertaining to ſalvation are freely given in anſwer to prayer: let us then ſeek for Grace, that we may ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; remembering that he is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of his ſaints; and that he is a conſuming fire, eſpecially to hypocrites, apoſtates, and deſpiſers of his ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—3.] The Jewiſh converts, afte the day of Pentecoſt were moſt eminent for the love of on another: but many things would naturally occur to interrupt that entire harmony, and to ſtop the current of tha liberality, which they at firſt ſhewed. It was therefor

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3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them: *and* them which ſuffer adverſity, as being yourſelves alſo in the body.

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5 *Let your* converſation *be* without covetouſneſs; *and be* content with ſuch things as ye have: for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.

6 So that we may boldly ſay, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over

peculiarly proper for the apoſtle to exhort them "to let "brotherly love continue," and to avoid every thing that interfered with their perſevering attention to peace, kindneſs and reciprocal affection; as became children of one family, and heirs of the ſame inheritance: and he probably meant to excite them to exerciſe brotherly love to the gentile converts, againſt whom they were generally prejudiced. In particular he exhorted them not to forget to entertain ſtrangers; eſpecially ſuch as were driven, or travelled, from home for the ſake of the goſpel; and who in general were deſtitute of other accommodation, and dependant on the hoſpitality of their brethren, who were not perſonally acquainted with them. To encourage this kind of charity, he reminded them, that ſome had entertained angels unawares, as Abraham and Lot. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xviii. xix.) It hath been obſerved, that one of the three, who came to Abraham, was called Jehovah, and was doubtleſs the eternal Word, and Son of God: but it was not neceſſary for the apoſtle to advert to that circumſtance, when he merely ſuggeſted a hint on the ſubject. It was not to be expected that they would literally be viſited by angels, in the form of ſtrangers: but in their hoſpitality to their brethren, for Chriſt's ſake, they in fact received him, and would be rewarded accordingly, (*Matt.* c. xxv. v. 31—40:) and even if they were miſtaken in the character of thoſe ſtrangers, to whom they ſhewed this kindneſs; their intentions would in no wiſe miſs of a gracious recompence. Many of their brethren alſo were bound in priſon, for the Goſpel's ſake: and they ought to remember their hardſhips, as if confined with them; that they might be excited to adopt every method of alleviating their ſorrows, or procuring their releaſe. In ſhort, whatever adverſity any were ſuffering, in their perſons, connexions, or circumſtances; they ought to ſympathize with, and endeavour to relieve them: recollecting that they were ſtill in the body, and liable to ſimilar afflictions; and that they would, in that caſe, expect the ſoothing, lenient care of their brethren. All captives and afflicted perſons might be included in the exhortation; but the houſhold of faith was ſpecially intended.

V. 3, *Marriage*, &c.] Many perſons, particularly they of the church of Rome, explain this as an exhortation; "Let marriage be honourable *in all things*, &c." and doubtleſs the apoſtle meant, that it ought to be entered into, and behaved in, according to God's moſt holy commandments; that it might be honourable to the perſons themſelves, and to their profeſſion of the goſpel; as well as that the ſtate ſhould be had in honour, and conſidered as undefiled. However, the particle, *but*, introducing the ſecond clauſe, ſhews that his primary meaning was to aſſert, that marriage in itſelf was honourable in all things, and in all perſons; and the bed undefiled as to its own nature, though not incapable of abuſe: for he contraſts marriage with the conduct of fornicators and adulterers, whom God will certainly judge, and condemn for their violations of his law. Some perſons in the primitive times contended for the lawfulneſs of fornication; and others condemned marriage, or at leaſt deemed it a leſs holy ſtate than celibacy. This myſtery of iniquity very early began to work: and the apoſtle, in a few moſt expreſſive words, guarded againſt both the extremes, which experience has always proved to be, in different forms, but almoſt equally, deſtructive to morality, the welfare of ſociety, and the purity of religion.

V. 5, 6.] The Hebrews were generally poor, and the goods of many of them had been plundered by their perſecutors. The apoſtle ſtrenuouſly exerted himſelf to procure them a liberal relief from the gentile churches; but he here exhorts them to let their whole conduct, diſcourſe, and manner of life be evidently at a diſtance from covetouſneſs: neither being anxious about getting money, to lay up, or to expend in ſuperfluities: nor yet to be tenacious of what they had, or averſe to lay it out for valuable purpoſes. On the contrary, it was proper for them to be content, well ſatisfied, and pleaſed with ſuch things as they had, though mean, ſcanty, or precarious; aſſured that infinite wiſdom and love choſe their portion for them; and remembering the promiſe of God, that "he would not in any wiſe leave them; nor in any wiſe, or account, or in any emergency, or at any time would he forſake them." The emphaſis of the original words, in which five negatives are uſed to increaſe the ſtrength of the negation, according to the Greek idiom, can ſcarce be retained in any tranſlation. The words are quoted from the Lord's addreſs to Joſhua, (*Joſh.* c. i. v. 5:) though nearly the ſame are uſed in ſeveral parts of the ſcripture. However, they ſhew that any believer, in ſimilar circumſtances, may rely upon the promiſes made ſpecially to any perſon as recorded in the ſcripture. The Hebrews therefore cleaving to the Lord and his ſervice, in the depth of poverty, and in the midſt of their perſecutors, might ſay with confidence "the Lord is my helper &c," according to the frequent language of the pſalmiſt: and they might be aſſured, that he would protect, provide for, and comfort them, in all poſſible emergencies; and never forſake them in life, or death, but bring them ſafe to his heavenly reſt and glory.

V. 7, 8.] To encourage their patience even unto a violent death, if that were ſet before them, the apoſtle called on them to remember ſuch *as had preſided over*, and ſpoken the word of God to them, but had been removed by martyrdom, or in ſome other way; as James, whom Herod beheaded, and ſeveral others. They ought you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of *their* converſation:

8 Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever.

9 Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines; for *it is* a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which ſerve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of thoſe beaſts, whoſe blood is brought into the ſanctuary by the high-prieſt for ſin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the people with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we ſeek one to come.

15 By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice

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carefully to recollect their inſtructions and behaviour, to adhere to the doctrines they had delivered, and to copy their vigorous faith, and conſtant obedience: conſidering eſpecially the concluſion of their courſe, and the manner in which they departed out of the world; and thinking of the compoſure and holy joy, with which they met the ſtroke of death, with whatever circumſtances of torture or ignominy it was attended. For if they would end their converſation, or their chriſtian courſe of obedience, in the ſame happy and honourable manner; they muſt follow their example, and adhere to their doctrine and inſtructions. And though theſe uſeful perſons had been removed; yet Jeſus Chriſt, the great Head of the church, was "the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever;" equally merciful, powerful, faithful, and all-ſufficient. As the Son of God, he was poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfection from eternity; he had continued to exerciſe thoſe perfections for the good of the church, through all preceding ages; nor was he leſs perfect and powerful, when manifeſted in the fleſh to purchaſe the church with his own blood: he continued the ſame, when exalted in human nature to the mediatorial throne; and when he ſhall come to judge the world, he will exhibit the ſame divine perfection and glory; and ſo to all eternity. The expreſſion ſeems to be a periphraſis of immutability, a divine attribute incommunicable to a mere creature: his Perſon is as immutable as his doctrine; his juſtice and holineſs, as his mercy and truth; and all kinds of perſons will meet a Judge exactly of the ſame character, as he manifeſted when he appeared on earth as a Saviour. The Hebrews might, therefore, confide in him, to ſupport and comfort them under their ſufferings for his ſake; even as he had thoſe, who had ſo happily finiſhed their courſe.

V. 9—14.] (Note, *Eph.* c. iv. ver. 14.) The apoſtle exhorted the Hebrews to truſt in and cleave to Chriſt, according to the inſtructions of their deceaſed teachers, and not to be carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines, as the clouds are driven by the wind. Many innovations were ſtarted by different deſcriptions of falſe teachers, which were all foreign to the ſimplicity of chriſtianity: but they ſhould eſpecially ſeek to have their hearts eſtabliſhed in a ſingle dependance on free grace, and in the experience of the ſanctification of the Holy Spirit, which would bring comfort into their hearts, and make them ſtedfaſt againſt every deluſion. Whereas, if they paid much attention to diſtinctions of meats, &c; they would not arrive at ſtability: nor could they expect ſpiritual profit from ſuch obſervances; ſeeing they, who had heretofore been occupied therein, and had looked no further, had derived no ſaving benefit from them. Indeed believers had, in the atonement of Chriſt, the ſubſtance of what had been ſhadowed forth by the ſacrifices of the law. The fleſh of many of them had been divided between the altar and the prieſts; and they alone were to eat the moſt holy things. But ſuch of them, as continued to miniſter at the tabernacle or temple, and neglected the goſpel, had not the privilege of participating with chriſtians in feaſting upon their ſpiritual ſacrifice; of which the Lord's ſupper was the appointed memorial, and might be alluded to. An intimation of this might be implied in the prohibition of the prieſt's eating any part of the moſt ſolemn ſin-offerings, the blood of which was carried into the moſt holy place on the day of atonement, to expiate the guilt of the nation, &c; but they were ordered to be burned without the camp. (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. iv. xvi.) Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſet apart for, and conſecrate to, God, his people as a ſpiritual prieſthood, by ſhedding his own blood, as their ſin-offering, that he might enter with it for them into the heavenly ſanctuary; ſuffered death, not within the precincts of the temple, or even in the holy city, but without the gate upon mount Calvary. Thus he was, as it were, caſt out of the camp as accurſed; that he might appear to be the true ſin-offering, of which all others were the types. As, therefore, it was proper for believers to renounce all dependance on legal ſacrifices, and the ſervice of the ſanctuary, to follow Chriſt: ſo they ought willingly for his ſake to bear the reproach caſt upon them on that account, and to be excommunicated and vilified by the perſecuting prieſts and ſcribes; going along with Chriſt, out of the camp of Iſrael, and enduring every indignity for his ſake, and after his example. Nor ſhould they ſhrink from any hardſhips in his cauſe; even if they were driven from their houſes, poſſeſſions and cities, to become exiles and wanderers; or if they were immured in priſons: for, being ſtrangers and pilgrims, they had on earth no continuing city, or quiet ſettlement; but were ſeeking one to come, even heaven itſelf, from which they could not be excluded, (c. xi. v. 10. 16.)

V. 15, 16.] The Hebrews needed no atonement but of praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us: for we truſt we have a good conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly.

19 But I beſeech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well

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that of Chriſt; and therefore living on him by faith, they might diſregard the legal oblations, and offer at a diſtance from the temple, more acceptable ſacrifices, than the peace-offerings, &c: if, through Chriſt's mediation, they preſented to God their continual and fervent praiſes and thankſgivings, adoring his manifeſted perfections, celebrating his wonderful works, and gratefully acknowledging his abundant loving-kindneſs towards them. This fruit of their lips would be more pleaſing and honourable to him, than the fruits of their land, or the firſtlings of their cattle. (*Hoſea*, c. xiv. ver. 2. 1 *Pet.* c. ii. ver. 5.) At the ſame time they ought not to forget or neglect to do good to their indigent brethren, or others in diſtreſs, by communicating to them according to their ability: for with ſuch ſacrifices, when offered from a principle of humble faith and love, God would be well-pleaſed; as they were a proper expreſſion of their gratitude to him, very honourable to the goſpel, and beneficial to mankind, and the fruits of his grace in their hearts. (*Phil.* c. iv. ver. 18.)

V. 17. *Obey, &c.*] The apoſtle, as a debtor to all men, had written to the Hebrews, to eſtabliſh them in the truth; and he had called on them to remember, and follow the faith of their deceaſed paſtors, &c: but he would alſo remind them, that they ought to obey thoſe pious teachers and guides, who now preſided over them; and to ſubmit to their inſtruction, admonition and reproof, as ruling over them with ſpiritual authority, derived from the Lord Jeſus. For they were appointed to watch for their ſouls, and to guard and caution them againſt all thoſe errors and ſins which might endanger them. And they performed this important and difficult ſervice, as men, who muſt give an account for every part of their conduct to him, who employed them; ſo that they could not deliver their own ſouls, without great vigilence, diligence, faithfulneſs and impartiality, which would often conſtrain them to diſpleaſe men. The people ought therefore to obey the word of God ſpoken, and ſubmit to his authority exerciſed, by them: that they might be able to give up their account with joy, having been ſucceſsful in their labours; and not with grief and anguiſh of heart, becauſe of the untractable conduct of thoſe to whom they had been ſent; which would not be for their profit, who occaſioned grief to their faithful paſtors. This muſt principally relate to the account given before the Lord, as it were, from day to day, with joy, or grief, of the reception given to their meſſage: for no miſconduct of the people will occaſion ſorrow to faithful miniſters, at the final day of retribution; though their ſalvation will be unto them a crown of rejoicing. The exhortation ſuppoſes the faithfulneſs of miniſters; and that they exerciſe a ſcriptural authority in a proper manner: for no obedience and ſubmiſſion can be due to uſurped dominion, to unfaithful ſtewards, or blind guides.

V. 18, 19.] It is plain from theſe verſes, that the perſons addreſſed knew from whom the epiſtle came. The apoſtle deſired them to pray for him and his fellow-labourers, as well as for their own paſtors: for however he had been calumniated, or ſuſpected by his nation; he truſted that he had a good conſcience, tender and duly informed, and that he was willing and deſirous in all things to act with integrity, and in a becoming manner. He therefore intreated their prayers for his protection, comfort and ſucceſs: but eſpecially, that the providence of God would order things in ſuch a manner, as to enable him to come among them the ſooner: for he was perſuaded many of them would be glad to ſee him; and he purpoſed to come as ſoon as he regained his liberty and had opportunity, notwithſtanding all that he had ſuffered in conſequence of his laſt journey to Jeruſalem. Whether he accompliſhed this purpoſe, or no, is not known.

V. 20, 21.] After deſiring the prayers of the Hebrews in his behalf, the apoſtle gave them a compendium of his moſt fervent ſupplications for them. He addreſſed himſelf to "the God of peace," as reconciled to believers, and ready to be at peace with all ſinners that came to him in the appointed way; as the Author of ſpiritual peace in the hearts and conſciences of his people; and as the Lover of peace and concord in the church and amongſt mankind; who "had brought again from the dead the "great Shepherd of the ſheep," from whom all paſtors derived their authority. As the great Proprietor of the choſen flock, to whom they had been given, he had laid down his life to atone for their ſins, and he continually ſought them and brought them home to his fold, where he protected and fed them. (Notes, *Pſ.* xxiii. *Iſaiah*, c. liii. v. 6. *Ezek.* c. xxxiv. *Luke*, c. xv. v. 1—6.) In order to ſhew that his ranſom was accepted, and that he might perform his gracious work, as the great Shepherd of his ſheep; God the Father had raiſed him from the dead, "through "the blood of the everlaſting covenant." For this may either refer to the reconciled love of God to his people, through the blood of Chriſt; or to his being brought again from the dead, becauſe his ſacrifice was ſufficient, and accepted, and ſo he became the Shepherd of the ſheep; or to the bleſſings for which the apoſtle prayed, and which pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 And I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in a few words.

23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is ſet at liberty; with whom, if he come ſhortly, I will ſee you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the ſaints. They of Italy ſalute you.

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

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were beſtowed through the blood of the everlaſting covenant: all theſe things may be contained in the words; and it is not obvious to determine, which was principally intended. The blood of Chriſt purchaſed the bleſſings of the new covenant, and ratified it as unalterable: ſo that it was rendered perpetual to the end of time, and everlaſting in reſpect of the ſalvation conferred according to it. The apoſtle intreated this God of peace, through the mediation of the great Shepherd, and on account of the blood of the covenant, that he would make the Hebrews "perfect in every good work to do his will;" rectifying every diſorder of their ſouls, and completely fitting them for every part of his holy ſervice; 'working in them" by his new-creating grace, "what was well-pleaſing in "his ſight," being according to his law, and image, and for his glory, and therefore acceptable with him, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom, even to the God of peace, he aſcribed eternal glory. The apoſtle prayed for them, under the full perſuaſion, that ſanctifying grace, and holy obedience would ſurely be attended with divine conſolations, which he did not particularly mention.

V. 22—25.] Not being immediately placed over the Hebrews, the apoſtle intreated them to take in good part the word of exhortation, warning, and encouragement he had ſent them, from love to their ſouls: for he had written a letter to them in few words, compared with the importance, and variety of the ſubjects diſcuſſed in it. Timothy had, it ſeems, been confined in priſon, for preaching the goſpel, of which the Hebrews had heard; but he informed them that he was at length ſet at liberty; and that he purpoſed to come with him to ſee them, if they were not delayed. It appears hence that the apoſtle had a proſpect of being ſpeedily liberated: and that the ſpurious poſtſcript falſely ſays, that Timothy was the bearer of the epiſtle. After this, He concluded with ſalutations, eſpecially to the paſtors and rulers of their churches; and from all the chriſtians in Italy, as well as thoſe at Rome.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As brotherly love tends in ſuch various ways to the benefit of the church, the comfort of believers, and the honour of the goſpel: ſo the enemy of our ſouls endeavours by every means to interrupt it's exerciſe, and to work upon the remains of our corrupt affections for that purpoſe, with a vaſt variety of moſt ſubtle artifices; againſt which, we ſhould be perpetually upon our guard. Hence it is, that ſo little of this love is found in the church, though ſo much is read about it in the ſcriptures; and that ſo many diviſions, and controverſies prevail among thoſe, who ſeem, in a meaſure, to have been taught of God to love their brethren! We beſt conſult our own intereſt, when we are mindful to uſe hoſpitality, and to relieve, or entertain the Lord's poor, even though they are perſonally ſtrangers to us: for thus we entertain Chriſt himſelf, whom all angels worſhip and obey. When we are exempted from impriſonment, or other grievous adverſities, we ſhould take care not to forget how many are thus oppreſſed, and bowed down; that we may ſympathize with them in their ſorrows, and help, or comfort them, according to our ability; being aware that we are liable to the ſame diſtreſſes, as long as we are in the body. Defilement and diſhonour ſpring from contrariety to the law of God, which is perfectly ſuited to promote our preſent, and future welfare: marriage therefore is honourable in all, nor can any defilement attach to it; except when the letter or ſpirit of God's commandments is violated, by men's behaviour reſpecting it. But God doth in this world ſeverely mark his abhorrence of thoſe forbidden luſts, to which the depravity of the human heart drives ſuch numbers; and he will ſurely condemn every impenitent fornicator and adulterer, at the day of judgment; what diſguiſe, or excuſe ſoever he may here uſe to cloke his wickedneſs. Chriſtians ſhould in all their words and actions ſhew, that they abhor covetouſneſs: whether they are poor or rich. Having in heaven inexhauſtible treaſures; they ſhould be well ſatisfied with mean accommodations here: and as God hath promiſed that he will never leave them, and in no caſe forſake them; they have no cauſe to court the favour, or fear the frown of men, or to dread the want of things needful; but may courageouſly ſay, "the Lord is my helper, I will not fear "what fleſh can do unto me." The inſtructions and example of miniſters, who have honourably and comfortably cloſed their teſtimony, ſhould be peculiarly remembered by their ſurvivors. Death, as it were, gives the laſt ſanction to their doctrine and exhortations; and the happy event of their trials calls on others to follow their faith, and to conſider the joyful end of their courſe; and miniſters ſhould have reſpect to this, during their lives. But Jeſus alone is an ever-living Friend, "the ſame yeſ"terday, to-day, and for ever." Still he fills the hungry, encourages the trembling, and welcomes penitents of every claſs; but he rejects proud Phariſees, abhors painted ſepulchres, and teaches all he ſaves, to love righteouſneſs, and hate iniquity: and they, only, will abide the day of his coming to judge the world, who would have met with favour from him, when he taught on earth. Let us then take care not to be carried about with ſtrange doctrines; but ſeek to have our hearts eſtabliſhed by grace: for notions and forms never profit thoſe, who are occupied in them. Living by faith in Chriſt, and being conſecrated to God through his blood, let us willingly ſeparate from this evil world, and bear the reproach of proud formaliſts. We have here no continuing city; our pilgrimage will ſoon end; let us then ſeek an abiding manſion in the city of our God; and conſider all tempora

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proſperity or adverſity, as of ſcarce any conſequence. As a ſpiritual prieſthood, let us ſolace ourſelves in this evil world, by offering to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, our continual ſacrifice of praiſe, even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. This, joined with the acceptable ſacrifice of doing good to men for the Lord's ſake, will be an anticipation of the joys of heaven, and a preparation for its work and worſhip. But miniſters ſhould peculiarly remember, that they are called "to watch "for men's ſouls, as thoſe, who muſt give account," for dreadful will be their condemnation, if they are ſlothful, ſelfiſh, or unfaithful; and Chriſtians ſhould obey and ſubmit to their faithful paſtors, and take in good part their loving admonitions; that they may give up their account with joy, and not with grief: for if ſuch paſtors loſe their labour, their hearers will loſe their ſouls. Men ſhould alſo pray for miniſters; who would generally walk more honourably, and labour more ſucceſsfully, if the people were more earneſt in praying for them: and when they ſee, or think they ſee, ſomewhat amiſs in thoſe, who upon the whole have a good conſcience, willing in all things to live honeſtly; they ſhould pray the more fervently for them. Let us then approach the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the ſheep; and through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, let us beſeech him, for ourſelves and each other, to make us perfect to do his will, working in us that, which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; that we may glorify him for ever. Then every word of exhortation, and every diſpenſation of providence will do us good; the communion of ſaints will be maintained, and grace will be with us all. Amen.

The General Epiſtle of JAMES.

James the ſon of Alpheus, brother of Jude, and near relation to our Lord, is ſuppoſed to have been the penman of this epiſtle. (Matt. c. x. v. 3. 1 Cor. c. xv. v. 7.) *Its authenticity has been much doubted and diſputed, both in ancient, and modern times: but the more it hath been examined, the clearer evidence hath appeared, that it's claim to a place in the canon of holy ſcripture was well grounded. Luther once ſpake very ſlightly of it: but deeper experience, more complete inveſtigation, and a more mature judgment, induced him to retract his opinion: and at preſent no further doubt ſeems to be entertained, as to its divine inſpiration and authority. It is ſtyled a general, or catholic epiſtle; becauſe it was not addreſſed to any particular church, but to Jewiſh converts, throughout their diſperſions; not without ſome reference to the unconverted part of the nation. It is not ſo full of the peculiar doctrines of chriſtianity, as moſt of the apoſtolical epiſtles are: for it ſeems to have been written with a ſpecial deſign of preventing the abuſe of thoſe doctrines, and to oppoſe the antinomian conſtruction that ſome put upon them. But they are throughout taken for granted: and the epiſtle abounds with exhortations to the patience of hope, and the obedience of faith and love; with which various warnings, reproofs, and encouragements are interſperſed; according to the different characters of the perſons addreſſed in it.*

CHAP. I.

Contains 1ſt. The addreſs; and exhortations to patience, to aſk wiſdom of God in lively faith, and to rejoice in ſpiritual privileges, and humble dependance on the Lord, 1--12. *2d. Inſtructions to aſcribe their temptations and ſins to the evil of their hearts, and every good gift to God,* 13--18. *3d. Cautions againſt pride, loquacity, anger, and malice; admonitions to receive God's word in meekneſs, and to reduce it to practice; and ſome intimations concerning falſe and true religion, &c,* 19--27.

JAMES, a ſervant of God and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the twelve tribes which are ſcattered abroad, greeting.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—4.] The apoſtleſhip of James not being diſputed, he only ſtyled himſelf the ſervant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus. He is recorded to have reſided chiefly at Jeruſalem, and to have been the firſt biſhop of that church; though improperly, for he poſſeſſed far more than epiſcopal authority, however that may be defined. He is ſuppoſed to have ſuffered martyrdom there not very long after writing this epiſtle, though the date of it is uncertain. He addreſſed himſelf to the twelve

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5 If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him.

6 But let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind and toſſed.

7 For let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man *is* unſtable in all his ways.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in

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tribes, which were conſidered as ſtill exiſting, though ſcattered by various calamities, and from different motives, into many diſtant nations of the earth; but he principally intended the chriſtians among them: and he ſimply greeted them, or wiſhed them health and peace, without uſing the benedictions, which preface moſt of the other epiſtles. Knowing the afflicted and perſecuted condition, in which his brethren were; he exhorted them to eſteem it altogether a cauſe of rejoicing, when they fell into divers temptations. Conſcious of their weakneſs, they were in general warned not to run into temptations, and taught to pray not to be led into them: yet if the Lord ſaw good, that, notwithſtanding their watchfulneſs, they fell into ſuch trials, as might expoſe them to temptation, and give them an opportunity of reſiſting and overcoming it; they ought to conſider it as a matter of unmingled joy, an occaſion of evidencing the ſincerity and ſtrength of their love to God, and a rich advantage to their ſouls, though painful for the time. For they might know, from the word of God, and their own experience, that the temporary trial of their faith, by which it's genuine nature and ſtrength were proved, had a tendency in the event to work patience in their diſpoſition and conduct; and to bring them into a reſigned, dependant, waiting frame of mind, connected with meekneſs and perſeverance in well doing. But in order to derive the full benefit from their trials; they muſt allow patience to perform its perfect work; and ſubmiſſively wait in reliance on God's promiſes, and obedience to his commandments, till he ſaw good to deliver them; without being induced by the number, variety, or duration of their ſufferings, to uſe ſinful means of deliverance, or to yield to peeviſhneſs, murmuring, or deſpondency under them. Thus, patience, like a ſalutary medicine, would have its perfect operation, and bring them into ſo tractable, docile, meek, compaſſionate, and reſigned a ſtate of mind, and ſo endear to them the love and ſufferings of Chriſt, ſo wean them from the world, and ſo reconcile them to death; that they would be rendered complete and mature in every part of the chriſtian character; and in all reſpects meet and prepared for the duties of their ſeveral ſituations, and wanting nothing in order to the performance of every good work. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. v. ver. 3—5. *Heb.* c. xii. v. 5—13.)

V. 5—8.] In reſpect of the proper enduring, and improving of their trials, as well as in a vaſt variety of other matters, many of them would experience, and diſcover, that they lacked wiſdom, and did not of themſelves know how to act in a ſuitable manner. When therefore, any of them perceived this to be the caſe, and were conſcious, that they were not capable of diſtinguiſhing truth from error, or of aſcertaining the line of conduct, which they ought to purſue; they ought to bring the caſe before God, and earneſtly beſeech him to be their Teacher and Counſellor, by the influences of his grace enabling them to underſtand, remember, and apply the inſtructions of his holy word; and to remove all prejudices and carnal paſſions, which tended to miſlead them. This any perſon might do with confidence; ſeeing the Lord was ever ready to give liberally to all that aſked him, of whatever deſcription they were; nor did He ever upbraid ſuch humble petitioners for wiſdom, with the folly, and ſinfulneſs of their former conduct, or with any of their miſtakes, and want of teachableneſs. So that aſſuredly wiſdom would be given to every one, who thus ſought for it, in proportion to his wants, difficulties, and duties. (*Prov.* c. ii. v. 1—8. *Luke,* c. xi. v. 9—13. *John*, c. vii. v. 17.) But in order to obtain the bleſſing, they muſt take care to aſk in faith, nothing wavering: they muſt not allow themſelves to queſtion whether this were the proper way of ſeeking wiſdom, or not; nor muſt they doubt of God's faithfulneſs to his promiſes, but confidently rely on him to direct them in the right way. For he that wavered in his judgment as to ſuch matters; and was diſpoſed to liſten unto carnal counſellors, or to halt betwixt God, and the world, would be always fluctuating and variable; being toſſed from one thing to another, by every change of circumſtances, or every gale of doctrine; as the wave of the ſea is driven about by the wind. Such half-hearted profeſſors, therefore, who were only religious by ſtarts, and had no abiding, realizing belief of the truth, or dependance on God's promiſes, had no reaſon to expect, that they ſhould receive any thing from him: as they would ſcarce have preſented their prayers, under ſome ſudden pang of devotion, but they would turn to other counſels, and projects: for ſuch double-minded men muſt be unſtable in all their ways, nor can any dependance be placed on them; whilſt they are aiming to unite contrary intereſts, and are unſettled in their principles, for want of faith in the word of God. (Note, *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 4.) Such men differ widely from weak believers; who conſtantly expect, and ſeek help from God, and allow not any doubts of his veracity and faithfulneſs; though they are harraſſed with fears, leſt there be ſomething in their caſe, or manner of aſking, &c, that ſhould exclude them from the benefit.

V. 9—11.] In order to attain to greater ſimplicity, and ſtability in the faith, it was proper for them to know, in what they ought to rejoice.. The brother of low degree, the real chriſtian, who was poor and afflicted in his that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: becauſe as the flower of the graſs he ſhall paſs away.

11 For the ſun is no ſooner riſen with a burning heat, but it withereth the graſs, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth: ſo alſo ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12 Bleſſed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.

13 Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed.

15 Then, when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin; and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

circumſtances, ought not to deem himſelf unhappy on that account: on the contrary he ought to rejoice, or glory, that he was exalted, in an honourable relation to Chriſt, in being conformed to him as to his outward ſtate, and in being made a Child of God, and an heir of heaven. But the rich chriſtian ought not to rejoice in his riches, or at all truſt in them for happineſs: rather let him rejoice, in that "he was made low," in the diſpoſition of his heart; having been convinced of his guilt, pollution and miſery, and made humbly willing, as a poor penſioner on God's mercy, to aſk for the bleſſings of ſalvation, in the ſame way with the pooreſt of his brethren; and to conſider himſelf as no wiſer or better than they, but merely entruſted with a larger ſtewardſhip, of which, an account muſt ſhortly be rendered. Being thus made low would be a ſolid ground for exultation; as ſo few rich perſons were thus humbled, and made poor in ſpirit: nor would the cauſe for this joy be abated, even if they were made low in their circumſtances alſo, through the rapacity of their perſecutors. For all their outward ſplendour and diſtinction muſt ſoon paſs away, as the gaudy flowers, that grow among the graſs are withered by the ſcorching ſun, and loſe all their beauty and tranſient glory, even ſooner than the green blade doth; and being withered they periſh, and are leſs valuable than the common herbage. Thus rich men flouriſh only to be cut down, they grow but to wither, and their tranſient diſtinctions iſſue in their deeper miſery and diſgrace; if they proceed "*in their ways,*" of avarice, luxury, pride, ſelfiſhneſs, or ungodlineſs; and are not made low, by repentance, faith, ſelf-denial, crucifixion to the world, and ſubmiſſion to the righteouſneſs and authority of God.

V. 12—15.] Whilſt the world deemed thoſe happy, who enjoyed uninterrupted proſperity, though it ſerved to increaſe their pride, ſenſuality, and impiety: they were indeed to be congratulated as bleſſed, who endured temptations, and paſſed through various afflictive and trying diſpenſations, with ſubmiſſive conſtancy, and the perſevering obedience of faith and hope: for after the chriſtian had been thus proved, and the reality of his grace manifeſted; and after his holy affections had been thus invigorated, and the temper of his mind improved; he would be honoured as a conqueror in the ſpiritual conteſt, not with a wreath of fading flowers, but with the crown of life; the honour, glory, and immortality, which the Lord had promiſed to them that love him, as reconciled to, and made to delight in him and his ways, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. But as far as trials became temptations and occaſions of ſin, no man might venture to ſay, that he was tempted of God; as if he were the Author of tranſgreſſion, or of the diſhonourable event of the trial. (Note, *Gen.* c. xxii. v. 1.) The commandments, and providential diſpenſations of the Lord make trial of men's hearts, and tend to diſcover what diſpoſitions prevail in them: where gracious affections are prevalent, through the power of the Holy Spirit, remarkable obedience and fidelity are conſequent on the trial: but when ſin and Satan rule within, diſobedience muſt be the effect. Nothing, therefore, that is ſinful in the heart or conduct, can be aſcribed to God, without the ſame abſurdity, as it would be to charge darkneſs and coldneſs upon the ſun: for God cannot be tempted with evil; his abſolute perfection and all ſufficiency render it impoſſible that there ſhould be any inducement for him, in the moſt minute degree, to deviate from complete and entire juſtice, truth, goodneſs, &c: neither doth he, in this ſenſe, tempt any man, by putting evil into his heart, ſuggeſting it to his thoughts, or neceſſitating his commiſſion of it; He is not the author of the droſs; though his fiery trial detects and expoſes it. But every man is tempted to commit ſin, when the inordinate deſires of his heart after worldly eaſe, wealth, pleaſure, &c. induce him to ſeize the bait, with which ſatan entices him: thus he is drawn out of the line of duty; as the fiſh is dragged out of the water, when it hath been enticed by the deluſive morſel, that covered the hook. So that when luſt, or any vehement deſire after ſome worldly object, which cannot be obtained without ſin, is conceived in the heart, through the ſuggeſtions of ſatan, and the allurements of external objects; the purpoſe of indulgence is admitted and cheriſhed: thus actual tranſgreſſion is brought forth, and when this is completed, it bringeth forth death as its genuine offspring, and nothing but the mercy and grace of God, through Chriſt Jeſus, can prevent the ſinner's final deſtruction. This may be conſidered as the ſcriptural account of the original of moral evil; the natural hiſtory of the conception, production, and progeny of the firſt ſin, and of every ſin; except as repentance, through God's mercy prevents the effects of them. But perhaps the apoſtle referred to the caſe of apoſtates, who, under perſecutions, through love

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom *is* no variableneſs neither ſhadow of turning,

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we ſhould be a kind of firſt fruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the engrafted word, which is able to ſave your ſouls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves,

of the world, conceived the purpoſe of renouncing chriſtianity; which being deliberately done, and perſiſted in, ended in their final obduracy, and deſtruction.

V. 16—18.] It behoved believers to be very careful not to miſtake in this matter, leſt they ſhould be induced to liſten to temptation, and *wander* from their duty, from an erroneous ſuppoſition, that their circumſtances would excuſe their ſins; or leſt they ſhould diſhonour and offend God, by aſcribing to him, what was ſolely the effect of their apoſtate nature. Every thing truly good, of whatever kind, was to be conſidered as a gift and bounty coming down from God; being beneficial in itſelf, and perfect in its kind, like its great Author; who is the Father, the Source and Fountain of light, natural, moral and ſpiritual; the Author of whatever is beautiful, excellent, and good in all creatures, and in the whole univerſe; as well as of all true knowledge, wiſdom, holineſs, and felicity in thoſe rational agents that never ſinned, and in redeemed ſinners. But nothing of a contrary nature comes down from him, "with whom is no "variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning." The ſun and moon, the two great natural lights, that he hath made, appear to us to have ſeveral changes, and turnings; whence originate ſummer, and winter, day, and night, &c; but in fact the whole conſiſts in our ſituation reſpecting them: thus God is immutably the Fountain of good, and of nothing elſe; all good is to be aſcribed to, and ſought from him; but the evil we do, or ſuffer, with all the changes we experience, are in, and from ourſelves; they ariſe from our having turned away from God, or the change in our ſituation reſpecting him; and muſt not in any degree be aſcribed to Him, who is unchangeably the ſame in his nature and perfection without the leaſt variation; and whoſe conduct proceeds upon the ſame unalterable principles of juſtice, truth, wiſdom, goodneſs; whatever effect it may produce on us, according to our character, behaviour, or ſtate, in his ſight: and all ſin, error, ignorance and miſery muſt be aſcribed to the mutability, frailty, and imperfection of created beings. It was alſo to be remembered, that they all were in themſelves dead in ſin, and children of wrath; and that God, of his ſovereign will and free mercy, had regenerated them, by his Spirit, through the word of truth; (Notes, *John*, c. iii. v. 1—8. 12. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 1—9. *Tit.* c. iii. v. 3—7.) in order that they might be conſecrated to his ſervice, as a kind of firſt fruits of his creatures, more excellent and valuable than the reſt of them; and as an earneſt of a vaſtly larger increaſe from the Gentile world, in that, and future ages; even as the firſt-fruits, preſented to the Lord, were the earneſt of, and brought a bleſſing upon, the future harveſt.

V. 19—21.] As believers owed all the difference in their ſtate and character to the ſovereign grace of God, through the inſtrumentality of his word; ſo it behoved every one of them to be ſwift and ready to hear further admonitions, inſtructions and counſels, from the ſame ſource, in a teachable and attentive manner; and to "be ſlow to ſpeak," not raſh or dogmatical in their judgments and deciſions; not haſty to aſſume the office of teachers, or allowing themſelves to diſpute of things beyond their depth; and not indulging a conceited loquacious humour, ſpeaking for the ſake of ſpeaking, without due ſeriouſneſs, modeſty, recollection, and prudence. They muſt alſo be ſlow to wrath; not giving way to angry tempers, bitterneſs of ſpirit againſt oppoſers, or fondneſs for acrimonious controverſy, under a miſtaken notion of great zeal for the truth: on the contrary, they ſhould be ſlow and backward to entertain or expreſs any kind, or degree of reſentment even againſt their moſt cruel perſecutors; aſſured that the wrath of man was not a proper means of promoting the intereſts of religion in the world, or leading men to embrace the goſpel, or lead holy lives. For ſuch proud contentions, and violent tempers tended to prejudice the minds of men againſt the goſpel, to diſturb the peace, and corrupt the purity of the church, to multiply iniquities, and in every way to hinder the knowledge and practice of the righteouſneſs of God. Wherefore, the apoſtle exhorted them to lay apart, and to caſt off with abhorrence, as a filthy garment, all the ſinful practices of their paſt lives, which were moſt abominable in the ſight of God; and eſpecially to avoid, and repreſs the "*overflowings of malignity*," which many indulged under a pretence of zeal; whereas they proceeded entirely from the predominancy of pride, wrath, envy, and other hateful paſſions in their hearts. Thus they ought to be prepared to receive the word of God, in a meek, docile, humble, and peaceable frame of mind; for it could only profit them, as an *engrafted word, or implanted word*, living and growing in the ſoul by faith and love, as the principle of a new nature, changing all their views, diſpoſitions and affections into conformity to its own holineſs, and ſo producing ſuitable fruit in their lives: and being thus received and engrafted, it would be able to effect the complete ſalvation of their ſouls, as the inſtrument of the new creating Spirit of God.

V. 22—25.] In order to the word of truth producing theſe bleſſed effects upon their ſouls; they muſt be

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glaſs;

24 For he beholdeth himſelf, and goeth his way, and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoſo looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed.

26 If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.

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doers of it, and not hearers only. But if they were only hearers, however attentive, conſtant, or teachable they might ſeem; their neglect of practiſing what they heard would prove that the word was not engrafted in them, and that they were putting a moſt fatal cheat upon themſelves: whether cuſtom, curioſity, a love of ſpeculation, or a vain confidence in knowledge without obedience for ſalvation, induced them to attend. Such a man, hearing the goſpel, and not obeying its call to repentance, faith in Chriſt, and a ſober righteous and godly life, was like a perſon, who gave a tranſient look at his natural face, as reflected from a mirrour, without attempting to alter what was unbecoming in his attire or appearance; and who would therefore, immediately depart, and ſoon forget what manner of man he was; and the glimpſe which he had of himſelf would have no manner of effect upon him. Thus the mere hearer would ſometimes have ſhort-lived convictions of his ſinfulneſs &c: but not liking the view given of his ſtate, heart, and character in the glaſs of God's word, and having no effectual deſires of an entire change; he would ſoon loſe ſight of his fleeting diſcoveries, in the company, buſineſs, and pleaſures of the world, and ſo remain ignorant of himſelf, and deſtitute of transforming grace. But whoſoever looked ſtedfaſtly and attentively into the word of God, with a real deſire of learning from it his true ſtate and character, and the way of acceptance and ſalvation; and continued with perſeverance in this important enquiry; He, not being a forgetful hearer, but one that reduced to practice what he learned from time to time, though it coſt him much humiliation and ſelf-denial, would be bleſſed *in his deed*, or *in his doing*: for the Lord would in this way lead him into the knowledge of his truth and ſalvation; in the progreſſion, his obedience would evidence the ſincerity of his faith; his ſanctification would be carried on along with his increaſing acquaintance with God, and himſelf; and his gracious recompence hereafter would be connected with his preſent peace and comfort. Some by "*the law of liberty*" ſuppoſe the moral law to be intended, in oppoſition to the ceremonial law; and it certainly deſerves that title *in itſelf*, as perfect obedience to it is perfect liberty, and every deviation from it is ſlavery: but it cannot give liberty to us ſinners. Others therefore ſuppoſe the goſpel to be intended; becauſe by it we are ſet at liberty from condemnation and the bondage of ſin. But perhaps divine revelation in general was meant; as every part of it has its uſe, in bringing the ſinner to Chriſt for ſalvation, and in directing and encouraging him to walk at liberty, by the Spirit of adoption, according to the holy commandments of God. In the word of truth, as the law, or rule, of obtaining and enjoying liberty, the true chriſtian looks as into a mirrour; that he may diſcover the remaining unholineſs of his tempers, affections, words, and actions; in order that his ſoul may be purified from all defilement, beautified with God's ſalvation, and tranſformed into his holy image continually more and more. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 24—27. *John*, c. xiii. v. 17.)

V. 26, 27.] So neceſſary was practice in every particular to the very exiſtence of real chriſtianity; that if any man among them appeared to be a devout worſhipper of God, according to the doctrines and ordinances of his goſpel; and if his conduct in other reſpects were not reprehenſible: yet in caſe he habitually neglected to bridle his tongue, and ſo gave a looſe to vain, polluting, oſtentatious, or improper diſcourſe; eſpecially, if he uttered bitter, malicious, ſlanderous, or reviling words, in an unreſtrained manner, under pretence of zeal, againſt ſuch as differed from him; and deceived his own heart by one vain excuſe or other, to think this was allowable, or conſiſtent with the chriſtian temper: his religion was thereby proved to be vain and worthleſs; his heart was not right in the ſight of God, whilſt out of the abundance of it ſuch evil things habitually proceeded; but he was ſtill in the gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of iniquity. In ſhort, pure religion, the acceptable holy worſhip and ſervice of God, as free from corrupt mixtures, and undefiled by corrupt motives and carnal paſſions, as exerciſed in the ſight of God even the Father, with his approbation, by his adopted children in Chriſt Jeſus, eſſentially conſiſted in diſintereſted, humble, ſelf-denying love to men for the Lord's ſake, and from love to him; and in taking pleaſure, from ſuch principles, in viſiting orphans, widows, and other afflicted or deſtitute perſons; to ſooth their ſorrows, relieve their wants, and afford them protection, counſel, and comfort in their diſtreſſes: and in keeping at a diſtance from the ſinful purſuits, intereſts, pleaſures, diſſipations, maxims, and faſhions, and from all the pollutions, of this wicked world; ſo that a man might have no ſtain upon his garments, no blemiſh on his character, or guilt upon his conſcience on that account. Without ſome meaſure of this holy love, and this mortification to the world, no doctrines, forms, confidence, high affections, zeal, or apparent devotion can prove a man an accepted worſhipper of God: our true religion is exactly equal to the meaſure, in which theſe things have place in our hearts, experience and conduct; and theſe are therefore the *criteria* of pure and undefiled religion,

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. Cautions againſt partial regard to the rich, and contempt of the poor, 1---7. *2d. Exhortations to the love of others, according to the divine law; and to ſhew mercy, in hope of finding mercy with God,* 8---13. *2d. The inſufficiency of a dead faith, without works, to juſtify or ſave the poſſeſſor,* 14---26.

by which we ſhould judge of it in ourſelves, and in others; both as to the reality of it, and the degree in which it is poſſeſſed. But this holy love, and mortification to the world can only be produced by faith in a crucified Saviour, and the ſupply of his ſanctifying Spirit; ſo that no *appearance* of thoſe things can be depended on, except they ſpring from, and connect with, a profeſſed belief of the goſpel, and a reliance on the mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus for ſalvation. (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſervants of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt muſt conſider themſelves as employed to do good to the choſen tribes of the true Iſrael, through all their diſperſions in this evil world. Divers temptations we muſt meet with: and if we fall into them without our own fault, and have only the diſtreſs of bearing them, without the guilt of yielding to them; we may deem it a great cauſe of joy to be thus proved and purified in the furnace, and made meet for future honour and felicity. For theſe painful, but ſhort trials, tend to reduce the gracious heart into a more ſubmiſſive temper, and a more cordial acquieſcence in the will of God; and when patience, in its various exerciſes, is allowed to have its perfect work, it meliorates all the diſpoſitions and affections of the ſoul, produces a peculiar ſimplicity, humility and tenderneſs, corrects the harſhneſs, and roughneſs natural to us, and matures the fruits of righteouſneſs to the greateſt advantage. So that in this ſevere ſchool the chriſtian makes his greateſt proficiency; and becomes perfect and entire in every part of his temper and conduct, according to the meaſure of attainment, which may be arrived at in this world; and is defective in nothing requiſite for the due performance of the ſervices required of him. But in reſpect of this, and every other part of our conduct, we ſhall feel that we lack wiſdom, in proportion as we become acquainted with ourſelves: nor ſhall we ſeek it in the ſchools of philoſophy, or from the counſels of the wiſe men of this world, if we attend to the ſcriptures; but we ſhall aſk the precious boon of God, and obtain the ſubſtance, whilſt others are deceived with an empty ſhadow. And as the Lord giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and as he hath engaged that wiſdom ſhall be given to them, that aſk him for it: ſo every man, who feels his want of, and has a deſire for heavenly wiſdom, may apply to Him for this ineſtimable benefit, without fear of being refuſed. Did we fully avail ourſelves of this privilege, how greatly ſhould we be enriched with divine knowledge! And how prudently ſhould we conduct all our concerns, and avoid every ſnare, and device of our enemies! But pride, prejudice, and a carnal mind, cooperating with unbelief, not only preclude multitudes entirely from theſe treaſures, but in a meaſure prevent all of us from drawing from them, as we otherwiſe might do. If men are divided in their judgment, between a dependance on God's promiſes, in the uſe of appointed means, and other methods of ſeeking wiſdom; if they do not really believe that the Lord will be as good as his word; or if they queſtion whether heavenly things are decidedly preferable to earthly: no wonder that they are like the waves of the ſea, that are driven with the wind and toſſed; and if they receive nothing of God, they have none to blame but themſelves. Whilſt we ſee ſo many of thoſe double minded men on every ſide who are unſtable in all their ways; we are reminded to pray for increaſe of faith, that we may waver no more, but truſt in, and cleave to the Lord only. Indeed if there were any ſubſtantial ſatiſfaction in earthly things; there might be ſome ſpeciouſneſs in the temptation to attempt ſerving God and mammon: but as all below is vanity and vexation of ſpirit; the poor believer may well rejoice in being exalted to an intereſt in Chriſt, and the proſpect of glory in heaven; though he have all kind of hardſhips by the way: and the rich have at leaſt equal cauſe for rejoicing, if God hath humbled them before his mercy-ſeat, though the world deſpiſe and hate them on that account; nay, though they ſhould be ſtripped of their poſſeſſions for the cauſe of Chriſt. For the faſhion of this world paſſeth away, and all its magnificence, and ſhew of happineſs, fadeth and withereth like the flower of the graſs; and moſt miſerable are thoſe rich men, who fade away in the pride of ungodly proſperity. But bleſſed are they, who patiently endure trials, and manfully reſiſt temptation; for through much tribulation ſhall they enter into the kingdom of God; and having been tried, they ſhall receive the unfading crown of glory, which God hath promiſed to them that love him. (1 *Pet.* c i. v. 6, 7.) But let not hypocrites, who are tempted under their trials to throw up their profeſſion; or believers, who through unwatchfulneſs are overcome in ſome ſharp conflict, venture for a moment to ſay, or think that they are tempted of God, for he cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: and if any one dare thus fooliſhly to charge God with being the author of ſin, in any way, or on any pretence; ſurely he may expect ſome dreadful rebuke of his preſumption. For when the depravity of the heart hath influenced men to hearken to ſatan's enticements, and catch at his baits; and ſo ſin hath been conceived, finiſhed, and condemnation juſtly incurred; it is no leſs than blaſphemy to throw the blame upon God's righteous providence, or holy commandments. Such inferences from important truths ill underſtood ſhould be carefully avoided; whilſt we remember that every good, and perfect gift cometh down from the unchangeable Father of Light, the inexhauſtable Fountain of wiſdom, holineſs and felicity.

If we are chriſtians indeed, He hath, of his own will, begotten us with the word of truth; we ſhould therefore give him all the glory of this happy change, and conſecrate all our faculties to his ſervice, that we may be a kind of firſt-fruits of his creatures. It behoves us therefore to be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, and ſlow to wrath; even

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *the Lord* of glory, with reſpect of perſons.

2 For if there come unto your aſſembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in alſo a poor man in vile raiment;

3 And ye have reſpect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and ſay unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and ſay to the poor, Stand thou there, or ſit here under my footſtool:

4 Are ye not then partial in yourſelves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God choſen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promiſed to them that love him?

6 But ye have deſpiſed the poor! Do not rich men oppreſs you, and draw you before the judgment ſeats?

7 Do not they blaſpheme that worthy name

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when religious zeal prompts to a different conduct; for, whatever ſome may pretend, the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God; but is the ſcandal and bane of every religious ſociety in which it is indulged. Let us then lay apart all filthineſs, and the overflowings of maliciousneſs; that we may receive with humble teachableneſs, and maintain with meekneſs and love, the ſacred truths of God's word; which, being engrafted in the heart, are effectual to the ſalvation of our ſouls. But whilſt we are ſwift to hear the word of God, let us take care to be doers of it, and not hearers only; leſt we deceive our own ſouls: many ſuch are found in our congregations, who deceive ſcarce any body but themſelves. The word of God is a faithful mirrour, to ſhew us the deformity, and pollution of our ſouls; and a monitor to teach us how we may remove them, and adorn them with the beauties of holineſs. Happy would it be for mankind, were they in general ſo aſſiduous in ſeeking this inward, durable, and ſpiritual adorning, as they are in decorating the poor mortal body, that it may appear comely in the eyes of their fellow worms! But tranſient glimpſes and notional diſcoveries leave mere hearers unchanged; and they chooſe to go away from the ſermon, and forget what manner of perſons they were. But whoſo looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and meditates continually on the holy word of God; not as a forgetful hearer, but as an obedient believer, ſhall be bleſſed in his deed: for in this way he ſhall find out whatever needs repentance, forgiveneſs, and cleanſing away, in his whole heart and conduct; thus Chriſt will become more precious to his ſoul; and by his grace he will daily grow more meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light, and have more abundant anticipations of their holy felicity. But our words muſt be attended to, as well as our actions: for whatever appearances there may be of true religion, in a man's creed, worſhip, and outward conduct; yet if he bridle not his tongue, he deceiveth his own heart, and all his religion is vain. No wonder that diſputatious, contentious, and noiſy talkers about forms and doctrines diſreliſh this epiſtle; when the unbridled licence of their tongues expoſes them to an unqualified charge of total hypocriſy in the very opening of it! But whilſt we depend on God's mercy in Chriſt Jeſus for all things pertaining to ſalvation; let us remember the eſſential nature of pure and undefiled religion before God, even our Father; let us ſhew our love to him, by viſiting the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and ſeek grace from him to preſerve us unſpotted from the world. For nothing availeth in Chriſt Jeſus, but faith that worketh by love, purifieth the heart, ſubdueth carnal luſts, and obeyeth God's commandments. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 31—46.)

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—7.] Whilſt the perſons, whom the apoſtle addreſſed, held the doctrine of Chriſt, and profeſſed faith in Him, as the Lord of glory, moſt glorious in himſelf, and the ſtandard and ſource of all that was honourable in men: they ought to take care not to ſhew a reſpect of perſons, giving honour to ſome, and throwing contempt on others, on account of their external circumſtances and appearances, without eſtimating the real excellency or worthleſſneſs of their characters: for this would be very inconſiſtent with their profeſſion of being the diſciples of the lowly Jeſus. For inſtance, if any perſon, adorned with rings on his fingers, and coſtly garments, as one of high rank in the community, ſhould come into their aſſembly, when they were met for the worſhip of God, as the Jews did in their ſynagogues; and another ſhould at the ſame time enter, in mean and worn-out clothes, as a poor man: and they ſhould pay great attention to him in gay clothing, accommodating him with ſome chief place in the ſynagogue, and contemptuouſly order the poor man to ſtand in ſome inconvenient place, or to ſit on the ground at their feet; without further enquiry into their characters, and conduct: would not ſuch a conduct prove that they were partial in forming an opinion in themſelves concerning others, and were become judges, who were miſled by vain reaſonings, and imaginations, unjuſt thoughts and corrupt affections? For their conduct would ſhew that they deemed wealth and ſplendour, however acquired, to be honourable; and poverty, however incurred or ſupported, to be diſgraceful: forgetting that the Lord of glory was pleaſed to be poor for the ſake of ſinners, to enrich them with eternal felicity. Some expoſitors, ſuppoſing that the paſſage thus interpreted, could ſcarce conſiſt with rendering honour to civil ſuperiors, as required in other ſcriptures; have endeavoured to explain it of partiality in deciding cauſes, in favour of the rich, and againſt the poor: as ſome courts of juſtice uſed to be held in the Jewiſh ſynagogues. But if the apoſtle had meant ſo groſs an iniquity, as that muſt have been, he would doubtleſs have ſpoken of it with more decided ſeverity. If ſuch partiality were uſed in their determinations of thoſe matters, that came before the churches; it would certainly be condemned by what he ſaid: yet the language ſeems not to imply judicial proby the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the ſcripture, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf, ye do well:

9 But if ye have reſpect to perſons, ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors.

10 For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that ſaid, Do not commit adultery, ſaid alſo, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law.

12 So ſpeak ye, and ſo do, as they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment.

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ceedings of any kind; but an improper reſpect ſhewn to ſome, and contempt expreſſed towards others, merely on account of their external appearance. No doubt this is very reprehenſible, and the effect of a carnal judgment, how common ſoever it may be; nor does civil reſpect to ſuperiors, or thoſe in authority, render ſuch difference of conduct towards the rich, and the poor, in religious matters at all neceſſary: eſpecially when the rich have nothing, but their wealth and ſplendour to recommend them; and the poor are perſons of pious character and good behaviour. As places of worſhip, cannot be builded, and maintained without much expence; it may be proper that they, who contribute towards defraying it, ſhould be accommodated accordingly: but were all perſons in ſuch matters more ſpiritually minded; leſs diſparity would be made, and the poor would be treated with more attention and regard than they commonly are, in worſhipping congregations. And we may conclude, that if the apoſtle could witneſs what takes place generally in our days, in this matter, and give his opinion of it; he would repeat the cenſure, that we were become partial in ourſelves, and judges influenced by evil thoughts, corrupt reaſonings and erroneous calculations. He therefore called their attention to his enquiry, whether they did not know, that God had choſen the poor of this world? Were not his people generally of that rank in life, with only a few exceptions? If the Lord had therefore chiefly bleſſed the goſpel for the converſion of the poor, it muſt be evident, that he had appointed that lowly ſtate for his choſen people, as the ſafeſt, moſt comfortable, and advantageous for them; as moſt conducive to their progreſſive ſanctification, moſt favourable to their inward peace, and moſt ſuited to ſhew forth the power and bleſſed effects of his grace beſtowed on them. For He would have given them the riches and honours of this world, if he had ſeen that they would have done them good, ſeeing he had choſen them to be "rich in faith," intereſting them in all the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and in all the precious promiſes of the ſcripture; and had nominated them to be heirs of the kingdom, which he had engaged to beſtow on all them, who were taught by his grace to love him, and his holy ways; and which compriſed ſuch a confluence of honour, authority, greatneſs, riches, and enjoyments, as no earthly kingdom could ever pretend to. (c. i. v. 12.) It was therefore evident, that the Lord peculiarly honoured and favoured men of low condition: whereas his worſhippers deſpiſed the poor, and ſlighted them, as if beneath their notice! (Notes, *Prov.* c. viii. v. 17. *Luke*, c. ii. v. 1—14.) Did they not alſo know that rich men were generally their oppreſſors and perſecutors, and dragged them before their iniquitous tribunals, to condemn them for their religion? And did they not often hear them blaſpheme the name of Chriſt, from whom they were called chriſtians; and which they conſidered as worthy of all honour and worſhip? Could they then imagine that the enemies of Chriſt and his church, and perſons of the vileſt characters ought to be treated with more reſpect on account of their wealth alone, than their poor brethren and neighbours were entitled to? This implies, that the apoſtle principally referred to the caſe of ſuch rich perſons, as occaſionally came to their aſſemblies; to whom vaſt attention was paid, whilſt the poor were deſpiſed; whereas the latter were far more likely to profit by the word preached, than the former: and he ſeems not to have meant, that the rich, who were ſtated attendants on their aſſemblies, and godly perſons, ought to have no degree of ſuperior regard ſhewn them; provided the poor were not deſpiſed and undervalued.

V. 8—13.] The Apoſtle reminded his brethren that they would do well, if they attended to, and fulfilled the comprehenſive ſcriptural precept of loving their neighbours as themſelves, in the ſeveral parts of their conduct towards each other. This might be called a royal law, becauſe of its pre-eminent excellency, and permanent authority; and becauſe it was the law of Chriſt their King, reſpecting their conduct towards one another, and all men. (Notes, &c. *Lev.* c. xix. v. 18. *Matt.* c. xix. v. 19, c. xxii. v. 39. *Mark.* c. xii. v. 30—33. *Luke*, c. x. v. 25—27. *Rom.* c. xiii. v. 8, 9. *Gal.* c. v. ver. 14.) It is of vaſt importance to obſerve how often this abſtract of the ſecond table of the law is referred to in the new teſtament, as a rule of conduct to believers; as it is ſufficient alone to ſhew the falſhood of their doctrine, who deny the moral law to be their rule of duty. But if the chriſtians, to whom James wrote, had reſpect of perſons, treating the poor with contempt, and paying court to the rich; they evidently committed ſin and acted unjuſtly, and conſequently were convicted by the law as tranſgreſſors: as they ſhewed not an equal love to their poor brethren. For even if they were obedient in all other things to the law, and only offended in one ſingle particular; they were guilty of all: that is they brake the law, and fell under its condemnation as certainly, though not ſo deeply, by tranſgreſſing one precept, as if they had broken them all. Even as a man is liable to the ſentence of death by the law of the land, who offends in one capital matter, though he be clear in all others. The chain, conſiſting of many links, is broken, when any one link is broken. According to the covenant of works, 14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? can faith ſave him?

15 If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food;

16 And one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed, and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

17 Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, a man may ſay, Thou haſt faith, and I have works: ſhew me thy faith without thy works, and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believeſt that there is one God;

one ſingle violation of any one command brings a man under condemnation, from which no obedience, paſt, preſent, or future, can deliver him: and according to the covenant of grace, the allowed known and habitual tranſgreſſion of any part of the moral law, as given to us from the hands of a Mediator, proves a profeſſed chriſtian to be impenitent, an hypocrite, an unreconciled enemy to, and rebel againſt, God; and that his obedience in other reſpects is not the reſult of a ſincere regard to the authority and glory of God: for if it were, the ſame principle would induce him to a conſtant endeavour and purpoſe of obeying every commandment. As the ſame authority which prohibited adultery, forbad murder alſo: and the ſame was the caſe with every other requirement of the law; therefore a violation of any one of them conſtituted the man a tranſgreſſor, and implied rebellion againſt the Law-giver. They would perhaps object, that they were not under the law, but under grace; and therefore they might be in a ſtate of acceptance, though the law condemned their conduct in various particulars: but though this in a certain ſenſe were indeed the caſe with true believers; yet it behoved them in every reſpect to ſpeak and act as perſons, who were to be judged according to "the perfect law of liberty." (Note, c. i. v. 25.) For the whole tenor of revelation, and the goſpel itſelf by which men were ſet at liberty from condemnation, and every yoke of bondage, would condemn all thoſe, who did not repent of, and forſake every ſin, and obey the commandments of God in ſincerity and ſimplicity, from faith in, and love to, the Lord Jeſus. So that if they habitually allowed themſelves in the practice of any known ſin, the goſpel would adjudge them to be unbelievers: eſpecially, they would certainly have judgment without mercy, and be puniſhed with the utmoſt rigour of the law, who ſhewed no mercy to their neighbours, inferiors, dependants, &c. As no man could be a true believer, whoſe heart was not humbled, and ſoftened into a compaſſionate, forgiving, kind, and loving diſpoſition. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 7. c. vi. v. 14, 15. c. xviii. v. 21—35.) And the exerciſe of mercy might be aſcertained by its "rejoicing againſt judgment," and by any one's taking pleaſure in abating from the demands of rigorous juſtice, and ſhewing kindneſs to thoſe, who had no legal claim to favour. Thus God deemed it his glory and joy, to pardon and bleſs them, who might juſtly have been condemned at his tribunal; and his grace taught thoſe who were partakers of his mercy, to copy it in their conduct towards their afflicted, and offending brethren: and all, who were not taught to ſhew mercy to others, muſt expect to be dealt with according to the ſeverity of God's juſtice, in reſpect of their eternal ſtate. What then muſt be the doom of the cruel oppreſſors, and iniquitous tyrants of the human ſpecies? Some explain the expreſſion "mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment" to denote the chearful expectation of a future judgment, with which the exerciſe of mercy to others inſpires the true chriſtian's heart: but though this may be implied, yet it ſeems not the proper meaning of the paſſage, or conſtruction of the words; for to "glory *againſt*, or to rejoice *againſt*," does not properly denote, to rejoice and glory in expectation of an event; but to rejoice and glory in obtaining the aſcendancy, or victory over a competitor; as *mercy* is figuratively repreſented to do, over the ſeverity of God's judgment, when *they* are juſtified and ſaved, who deſerve to be condemned.

V. 14—18.] It is plain that the apoſtle here argued againſt thoſe, who ſubſtituted a notional belief of the goſpel for the whole of evangelical religion; and who were ready to anſwer exhortations and reproofs, as many now do, by ſaying "we are not to be juſtified by our works, but by " faith: we believe, and have all things in Chriſt; do not " ſend us back to Moſes or to mount Sinai: we will have " nothing to do with ſuch legality, &c." He therefore enquired of them what it profited a man "though *he ſaid* " that he had faith, and had no works" of true piety and holineſs; to which he could appeal as the fruits and evidence of it? "could faith" of this kind "ſave him"? No doubt true faith, intereſting men in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, atonement, and grace, ſaves their ſouls; but then it alſo produces holy fruits, and is evinced to be genuine by its effect on their works: but a ſpeculative aſſent to any form of doctrine, or an hiſtorical belief of any facts, eſſentially differ from this ſaving faith. The worthleſſneſs of ſuch an aſſent might be ſhewn by an apt illuſtration: if any poor chriſtians were deſtitute of proper clothing, or food for the day, and ſo in immediate diſtreſs, and danger of periſhing: and a profeſſor, who was able to relieve them, ſhould pretend to much brotherly love, and expreſs a cordial wiſh and deſire that they might be furniſhed with raiment and ſupport by ſome kind friend &c; but at the ſame time ſhould give them nothing towards the ſupply of their urgent neceſſities: would any man be ſo deſtitute of common ſenſe, as to ſuppoſe theſe unmeaning expreſſions conſtituted that moſt excellent grace of brotherly love, which Chriſt and his apoſtles ſo greatly inſiſted on, and extolled? Or would any poor ſtarving perſon be perſuaded to account it any better, than a cruel mockery of his miſery? what then would ſuch a love profit either the poſſeſſor or his poor brother? Even ſo, though faith is moſt excellent and advantageous, when genuine and efficacious; yet that faith, which has no good works ſpringing from it, is dead and worthleſs; and as it is inactive and unfruitful, ſo it can by no means juſtify the poſſeſſor; being *alone*, and ſeparated from repentance, love to thou doeſt well: the devils alſo believe and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar?

22 Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 And the ſcripture was fulfilled which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs: and he was called the friend of God.

24 Ye ſee then how that by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewiſe alſo was not Rahab the harlot juſtified by works, when ſhe had received the meſſengers, and had ſent *them* out another way?

26 For as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.

God and man, and every other holy affection. It would therefore be moſt abſurd to ſuppoſe that the Lord would approve and value ſuch a faith: when no poor chriſtian would value a love of exactly the ſame kind. So that if a chriſtian, who was more attentive "to the work of faith, "and labour of love," than to the noiſy diſputatious profeſſion of certain doctrines, being queſtioned by one of another ſtamp, might ſay to him, "thou haſt faith, and I have "works; ſhew me therefore, thy faith without thy works," if any conceivable method can be found of doing this; and in the mean time "I will proceed to ſhew thee, and all around me, that faith in Chriſt influences and rules in my "heart, by the works of a ſober, righteous, and godly "life." Moſt copies read "ſhew me thy faith by thy "works, and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works." "Thou profeſſeſt to believe, and diſgraceſt that profeſſion "by thy conduct; but do not expect to be conſidered as a "believer, till thou ſheweſt thy faith by the good works of "a holy life: and thou cenſureſt me, as not ſufficiently "exact, or zealous in reſpect of my faith; but I deem "it better to evince it by my works, than by boaſting "and diſputing about it." Either reading warrants the ſame inference; viz. that there is no poſſible way to ſhew that we really do believe in Chriſt, except by being diligent in, and zealous of good works, from evangelical motives, and for evangelical purpoſes; and where good works are evidently wanting, the moſt confident profeſſion of the moſt orthodox creed, can only prove a man to be a well-inſtructed hypocrite; who has received a ſyſtem of doctrine into his underſtanding as true, in a ſcientific manner; but has never been ſo convinced of its excellency, as to admit it into his heart, experimentally, as the influential principle of his conduct towards God and man.

V. 19, 20.] To ſhew the vanity of ſuch a faith, as did not influence the heart and conduct, the apoſtle mentioned the fundamental article of all religion, the exiſtence of one God, as the only object of all worſhip and ſervice, &c. Now the profeſſor before deſcribed, believed this important truth, but without making any practical uſe of it: no doubt he did well, in believing the truth, as far as it went; but of what advantage could this be to him, ſeeing the very devils believed it alſo, nay they trembled at the thoughts of his omnipotent power, and righteous vengeance; yet they continued implacably to hate his perfections, government, cauſe and ſervice. If any man therefore believed all the truths of the goſpel, in the ſame manner, with the utmoſt exactneſs; he could not know them more accurately, or aſſent to them with greater certainty, than devils did! Would not then the vain antinomian diſputer be at length convinced by the teſtimony of an apoſtle, and ſuch irrefragable arguments, that faith without works was dead, worthleſs, and uſeleſs; like a dead tree, fit only to be cut down, and caſt into the fire; or a dead corpſe to be buried out of ſight, that its putrefaction might not annoy the living?

V. 28—26] The apoſtle next proved his aſſertion by examples: was not Abraham, the Father of the Jews, and ſpiritually of believers, juſtified by works, when, at God's command, he heſitated not to offer his beloved Iſaac for a burnt-offering? (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xxii. *Heb.* c. xi. v. 17—19.) That is to ſay, his works evinced the reality, and holy efficacy of his faith, and proved him accepted before God. The attentive reader muſt ſee, in what a powerful manner his faith in God's promiſes operated to produce good works, in obedience to his commands, in the moſt trying circumſtances, univerſally, and without reſerve: and thus "by works was his faith made "perfect:" as the tree is in it's perfect ſtate, when grown to maturity, and loaded on every branch with abundance of valuable fruit. Thus the ſcripture was fulfilled, which declared that "Abraham believed God, and it was "imputed to him for righteouſneſs," in conſequence of which he was admitted to ſuch a ſtate of peace and intimate communion with God, that he was honoured with the privileges, and appellation of "his friend." (Notes, *Gen.* c. xviii. v. 17—19. 2 *Chron.* c. xx. 7. *Iſaiah*, c. xli. v. 8. *John*, c. xv. v. 14, 15. *Rom.* c. iv.) Abraham's juſtification by faith took place many years before he was commanded to ſacrifice Iſaac: but his obedience in that reſpect proved him to be a ſound character, and juſtified him before men as a true believer, and a devoted ſervant of God. So that it was evident, there was a good and important ſenſe, in which "a man was juſtified by "works, and not by faith only;" as his works muſt be appealed to for the juſtification of his profeſſed faith, before men, and as they will be adduced before God's tribunal to diſtinguiſh true believers from hypocritical profeſſors; nor will faith juſtify any man before God, who is not thus juſtified before the whole world by his works alſo. Not that this will be a ſecond juſtification by works, in the ſenſe, that many contend for; as the merits of Chriſt, depended on by living faith, can alone juſtify a ſinner, before God, from firſt to laſt; but the good works of the true believer, from the time when he received

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. Cautions againſt an aſpiring temper, and a diſplay of the fatal effects of an unbridled tongue, 1--14. 2*d. The difference between earthly, and heavenly wiſdom,* 13---18.

Chriſt, to the time of his death, how long, or how ſhort ſoever that ſpace may be, will ſuffice to diſtinguiſh his living faith, from the dead faith of mere profeſſors, to *juſtify* him againſt every charge of hypocriſy; and to prove him entitled "to the gift of God, even eternal life through Jeſus "Chriſt." In like manner, even Rahab, who had been an harlot, was juſtified by works, when her faith wrought by love to the people of the Lord, and ſhe entertained the meſſengers, and diſmiſſed them in peace, at the hazard of her life, (Notes, *Joſh.* c. ii. *Heb.* c. xi. v. 31:) for this conduct proved her faith to be living and influential, it ſhewed that ſhe did believe with her heart, and not merely by an inefficacious aſſent of the underſtanding. For, as the human body, when deſtitute of the ſpirit or ſoul, is a mere dead corpſe, without motion or activity, however exactly formed in every part; and differs eſſentially from a living man: even ſo faith without works, is only a dead carcaſe, not only worthleſs, but polluting and offenſive; and as ſuch, ought to be carried out of the church, and buried out of ſight. It is unneceſſary to uſe further arguments to prove the conſiſtency of James's doctrine with that of Paul. The latter evidently meant, that faith alone intereſted a ſinner in God's mercy, through the merits of Chriſt, for juſtification: but the faith, he ſpake of, wrought by love conſtraining to obedience, and was connected with a new creation unto holineſs: and James meant, that no faith could juſtify a man before God, that was not productive of good works: that a ſpeculative aſſent, ſeparate from repentance, and holy obedience, was dead and unprofitable; and that conſequently, there was a ſound ſenſe, in which a man might be ſaid to be juſtified by his works, and in perfect conſiſtency with "his faith being imputed to him "for righteouſneſs;" as in the caſe of Abraham. But Paul oppoſed thoſe, who objected to the doctrine of juſtification by faith, and James wrote againſt ſuch as abuſed it. Both views of the ſubject are uſeful to the humble, upright, and attentive: but the Lord ſees good, that the ſelf-wiſe, the proud, the heedleſs, and the licentious ſhould have ſomewhat to cavil at, and ſtumble over.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord Jeſus is the true fountain of honour; and they are the moſt honourable, who beſt ſerve, and moſt reſemble him, whatever their external rank, or appearance may be. But how hard is it for us to diveſt ourſelves of carnal reaſonings, and corrupt prejudices, in ſuch matters! and to give decent reſpect to ſuperiors, without a partial regard to the affluence and ſplendour, which too often are the appendages, or heralds of their vice and folly. But if this become not the diſciple of the lowly Jeſus; it is ſtill more criminal to treat the poor with contempt, becauſe of their mean garments and indigent circumſtances: when perhaps they are adorned with wiſdom and grace; angels delight in miniſtering to them, and Chriſt rejoices over them to do them good! We ſhould watch and pray againſt ſuch a corrupt judgment, and ſuch evil thoughts, in all caſes; but eſpecially in the worſhip of God, before whom the rich and poor meet together, and are regarded entirely according to their characters, and not in the leaſt according to their rank. It is greatly to be deſired, that every degree, or appearance, of the evil here reproved ſhould be removed from our congregations; and that we ſhould more conſtantly remember, that God hath choſen the poor of this world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promiſed to his friends. The poor ſhould hence learn to ſeek theſe riches, and honours, and the aſſurance of them, with increaſing earneſtneſs; to be contented in their low eſtate, to rejoice in their ſpiritual privileges, to be chearful in the humble duties of their ſtation, to be thankful for their advantages; and to pray for their rich neighbours, that they may not be put off with a periſhing inheritance. The rich alſo ſhould learn to rejoice with trembling in their perilous pre-eminence, not to truſt in their earthly treaſures; and not to deſpiſe their poor brethren, but to ſeek the true riches, and to improve their talents with a conſtant recollection of the time, when they muſt give an account of their ſtewardſhip. For ſoon will the tables be turned in reſpect of the wealthy oppreſſor, perſecutor, and blaſphemer of Chriſt, and the poor deſpiſed believer; when the latter will be comforted and the former tormented for evermore. (Notes, &c. *Luke*, c. xvi.)

We ſhould in all things obſerve, and endeavour to fulfil the royal law of loving our neighbour as ourſelves: But if we have reſpect of perſons, we commit ſin, and are convicted as tranſgreſſors, even though we are guilty of no groſs violation of juſtice and truth. If our obedience be ſincere, it will be univerſal, as far as we are acquainted with our Lord's will; for the ſame authority is affronted, whatever command is broken. In vain do men urge, that they are not under the law, whilſt they allow themſelves in known ſin; the very goſpel will conſign them over to the righteous vengeance of God, and all the curſes of the law will be executed upon them, with a tremendous increaſe of puniſhment, for having "ſinned on that grace might abound." But the hard hearted, ſelfiſh, implacable and oppreſſive profeſſor of Chriſtianity, has the greateſt cauſe to tremble: for if "he ſhall have judgment without mer"cy, who hath ſhewn no mercy;" the meaneſt ſlave, that ever was whipped and worked to death muſt be conſidered as a happy perſon, compared with his haughty, cruel tyrant and this will ſufficiently appear, "when the earth ſhall diſcloſe her blood and ſhall no more cover her ſlain". Still vain men will talk of faith, of mercy, of ſalvation, but God will no more regard their heartleſs aſſent to truth; than he will reward their hollow expreſſions of love to their poor deſtitute neighbours. Let no man deceive himſelf: faith being alone, and not productive of good works, is no better than the faith of devils, and will leave the poſſeſſor in their company to all eternity. Would we be with Abraham the friends of God; we muſt both believe his promiſe, truſt his mercy; and obey his commandment; or elſe publicans and harlots, will enter heaven before us; and a believing Rahab ſhall be juſtified in her profeſſion of faith, by her works, before the aſſembled world; when many diſputers for orthodox creeds, which they have diſgraced by their

MY brethren, be not many maſters, knowing that we ſhall receive the greater condemnation.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the ſame *is* a perfect man, *and* able alſo to bridle the whole body.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horſes mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold alſo the ſhips, which though *they be* ſo great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very ſmall helm, whitherſoever the governor liſteth.

5 Even ſo the tongue is a little member, and boaſteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: ſo is the tongue among our members,

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lives, ſhall have their portion with the workers of iniquity, in outer darkneſs, where is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1, 2.] The word here rendered *maſters* ſignifies *teachers*; ſome ought to be teachers, but none ought to domineer, and aſſume authority in the church of God. However, an arrogant, ſelf-preferring, dictatorial temper, whether it led men, without a proper call or ſuitable qualifications, to aſpire to the office of teachers; or whether it induced them to aſſume pre-eminence in other ways, may be ſuppoſed to be reproved by the apoſtle: though the former ſeems to have been principally intended. Many converts to chriſtianity would be ambitious of the diſtinction of teachers; with a view to the credit, and pre-eminence of that office, or from a miſtaken idea, that they could not glorify God, and do good to man in other ſtations: whilſt perhaps they were not aware of the weight, and difficulty of the work, and the ſolemn account to be given of it. Whereas they ought to know, and conſider, that teachers muſt ſtand a greater, or more ſtrict judgment, than other men; and that falſe, unfaithful, ambitious and ſelfiſh teachers would be ſubject to a greater and more awful condemnation, than other ſinners. This is alſo applicable to the caſe of cenſorious, dogmatical, and domineering perſons, in any ſtation. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 1—6. *Luke*, c. vi. v. 37, 38.) Moreover, even true believers, though preſerved from final condemnation; if employed as teachers, muſt expect to be called to a more ſtrict account, than their brethren: and as their conduct muſt be more ſeverely ſcrutinized by men than that of others; ſo they would be more ſharply rebuked, and chaſtened of God for their offences, in order to the diſplay of his glory, and the prevention of ſcandals in the church: even as, thoſe of cenſorious and aſpiring chriſtians would be alſo: ſo that every attempt to force themſelves into eminent and conſpicuous ſtations, would enſure a larger meaſure of painful and mortifying trials. (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 31—34.) Nor could any man expect to behave ſo, as to eſcape correction or condemnation: for in *many* things all offended, without excepting the apoſtles themſelves; all frequently tripped or ſtumbled in their walk, though they did not utterly fall: and the more men were advanced and diſtinguiſhed; the greater would be their dangers, the more noticed their tranſgreſſions, and the more needful their rebukes and chaſtiſements. Eſpecially it would be found extremely difficult for them to ſpeak ſo much, and ſo often, as the public and private duties of that ſtation required; without often uttering unadviſed words, diſhonourable to God, injurious to men, or the reſult of pride, anger, or ſome ſelfiſh paſſion. So that idle, and evil words muſt be multiplied in conſequence of men's improperly entering into the paſtoral office: nor could any wholly eſcape this guilt; though ſuch as were duly called to the ſervice might expect proportionable grace and mercy. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 5—8. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 34—37.) If indeed any man were able to bridle his tongue, ſo as not at all to offend in his words; he muſt be a perfect man, able alſo to govern, reſtrain, and uſe all the appetites, ſenſes, and members of his body as inſtruments of righteouſneſs, in ſubſerviency to the glory of God, and in obedience to his will: ſeeing he was found able to govern the moſt unruly of them all. (c. i. v. 26.) No man could actually attain to this abſolute perfection; for in many things all offended: but the degree of a man's wiſdom and grace might be aſcertained by the meaſure, in which he was enabled to govern his tongue: ſo that, if nothing in principle or practice proved the contrary; he, who moſt avoided all improper words, and ſpake moſt to the glory of God, and the edification of men, muſt be deemed the moſt eminent chriſtian: whereas falſhood, boaſtings, revilings, and filthy converſation brought a man's character into ſuſpicion, or diſrepute, whatever elſe ſeemed to be good in it.

V. 3—6.] To ſhew the importance of the ſubject, the apoſtle ſhewed, that the eſtimate muſt not be made according to appearance, but by the effect. The horſe, though a powerful and ſpirited animal, might be directed by the bit in his mouth in obedience to the rider, and his whole body followed that guidance; whereas, if that were omitted, great danger and miſchief would enſue: and the ſhips, though of vaſt bulk, and driven by violent winds on the impetuous ocean, might be directed by a very ſmall helm, according to the motion of the pilot's hand: even ſo, the tongue, though a little member, boaſted and gloried of being able to do great things: when properly bridled and directed, it could produce the moſt bleſſed effects; but if neglected, the moſt fatal conſequences muſt follow. For let any man conſider how vaſt a quantity of fuel a ſmall match, or even a ſpark of fire would ſuffice to kindle: and what tremendous conflagrations would follow. And he might hence learn the importance of the tongue; which is in fact a fire, to deſtroy all before it, and a world of iniquity, comprehending in the abuſe of it, all the wickedneſs in the univerſe, in miniature, or rather in embrio. It's ſituation, and office among the members is ſuch, that it defileth the whole body, and inflames or vents all thoſe corrupt paſſions that it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature; and it is ſet on fire of hell.

7 For every kind of beaſts, and of birds, and of ſerpents, and of things in the ſea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame: *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon.

9 Therewith bleſs we God, even the Father; and therewith curſe we men, which are made after the ſimilitude of God.

10 Out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing. My brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be.

11 Doth a fountain ſend forth at the ſame place ſweet *water* and bitter?

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs? ſo *can* no fountain both yield ſalt water and freſh.

13 Who *is* a wiſe man and endued with knowledge among you? let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the truth.

15 This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.

16 For where envying and ſtrife *is*, there is confuſion and every evil work.

17 But the wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* eaſy to

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by which men are inſtigated to commit the ſeveral vices, of which the other members are the inſtruments. Nay it ſetteth on fire the whole circle of nature, through every generation, and produces the moſt extenſive and prolific miſchiefs all over the earth: being indeed ſet on fire of hell; as the devil, working on the various luſts of man's apoſtate nature, and exciting men to vent their abominable thoughts by their tongues, diſſeminates from one to another all over the earth, atheiſm, infidelity, hereſies, blaſphemies, impiety, lies, ſlanders, emulations, lewdneſs, diſcords &c; whence all kinds and degrees of atrocious crimes proceed.

V. 7—12.] Every kind, or nature of living creatures, however monſtrous, ravenous, fierce, or venemous, had been and were *ſubdued* by the reaſon, courage, and perſevering efforts of the human ſpecies; by which means the miſchiefs, which otherwiſe would have been occaſioned by them, were in great meaſure prevented: but no man could ever find out a way to ſubdue the tongue; or to hinder wicked men from corrupting the principles, polluting the imaginations, and inflaming the paſſions of others, by their miſchievous diſcourſe. No man, however wiſe, powerful, or excellent, had ever been able, by laws, puniſhments, arguments, or any other method, to ſtop the progreſs of this evil; which effects far more tremendous deſolations, in communities, churches, and families; and does more to make men miſerable here, as well as hereafter, than all the venemous and voracious creatures in the world combined can do. The word rendered *tamed* properly means *ſubdued*: it could ſcarce be ſaid that all kinds of ſea monſters &c, had been tamed or rendered tractable by men: but they have all been brought under ſubjection in one way or other; whereas no efforts could ever prevent the malignant effects of the unbridled tongues of ungodly men: for that is an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon; the chief inſtrument, by which the deſperate wickedneſs of men's hearts is propagated, to poiſon the principles, and inflame the corruptions of multitudes around them. Therewith, indeed, chriſtians bleſſed and praiſed God, according to the honourable uſe, for which it had been created; and many profeſſors did this outwardly, who were deſtitute of true piety: ſo that with this ſame member ſome even of God's worſhippers ſlandered, reviled, anathematized, and imprecated vengeance on other men, from the malignity and pride of their hearts; though men were firſt created after the image of God, ſtill retained his natural image, and were capable of being renewed to a conformity to his holineſs. So that out of the ſame mouth the language of love, gratitude and adoration of God, and that of enmity and rancour againſt men proceeded! Some of them might pretend that they thus vented their indignation againſt their oppoſers from zeal for the truth, and againſt error: but theſe things ought not by any means to be ſo; and every chriſtian who acted in ſuch a manner belied his profeſſion, and yielded to the ſuggeſtions of ſatan, and his own corrupt paſſions. Indeed it was an abſurdity that could not be paralleled: for no fountain from the ſame *opening* ſent forth water, ſometimes ſweet, at others bitter, ſometimes freſh, and at others ſalt; and every plant produced uniformly its natural fruit, and no other. But pious, pure, loving, candid, ſincere, humble, and edifying language was the genuine produce of a ſanctified heart; and none, who underſtood chriſtianity, would expect to hear curſes, lies, boaſtings and revilings from a believer's mouth; any more than they would look for figs upon a vine, or olive berries on a fig-tree. (Notes, &c. *Prov.* c. x. v. 11. 13. 20, 21. 31, 32.)

V. 13—18.] The Apoſtle had rather digreſſed from his ſubject; but he was ſhewing the conſequences of an aſſuming temper, and an improper deſire to be teachers. If therefore, any of them were, or deſired to be thought, perſons of ſuperior wiſdom and capacity, and endued with much knowledge of the goſpel; let them not think themſelves buried in a private or obſcure ſtation, or indulge ſuch a proud aſpiring, and diſcontented ſpirit; but let them ſhew forth, in the general tenor of a good converſation, in the ſeveral relations and employments of life, their works of piety, equity, purity and mercy, "in meekneſs of wiſ- "dom;" exerciſing that prudence which is characterized by, and inſeparably connected with, a meek and quiet ſpirit, and a readineſs to forgive, and, to be at peace with all men. (Notes, 2 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 24—26.) But if any of them in-be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.

18 And the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace.

dulged bitter envyings in their hearts; and ſo rivalled others for pre-eminence, reputation, or authority, as to cenſure, revile, and calumniate them, in a bitter and malignant manner; and to take pleaſure in contending and quarrelling with ſuch as differed from them: let them not abſurdly glory in ſuch tempers, and behaviours, as if they aroſe from extraordinary zeal, boldneſs, or faithfulneſs; neither let them lie againſt, or defame the truth, by pretending that ſuch were the neceſſary effects of embracing, profeſſing, and earneſtly defending it; or that they were luke-warm, who did not diſpute for it in this violent manner. For this wiſdom though it would have numbers of injudicious admirers, even among religious people, was not deſcended from above, (c. i. v. 5:) but was "*earthly*," as it ſought earthly diſtinctions and advantages, and was of an earthly origin; it was alſo *natural*, the reſult of ſuch principles, as unregenerate men are actuated by; and it was *deviliſh*, being at firſt derived from the devil, and conſtituting the image of his pride, ambition, policy, ſagacity, envy, malignity, and falſhood. The word rendered *ſenſual* is elſewhere tranſlated *natural*: and I apprehend it ſhould be ſo rendered in this place; for it ſeems rather to relate to man's natural depravity in general, than his ſenſuality in particular; to which ambitious diſputants are commonly leſs addicted, than to malignant paſſions, (Note, 1 *Cor*. c. ii. v. 14—16.] It is added, that where envy and ſtrife are found, there is, of courſe, confuſion and every evil work: for thoſe paſſions, being vented by one man, are excited in others; till churches, communities and families are thrown into confuſion, and all ſpecies of crimes are perpetrated; whilſt men are blinded, and hurried on by their violent reſentments and prejudices. But on the coutrary, the wiſdom which is from above, even that wiſdom, which God gives his people, in anſwer to their humble and believing prayers "is firſt pure" in reſpect of its objects, motives, and tendency; it relates to the holy and purifying truths and precepts of God's word, and tends to holineſs of heart, language, and conduct. As far as conſiſts with this, it then is peaceable, and the profeſſor is diſpoſed to give up every thing for peace, except truth and duty; and theſe he will firmly adhere to, but in a peaceable and loving manner. It is alſo gentle, and influences men to be ſlow to anger; canded, calm, forbearing, and courteous: moreover it is eaſy to be intreated, and perſuaded to what is reaſonable, or forgiving; and to liſten to the words of truth and equity, though ſpoken by an inferior, a child, or an enemy: and it is full of mercy, compaſſion, tenderneſs, and all good fruits; (Note, *Gal*. c. v. ver. 22, 23:) without partiality, in judging of perſons or actions, free from bigotry for one party, or againſt another; and from attending to, and contending for, one part of religion, to the neglect and diſparagement of others: and finally it is free from hypocriſy; leading a man to a greater regard to the acceptance of God, than to the good opinion of men. (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor*. c. xiii.) As heavenly wiſdom according to James's deſcription of it, is nearly allied to that love, for which Paul contended: ſo we may obſerve of them both, that they are deſcribed as they are in themſelves; and that every man may aſcertain the reality or the degree, of his attainments in them, by theſe effects of them on his temper and conduct. For whatever bigots and zealots may imagine, "the fruit of righteouſneſs," or that good ſeed whence this bleſſed fruit grows here on earth, "is ſown in peace:" men of peaceable loving tempers, preaching the goſpel, adorning it in their lives, and watering it with their prayers, ſow the ſeed, which God bleſſeth to the converſion of ſinners, and the propagation of true religion in the world. It is ſown in peace, not amidſt a great noiſe and diſturbance; and "by thoſe that make peace" who are both peaceable, and peace-makers in the church and in the world. (Note. *Matt*, c. v. ver. 9.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Did men duly weigh the importance and difficulty of the goſpel miniſtry; the account to be given of it; and the trials and temptations, to which it expoſes them; they would be leſs forward, than they ſometimes are, in aſpiring to that diſtinction. Indeed every conſpicuous ſtation muſt connect with many painful and mortifying events; and numbers, who intrude into them, will receive the heavier condemnation on that account. If then, the glory of God, the good of mankind, and an evident call in providence did not require the contrary; a wiſe and humble man, poſſeſſed of much ſelf-acquaintance, would chooſe obſcurity and privacy, to be out of the way of temptation, to ſhun the danger of diſhonouring the goſpel, and to eſcape trials, as much as this preſent ſtate will admit of. For in many things we offend all: and though a well informed chriſtian will readily acknowledge that his rule of duty is perfect, he will alſo know, that *in fact* no man on earth lives up to it. But nothing is more arduous, than the proper government of the tongue: and though the miniſter, who is ſatisfied that Chriſt hath ſent him to preach the goſpel, will truſt in his abundant mercy and all-ſufficient grace; yet he will alſo perceive, that no outward appendages of the work can counterbalance the additional danger of contracting guilt, to which that work expoſes him. Facts abundantly prove, that more profeſſors ſucceed in bridling their ſenſes and appetites, than in duly reſtraining their tongues: and whilſt we contemplate with grief and aſtoniſhment, the horrible effects produced by this unruly evil, this world of iniquity, this deadly poiſon, this fire that ſets the whole courſe of nature in a flame, in every part of the earth, and hath done ſo through all the ages of time; and recollect with admiring gratitude and joy, that the Lord makes uſe of this very member, when he has filled the heart with holy affections, to ſpread the word of truth and righteouſneſs throughout the earth: let us particularly enquire, what uſe we make of our tongues? It behoves us to bridle them, that they may obey the dictates of our enlightened underſtandings and holy affections, as the well managed horſe does the rider; or as the ſhip is turned by the helm in the hand of the pilot; that neither pride, paſſion, luſt, or levity, nor yet any temptation may lead us to ſpeak corrupt, or unadviſed words, or any thing contrary to the glory of God, and the edification of men. As no man is able to ſubdue and tame the tongue; we are reminded to beg of God to do it,

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1*ſt. Arguments againſt worldly luſts, pride, envy, &c.* 1---6. 2*d. Exhortations to repentance, and ſubmiſſion to God,* 7---10. 3*d. Cautions againſt detraction, raſh judging, carnal ſecurity, worldly hopes and rejoicing; with inſtructions to conſider the uncertainty of life, and to truſt in God in every undertaking, &c,* 11---17.

FROM whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your luſts that war in your members?

2 Ye luſt, and have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not.

3 Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume *it* upon your luſts.

4 Ye adulterers and adultereſſes, know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain, The ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore

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for the things, which are impoſſible with man, are poſſible with God. Depending on his grace, let us take heed to bleſs, and curſe not: let us aim at a conſiſtency of converſation and conduct, and ſee to it, that our love to men ſhews the ſincerity of our profeſſed love to God; and that our conduct out of the place of worſhip correſponds with our language and profeſſions in it. For many things *are*, even among chriſtians, that *ought not to be ſo.* Inſtead of ſeeking the reputation of wiſdom and knowledge, by oſtentatiouſly aſpiring after pre-eminence; let us be careful to ſhew out of a good converſation our works with meekneſs of wiſdom; avoiding all bitter envying and ſtrife in our hearts, as well as in our words, and actions; not glorying in ſuch things as are indeed a ſhame to any man; or ſcandalizing the truth by diſgraceful contentions about it. Such wiſdom is common enough in the world, and in the viſible church: as it thrives here, being in its proper ſoil and climate; for it deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, natural, and deviliſh, producing confuſion, and every evil work. May the Lord then beſtow upon us the wiſdom, which is from above; may the purity, peace, gentleneſs, docility, and mercy manifeſted in all our actions, and the fruits of righteouſneſs abounding in our lives, evince that God hath repleniſhed us with this moſt excellent gift! May we avoid all partiality, reſpect of perſons, narrow prejudices, and a half religion, as well as hypocriſy; and in our words and works, be employed as peace-makers, to ſow that good ſeed, which yields the fruits of righteouſneſs on earth, to the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—3] The apoſtle is generally ſuppoſed to have, in this place, addreſſed the unconverted Jews; to whoſe conduct his language is peculiarly applicable, according to the hiſtory of thoſe times. Indeed we can ſcarce conceive, that perſons, continuing members of the chriſtian church, were guilty of the enormities here mentioned; though the paſſage is applicable enough to nominal chriſtians in ſubſequent ages. But the apoſtle ſeems to have cautioned his brethren againſt envy, ſtrife, and ambition, which got ground within the church; by the example of their nation, and the ſtill more tremendous effects, which ſprang from the ſame cauſe among them: yet he employed ſuch language, as would be a direct addreſs to thoſe Jews, that might happen to read his epiſtle. He, therefore, enquired, whence wars and fightings among them originated? Seeing the nation was divided againſt itſelf, and was ſplit into parties, which deſtroyed each other by moſt furious conteſts; whilſt their continual inſurrections were drawing down deſtruction on them from the Roman power. Did not theſe calamities ariſe from their *luſts*, or their *pleaſures*; or from thoſe corrupt paſſions, which they ſought their pleaſure in gratifying? Theſe luſts warred in their members: either the members of the corrupt nature, the old Adam, in which one luſt warred againſt another, as all could not be gratified, and each ſtrove for the maſtery; or their carnal paſſions, working within, made uſe of the members of the body as their weapons, or inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs, for perpetrating their criminal purpoſes: for ſenſual inclinations ſeem not to be meant excluſively. However, they luſted after, and eagerly craved worldly proſperity, and the ſeveral things connected with it; but they did not poſſeſs them: and in conſequence of their diſappointment, they were ready to murder, or actually did murder, ſuch perſons, as ſtood in their way; yet they could not, after all, obtain the advantages, which they ſo inordinately coveted: this, therefore, rendered them ſtill more violent; and inteſtine broils, and public inſurrections were next excited; but, inſtead of proſpering by them, they were only the more impoveriſhed, and diſtreſſed; becauſe they ſought not the deſired benefit from God by prayer. This ſeems to refer to the eager deſires of the Jewiſh nation after temporal proſperity, and liberty from the Roman yoke, and to the violent and ungodly meaſures, that they adopted, in order to obtain them; which ſerved only to increaſe their miſeries, and haſten their deſtruction; becauſe they truſted not in God. Yet ſome of them kept up the form of religion, and prayed for temporal proſperity; but they received it not, becauſe they aſked amiſs: their very prayers were dictated by their carnal affections; they were preſented in a formal manner; and they continued to reject their Meſſiah, vainly expecting a temporal deliverer, whom they would gladly have welcomed. So that they only aſked worldly advantages and poſſeſſions, that they might ſpend and waſte them in gratifying their luſts.

V. 4—6.] The Jews ſtill retained the profeſſion of being the worſhippers of God; and the nation had been eſpouſed to him by ſpecial covenant: idolatry, therefore, and other direct violations of the national covenant, were he ſaith, God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourſelves therefore to God. Reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanſe *your* hands, *ye* ſinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heavineſs.

10 Humble yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that ſpeaketh evil of *his* brother, and judg-

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ſpiritual adultery: and the rejection and crucifixion of the Meſſiah was the groſſeſt inſtance of that crime, that could be committed. Moreover they idolized worldly intereſts and pleaſures, in the moſt exceſſive manner; as if theſe had been their portion, and their religion was no farther valuable, than as it ſubſerved that primary object. It is alſo probable, that many nominal chriſtians had renounced, concealed, or belied their profeſſion, from regard to the world, to ſuch a degree, as to merit the ſevere rebuke contained in this addreſs. Both deſcriptions might juſtly be called adulterers and adultereſſes, in reſpect of their unfaithfulneſs to that God, whoſe profeſſed worſhippers they were; though they were not guilty of adultery, in the common acceptation of the word. And did not they, to whom the oracles of God were committed, know, that the friendſhip of the world was enmity with God? So that, if any man reſolved to live upon friendly terms with the world, he muſt be the enemy of God. For the world, or mankind in general, being under the influence of ſatan, and conſequently governed by unholy maxims, the reſult of a carnal judgment and diſpoſition; the man, who will at any rate be upon good terms with the world, muſt not profeſs the truth, attend on the ordinances, or keep the commandments of God; or ſtand up for the honour, cauſe, and goſpel of Chriſt, in that manner that every believer is bound to do. The friendſhip of the world implies an intimate alliance with the determined enemies of God; which no man can maintain, without living in rebellion againſt Him, to pleaſe his enemies. To live in friendſhip therefore with the world denotes, that a man is carnally-minded, at enmity with God, unregenerate, unpardoned, and unreconciled; whatever his notions, convictions, or profeſſion have been, and are. This muſt be the caſe, till ſatan, the god and prince of this world, is dethroned, and mankind in general become true chriſtians. The ſervants of Chriſt are indeed the beſt friends to the world, of any men whatſoever: but they cannot poſſeſs the friendſhip of it in any meaſure, without acting contrary to the ſpirit of their profeſſion. Did then the Jews, or the looſe profeſſors of chriſtianity, ſuppoſe that the ſcripture ſpake in vain, without truth or meaning, in all thoſe numerous paſſages, which deſcribe the ungodlineſs, ſelfiſhneſs, carnality, pride, and malignity of the human heart, and declare that the ſpirit, which naturally dwelleth in us luſteth *to envy, or enviouſly?* Since it was evident from the whole tenor of the Old Teſtament, that the natural diſpoſition of fallen man, as inſtigated by ſatan, ſo eagerly covets worldly things, as to envy all thoſe that poſſeſs them, and ſo prompts them to ambition, contention, hatred, fraud, injuſtice, &c; and that it leads them to envy, or to hate thoſe, who love God, as Cain envied, hated, and murdered his brother Abel. Muſt not then ſuch perſons be enemies to God, his truths, ways, cauſe, and people? Could they hope to reconcile the friendſhip of ſo wicked a world with that of God! Or would they deem themſelves his people, whilſt evidently under the power of this envious ſpirit? Some read the laſt clauſe as a ſeparate interrogation; “ Do ye think, that the ſcripture ſpeaketh “ in vain? Or doth the Spirit, that dwelleth in us luſt to “ envy?” That is, doth the Holy Spirit, which dwelleth in all chriſtians, or that new nature which he createth, produce ſuch fruit? But the meaning is much the ſame. The apoſtle would further remind them, that God giveth his people more grace, than to leave them ſlaves to ſuch vile paſſions: and having begun to ſanctify their hearts; he gives them more and more of the transforming influences of his holy Spirit, to deliver them gradually from every evil temper, and to make them ſpiritual in all their affections and diſpoſitions. So that, whilſt He fighteth againſt the proud, the ſelf-ſufficient, ſcornful, obſtinate, impenitent, and unbelieving; he ſheweth favour, and communicateth grace to the humble and lowly, who are ſupplicants for ſpiritual bleſſings at his mercy-ſeat, according to the teſtimony of Solomon. (*Prov.* c. iii. v. 34.)

V. 7—10.] From the preceding reproofs and arguments, the apoſtle took occaſion to exhort the readers of his epiſtle, whether unconverted Jews, or mere nominal chriſtians, to ſubmit themſelves to God. For He would certainly fight againſt the proud, as his peculiar enemies and competitors, till they were either brought to ſubmit to Him, or were deſtroyed: and as he was waiting to be gracious to the humble ſupplicant; let them be perſuaded to ſubmit to his teaching, and authority, to own the juſtice of his judgments and threatenings, to plead guilty, and caſt themſelves upon his mercy; and to reſign themſelves to his will, and obey him as his willing ſubjects. In order to this it behoved them to reſiſt the devil, and to reject his ſuggeſtions, whether immediate, or by his agents, which tended to excite their carnal paſſions, or to prejudice them againſt his holy ſalvation and ſervice: for if they reſiſted the tempter reſolutely, in dependance on the grace of God, and oppoſed to his ſuggeſtions the plain truths, promiſes, inſtructions and precepts of ſcripture, he would be driven from them by the concurrent power of the Lord, and flee away as a vanquiſhed enemy. Let them alſo draw near to God, as in Chriſt Jeſus, and upon a mercy-ſeat, by believing prayer, ſeeking reconciliation to him; and he would draw nigh to them, to ſupport, ſanctify, comfort and bleſs them. But at the ſame time, they, who were living ungodly and wickedly, or practiſing any kind of ſin, muſt cleanſe their hands from it, by repenting of, and forſaking, it with abhorrence, and renouncing all the eth his brother, ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy: who art thou that judgeſt another?

13 Go to now, ye that ſay, To-day or to-morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what *ſhall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.

15 For that ye *ought* to ſay, if the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings: all ſuch rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is ſin.

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carnal pleaſure or profit connected with it: (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 10—20.) Alſo the double-minded, or hypocritical profeſſors, (c. i. v. 8;) the men, who cleaved to the world, and its friendſhip and intereſts, to the neglect of God and his will, muſt purify their hearts, in dependance on the mercy and grace of the goſpel, from every pollution, that they might be prepared, in the fear and love of God, and all holy affections, for a life of humble and devoted obedience. Inſtead therefore of proceeding in a thoughtleſs courſe of ſin, or a looſe and formal profeſſion; "let them be afflicted, and "mourn and weep," on account of the diſhonour their ſins had done to God, the miſchief occaſioned by them to men, and the danger to which their own ſouls were expoſed: and becauſe of the rebellious ingratitude, contempt, and enmity, of which they had been guilty; eſpecially in their oppoſition to, and neglect of Chriſt, and his ſalvation. Their carnal mirth and laughter, as well as their ſcornful deriſion of divine things, ought without delay to be turned into mourning and godly ſorrow; and their worldly joy into heavineſs, depreſſion of ſpirits, ſelf-abaſement, brokenneſs of heart, and ſerious concern for their ſouls. For if they humbled themſelves inwardly, and in the ſight of God, by unfeigned repentance, ſubmiſſion to his righteouſneſs, and acceptance of his ſalvation; he would certainly lift them up from their dejection, heal their wounded ſpirits, comfort them with his reconciled love, exalt them to moſt valuable privileges, and enrich them with everlaſting glory and felicity.

V. 11, 12.] The apoſtle next warned his brethren, or thoſe, who profeſſed and appeared to be chriſtians, to avoid detraction, ſlander, and uncharitable judgments on each other's motives, actions, characters, or ſtate. As theſe things were expreſſly forbidden in the divine law, (Notes, *Exod.* c. xx. v, 16. *Lev.* c. xix. v. 16—18,) the man, who thus reviled, ſlandered, or decided againſt his brethren, did in fact condemn, and defame the law itſelf, as if it were unjuſt, unneceſſary, or unfit to be obeyed. This conduct therefore, was indeed no leſs a preſumption, than for a man to quit his ſtation as the ſubject of God, who ſhould be a doer of the law; and to uſurp the place of a law giver and judge, whoſe office it was to determine what ought to be commanded, to preſcribe to men their conduct, to call them to account for it, and to paſs ſentence upon the guilty. But there was one Law-giver, who was fully authorized, and qualified to enact laws for his church and for the univerſe, and to enforce them, or vindicate their obligation, and honour, being able to deſtroy the obſtinate tranſgreſſor, and to detect the maſked hypocrite; as well as to ſave the humble penitent: and to him all authority and judgment belonged. Who then was the poor worm, the vile ſinner, that forgetful of his own deſerts, dared to uſurp the throne of judgment, as if he were the competitor of Chriſt; and to decide on the actions, and denounce ſentence againſt the perſons of his brethren, in a dictatorial manner; and according to his own rules, as if that were his province and duty? (Notes, *Matt.* c. vii. v. 1. *Rom.* c. xiv. v. 1—13.) Nothing can more completely demonſtrate, than this paſſage does, that the moral law is the believer's rule of duty; and that every word, or action, which diſhonours the law, is rebellion, if not blaſphemy, againſt our one Lawgiver and Judge: at the ſame time, that it expoſes in a moſt ſtriking manner, the wickedneſs of that ſlanderous, preſumptuous, raſh, and cenſorious manner, in which zealots and bigots condemn, and anathematize thoſe, who in any reſpect differ from them, to the immenſe ſcandal of the goſpel, and diſturbance of the church; and which, in fact, often connects with antinomian tenets, and is perfectly congenial to them.

V. 13—17.] Another effect of ſelf-ſufficiency, a carnal mind, and unbelief, is here reproved and expoſed. The expreſſion, "Go to now," or "come now," implies ſtrong diſapprobation, and a call to any one, to conſider the abſurdity, or baſeneſs of his conduct. The perſons reproved were eager in purſuing worldly advantages, pleaſed with the ſagacious plans they had formed for obtaining them, and ſanguine in expecting ſucceſs: but they neither conſidered the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of life, nor their entire dependance on God in every thing. Thus ſome would ſay "We ſhall ſet out to day, "or to-morrow, to go to ſuch a city, where we pur-"poſe to reſide for a year, and by carrying on ſuch and "ſuch trade, we expect to enrich ourſelves, &c." Whereas, they could not know, what might take place reſpecting them, before, or on the morrow: (Notes, &c. *Prov.* c. xxvii. v. 1. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 13—21.) For indeed, what were their lives to be compared unto, but a vapour, or luminous meteor, which gliding through the air, in the night, appears beautiful for a moment, and then vaniſhes for ever? So ſhort, unreal, unſubſtantial, uncertain and fading is human life, and all the ſplendour, proſperity, or enjoyments that attend on it; though an eternity of bliſs, or woe muſt be determined according to our conduct during this fleeting moment! They ought therefore to ſay with ſerious recollection,

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Contains 1ſt. Judgments denounced upon the rich and wicked Jews, 1---6. *2d. Chriſtians exhorted to patience and meekneſs, under their trials, in hope of a ſpeedy deliverance,* 7---11. *3d. A caution againſt ſwearing, and an admonition to prayer and praiſe,* 12, 13. *4th. Inſtructions concerning the elders viſiting the ſick; and concerning chriſtians confeſſing their ſins to each other, with prayer for one another; and a declaration of the efficacy of fervent prayer, with an encouragement to attempt the converſion of ſinners, &c.* 14---20.

ſubmiſſion to God, and indifference about earthly things, "If the Lord will, I ſhall live, &c: it is in the line of my duty, and if he ſpare my life, I ſhall go about it according to his commandments, and in dependance on Him; and he will ſucceed the deſign ſo far as it is for my real good." But as the perſons reproved, "rejoiced in their boaſtings" concerning the policy of their ſchemes, and their proſpect of ſucceſs; they muſt be reminded that all ſuch rejoicing was evil; the reſult of a proud, carnal, unbelieving, and ungodly diſpoſition; a ſelf-idolatry, as well as an idolizing of the world, and a forgetfulneſs of God, of death, and of a future judgment. This *heathen* temper and conduct was leſs excuſeable in them, than in the Gentiles: for having the word of God, and the inſtructions of his miniſters; they could not but know, that they ought to be ſpiritually-minded, and acknowledge God in all their ways: if therefore they knew, in this, and other things, what the good, and perfect will of God was, and yet did not obey it; their omiſſion would be emphatically ſinful, and expoſe them to ſevere rebukes, or final condemnation. This is a rule univerſally applicable; and every man ought moſt carefully to conſider it, in reſpect of ſins of omiſſion, which the conſcience does not ſo readily remonſtrate againſt, as it does againſt thoſe of commiſſion. (Notes, *Luke*, c. xii. v. 47, 48. *John*, c. xiii. v. 17.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All the wars, murders, maſſacres, perſecutions, oppreſſions, and bloody conteſts, that ever deſolated the earth, or harraſſed the church, have originated from the luſts of man's apoſtate nature, and the perverſe pleaſure which he takes in breaking God's commandments. The carnal affections of the heart, having caſt off the rule of reaſon and wiſdom; anarchy, and a civil war takes place in the ſoul; whilſt one member of the corrupt nature wars againſt the reſt, and they in turns prevail, and are gratified; and whilſt the members of the body are the inſtruments of their pernicious purpoſes, and obey the dictates of the tyrant of the hour. This being, in one way or other, the caſe with the unnumbered millions of the human ſpecies, except the remnant of thoſe, that are born again; we need not wonder at, though we muſt mourn over, the confuſion, crimes, and miſeries, that have, in every age, abounded in all parts of the world. But ſatisfaction cannot be found in this way; whatever method the carnal mind may ſelect in order to obtain it. In reſpect of ſpiritual bleſſings, it may be ſaid of many "ye have not becauſe ye aſk not; or becauſe ye aſk amiſs;" yet all who aſk in ſincerity, will ſurely receive: and humble, believing prayer is the beſt means of obtaining all deſirable ſucceſs in temporal things. But if men aſk worldly proſperity and affluence, that they may gratify their luſts, and waſte God's bounty in violating his commandments: they will either be denied, or receive them as a ſcourge, or a curſe. Alas, how many nominal chriſtians might be addreſſed in the apoſtle's words, "as adulterers, and adultereſſes" both literally and ſpiritually! And yet how would they be diſguſted and enraged if a miniſter were to accoſt them in ſuch words, however juſtly and ſcripturally applied! But in whatever terms the offenſive truth be conveyed, we are bound to declare *moſt perſpicuouſly* that the friendſhip of the world is enmity againſt God: and that whoſoever will be the friend of the world is conſidered as an enemy of God! Such a profeſſion of the goſpel, as gives no offence to a world, that lieth in wickedneſs, will leave a man to periſh with the enemies of Chriſt. Let us then endeavour to be friends to mankind, and to do good to all men; and at the ſame time, to diſregard the friendſhip, or enmity of the world, to refuſe conformity to its vain faſhions, to ſeparate from the intimate ſociety of ungodly men; and to profeſs the truths, and obey the precepts of Chriſt, without enquiring how far we may do theſe things, without incurring reproach, contempt, opprobrious names, or other kinds and degrees of perſecution. The envious, ambitious, and aſpiring ſpirit of ungodly men is totally contrary to the chriſtian temper, and the influences of the Holy Spirit: and if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. But the Lord giveth grace to his people; though he often denies them wealth, and honour: and he will give more to thoſe who long to have ſin mortified, and their hearts more fully ſanctified: but he reſiſteth the proud as his rivals, and perſonal enemies, whilſt he giveth his grace to the poor in ſpirit and broken hearted.

Let ſinners then ſubmit themſelves to God, and ſeek his grace and favour; reſiſting the devil and rejecting his temptations, and he ſhall flee from them: and let them draw near to God, upon his mercy-ſeat, and he will draw near to ſave and help them. But repentance muſt be ſhewn by works meet for repentance; the ſinner, who comes to God, muſt cleanſe his hands from the allowed practice of every tranſgreſſion, however ſecret, gainful, or pleaſant to his corrupt nature; and the double minded muſt cleanſe his heart, from hypocriſy, partiality, and worldly luſts; earneſtly calling upon God to enable him for theſe things, which would otherwiſe be entirely impracticable. All ſin muſt be wept over, or lamented; either here in godly ſorrow, or hereafter in wailing and gnaſhing of teeth; men may defer this inſeparable conſequence of wickedneſs, but they cannot eſcape it. Well may we then call on the gay, the volatile, and the triflers around us, to be afflicted, and mourn and weep; as well as on the haughty and preſumptuous, to humble themſelves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt them in due time: for this is the only road to ever-

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GO to now, *ye* rich men, weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon *you*.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and ſilver is cankered; and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of ſabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleaſure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nouriſhed your hearts, as in a day of ſlaughter.

6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the juſt; *and* he doth not reſiſt you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the

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laſting honour and felicity; nor will the Lord refuſe to comfort one godly mourner for ſin, or to exalt one, that abaſes himſelf before Him.

But whilſt miniſters and chriſtians, in their ſeveral places, muſt proteſt againſt ungodlineſs, impenitence, pride, unbelief, and all iniquity; they ſhould carefully avoid calumniating, reviling, and judging others; or deciding either on their ſtate or conduct, except when their duty to them, or to others, renders it unavoidable. Alas, there are too many profeſſed chriſtians, who ſeem openly to quit the place of Chriſt's ſervants, and doers of his commandments, to ſet up for judges, and to preſcribe to, or decide on the eternal ſtate of, their fellow ſervants! Such men ſpeak evil of God's law, and defame it; whilſt they vent their own paſſions, under the colour of zeal for the truths of the goſpel! But let us leave them and all others to their own Maſter, remembering that there is one Lawgiver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy; and let us be careful to judge ourſelves, that we be not condemned of the Lord. Let us alſo watch againſt the worldly ſpirit and conduct ſo common among profeſſors of the goſpel, who ſcheme, purpoſe, and ſpeak, as if they were to live here for ever, as if this were their reſt and portion, and as if God was not in all their thoughts. Let us remember, that our life is but a vapour, that continueth a little while, and then paſſeth away, juſt when, and as the Lord pleaſeth; that the world is full of vexation, and diſappointment; and that we have nothing to do on earth, but to ſecure the ſalvation of our ſouls, to glorify God, and to ſerve our generation. Then we ſhall cordially ſay, "If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this, "or that;" and keep at a diſtance from the ſelf-conceited, and fooliſh boaſtings of ungodly men. Let us learn alſo to reduce all our knowledge to practice; remembering, that to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is ſin, in a moſt aggravated manner.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—6.] The apoſtle here evidently meant a direct addreſs to the unbelieving Jews, among whom were the rich and great men of the nation. He wrote ſome time before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and thoſe deſolations, which Chriſt had predicted, and his diſciples expected: and as the more proſperous of his countrymen rejected the goſpel, from regard to their worldly intereſts, and were become moſt atrociouſly wicked; ſo he foreſaw the ſpeedy termination of all their worldly enjoyments, and the moſt grievous temporal calamities about to overwhelm them; as well as the event of their crimes in their future miſery, if they continued unbelieving and impenitent. He, therefore, called on them, to come and attend to his words, and to conſider the danger of their condition: that they might weep, and howl with moſt doleful lamentations, on account of the complicated miſeries, that were ſpeedily coming upon them. As to their treaſures, they would not at all profit them in the day of the Lord's vengeance; (Notes, *Iſaiah*, c. ii. v. 20. *Zeph.* c. i. v. 18. *Matt.* c. vi. v. 19, 20.) Their corn, or other periſhable goods, which they had avariciouſly hoarded, were corrupted; or they would be of no more uſe to them, than if they were entirely decayed. Their coſtly garments, which they kept in their ſplendid ward-robes, were conſuming by moths; or there was ſuch a curſe upon them, that they would ſoon be of no value: and even their gold and ſilver, which ſhould have been brightened by circulation, were laid by till they were tarniſhed, as with ruſt, and the very appearance of their money would bear witneſs againſt their covetouſneſs: whilſt in conſequence of their heaping it up, their enemies would have the richer plunder; the anguiſh of having it torn from them would be a torment to their minds; and their guilty conſciences would upbraid them with the crimes by which they became rich, and the bad uſe they had made of their abundance: ſo that, they would be tortured, as if the ruſt of their metals were converted into a cauſtic, to burn their fleſh like fire. Indeed, with much wickedneſs, and great labour, they had amaſſed treaſures for the laſt days of their city and nation, when God was about to execute tremendous vengeance upon them, for their perſonal, and public iniquities; and when they would no more profit them, than in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment; which was in fact to treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath. For, behold the hire of their poor labourers, who had reaped their harveſt, and toiled to increaſe their wealth, had been fraudulently with-held, and cried for vengeance heaven upon them! (*Lev.* c. xix. v. 13. *Deut.* c. xxiv. v. 15. *Jer.* c. xxii. v. 13. *Hab.* c. ii. v. 11, 12.) So that the bitter and loud complaints of the oppreſſed againſt their cruel tyrants were heard by the Lord of ſabaoth, *or of hoſts*, who was about to ſend the Roman armies, to execute his judgments upon them for their iniquity. They had indeed lived for a time luxuriouſly and delicately, coming of the Lord. Behold, the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye alſo patient, ſtabliſh your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9 Grudge not one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye be condemned: behold, the Judge ſtandeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12 But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; leſt ye fall into condemnation.

and had rioted in ſenſuality, as cattle in a rich paſture; and the pride and carnality of their hearts had been nouriſhed by their proſperity and ſelf-indulgence, as in a day of ſlaughter, when many ſacrifices were offered, and a great feaſt was made; or rather, as the ox is fattened for the day of ſlaughter, and even enjoys his luxuriant paſture ſecurely to that very time. But above all their other crimes, the Jews had iniquitouſly condemned and crucified, with the ſuffrage, as it were, of the whole nation, that Juſt One, who had come among them, even Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; and they ſtill perpetuated that enormous crime, by perſecuting his meek and harmleſs followers: and hitherto he had not reſiſted them, nor had they any pretence for their outrageous enmity and cruelty to him and his diſciples; but he was about to come, and execute moſt terrible vengeance upon them.

V. 7—11.] After this awful warning and cutting reproof of the wealthy Jews, who were the principal oppoſers of the goſpel, and peculiarly expoſed to the approaching judgments of God; the apoſtle addreſſed himſelf to his poor, afflicted, and perſecuted fellow chriſtians; whom he exhorted to bear their ſufferings with reſignation, and conſtant perſeverance, till the coming of the Lord. He primarily meant the providential coming of the Lord Jeſus to deliver them from the perſecution of the Jewiſh rulers, and to execute vengeance upon that devoted nation: yet he might intend to lead their thoughts forward to the hour of death, and the coming of Chriſt to judgment. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiv, xxv.) They might obſerve, that the huſbandman, when he hath tilled his ground, and ſown the ſeed, with great labour and expence, does not reap the harveſt immediately; but waits patiently for ſome months amidſt the fluctuations of the weather, and continually renewing his labour, as occaſion requires; till the Lord, on whom the increaſe entirely depends, is pleaſed to ſend the former, and the latter rain: and at length the crop ripens, and his toil and waiting are amply compenſated by the harveſt. Thus ought they to wait with patient hope, and perſevering diligence, not yielding to wearineſs or deſponding fears; but ſtabliſhing their hearts by faith in the promiſes, againſt all temptations to draw back, or to turn aſide: for the time of their waiting would not be long; as in every ſenſe the coming of the Lord approached, and a moſt glorious and precious harveſt would ſoon repay all their loſſes, hardſhips and ſufferings. They ought not, therefore, to grudge one another, the tranſient advantages which they poſſeſſed; or to give way to envy, diſcontent, repinings, fretfulneſs, or reſentment; leſt the coming of the Lord ſhould be to their condemnation, inſtead of their redemption. For they muſt carefully obſerve, that the Judge even then, as it were, ſtood at the door, and was about to enter. Very ſoon would he decide between his people and mere profeſſors, as well as execute vengeance on their enemies: and they ought to prepare for his coming, and leave him to plead their cauſe, without attempting to avenge themſelves, or *inwardly groaning* under their injuries and diſtreſſes, or murmuring for want of ſuch tranſient benefits, as all temporal poſſeſſions muſt be. Inſtead therefore of copying the fierce paſſions of their unbelieving countrymen, who were ready to rage under their calamities, like a wild bull in a net; they ought to ſtudy and imitate the example of the ancient prophets, by whom the Lord had ſent his meſſages to their nation; and who had been abuſed, reviled, and even put to death for their faithfulneſs: yet they had perſevered with calm confidence in God, and ſubmiſſion to his will, and with a meek, and compaſſionate fortitude among their enemies. They ought alſo, to remember, that the apoſtles of Chriſt, and other faithful miniſters of the New Teſtament, counted them happy, who patiently endured affliction and perſecution; not thoſe who were exempted from ſuffering, or ſuch as turned aſide to avoid it. (c. i. v. 12.) They had often heard of the patience of Job, under the moſt complicated and aggravated diſtreſſes, that could be imagined; and how he ſtedfaſtly adhered to God, and determined to hope in him in his utmoſt extremity, notwithſtanding the exceſſive confuſion, into which his temptations had thrown his mind: and they perceived, that the end of his afflictions, and the temporal and ſpiritual advantage that he derived from them, ſufficiently demonſtrated, that the Lord was moſt tenderly compaſſionate, and propenſe to mercy, even when he moſt heavily afflicted, or ſharply tried his believing ſervants. This had not appeared, during Job's calamities, but it was manifeſt in the event of them: and they alſo would find the ſame, in the iſſue of their trials. (*Heb.* c. xii. v. 5—12.)

V. 12. *But*, &c.] (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 33—37. c. xxiii. v. 16—22.) Above all things, chriſtians were to beware, leſt their trials and provocations ſhould lead them to ſwear, in a paſſionate, raſh, or pro-

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him ſing pſalms.

14 Is any ſick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up; and if he have committed ſins, they ſhall be forgiven him.

16 Confeſs *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are, and he prayed earneſtly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and ſix months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

ſane manner, in their own juſtification, on any trivial occaſion; or by any cuſtomary oath, after the example of the Jews, but contrary to the expreſs command of Chriſt. On the contrary, in their ordinary converſation, and at all times, when a ſolemn appeal to God, as an act of religious worſhip was not proper, they ought ſimply to affirm or deny, and to eſtabliſh their aſſertion or engagement by a ſerious repetition of it when neceſſary. At the ſame time, their veracity and punctuality ought to be ſo approved, that every one might be diſpoſed to credit, or confide in them without heſitation, or requiring the ſecurity of an oath: otherwiſe, they would fall under condemnation, for ſwearing falſely, without neceſſity, or without due reverence of God, or of an oath; or at leaſt they would be judged to be perſons, whoſe word could not be depended on. The Jews are recorded to have been remarkably guilty of common ſwearing at this time; which might induce the apoſtle to enter this ſolemn proteſt againſt it.

V. 13—15.] Whilſt worldly men, under their afflictions, either yielded to bitter complaints and deſponding murmurs, or ſought relief from ſenſual indulgence, or tried to extricate themſelves by ſinful means; chriſtians ſhould be excited by their ſorrows, to pray more frequently, copiouſly and earneſtly; that they might receive from God comfort, deliverance, and a ſanctified uſe of their afflictions. On the other hand, when any of them proſpered, or was chearful in ſpirit; they ought to expreſs their joy in the voice of praiſe and thankſgiving, and by ſinging the pſalms, which inſpired men had written for that uſe; or by imitating their conduct on ſimilar occaſions: inſtead of running into the exceſſes of carnal rejoicing, or ſinging ſuch frivolous, polluting, or profane ſongs and odes, as were uſed by ungodly men, when they attempted to be merry. Such perſons alſo ſhould ſend for the elders of the church, many of whom were at that time endued with miraculous powers: that they might pray for their forgiveneſs and recovery, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord Jeſus, as expecting a cure from his power and love. And when this was done in that faith, by which miracles were wrought, the prayer, offered in behalf of the ſick perſon, would be the means of ſaving his life; and the ſins committed by him, for which the chaſtening was ſent, would be pardoned alſo. (Notes, *Mark*, c. vi. v. 13. c. xvi. v. 17, 18.) As miraculous cures are not now expected; ſo the ſymbolical action of anointing with oil cannot properly be retained. It need ſcarce be obſerved, that the "extreme unction" uſed by the church of Rome, totally differs from the anointing recommended by St. James; for it is never adminiſtered, till the ſick perſon is ſuppoſed to be at the point of death, and no hope is entertained of his recovery: ſo that a ſpiritual benefit alone can be *propoſed* by ſuch a ceremony; which indeed ſerves only as an opiate to quiet and ſtupify the conſciences both of the dying and the living. We cannot ſuppoſe, that theſe miraculous cures could be performed at all times: but there ſeems to have been ſome impreſſion on the mind of the perſon, who wrought the miracle, and a peculiar exerciſe of faith in Chriſt for that purpoſe. But it might be proper for chriſtians always when they were ſick to ſend for their paſtor, to counſel and pray for them: though the viſiting of the ſick *by miniſters* is not ſo particularly ſpoken of in ſcripture, as might have been expected. When this charitable ſervice is performed with prudence, tenderneſs, and faithfulneſs, it may be very uſeful, eſpecially to believers, and to thoſe around them: but the *indiſcriminate* viſiting, praying with, and giving the Lord's ſupper to, ſick and dying perſons, as it is too commonly managed, is doubtleſs of very bad tendency, and is a relict of popiſh ſuperſtition and formality: for it not only gives a falſe quiet to many of thoſe, who have then firſt begun to think about God and their ſouls; but it encourages others to procraſtinate, under a deluding imagination, that a confeſſion, a prayer, a miniſterial abſolution and exhortation, and the ſacrament, will ſet all right at laſt, without any previous diligence in the diſreliſhing duties of a godly life.

V. 16—18.] The apoſtle next exhorted chriſtians to confeſs their faults to one another: this may mean either mutual acknowledgment of the faults they had fallen into, as to their conduct towards one another; which would tend greatly to peace and brotherly love, if it were practiſed; or to a communication reciprocally of their experiences, and a confeſſion of thoſe things, which burdened their conſciences; which when prudently managed, would make way for them to counſel, encourage, and exhort one another, and be a direction to their prayers for each other; and thus tend to their inward peace and the healing of their ſouls, as well as to the removal of the chaſtiſements, which they had incurred. But this does not at all reſemble the practice, which the church of Rome hath abſurdly grounded upon it, of the laity being required to confeſs all their ſecret ſins to the prieſts, in order to their being pardoned and abſolved &c. Thus

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.

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that order of men (who are in themſelves no leſs ambitious, intereſted, and prone to vice than other orders in the ſociety,) is put in poſſeſſion of the ſecrets of families, nay of councils and princes, of which they have made abundant uſe, to their own aggrandizement, and the enſlaving of the laity, and for many other miſchievous purpoſes. Thus alſo they have diſcovered the weak and vulnerable ſide of almoſt every individual, which hath opened the way to their attempting and committing crimes of every kind. But the confeſſion of ſins, ſpoken of by the apoſtle, is no more, that of a lay-man to a prieſt, than that of a prieſt to a lay-man: but it is reciprocal between chriſtians one amongſt another and voluntary, that it may be regulated according to prudence and propriety, for the benefit of mutual exhortations and prayers. To encourage them to this beneficial practice, the apoſtle ſhewed them the value and efficacy of prayer. When a righteous perſon, a true believer juſtified in Chriſt, and by his grace walking before God in holy obedience, preſented an *effectual* fervent prayer; one that was *wrought in* his heart, by the energy of the holy Spirit, exciting holy affections and believing expectations, and ſo leading him to be fervent and earneſt in pleading the promiſes of God at his mercy-ſeat, in behalf of himſelf, or others: "it availed much," in obtaining the bleſſings thus ſought for, being the means through which God was pleaſed to work his own gracious purpoſes, as really as any other which he employs for that end. Elias, or Elijah, for inſtance, was a man of the ſame ſinful nature with others; and he was no more exempt from human paſſions and infirmities, when he executed his miniſtry, than the apoſtle and his brethren were: yet he prayed, (under the influence of the prophetic Spirit, out of zeal for God's glory, and to prevent Iſrael's total apoſtacy;) that it might not rain on the *land:* and in anſwer to his prayer there was no rain for three years and an half; and at length the calamity was terminated in anſwer to his prayers for rain, after he had ſlain the prieſts of Baal. (Notes, &c. 1 *Kings* c. xvii, xviii.)

V. 19, 20.] Among other works of love, that they ought to attempt by faith and prayer; the recovery of backſliders, and the converſion of ſuch nominal chriſtians, as had run into dangerous hereſies, were peculiarly to be attended to; eſpecially, as ſo many abuſes and evils had taken place amongſt them. If any one therefore, had turned aſide from the truth, and had got into ſome deſtructive path; and ſome other perſon had been inſtrumental to his converſion, ſo that he was at length become a true chriſtian: ſuch a man muſt be conſidered as under far greater obligations to his brother, than if he had wrought a miracle to heal his ſickneſs, and preſerve his life. And the man, who had been employed in this good work, ought to deem it a far more deſirable ſervice, than if he had been enabled to work miracles for the recovery of the ſick, &c. Seeing he had been the inſtrument of God, in ſaving an immortal ſoul from eternal deſtruction; and of bringing a periſhing tranſgreſſor to Chriſt, that his atoning blood might cover the multitude of his ſins never more to appear in judgment againſt him, or to prevent his admiſſion into eternal happineſs. (*Prov.* c. x. v. 12.) Such a good work could not cover the multitude of the man's ſins who performed it, by inducing God to pardon him for the ſake of it: for the moſt ſucceſsful miniſter needs ſelf-denying diligence, leſt whilſt he preaches to others, he himſelf ſhould be a caſt-away, and the whole plan of the goſpel runs counter to ſuch an idea. And though it might be an evidence of grace, and conduce to a man's enjoying the comfort of the pardoning love of Chriſt, notwithſtanding his manifold defects, &c; yet this falls far ſhort of the energy of the apoſtle's words: ſo that learned men have laboured in vain to put this conſtruction upon them. As there is joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth; zealous chriſtians cannot want inducements, to animate them in attempting ſo bleſſed a work, when they have any proſpect of ſucceſs: nor can *they* need any of their own works to cover the multitude of their ſins, who know the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt's atoning blood. But the apoſtle meant to ſhew, that this was a far more important uſefulneſs than healing the ſick could be; though nature would prompt them moſt to covet, or value miraculous powers, and they might be led to overlook or neglect a much more charitable work.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Rich men, who ſcorn to mourn for their ſins, will ſoon be forced to weep and howl under the miſeries, that are coming upon them. All their idolized treaſures will ſoon corrupt and periſh, except as they will riſe up in judgment againſt them, and torment them as fire, by increaſing their condemnation. The doom of unfaithful ſtewards will then be very dreadful: but the cruel injuſtice and oppreſſion, with which many treat their dependants and labourers, by whoſe toil and ingenuity they are enriched, and whom they have left to penury and diſtreſs, will cry for moſt tremendous vengeance in the ears of the Lord *of hoſts*. What then will it avail them, that they have lived in pleaſure on the earth, and been wanton; and cheriſhed their carnal hearts, as the fatted ox for the ſlaughter? They have only heaped up periſhing treaſure, to leave it behind them; or faired ſumptuouſly every day, as a prelude to lifting up their eyes in hell, being in torments. Such warnings, however, will expoſe the ſervants of Chriſt to their haughty indignation; and hence proſperous ſinners have often been excited to condemn and murder the righteous and unreſiſting diſciples; as the Jews did the Lord of glory himſelf. But let the poor and afflicted chriſtian patiently wait for the coming of his Lord; as the huſbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth: for the good ſeed, which he now ſows in pain, and waters with tears, will ſpring up, and ſoon ripen to a harveſt of eternal joy. Let us then patiently continue in well-doing, having our hearts eſtabliſhed with grace, and in realizing expectations of the great day of retribution. It does not become chriſtians to grudge one againſt another; or to envy, repine, deſpond, or diſpute; rather let us prepare to meet our Judge, who ſtandeth at the door, that we may not be condemned at his coming: for all our eternal intereſts are ſecure, if we have truſted them in his hand; and all elſe is a mere vanity, that will ſoon be done with for ever. May we then follow prophets and apoſtles, as they followed Chriſt, in patiently ſuffering affliction, and meekly bearing injuries: for they, and they only are, and will be happy, who endure amidſt tribulations, even unto the end. The event will clear up the darkneſs of all the Lord's dealings with his people; and, whatever they, or others have thought during the continuance of their trials, in the end it will appear as evident in the caſe of every one of them, as it did in that of Job, that the Lord is pitiful and of tender mercy. Our part is to truſt in him, and obey his commandments; to reverence his name, to keep at a diſtance from the profane ſwearing, that abounds in the world, and from that inſincerity, which is intimately connected with it; that our yea may be yea, and our nay nay, and that we may eſcape condemnation. The voice of prayer ſhould always accompany that of our lamentations, when afflicted: and our joy ſhould be expreſſed in the language of praiſe and thankſgiving. We ſhould receive pain and ſickneſs, as the chaſtiſement of the Lord, and ſeek relief from him, whatever inſtrument or means we employ for that purpoſe. The counſels and prayers of the miniſters and diſciples of Chriſt are peculiarly deſirable on ſuch occaſions: and we ought more earneſtly to ſeek the pardon of our ſins, and the healing of our ſouls, than the removal of our bodily ſufferings. Chriſtians may profitably confer together concerning their conflicts, ſins and temptations, that they may encourage, warn, counſel, exhort, and properly pray for each other: and they ſhould never be backward to confeſs thoſe offences, that they have committed againſt their brethren, or to forgive ſuch as have been done againſt them. We ought greatly to deſire, and highly to value the prayers of our fellow chriſtians, and to abound in ſupplications for them; as the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Nor ought we to be diſcouraged from this duty, by the conſciouſneſs of our weakneſs, unworthineſs, or ſinful paſſions; as they, who of old received ſuch ſignal anſwers to their prayers, were men of like paſſions with us: and we have as good reaſon to expect, that God will anſwer our humble believing requeſts, for ſuch things, as he hath promiſed, and as are really for our good, and his glory; as Jacob, Moſes, Elijah, Hezekiah, or Daniel had, or any other perſon who wreſtled with him and prevailed. In the uſe of all proper means, every one of us ſhould ſeek the ſpiritual good of our children, relatives, friends, enemies, and all around us; and the converſion of ſuch profeſſors, as wander from the way of truth and holineſs: conſidering, that if in one inſtance only, during the courſe of our whole lives, and after ten thouſand diſappointments, we are made ſucceſsful inſtruments in ſaving a ſoul from death, and covering a multitude of ſins, (*Rom.* c. iv. ver. 7;) the event is of that vaſt importance, as abundantly to repay all our toil, anxiety and diſappointment; being far greater, than the preſervation of the lives of multitudes, or promoting the temporal proſperity of a whole nation. Let us then, in our ſeveral ſtations, keep theſe things in mind, and ſpare no pains in ſo charitable a ſervice; and the event will prove, that our labour was not in vain in the Lord.

The Firſt EPISTLE general of PETER.

We have had repeated opportunities of conſidering the character and apoſtleſhip of Peter, who penned this and the following epiſtles; as far as they can be known to us from the holy ſcriptures: the traditions, that have been handed down to us concerning him, and the pretenſions of the church and biſhop of Rome as grounded on them, are in general ſo groundleſs, abſurd, or dubious, as to deſerve little notice, and to require no further refutation. It is not quite certain that Peter ever was at Rome; though it is probable that he went thither towards the end of his life, and that he was there put to death by crucifixion, at, or near to the ſame time, when Paul, as a Roman citizen, was beheaded, during Nero's perſecution. He wrote this epiſtle ſome time before, to the chriſtians in different provinces of Aſia Minor. Many have endeavoured to prove that, as the apoſtle of the circumciſion, he addreſſed the Jewiſh converts only: but as Paul, the apoſtle of the uncircumciſion, wrote to the Hebrews, and in all his epiſtles addreſſed the Jewiſh as well as the Gentile converts: ſo, we may ſuppoſe, that Peter addreſſed the Gentile, as well as the Jewiſh converts; though perhaps with a peculiar reference to the caſe of the latter: and his language in many places confirms this ſuppoſition. He wrote this epiſtle from Babylon, in the remains, or vicinity of which city, a chriſtian church ſeems to have been planted, perhaps conſiſting principally of the deſcendants of the Jews, who ſtaid behind after the Babyloniſh captivity. We find in it the ſame *great doctrines, that fill St. Paul's epiſtles, and applied to the ſame practical uſes. And is remarkable for the ſweetneſs, gentleneſs, and humble love, with which it is penned; and which indeed forms a ſtriking contraſt to the domineering pride and ſeverity, which characterize the pretended ſucceſſors of this ſacred writer.*

CHAP. I.

Contains 1ſt. The addreſs, and introductory ſalutations; with thankſgivings to God for his ſpecial mercies to his people, &c, 1---9. *2d. The teſtimony of ancient prophets, and the attention of holy angels, to the goſpel, adduced as reaſons, why chriſtians, having been redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, and regenerated through the word of God, ſhould be diligent, ſtedfaſt, holy, and fervent in brotherly love,* 10---25.

PETER, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia,

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3 Bleſſed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation ready to be revealed in the laſt time.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1, 2.] The churches here addreſſed were ſituated in Aſia Minor, (as diſtinguiſhed from the continent of Aſia;) and Aſia, as mentioned ſeparately, was the proconſular diſtrict, of which, Epheſus was the capital city: ſo that they were chiefly the churches, which had been planted by St. Paul, and the evangeliſts, that accompanied or helped him. As the apoſtle called the perſons, to whom he wrote "ſtrangers:" ſome have laboured to prove, that they were ſuch proſelytes of the gate, (as Cornelius and his friends are ſuppoſed to have been,) who had embraced chriſtianity: others confine it to the Jewiſh converts, who living at a diſtance from the promiſed land, among the gentiles, were thus called; (*Acts*, c. ii. v. 10.) But as chriſtians are ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth; and as the ſojourning of the patriarchs, or of the Jews in foreign nations, was a mere type of their pilgrimage; (c. ii. v 11:) ſo it is more natural to underſtand it of believers in general, who were pilgrims, or ſtrangers, in every city, or country, where they lived, and who were ſcattered through the nations, to be as lights in the world, and as the ſalt of the earth. Theſe the apoſtle addreſſed, as "*Elect*" or choſen in Chriſt, "according to the foreknowledge of God;" (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 28—31. *Eph.* c. i. v. 1—12. 2 *Theſſ.* c. 2. v. 13, 14.) This eternal purpoſe, and ſpecial love of God the Father had been rendered effectual, as was deſigned, "through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience;" which was begun by their regeneration, and carried on in the continued mortification of their whole ſinful nature, and the progreſſive renewal of their ſouls to the holy image of God; thus preparing them for evangelical obedience: and this was accompanied with "the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus," or the continual application of the virtue of his atonement to their conſciences, by divine faith, for the removal of their guilt, and the rendering of their perſons and ſervices accepted with God: as the blood of the legal ſacrifices was applied by ſprinkling around the altar, before the mercy ſeat &c. (*Heb.* c. ix. x.) To theſe perſons, the apoſtle wiſhed and prayed, "that grace and peace might be multiplied," according to the ſalutation generally uſed by St. Paul. (Note, *Rom.* c. i. v. 7.) Thus they were taught by the opening of the epiſtle, to aſcribe their ſalvation to the electing love of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the ſanctification of the Holy Ghoſt; and ſo to give glory to one God in three perſons, into whoſe name they had been baptized.

V. 3—5.] (*Eph.* c. i. v. 3.) Peter, as well as his beloved brother Paul, opened his ſubject, by calling on his fellow chriſtians to join with him, in bleſſing God for his diſtinguiſhing mercy and grace, in the character of "the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Of his abundant mercy, or the greatneſs of his compaſſionate love to the guilty, the polluted, and the wretched, even ſuch as were dead in ſin, and children of wrath, he *had regenerated them*," (Notes, &c. *John*, c. iii. v. 1—8. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 1—10;) and from this gracious

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a ſeaſon, if need be, ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt:

8 Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom, though now ye ſee *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory:

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change, wrought in them by his divine power, all their repentance, faith, and obedience had originated. Thus, as the children of God, they had been taught to entertain "a *lively*," or a *living* "hope:" they no longer were left to be influenced principally by any of the hopes, which worldly men indulge of obtaining ſatisfaction in temporal things; or to the preſumptuous, and inefficacious hope of mercy and ſalvation, by which formaliſts and hypocrites are deceived: but they had been made partakers of a well-grounded hope of ſalvation, which was an active living principle in their ſouls, of patient and chearful obedience. This regeneration, and the hope reſulting from it, were conſequent to "the reſurrection of Chriſt:" his vicarious ſacrifice having been accepted, he had been raiſed from the dead, to prove that he was the Son of God, and that he had done his work on earth, and for the performance of his mediatory office in heaven; that by communicating, through his interceſſion, the Holy Spirit, to give efficacy to the preached goſpel, ſinners might be quickened from the death of ſin; in a continuation, as it were, of that power, by which his dead body had been reſtored to life; (Notes, *Eph.* c. i. v. 19, 20.) Thus they had obtained a title, and an hope of, and meetneſs for, an inheritance, which was of a very different nature, than thoſe which worldly men ſought for. For theſe are *corruptible* in themſelves, and in reſpect of their poſſeſſors; *defiled*, in reſpect of the means of obtaining them, the uſe made of them, and the perſons, who are admitted to the poſſeſſion of them; and *fading*, in reſpect of the trivial comfort, honour, or diſtinction, which they confer: whereas the inheritance, which the regenerate are entitled to, and hope for, is *incorruptible* in itſelf, and they will be rendered incorruptible and immortal to enjoy it; it is *undefiled*, in reſpect of its pleaſures, and all thoſe who are admitted to them; and unfading, as to its ſatisfaction, glory, and ſplendor, which will be unalloyed, unſullied, permanent, uninterrupted, ever increaſing, and eternal. This inheritance "was reſerved in heaven," out of the reach of all enemies and changes, in the place of perfect holineſs and felicity, *for them*, even for all the elect, the regenerate, &c, who were kept," as in a ſtrongly fortified, and garriſoned caſtle, by "the power of God," as engaged by covenant to fulfil his irrevocable promiſes, and the purpoſes of his everlaſting love: ſo that, having entered by Chriſt the Door, into this ſtrong tower, through faith; and ſtill exerciſing faith on the promiſes of God, and on his perfections as engaged to perform them; and this faith being preſerved from failing, through the continual interceſſion of Chriſt, and grace beſtowed by him, they were ſure of being preſerved in all dangers, and protected againſt all enemies, internal, and external, unto complete ſalvation. This was in all reſpects prepared, and ready for them; though the appointed ſeaſon of it was not yet arrived: ſo that it ſtill remained, as it were, vailed; but it would be revealed, manifeſted, and publicly conferred on them, at the laſt time, even at Chriſt's coming to raiſe the dead, to judge the world, and to deſtroy all ungodly men.

V. 6—9.] In the earneſts and hopes of this ſalvation, true chriſtians greatly rejoiced: this was the genuine effect of their faith, in proportion to its ſtrength; though at the preſent, for a tranſient ſeaſon, they might be, and often were "*in heavineſs*," or diſquieted, and even dejected, through a variety of afflictions and trials, in their outward circumſtances, through the remaining ſinfulneſs of their hearts, and the harraſſing aſſaults of ſatan: (Notes, *James*, c. i. v. 1—3. 12—15.) Theſe troubles and conflicts interrupted their rejoicings, by ſhort intervals; but there was a neceſſity for them, in order to their beſt good, and for the glory of God: otherwiſe He would no more have appointed ſuch trials to them, than a kind and wiſe Father, would needleſſly afflict his beloved child; or a phyſician would preſcribe nauſeous medicines without occaſion to his deareſt friend. The intent of all theſe troubles was, that a proper trial might be made of their faith: they profeſſed to believe in, and love Chriſt; and it was proper that the ſincerity of their profeſſion ſhould be aſcertained, that they might be diſtinguiſhed from hypocrites. This was effected by perſecutions, afflictions and temptations, as gold is diſtinguiſhed from baſe metal, (as well as purified,) by being caſt into the furnace. But the faith of chriſtians, was much more precious than gold, which is of a periſhing nature, and can only purchaſe periſhing things; whereas faith intereſted the ſoul in God's unchangeable promiſes, and in eternal felicity: it was therefore proper that it ſhould be tried in the fire of perſecution, &c; by which the dead faith of hypocrites uſed to be conſumed; as they commonly renounced Chriſt to eſcape the croſs, and ſecure worldly advantages: but the living faith of the regenerate was thus manifeſted to be genuine, by their ſtedfaſt cleaving to Chriſt and his will, at any price; and by being increaſed and purified by the trial. And they would have the comfort, and God the glory of it now; and it would be found to praiſe, and honour and glory, in the preſence of the whole world, when Chriſt ſhould appear to judge the world; when no degree of applauſe, or weight of glory could excite pride, as they would do, whilſt ſin remained in their hearts. To this joyful event all true believers looked forward with ſerious preparation: and though the chriſtians, to whom Peter wrote, had in general never ſeen Chriſt during his humiliation, and they were not at preſent admitted to ſee him in his glory; yet they loved his Perſon, his divine perfections in his human excellencies, and his me-

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the ſalvation of *your* ſouls.

10 Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace *that ſhould come* unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things, which are now reported unto you by them, that have preached the goſpel unto you with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven; which things the angels deſire to look into.

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the re-

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diatorial ſuitableneſs; they were earneſtly deſirous of his favour and ſalvation; they were thankful for his unſpeakable love, and the benefits conferred on them; they rejoiced in his exaltation, and were zealous for his glory: and this led them to cleave to, and obey him; to love his people, ordinances, truths and commandments; and to give up whatever intervened between him and their ſouls, or was his rival in their affections. This love of an unſeen Saviour reſulted from faith in Him: they believed the teſtimony of God by his apoſtles concerning Him, and what he had done, and ſuffered for ſinners, and concerning his power, grace, and truth, &c; and in this faith, they had entruſted their ſouls into his hands, and depended on him, to cleanſe and ſave them. From this faith, working by love, they derived a joy, that was in its nature ſo excellent, holy, ſubſtantial, and ſatisfactory, that it could not be expreſſed by words; as it was "*full of glory*," or *glorified*, of the ſame nature and effects with the glory and felicity of heaven; and they ſhared this joy, in proportion to the degree of their living faith and obedient love; whilſt they inwardly delighted in the ſalvation, that was wrought by him, and in their enrapturing diſcoveries of the glory of God harmoniouſly uniting with the everlaſting felicity of ſinners, that believed in Chriſt; and whilſt they poſſeſſed the earneſts of this felicity, in the graces and conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, and in communion with God in Chriſt; this faith, love and joy, in reſpect of an unſeen Saviour, conſtituted the peculiar experience, and formed the diſtinguiſhing character of real chriſtians; who thus were aſſured that they ſhould receive that ſalvation of their ſouls, which was the end propoſed by them when they believed; and they were continually *receiving* that ſalvation, in its earneſts, comforts, and ſanctification, amidſt their trials, and proportioned to the degree of their faith and grace. (Note, *John*, c. xx. v. 29. c. xxi. v. 17—19.)

V. 10—12.] This ſalvation, to which men were then called by the goſpel, had been predicted by the prophets from the beginning: ſo that their writings were peculiarly worthy of the attentive conſideration of chriſtians. Theſe ancient ſervants of God had themſelves moſt earneſtly enquired into, and diligently inveſtigated the meaning of their own predictions; not being able fully to underſtand what that grace was which was intended for thoſe, who ſhould live after the coming of the Meſſiah. They therefore ſearched, (as miners do for the veins of metal,) that they might diſcover when, and in what manner of time, thoſe things would occur, which the Spirit of Chriſt, who dwelt in them, did intend by the predictions that he ſuggeſted to them: for they did not know the full import of their own words, whilſt they teſtified ſo long before, that the Meſſiah would paſs through a variety of complicated ſufferings, even unto death; and that he would afterwards be glorified, in his perſonal exaltation, and in the extent, peace, and duration of his mediatorial kingdom, the happineſs of his ſubjects, and the deſtruction of his enemies. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* xxii. lxix. *Iſaiah*, c. liii. *Dan.* c. ix. v. 24—27.) The Holy Spirit is here ſpoken of, as a diſtinct Perſon; and as the Spirit of Chriſt, not only in that he ſpake of Him, but as ſent forth by Him long before his incarnation. The ſame order was evidently obſerved both in the expreſs prophecies of Chriſt, and in all the typical perſons, events and inſtitutions, that related to him; his ſufferings were uniformly repreſented as introducing his glory: and the prophets were immediately inſtructed, that they ſhould not live to witneſs the accompliſhment of their own predictions; and that neither they, nor their cotemporaries would derive the principal benefit of their miniſtry, or enjoy the privileges announced by them; but that they were labouring for the benefit of future generations: whilſt they declared thoſe great events, which had at length taken place, and had been reported to the Jews and Gentiles by the apoſtles of Chriſt, that had preached the goſpel to them whoſe miniſtry was atteſted by the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit, and rendered ſucceſsful by his efficacious influences; and who was ſent down from heaven to bear teſtimony to the performance of thoſe prophecies, which he had of old inſpired. Indeed theſe myſteries of redemption contained ſuch diſplays of the wiſdom, power, truth, juſtice, holineſs and mercy of God; that the angels deſired with great earneſtneſs, to ſtoop or bow down to look into them, and to join in adoration of the divine Redeemer; (as the cherubims were repreſented as bowing down to look upon the ark of the covenant:) ſo that they, as it were, left the glories of heaven, to ſtudy the divine character, and learn new ſongs of adoring praiſe, in the ſtable at Bethlehem, in Gethſemane, on Mount Calvary, and from the church, which God, manifeſted in the fleſh, had purchaſed with his own blood. (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. iii. v. 10. 1 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 16.)

V. 13—16.] As, the ſalvation of Chriſt had attracted the attention of prophets from the beginning, as it was preached by apoſtles with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven, and as angels deſired to look down unto it: ſo it behoved thoſe that were ſo highly favoured to avail them-velation of Jeſus Chriſt ;

14 As obedient children, not faſhioning yourſelves according to the former luſts in your ignorance :

15 But as He which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation ;

16 Becauſe it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of perſons judgeth according to every man's work, paſs the time of your ſojourning *here* in fear :

18 Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation *received* by tradition from your fathers ;

19 But with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot :

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God.

ſelves of their advantages, and to make ſuitable returns with all diligence and alacrity. They ought therefore, "to gird up the loins of their minds," (Notes, *Luke*, c. xii. v. 35. *Eph.* c. vi. v. 14;) by endeavouring to lay aſide all carnal prejudices and ſuperfluous cares, with ſuch occupations, deſires, and purſuits, as might prevent their clearly underſtanding, cordially chooſing and loving, and chearfully obeying the word of the goſpel ; and they ought to uſe all means of getting rid of impediments, of invigorating their holy affections, and of animating themſelves and each other, in diligently ſerving, and patiently ſuffering for Chriſt. (Note, *Heb.* c. xii. v. 1—3.) They ought alſo to be "ſober," ſerious, conſiderate, moderate and temperate in all things, vigilant, and ſtedfaſt in the faith : "hoping *perfectly*, or *to the end*," that notwithſtanding all inward conflicts, and outward diſcouragements, the Lord would fulfil his promiſes, and bring them to his eternal glory ; entirely relying on his omnipotence, omniſcience, and infinite perfections, to protect, uphold, new-create, and ſave them, in all caſes, and againſt all enemies. Thus they ought to hold faſt the bleſſed hope of that grace, or free unmerited favour, which will be brought to, and publickly conferred on, all true chriſtians, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed to judge the world, and deſtroy the wicked, (Notes, &c. 2 *Theſ.* c. i. v. 7—10.) They had indeed been children of diſobedience and of wrath, but being born of God, they had become *children of obedience*, and diſpoſed to obey their heavenly Father, in the ſpirit of adoption. This was their profeſſion and character : and in conſiſtency with it, they muſt not order their conduct, or diſcourſe, or form their plans, in any reſpect, according to the maxims of the world, or the luſts, which they had obeyed and indulged, when they were ignorant of God, and true religion ; as both Jews and gentiles had, before their regeneration, been deſtitute of any humbling, or ſpiritual knowledge of divine things. But as this bleſſed change had taken place in them, by the efficacious calling of God, who, being perfectly holy in himſelf, had purpoſed to make them happy in his holy ſervice and favour : ſo they ought now to be holy in every part of their temper, conduct and converſation, in imitation of, and conformity to his holineſs. This had been required of Iſrael under the law ; (Notes, *Lev.* c. xi. v. 44. c. xix. v. 2 ;) and without it, they could not comfortably walk with, or acceptably worſhip God in this world, or enjoy heaven at laſt.

V. 17—21] Seeing they now profeſſed themſelves the worſhippers of God, and called on him as the Father of the Lord Jeſus, and their Father in him : they ſhould remember, that "without reſpect of perſons, "He judged according to every man's work." (Notes, *Acts*, c. x. v. 34, 35. *Rom.* c. ii. v. 11.) They muſt not therefore ſuppoſe, that any name or form would avail them ; or that he would approve of any man, becauſe he had been a Jew, or was now called a chriſtian : for he would certainly judge of every man's profeſſion and character by his works, appoint hypocrites their portion with unbelievers, and finally condemn every worker of iniquity. (Notes, *James*, c. ii. v. 14. 26.) Nay, if believers did any evil thing, God would not connive at it, becauſe of their relation to him ; but he would ſurely viſit them with ſharp rebukes and corrections, and refuſe them his conſolations, till they had deeply repented of it. It therefore behoved them to paſs the whole time of their pilgrimage in this evil world, in fear, as well as in hope : not doubting of God's faithfulneſs to his promiſes, or giving way to diſcouraging, enſlaving dread of his wrath ; but being humbly jealous of, and watchful over their own hearts ; fearing leſt they ſhould be deceived ; or come ſhort, leſt they ſhould diſhonour God, or incur his awful rebukes, and leſt they ſhould fall into temptation ; and uniting their confidence in the Lord's mercy, with reverence of his majeſty, holineſs and authority. For the chriſtian's beſt frame is, a due temperature of humble fear, and believing hope, at an equal diſtance from preſumption, and deſpondency : without hope, a man is like a ſhip which hath no anchor ; without fear, he reſembles one without ballaſt. The fearleſs profeſſor is defenceleſs, and ſatan takes him captive at his will ; whilſt the deſponding profeſſor has no heart to avail himſelf of his advantages, and therefore ſurrenders at diſcretion. The chriſtians, to whom Peter wrote, were exhorted to fear always, as well as to hope to the end : eſpecially, as they knew at what a price they had been redeemed. Once they had lived in a vain unprofitable manner, ordering their whole converſation, according to traditions received from their fathers. The Jews reſted in their legal ceremonies, and the traditions of the elders ; and the gentiles in the abſurd fables, and idolatrous worſhip, which had been tranſmitted to them from their anceſtors : and both were at a diſtance from

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the ſalvation of *your* ſouls.

10 Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace *that ſhould come* unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things, which are now reported unto you by them, that have preached the goſpel unto you with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven; which things the angels deſire to look into.

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the re-

diatorial ſuitableneſs; they were earneſtly deſirous of his favour and ſalvation; they were thankful for his unſpeakable love, and the benefits conferred on them; they rejoiced in his exaltation, and were zealous for his glory: and this led them to cleave to, and obey him; to love his people, ordinances, truths and commandments; and to give up whatever intervened between him and their ſouls, or was his rival in their affections. This love of an unſeen Saviour reſulted from faith in Him: they believed the teſtimony of God by his apoſtles concerning Him, and what he had done, and ſuffered for ſinners, and concerning his power, grace, and truth, &c; and in this faith, they had entruſted their ſouls into his hands, and depended on him, to cleanſe and ſave them. From this faith, working by love, they derived a joy, that was in its nature ſo excellent, holy, ſubſtantial, and ſatisfactory, that it could not be expreſſed by words; as it was "*full of glory,*" or *glorified*, of the ſame nature and effects with the glory and felicity of heaven; and they ſhared this joy, in proportion to the degree of their living faith and obedient love; whilſt they inwardly delighted in the ſalvation, that was wrought by him, and in their enrapturing diſcoveries of the glory of God harmoniouſly uniting with the everlaſting felicity of ſinners, that believed in Chriſt; and whilſt they poſſeſſed the earneſts of this felicity, in the graces and conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, and in communion with God in Chriſt; this faith, love and joy, in reſpect of an unſeen Saviour, conſtituted the peculiar experience, and formed the diſtinguiſhing character of real chriſtians; who thus were aſſured that they ſhould receive that ſalvation of their ſouls, which was the end propoſed by them when they believed; and they were continually *receiving* that ſalvation, in its earneſts, comforts, and ſanctification, amidſt their trials, and proportioned to the degree of their faith and grace. (Note, *John*, c. xx. v. 29. c. xxi. v. 17—19.)

V. 10—12.] This ſalvation, to which men were then called by the goſpel, had been predicted by the prophets from the beginning: ſo that their writings were peculiarly worthy of the attentive conſideration of chriſtians. Theſe ancient ſervants of God had themſelves moſt earneſtly enquired into, and diligently inveſtigated the meaning of their own predictions; not being able fully to underſtand what that grace was which was intended for thoſe, who ſhould live after the coming of the Meſſiah. They therefore ſearched, (as miners do for the veins of metal,) that they might diſcover when, and in what manner of time, thoſe things would occur, which the Spirit of Chriſt, who dwelt in them, did intend by the predictions that he ſuggeſted to them: for they did not know the full import of their own words, whilſt they teſtified ſo long before, that the Meſſiah would paſs through a variety of complicated ſufferings, even unto death; and that he would afterwards be glorified, in his perſonal exaltation, and in the extent, peace, and duration of his mediatorial kingdom, the happineſs of his ſubjects, and the deſtruction of his enemies. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* xxii. lxix. *Iſaiah*, c. liii. *Dan.* c. ix. v. 24—27.) The Holy Spirit is here ſpoken of, as a diſtinct Perſon; and as the Spirit of Chriſt, not only in that he ſpake of Him, but as ſent forth by Him long before his incarnation. The ſame order was evidently obſerved both in the expreſs prophecies of Chriſt, and in all the typical perſons, events and inſtitutions, that related to him; his ſufferings were uniformly repreſented as introducing his glory: and the prophets were immediately inſtructed, that they ſhould not live to witneſs the accompliſhment of their own predictions; and that neither they, nor their cotemporaries would derive the principal benefit of their miniſtry, or enjoy the privileges announced by them; but that they were labouring for the benefit of future generations: whilſt they declared thoſe great events, which had at length taken place, and had been reported to the Jews and Gentiles by the apoſtles of Chriſt, that had preached the goſpel to them whoſe miniſtry was atteſted by the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit, and rendered ſucceſsful by his efficacious influences; and who was ſent down from heaven to bear teſtimony to the performance of thoſe prophecies, which he had of old inſpired. Indeed theſe myſteries of redemption contained ſuch diſplays of the wiſdom, power, truth, juſtice, holineſs and mercy of God; that the angels deſired with great earneſtneſs, to ſtoop or bow down to look into them, and to join in adoration of the divine Redeemer; (as the cherubims were repreſented as bowing down to look upon the ark of the covenant:) ſo that they, as it were, left the glories of heaven, to ſtudy the divine character, and learn new ſongs of adoring praiſe, in the ſtable at Bethlehem, in Gethſemane, on Mount Calvary, and from the church, which God, manifeſted in the fleſh, had purchaſed with his own blood. (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. iii. v. 10. 1 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 16.)

V. 13—16.] As, the ſalvation of Chriſt had attracted the attention of prophets from the beginning, as it was preached by apoſtles with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven, and as angels deſired to look down unto it: ſo it behoved thoſe that were ſo highly favoured to avail them-velation of Jeſus Chriſt;

14 As obedient children, not faſhioning yourſelves according to the former luſts in your ignorance:

15 But as He which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation;

16 Becauſe it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of perſons judgeth according to every man's work, paſs the time of your ſojourning *here* in fear:

18 Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot:

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

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22 Seeing ye have purified your Souls, in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *ſee that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all fleſh *is* as graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of graſs. The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.

ſpiritual religion, and under condemnation as ſinners. But they had been redeemed from this ſtate of ſlavery and wretched impriſonment, into which they had been ſold for their crimes; not only by power exerted, but by a price paid for them, as a ſatisfaction to God's juſtice that he might be honourable, in delivering them. This price had not conſiſted of corruptible things, ſuch as ſilver and gold, the treaſures which men generally moſt valued; (*Pſ.* xlix. v. 7, 9:) but it had been paid with the blood of Chriſt, the Son of the living God, which was indeed moſt precious, by reaſon of his divine nature and excellency: ſo that it was ſufficient to render it glorious to the juſtice and law of God, for the ſake of it, to ſhew mercy and give grace to ſinners of every nation and deſcription. (Note, &c. *John*, c. i. v. 29.) For this was the Lamb of God, without the leaſt ſpot or blemiſh of ſin, of whoſe purity and excellency as well as his ſufferings unto death, the innumerable multitude of paſcal lambs and daily burnt-offerings under the law, had been mere ſhadows. He had indeed been fore-ordained to this work, (which none elſe could have performed,) from before the foundation of the world, in the eternal counſels of God: and he had been promiſed as ſoon as ſin had entered: but he had not been perſonally manifeſted, to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf, till theſe laſt times; in conſequence of which he was now openly proclaimed in the preaching of the goſpel, as the Saviour of all men, Jews or Gentiles, who came to him. For the whole benefit was intended for, and confined to thoſe, who, by his grace, and through his interceſſion and atonement, believed in, and relied on the mercy, truth, and power of God for ſalvation; being aſſured, that he had raiſed the crucified Jeſus from the dead, and conferred on him the predicted glory, (v. 11:) on purpoſe, that ſinners might fix their faith and hope on God, as reconciled to them in his Son, and for his ſake engaged to fulfil all his promiſes to believers.

V. 22—25.] The ſouls of thoſe whom the apoſtle addreſſed, had been polluted with apoſtacy, rebellion, enmity, ingratitude, pride, malice, ſelfiſhneſs, and worldly luſts, as thoſe of other men were: but they had "purified them" from the dominion of theſe polluting evils, as well as from the guilt of their actual ſins, in the method, which God had appointed for that purpoſe. For the truth of the goſpel having been ſent to them, they were by it ſhewn their need of this purification, and taught in what way it might be wrought: and being inclined and enabled "to obey the truth," by repentance, faith in Chriſt, ſeparation from ſinners, ſelf-denial, and the uſe of the means of grace; they were thus cleanſed from their filthineſs and idols, and the ſeveral faculties of their ſouls were purified and ſanctified, to ſerve God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. This purification had been effected, "through the Spirit," who firſt quickened, convinced and humbled them, and ſo led them to repent, believe, ſubmit, obey the truth, pray, &c; and afterwards they had ſought further degrees of holineſs, in dependance on, and compliance with, his gracious and powerful influences: ſo that *they* indeed were active in this matter, but *He* had given them both the will and the power. One peculiar effect and evidence of this purity of heart conſiſted, in "unfeigned love of the brethren:" they had thus been led to love the image of Chriſt in his people, and to eſteem them highly, though once they would have deſpiſed and hated them: they had learned to love their company, to ſympathize in their ſorrows, to rejoice in their comforts, to do them good, and to live at peace with them. This they did *unfeignedly*, by choice, and in uprightneſs, and they evinced it, by giving up their own intereſt, or indulgence for their benefit. Seeing then, this diſintereſted love of chriſtians was wrought in their hearts through the Holy Spirit; let them ſee to it, as of great importance, that they loved one another more and more; in the uſe of the ſame means, and in dependance on the ſame Spirit; let them ſeek more entire purity from every ſelfiſh, envious, or malevolent affection; that no anger, bitterneſs, prejudice, or carnal deſires might warp, corrupt, or interrupt their mutual love; and that it might grow more fervent and intenſe, and be manifeſted in more ſelf-denying endeavours to promote each others temporal comfort and ſpiritual advantages: as they were all children of one family, and nearer related than any earthly brethren could be. For they were born again: not by means of corruptible ſeed, as all the human race are born of Adam's fallen nature, to ſicken and die, and ſo to return to corruption and duſt, in reſpect of their bodies; whilſt the ſoul, unleſs regenerate, muſt ſink into miſery: nor yet were they merely diſtinguiſhed from others, as the natural poſterity of Abraham, which was only a corruptible ſeed: but they were born again by means of an incorruptible ſeed, even by the word of God implanted in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt. This, being immutable and eternal truth in itſelf, lived and would abide for ever, in the effects produced by it upon their hearts; according to the promiſes of God, being the ſeed of a divine life, and powerfully operating a total change in the judgment, diſpoſitions and affections of the ſoul. So that all, who were born again (however before ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed,) were thenceforth brethren by an enduring and eternal relation; which will flouriſh, when all other relations ſhall be diſſolved, or loſt in total enmity. For all fleſh, all that is born of Adam's fallen nature, is as graſs; and all the glory of man, whatever any of the human race ever boaſted of or rejoiced in, is but as the gaudy flower of the graſs: whether it were

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. General exhortations to holineſs, enforced by the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, as the foundation of the church, the union of believers with him by faith, their ſpecial mercies and privileges, and the conviction of the Gentiles among whom they lived, &c, 1--12. *2d. Particular directions to obey magiſtrates and maſters; and to imitate Chriſt's example, in patience and meekneſs under unmerited injuries and reproaches,* 13--25.

royal or noble birth, genius, wiſdom, learning, accompliſhments, wealth, magnificence, or ſplendid actions; and even the Jewiſh boaſt of being the children of Abraham: for the whole muſt ſoon wither and be cut down, and end in the grave, and in hell. But the word of God abideth for ever: its truths, promiſes, and threatenings will be accompliſhed to eternity; and its effects, in the ſouls of the regenerate, will be eternal alſo: and as this word was by the goſpel preached to them; they ought to bleſs God for their privileges, to ſeek an increaſing experience of its efficacy, to value this diſtinction above all others, and to love one another with a pure heart fervently, without reſpect to their Jewiſh, or Gentile extraction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As we are ſtrangers on earth, we ſhould expect contempt and unkindneſs from thoſe among whom we ſojourn, and continually prepare for our removal into the eternal world: and we ſhould remember, that we are ſcattered into different countries, cities, and families, as witneſſes for God and his truth, to thoſe, among whom we live. All the redeemed were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father:" but this cannot be known by them, except "through the ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience;" and when a ſimple dependance on, and a conſtant application of the atoning blood of Chriſt, unite with a holy hatred of all ſin, and a diſpoſition to obey all God's commandments, and to delight in them; we may be ſure that we are the objects of God's everlaſting love, and that grace and peace will be multiplied unto us, until they be perfected in the felicity of heaven. "The lively hope of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and unfading," which ſprings from regeneration, connects with faith in a crucified, and riſen Saviour, aſcribes all ſalvation to the abundant mercy of God, and iſſues in the love and practice of holineſs, and is peculiar to the real chriſtian; and it totally differs from the vain confidence of formaliſts, Phariſees, Antinomians, and enthuſiaſts of every deſcription. If we thus hope for an undefiled felicity, and habitually prepare for it; we may well rejoice, that it is reſerved for us in heaven, and that we are kept, as in a caſtle, by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation, which is made ready, and will be revealed, when the myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed. But though this, when clearly evidenced, gives ſubſtantial joy to the ſoul, and muſt be had recourſe to in all our troubles, for our ſupport and animation: yet we cannot but be ſometimes in heavineſs, when we are called to ſtruggle with manifold temptations, to conflict with inward enemies, to walk in darkneſs without ſenſible comfort, or to endure afflictions, in body, mind or circumſtances. Even they, who have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, do, on ſuch occaſions "groan being burdened:" and though the Lord does not willingly afflict, or grieve the children of men; yet his wiſe love often appoints ſharp trials for his people, becauſe he knows them to be neceſſary, in order to humble and prove them, to ſhew them what is in their hearts, and to do them good at the latter end. When this is the caſe, or his glory requires it; they will be in heavineſs for a ſhort ſeaſon: but neither their trials, nor the peculiar diſtreſſing circumſtances connected with them, will be ſharper, more numerous, or of longer continuance, than is needful, in order to try their precious faith, that it may be found unto praiſe, and honour and glory, at the coming of the Lord Jeſus. And in the intervals of their temptations and conflicts, when they have time, and are compoſed enough to make obſervations on their experiences; they can find that they really do believe in, and love an unſeen Saviour, and ſhew that faith and love by cleaving to, and aiming to obey him, in the midſt of their troubles; and this cauſes them to rejoice in his all-ſufficiency and grace, with a joy, that is unſpeakable, and a ſweet antepaſt of the heavenly felicity; tuning their hearts to the ſongs of the redeemed, and preparing them for their holy employments: and thus by the way, they receive in part, the end of their faith, even the ſalvation of their ſouls.

Whilſt we thus diſcourſe on evangelical and experimental truths, numbers, either ignorantly, or maliciouſly, will charge us with holding novel doctrines, and bringing up a new religion: but in fact, theſe principles were firſt publiſhed, as ſoon as ſin entered into the world; though they have paſſed, ſo to ſpeak, through ſeveral improved editions. Concerning theſe things the ancient prophets enquired and ſearched with great diligence, that they might know ſomewhat of the grace preparing for later ages; and for 4000 years the croſs of Chriſt, and the glory which was to follow, formed the great ſubject of revelation, in types, promiſes, and multiplied predictions. At length the deſire of nations appeared, finiſhed his ſufferings, and entered into his glory: then apoſtles bare teſtimony to the ſame important truths, and the Holy Ghoſt was ſent down from heaven to authenticate their teſtimony: whilſt angels deſired to look down into theſe things, as eclipſing all former diſplays of the harmonious perfections of their God! And ſhall not we then ſearch diligently thoſe ſcriptures, which contain the joyful and intereſting doctrines of ſalvation? Or ſhall we neglect the means of appropriating to ourſelves it's everlaſting benefits? Far be this from us! Rather let us throw aſide all carnal incumbrances, and uſe every method of bringing our minds into a proper frame for attending to this grand concern, and of doing the work of our great Maſter with alacrity and induſtry. Let us ſtudy to be ſober, in the midſt of a giddy, ſenſual, and intoxicated world; let us hold faſt the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end; and ſhew ourſelves obedient children of God, by avoiding conformity to the world, and being careful not to "faſhion ourſelves according to the former

WHerefore laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and all evil ſpeakings,

2 As new-born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If ſo be ye have taſted that the Lord *is* gracious.

4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living Stone, diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God, *and* precious.

5 Ye alſo, as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt.

6 Wherefore alſo it is contained in the ſcripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner Stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him ſhall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be diſobedient, the Stone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner;

"luſts in our ignorance;" but eſpecially watching and praying againſt thoſe ſins, to which we were then moſt prone, or accuſtomed; and thus let us aim to become holy in all manner of converſation, even as God who hath called us is holy. For he ſanctifies all whom he ſaves: He is no reſpecter of perſons, but doth now, and will at laſt, judge according to every man's work: He will detect many hypocrites, whom his ſervants never ſuſpected, and ſome who never ſuſpected themſelves: and he will condemn many, as workers of iniquity, who called Him their Father, and Jeſus their Lord and Maſter. Knowing theſe things, and aware of the deceitfulneſs of our hearts, the ſubtlety of our enemies, and the manifold deluſions that are every where propagated; we ſhould paſs the time of our ſojourning in this perilous world, in humble, watchful and jealous fear; which will beſt ſecure us againſt fatal deceptions, and preſerve us from diſhonouring God, and expoſing ourſelves to his fatherly corrections. It behoves us alſo frequently to remember that, all the riches of the world could never have ſaved one ſoul from eternal deſtruction: why then ſhould we covet ſuch periſhing treaſures? But, how vaſt are our obligations to the Lord Jeſus, the ſpotleſs Lamb of God, whoſe precious blood was freely ſhed to ranſom our ſouls, and to purchaſe eternal ſalvation for us! May we by Him believe in God, who raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might reſt on the infinite perfection and love of God, for all things pertaining to our ſalvation! In this view, how abſurd does their conduct appear, who cleave to the vain converſation delivered to them by tradition from their fathers, and pretend that they will not change their religion! By this rule Chriſt muſt have come and died in vain: for Jews and Gentiles muſt have agreed in rejecting the goſpel, to cleave to the religion of their fathers! Moreover, ſinners ſhould conſider, that their ſouls muſt be purified from pollution, or they will periſh; that there is a work, and duty for them to attend on, in this matter; that they can do nothing in it, except by obeying the truth; that they cannot obey the truth, but by the Holy Spirit, whom God hath promiſed to give to thoſe that aſk Him; and that unfeigned love of true chriſtians is the proper teſt and ſtandard of evangelical purity of heart. If we have attained to this infallible evidence that the good work is begun within us; let us ſee to it, that we love one another with a pure heart fervently; thus it will be more and more evident that we are born again of incorruptible ſeed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. All other diſtinctions will ſoon be loſt in the difference between the regenerate, and the unregenerate; all other glory will wither, and terminate in everlaſting ſhame and diſgrace; all other unions will be diſſolved, and periſh. But they, who are one in Chriſt Jeſus, and are beautified with his ſalvation, will be united in perfect love, glory and felicity for ever. As this word of the goſpel, which is the ſeed of eternal life, is preached to us alſo; let us ſee to it, that it dwells in our hearts, and brings forth holy fruit in our lives; and then we ſhall not be aſhamed or confounded world without end.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—3.] From the truths ſtated in the preceding chapter, the apoſtle took occaſion to exhort his brethren "to lay aſide," as a caſt off garment, which they had worn too long, all kinds of malice, guile, hypocriſies, inſincerity in their profeſſion, or converſation, envyings and ſlanders: that, with the ſimplicity of newborn infants, they might deſire and reliſh the uncorrupted doctrines and precepts of God's word, as the newborn babe craves for the nutrimental milk of the breaſt, and wants no other ſuſtenance: that thus they might grow by this wholeſome food for their ſouls, in knowledge, faith, hope, love, and every holy affection; and not always be as children, or become dwarfs, who are ſeldom healthy, comfortable, comely, or uſeful. This might be expected from them, and even from thoſe that had lately been converted; *if ſo be*, or *ſince*, they had taſted that the Lord was gracious. The apoſtle here applied to Chriſt, as the context proves, what the Pſalmiſt had ſpoken of Jehovah. (Note, *Pſ.* xxxiv. v. 8.) The Lord is merciful and kind, whether men believe it or no: many have inefficacious notions of his mercy, without any experience or taſte of it; and theſe commonly embolden them in rebellion: but regenerate perſons believe that he is gracious, they apply to him in that behalf, and ſo they taſte of, and reliſh his grace, and have an earneſt of their future felicity, and "the witneſs in themſelves" of his mercy and truth. (Note, *James*, c. i. v. 21.)

V. 4—10.] The apoſtle, having been educated a Jew, and writing to Jewiſh converts, as well as others, retained the figurative and typical language of the old teſtament, concerning a temple, a prieſthood, and ſacrifices. The temple had been the centre of Jehovah's worſhip: there He

offence,

8 And a Stone of ſtumbling, and a Rock of offence, *even to them* which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient: whereunto alſo they were appointed.

9 But ye *are* a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light:

10 Which in time paſt *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

diſplayed his glory from the mercy ſeat, and dwelt among his people: there he received their worſhip, and communicated his benefits: there alone God met ſinners and bleſſed them, and ſinners approached God to glorify him; for every accepted ſervice had reference to the worſhip at the temple. Thus Chriſt, and believers as one with him, form a ſpiritual temple, wherein God dwells with ſinners, and bleſſes them; and ſinners come to God and glorify him. In alluſion to this type, Chriſt was called "a living Stone," (as elſewhere *living Bread*;) this metaphor ſhewed his power, ſtability and permanent ſufficiency, in his Perſon, and mediation, to ſuſtain the whole weight of the glory of God, and the ſalvation of his people that was to be builded upon him: and the epithet *living*, whilſt it ſhewed that the expreſſion was figurative, pointed out the quickening efficacy of his grace on the ſouls of thoſe who had been dead in ſin; and his ever living to make interceſſion for, and to maintain the cauſe of his people. This Stone was diſallowed of men, both Jews and Gentiles, ſo long as they continued unregenerate; becauſe men are naturally ignorant, ſelf-conceited, carnal, and at enmity with God; ſo that they cannot reliſh his humbling, holy doctrines and ſervices: but it was choſen of God, to be the ſupport, cement, and ornament of the whole ſpiritual building; and was moſt precious in itſelf, and perfectly fitted for that purpoſe. (Note, *Matt.* c. xvi. v. 16.) All therefore, who were born again, and thus enlightened, humbled, made in a meaſure ſpiritual, and taught to ſeek reconciliation unto God, came to Chriſt, to build their hopes and ſouls on Him, whom men deſpiſe, that they might be made a part of this holy and living temple; continually applying to Chriſt, and to the Father through him, for his purchaſed ſalvation, and the ſanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Thus they, as *living* ſtones, by life derived from Chriſt, became meet to be builded up as a part of this ſpiritual houſe, conſecrated to God, as his holy habitation. (Notes, &c. 2 *Cor.* c. vi. ver. 16. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 20—22.) But to ſhew more fully the import of this figurative language, it was proper that the ſubject ſhould be illuſtrated by another metaphor: for by thus coming to Chriſt, they were waſhed, anointed, arrayed, and conſecrated, as an "holy prieſt-hood," to draw near and miniſter unto God at his temple: they were not indeed to preſume to offer atoning ſacrifices, nor were they called to offer ſuch carnal oblations as the Jewiſh prieſts continued to preſent: but they were conſecrated to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices, even prayers, ſupplications, praiſes, thankſgivings, good works, liberal contributions to the poor, eſpecially their indigent brethren, and their very bodies; as devoted to the ſervice of God. (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xii. v. 1. *Phil.* c. iv. v. 18. *Heb.* c. xiii. v. 15. 16.) Theſe ſacrifices, though in a meaſure defective and defiled, and offered by ſinners, would yet be acceptable to God, becauſe honourable to him, when preſented through Jeſus Chriſt, and by faith in his atoning ſacrifice, and his interceſſion as their High-Prieſt within the heavenly ſanctuary. This accorded to a prophecy, which hath been explained. (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. xxviii. v. 16, 17. *Rom.* c. ix. v. 33.) Unto thoſe, therefore, who believed, Chriſt was precious, as the foundation of all their hopes, their chief glory, and moſt valuable treaſure; for they ſaw ſuch excellency in him, experienced ſuch comfort from him, and ſo entirely depended on him for ſalvation; that they were prepared to renounce every thing elſe, rather than come ſhort of an intereſt in him. But on the other hand, they who continued diſobedient, among whom were the Jewiſh rulers, ſcribes, and prieſts, who were the ſuppoſed builders of the temple, conſtituted an awful accompliſhment of another ſcripture; (Notes, *Pſ.* cxviii. v. 22. *Matt.* c. xxi. v. 42—44.) Notwithſtanding their proud and obſtinate rejection of, and oppoſition to him, he was made the Head, and Chief Corner-Stone: and they could only ſtumble at, and be broken, on him, as a rock of offences who was to believers, a refuge, and a rock of ſalvation. This was the effect of their unbelieving prejudices againſt the word of the goſpel, and their rebellious diſobedience to the commands of their promiſed Meſſiah; to which they had been appointed, in the righteous judgment of God, who purpoſed to leave them to their pride and enmity, and to glorify himſelf in their deſtruction; as was evident by the prophecies fulfilled in that event. (Notes, *Iſaiah*, c. viii. v. 12—15. *Rom.* c. xi.) Thus Iſrael, as a typically choſen generation &c, was caſt off, from being the peculiar people of God: but chriſtians, as the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, and as born again in conſequence of their election in Chriſt, were indeed "a holy generation;" nay they were become, "a royal prieſt-hood," A ſmall company of Iſrael really officiated as prieſts, and they were not of the ſame tribe, to which the kingdom was allotted: but in Chriſt, the kingly and prieſtly offices were united, and through Him believers became both kings and prieſts; being every way dignified and made honourable; being called to exerciſe a ſpiritual dominion over thoſe paſſions, to which others are enſlaved, and to obtain victories over ſatan, the world and ſin; and being appointed heirs of the kingdom of heaven. They alſo conſtitute "an holy nation," incorporated under the government of Chriſt, ſubject to his holy laws, ſanctified by his Spirit, conformed to his image; and ſafe under his protection: and they are "a peculiar people," purchaſed with the blood of Chriſt, redeemed from worſe than Egyptian bondage, favoured with peculiar privileges, and formed to a peculiar character and conduct; (Note, *Tit.* c. ii. v 14.) In all theſe reſpects they are appointed to ſhew forth the praiſes of the Lord, by their ſpiritual wor-

11 Dearly beloved, I beſeech *you* as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul;

12 Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles: that, whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil-doers, they may, by *your* good works, which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation.

13 Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: whether it be to the king, as ſupreme;

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well.

15 For ſo is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men:

16 As free, and not uſing *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs, but as the ſervants of God.

17 Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Servants, *be* ſubject to *your* maſters

ſhip, their profeſſion of his truth, their holy converſation, and exemplary conduct. To this the apoſtle exhorted his brethren: the Lord had called many of them out of the total darkneſs of pagan idolatry; and the reſt from the comparative darkneſs of the Moſaic diſpenſation and Jewiſh formality, into the clear light of the goſpel, to behold the marvellous diſplays therein given of the divine glory, and to partake of his aſtoniſhing love to ſinners, as thereby exerciſed: this he had done, in order that they might be his witneſſes and worſhippers, to render him the glory due to his name; and to declare his *virtues*, or *energies*, even the efficacy of his grace, in their holy tempers and actions. They had formerly not been a people, of any name, or excellency, but they were now become the people of God; and had now obtained mercy for the pardon of their ſins &c, which once they were ſtrangers unto. The prophecy, thus applied, being elſewhere referred to the calling of the Gentiles, ſhews that the Jewiſh converts were not excluſively addreſſed; (*Hoſ.* c. ii. v. 23. *Rom.* c. ix. v. 23—26.)

V. 11—12.] The apoſtle exhorted his dearly beloved fellow chriſtians, who were ſo highly honoured, and peculiarly favoured, to conſider themſelves "as ſtrangers and pilgrims," who were journeying through a diſtant land to their heavenly home, (Notes, &c. c. i. v. 1. *Heb.* c. xi. v. 13—16;) and to abſtain from fleſhly, or "*carnal* luſts," and not to allow of hankering after, or indulgence in, unlawful, inexpedient, or inordinate animal pleaſures; but to keep at a diſtance from ſuch ſenſuality; and to bridle, and reſtrain all their appetites, and induce them to ſubjection; as well as to avoid all other carnal and worldly luſts and deſires after any thing forbidden, or any earthly object. For ſuch luſts warred againſt men's ſouls, to the deſtruction of immenſe multitudes: nay, they warred againſt the ſouls of chriſtians; and by their ſtrivings againſt the Spirit, or the regenerate part, and their temporary prevalence in their affections and conduct, they often wounded and weakened their ſouls, and prevented their comfort, growth, purity, and proſperity. As covetouſneſs, pride, envy, and other carnal luſts war againſt the ſoul, no leſs than ſenſuality does; and as ſuch evil things are mentioned by the apoſtle Paul, "as the works of the fleſh," (Notes, *Gal.* c. v. ver. 16—21:) ſo it does not ſeem proper to explain the words of Peter, reſtrictively of the animal appetites, as warring againſt the rational powers of the ſoul. For the whole natural man is depraved: and in the regenerate, the conflict is not between the body, and the ſoul; but between the new, and the old nature, called the fleſh, and the ſpirit: and the warring againſt the ſoul relates to the deſtructive tendency of fleſhly luſts, the indulgence of which, in any way, is hoſtile to the ſoul, and wars againſt its ſalvation, or its peace, purity, and vigour. Thus it was incumbent on them to maintain an honourable, and becoming converſation in all reſpects, among their Gentile neighbours, (from whom, chriſtians as ſuch, were diſtinguiſhed:) that, whereas, through their carnal enmity and ignorant prejudices, they were led to invent and propagate ſlanders concerning them, as if they were evil-doers, or malefactors, guilty of crimes injurious to ſociety, becauſe they would not join in the idolatry eſtabliſhed among them; they might ſilence their calumnies, and ſoften their prejudices, by their evident and abundant good works. Thus their example, in the preſence of their enemies, would concur with the preaching of the goſpel, in promoting the converſion of the Gentiles; and in the day of their viſitation, when the Lord ſhould pleaſe to call them alſo by his grace, to glorify his name, the holy lives of his people would be owned as the means of that happy change. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 13—16. *Acts*, c. xv. v. 14.)

V. 13—17.] (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. xiii. v. 1—8. *Tit.* c. iii. v. 1.) The words rendered "*every ordinance of man*," may ſignify "*every human conſtitution*." God hath appointed magiſtracy as his ordinance, for the peace and good order of ſociety; but the peculiar form of it is left to human prudence, under the direction of his providence. So that chriſtians are required to ſubmit to that government which is eſtabliſhed in the countries, where they reſide, without attempting any alteration, except in a peaceable and legal manner, according to their rank in the community. The apoſtle wrote, when Nero was the Roman emperor; but he was led to uſe the more general name of *King*, as his epiſtle was intended for the uſe of all future ages. This ſavage tyrant, who was at length put to death, as the enemy of mankind, but not till he had ſlain multitudes of chriſtians by his perſecuting cruelty, and among the reſt, the apoſtles Peter and Paul, (as is generally ſuppoſed;)

with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward.

19 For this *is* thank-worthy, if a man for conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and ſuffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps:

22 Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not; but committed *himſelf* to him that judgeth righteouſly:

24 Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree; that we, being dead to ſins, ſhould live unto righteouſneſs: by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as ſheep going aſtray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Biſhop of your ſouls.

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was the ſupreme, that was to be ſubmitted to and honoured! And the governors of provinces, &c, deputed by him and the Roman ſenate, together with other ſubordinate magiſtrates, were alſo to be obeyed. The intention of civil government was "to puniſh evil-doers," and to protect and honour thoſe, who did well; and in general, the adminiſtration even at that time, would be productive of much good; though in many things the end of government muſt be counteracted; for which the rulers would be accountable to God at leaſt. But in reſpect of chriſtians, it was his will, that by their good behaviour, in all godlineſs and honeſty, as peaceable ſubjects, notwithſtanding the oppreſſions they ſuffered, they might put to ſilence the ignorant ſlanders of fooliſh and wicked men; who reviled them as ſeditious perſons, and enemies to the ſtate, becauſe they would worſhip God, and not join in idolatry. They ought indeed to conſider themſelves "as free" from the ceremonial law, from condemnation, from ſatan's yoke, and from human impoſitions in reſpect of God's worſhip: but they muſt by no means uſe their liberty, to vail maliciouſneſs, to cover over any ſiniſter and ſelfiſh deſigns, or to find a pretence for gratifying revenge on thoſe, who had injured them: but in all things to act as God's ſervants, in willing obedience to his commandments, which formed the moſt perfect liberty, that could be enjoyed. Let them therefore, in obedience to God, ſhew a proper reſpect and honour to all men, according to their rank and authority in ſociety, and not ſcruple the cuſtomary tokens of ſubjection in all things lawful: let them at the ſame time reſerve their eſpecial love to the brotherhood, or their fellow chriſtians; and whilſt they feared, worſhipped, and reverenced God ſupremely; let them honour the King, as far as conſiſted with their other duty. (Note, *Matt.* c. xxii. v. 15—23.) It is next to impoſſible, that there can be a worſe ſupreme Governor, than he, who ruled the vaſt Roman empire, when this was penned by the inſpiration of God.

V. 18—25.] (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. vi. v. 5—9. *Col.* c. iii. v. 22—25. 1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 1, 2. *Tit.* c. ii. v. 9, 10.) Peter exhorted ſervants to obedience even in ſtronger language, than his beloved brother Paul had done. Theſe were generally ſlaves, and many of them to heathen maſters, who uſed them very cruelly: yet the apoſtle directed them to be ſubject to them, with all *fear*; with a due reſpect to them as placed over them by providence, and with a fear of offending, or diſhonouring God: this was to be obſerved, not only to ſuch maſters as were kind and humane, and who would be pleaſed on reaſonable terms, and be gentle even when offended; but alſo to the froward and moroſe, who would be angry without cauſe, and uſe ſeverity when diſpleaſed. For it would be *grace*, or the effect and evidence of grace, acceptable to God, and worthy of man's commendation, if, from a conſcientious regard to the authority and will of God, they patiently and meekly endured ſuch treatment, as was grievous to be borne; when they had not been faulty, but were unjuſtly puniſhed. For what glory, or honourable diſtinction could it be, for profeſſed chriſtians to be patient, when they were beaten or ſcourged for their faults? As many of the gentile ſlaves ſubmitted quietly in this caſe. But if they behaved well, and were beaten by their proud and paſſionate *heathen* maſters; and yet bare it without peeviſh complaints, or purpoſes of revenge, and ſtill perſevered in meek endeavours to do their duty: this indeed would be acceptable with, and rewarded of, God as a diſtinguiſhing effect of his grace. For chriſtians were called thus do good to all men, and to endure ill uſage from them; and ſtill to proceed with alacrity to do well amidſt ingratitude, revilings, and injuries, without being wearied out by any kind or degree of evil done to them: becauſe Chriſt when he ſuffered in their ſtead, left them in this, and in all other reſpects an example, that they ſhould follow his ſteps; that in the ſame Object, to which they looked for pardon and righteouſneſs, they might learn how to act in the moſt trying circumſtances. He, indeed had done no kind of ſin; and perfect wiſdom, love, and holineſs were diſplayed in all his works; nor was there any guile in his words: ſo that the contempt, malice and cruelty, he met with, were the baſe returns for the greateſt kindneſſes, and the unworthy treatment of conſummate excellency. Yet when he was reviled, as if guilty of the moſt atrocious crimes; he did not retort the reproachful language, though moſt juſtly deſerved by his enemies: and even when he ſuffered all kind of indignities and tortures, till they terminated in his death upon the croſs; he did not ſo much as menace his crucifiers, though all power veſted in him; but on the con-

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. Exhortations to wives and huſbands concerning their reſpective duties, 1---7. *2d. Directions to all chriſtians to live in amity, to forgive injuries, to be conſtant under perſecutions, to profeſs the truth with meekneſs, and to maintain a good conſcience; enforced by arguments taken from the nature of their calling, their preſent, and future advantage, and the example of Chriſt,* 8---18. *3d. The caſe of thoſe drowned in the deluge, and that of Noah ſaved in the ark, adduced as an emblem of the deſtruction of the wicked, and the ſalvation of the church, through a riſen and glorified Redeemer,* 19---21.

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trary he prayed for them, ſaying, "Father forgive "them, for they know not what they do;" and thus he committed himſelf to Him, who judged righteouſly, and left Him to juſtify his character, plead his cauſe, and puniſh his enemies. This example chriſtians were peculiarly bound to conſider and imitate; becauſe the Lord Jeſus, when he thus ſuffered, acted as their holy and divine Surety; and, pitying their miſery, when they deſerved and were expoſed to the wrath of God, he voluntarily bare the guilt and puniſhment of their ſins, as imputed to him, and expiated them by his death, on the accurſed tree; in order, that through his grace, and the encouragements of his goſpel, they might become dead to, and ſeparate from their ſins, and live unto righteouſneſs, as the obedient ſervants of God. Thus through the ignominious ſtripes, which He, (holy and glorious as he was,) willingly endured for them, the diſeaſes of their ſouls were healed; which were far worſe than the galling wounds, that they received from the cruel ſcourgings inflicted on them, in which they were conformed to their divine Lord. Theſe things related to all of them: for they had without exception been as ſheep going aſtray, and muſt have fallen a prey to the roaring lion, that ſought to devour their ſouls: but they had been ſought out by, and *brought back* to the good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the ſheep; and thus they were ſafely lodged in his fold, under his care, and become partakers of his love, who, as the Biſhop, or Overſeer of their ſouls, watched over them, and was become their omniſcient, omnipotent, and moſt holy Protector. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. liii. *Pſ.* cxix. v. 176. *Luke*, c. xv. v. 1—6.) Some expoſitors call the things, which the apoſtle here ſpake of Chriſt, a digreſſion from his ſubject, and the effect of the fulneſs of his heart: but I apprehend, that the Holy Spirit led him thus to write, that miniſters might learn from the example, to inculcate practical matters, from evangelical principles.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The apoſtles with one conſent declare the neceſſity of laying aſide all malice, guile, hypocriſies, envies and ſlanders, in order to receive with meekneſs the inſtructions of Chriſt. We need not then wonder, that there are ſo many unfruitful hearers of the word, and that others are ſo little edified; when we obſerve how much theſe apoſtolical injunctions are neglected. But let thoſe, who are as new-born infants in the family of God; and who have juſt taſted, that the Lord is gracious, avoid ſuch as would miſlead them into angry controverſies, which are commonly conducted with malice, envy, deceit and detraction; and let them beware of all hypocriſy: that ſo their ſpiritual health may be preſerved, a vitiated appetite prevented, and a deſire for, and reliſh of the holy word of God increaſed. They ought alſo to attend primarily to the more ſimple and eaſy parts of divine truth, which is the proper milk for young converts; that ſo growing thereby to maturity of judgment, experience and grace, they may at length be able to digeſt the more difficult doctrines; which are ſuitable food for thoſe who are of full age, and which will never be given to new-born babes by workmen, who know how rightly to divide the word of truth. But let no man reſt in unexperienced notions: for even babes in Chriſt *taſte* that he is gracious; and their experience of his love and mercy draws them to apply to him in all their further diſtreſſes, fears, wants, and temptations, and to reſt on him as the foundation of all their hopes. Thus they come daily to him, and are builded on him, as living ſtones, to be a ſpiritual houſe; and are conſecrated by Him as an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptably to God through him: for true religion conſiſts of *doctrine*, *experience*, and *practice*; and he who divides them deſtroys the whole. As the Lord hath laid this Chief Cornerſtone, elect, precious, to be the foundation of his living temple; they who are taught to come to, and reſt their hopes on Him, will ſurely be ſafe and happy: for the whole ſcripture declares, that they who believe on him ſhall never be aſhamed. But whilſt our Emmanuel and his ſalvation, are glorious in the eyes, and precious to the hearts of all the regenerate, who deem it their chief honour to belong to, and ſerve him; men in general, continuing proud, carnal, and alienated from God, can ſee no comelineſs or glory in him. Though he be made "the Head-Stone of the corner;" yet builders, in theſe modern times, make no account of him, but carry on their work, either in open oppoſition to, or manifeſt neglect of Him. Thus they ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient, and will periſh more dreadfully, than if He had never come to be the Saviour of ſinners: "whereunto "alſo they were appointed." But let us enquire, whether we have the obedient faith of thoſe, to whom Chriſt is precious? For many profeſs his truths, who ſtumble at his precepts; and ſo in another way he becomes to them a rock of offence, and an occaſion of deeper condemnation. Happy are they, of whom it may truly be ſaid "ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, &c." if we aſpire at theſe diſtinctions, let us be followers of God, as dear children; let us abound in our ſpiritual ſacrifices, and be careful to act up to the dignity and ſanctity of our royal and prieſtly character, in all the concerns of life; let us obey the holy laws o Chriſt our King, and ſeek his honour in connexion wit the peace, and proſperity of our fellow-ſubjects: and le us be careful to appear as a peculiar people, zealous o good works, whoſe great buſineſs it is, to ſhew forth th praiſes of God, who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. Thus we ſhall beſt evince, tha

LIKE-

CHAP. III.

LIKEWISE, ye wives, *be* in ſubjection to your own huſbands; that, if any obey not the word, they alſo may without the word be won by the converſation of the wives:

2 While they behold your chaſte converſation *coupled* with fear.

3 Whoſe adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women alſo, who truſted in God, adorned themſelves, being in ſubjection unto their own huſbands:

6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whoſe daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7 Likewiſe, ye huſbands, dwell with *them*

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theſe bleſſings belong to us, and make ſuitable returns for them. Moſt of us well know, that once we were not a people devoted to the Lord; nor had we ſought, or obtained mercy from Him: how vaſt then are our obligations to him, who hath made us his people, and ſhewn mercy to us! It becomes us therefore, as ſtrangers and pilgrims to abſtain from all kinds of fleſhly luſts, which continually war againſt the ſouls of men: nor can a believer, in any inſtance, or degree, indulge them, without being wounded, weakened, defiled and injured. But we ſhould not only conſider our own comfort and advantages: the honour of the goſpel, and the converſion of our neighbours demand our attention. Let us then ſtudy to have our converſation honeſt, and honourable, amidſt our enemies and ſlanderers; that whereas they revile us as evil doers, our evident good works may refute their ſlanders, and be the means, if the Lord pleaſe, of bringing them alſo to believe in, and glorify his name: for if we, who had not obtained mercy have at length obtained mercy; why may not they, who ſtill remain ignorant and prejudiced, be made partakers of the ſame ſalvation?

With this intent, and from other evangelical motives, we ſhould ſubmit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake; obeying the king, and all placed in authority under him, praying for them, that they may have wiſdom and grace, to be faithful to their important truſt, and for the preſervation of our moſt excellent conſtitution; and endeavouring, as the quiet in the land, by well doing to put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men: as free, with that liberty which the Son of God beſtows through the Holy Spirit; but remembering that we are the ſervants of God, and muſt in no degree uſe our liberty to cloke any malicious, or ambitious deſigns. By thus honouring all men, loving our brethren, fearing God, and honouring the king; we ſhould adorn, and moſt experience the comfort of the goſpel: yea in this way, even ſervants may enjoy the perfect liberty of God's ſervice. Indeed the view given by the apoſtle of the behaviour of many maſters to their unoffending ſlaves may ſerve to convince us how incompatible ſlavery is with the love of our neighbours, and animate us to proteſt in all proper ways againſt ſo grievous an oppreſſion of our fellow creatures: yet chriſtianity teaches men to behave honourably and live comfortably even in ſuch circumſtances of degradation and ſuffering. But if ſlaves, when thus unjuſtly and cruelly uſed, were directed to ſubmit to, and reſpect their maſters; how inexcuſable are thoſe hired ſervants, who profeſſing the goſpel, do not obey good and gentle maſters? Who can endure no degree of frowardneſs in others, through the indulgence of it in themſelves? And who will not bear a reproof when moſt evidently culpable? Indeed this would be no evidence of grace, or acceptable obedience; though it would be better than their anſwering again: but when, in any ſituation, we do well, and then ſuffer rebuke or ill uſage patiently, from conſcience towards God, we manifeſt the reality of our grace, enſure a bounteous recompence, and have the honour of reſembling our bleſſed Lord: and ſervants to *unconverted* maſters, who without cauſe abuſe and revile them, ſhould rejoice in ſhewing whoſe followers they are. Indeed we cannot go through with our work as chriſtians in any ſtation, if we cannot perſevere in endeavouring to overcome evil with good, after the example of Him who ſuffered for us, and left us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps. Our ſufferings and reproaches, can neither be ſo unmerited or ſo many and great as his were; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; who ſuffered without threatning, and committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly. As therefore he, his own ſelf, bare our ſins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to ſin might live unto righteouſneſs, and that by his ſtripes our ſouls might be healed; and as we all were as ſheep going aſtray, till divine grace brought us back to the Shepherd and Biſhop of our ſouls: ſo let us learn to copy his example, when we are reviled and abuſed, as well as to rely on his merits, and keep cloſe under his gracious protection and guidance.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—6.] (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. v. ver. 22—33.) The apoſtle next gave directions concerning the duties of wives and huſbands, as a matter of great importance to the credit and ſucceſs of the goſpel. In general wives were commanded to be ſubject to their own huſbands: and even they, who were married to gentiles, or other unbelievers, whether they had been converted ſince their marriage, or had *ſinfully* brought themſelves into ſo trying a ſituation, were to obey this commandment in *all things* lawful. (Notes, *Gen.* c. iii. v. 16. 1 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 10—16. c. xi. v. 3—16.) This muſt be attended to, in a conſcientious manner, not only in order to lighten their own croſs, and to adorn the goſpel; but with an eſpecial aim to the converſion of their huſbands. Which was not ſo much to be expected from a diſputatious attempt to teach them the goſpel, as from the ſilent perſuaaccording to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker veſſel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

ſive eloquence of a becoming deportment. Thus they might hope to win upon thoſe, who obeyed not the word, but treated it with contempt and neglect; as the conſtant obliging, and amiable conduct, and prudent diſcourſe of their wives would tend to ſoften their prejudices and conciliate their affections; and ſo induce them to pay more attention to the preached goſpel. For it would have a conſiderable tendency to their conviction, habitually to witneſs the excellent effects of chriſtianity, in the chaſte, modeſt, and faithful conduct of their wives, as united with reſpectful fear of diſobliging or grieving them, and reverential regard to the authority and commands of God. But in this endeavour to promote the goſpel; they muſt not deem outward things, ſuch as the plaiting of the hair, wearing golden rings and bracelets, or putting on elegant or becoming garments, to be their adorning in any degree. But they muſt value, and ſeek for an inward beauty, reſiding in the heart, as a hidden man, viſible in its eſſence only unto God, and conſiſting of a renewal and ſanctification of the whole ſoul into the divine image, through the incorruptible ſeed of the word made effectual by the power of the holy Spirit: for this alone would continue for ever, without decay, or being tarniſhed. This inward beauty and ornament of a ſanctified heart would eſpecially be maniſeſted by "a meek and quiet ſpirit," which was in the ſight of God very valuable, and he would certainly honour it, though men might undervalue it: yet indeed it would be their beſt ornament in the ſight of their huſbands, and do far more to fix their affections, and excite their eſteem, than the ſtudied decorations of becoming or faſhionable apparel, attended by a froward and contentious temper. (Notes, &c. 1 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 9, 10.) Outward ornaments, according to every one's rank in life, are not abſolutely prohibited by ſuch ſcriptures, as hath been generally obſerved: but the frivolous affectation and vanity, which conſtitute the love of finery; the time, attention and expence waſted by thoſe, who are attached to ſuch decorations; and the proportionable neglect of the inward adorning, which uniformly connects with it, ſufficiently prove; that the more moderate in, and indifferent about ſuch embelliſhments, chriſtians are, from proper principles and without preciſeneſs and cenſoriouſneſs; the more reſpectable and amiable they muſt appear, in the eyes of all competent judges. The ornaments, which the apoſtle recommended, had been of repute in the church from the moſt remote antiquity; for thus holy women, of old time, who truſted in God's promiſe, and were intereſted in his ſalvation, had adorned themſelves; not counting either their perſonal beauty, or their coſtly garments *their adorning*; but in the meekneſs of wiſdom they willingly obeyed God, by being in ſubjection to their own huſbands. Thus Sarah, the honoured mother of the nation of Iſrael, had obeyed Abraham: and in token of her reſpect for his perſon, and the authority that God had veſted in him, ſhe was uſed to call him, "her lord." It is remarkable, that in the inſtance, where this is recorded, Sarah expreſſed ſuch unbelief, reſpecting the promiſe of God, that ſhe was ſharply rebuked for it: yet that is here paſſed over, and the only good word, ſhe ſpake on this occaſion, is mentioned to her commendation: which ſhews how readily the Lord pardons the ſins, and how graciouſly he accepts the poor ſervices of the upright. (*Gen.* c. xviii. v. 12.) Many of the chriſtian women, whom Peter addreſſed, were deſcended from Abraham and Sarah; and the others would be accounted as her daughters, heirs of her faith, and imitators of her example, ſo long as they behaved well in their relative duties, and as profeſſed diſciples; and were not ſo afraid of the anger of their huſbands, as to deny Chriſt, or act contrary to his commandments, through unbelief and conſternation of ſpirit: for this would be rather an imitation of Sarah's ſin, when through ſurpriſe ſhe denied that ſhe laughed; than of her faith and holineſs, or her becoming ſubjection to her huſband.

V. 7. *Likewiſe*, &c.] On the other hand the apoſtle exhorted huſbands, profeſſing the goſpel, to dwell with their wives, in a rational and intelligent manner, which might evince the propriety of the authority being conferred on them. They ought to behave towards them, as became thoſe, who had the knowledge of God and of true religion; who underſtood the ends for which marriage was appointed, and the manner in which godly perſons ought to behave in that holy eſtate: and this would keep them from every thing unbecoming, unkind, unfaithful, or injurious to their temporal comfort, or their ſpiritual improvement. As their wives were of the ſame nature, and conjoined in the moſt endeared and indiſſoluble union, which blended all their intereſts with thoſe of their huſbands: ſo the conſideration of their inferiority in this relation, and the comparative weakneſs of their ſex, which rendered them incapable of ſo great hardſhip and fatigue, as men could endure, together with their manifold infirmities, as connected with child-bearing, ſhould induce their huſbands to treat them with the greater reſpect and tender regard; inſtead of exciting them to tyrannize over them. They ought therefore to ſhew a peculiar eſteem and affection for them; to take much ſatisfaction in their company, to honour them before ſervants and ſtrangers, to ſupport their credit in the family, to make a becoming proviſion for their wants, to lay no unreaſonable injunctions upon them, and to ſhew a great concern in every thing relative to their health, comfort, and reputation. And if they would be thought ſuperior in knowledge or wiſdom; they ought to ſhew it, by being above taking offence at trifles, and by giving up their own humours and inclinations to oblige their wives, and for their welfare. Theſe things ſhould be attended to, from the conſideration, that they were fellow heirs of the free favour and gift of God, which is eternal life; and therefore as companions in their pilgrimage, they ought to do all they poſſibly could to ſolace, counſel, and aſſiſt each other by the way: and they ſhould more attentively guard againſt all diſagreements, and domeſtic uneaſineſs; that nothing might occur to indiſpoſe them for prayer, in ſecret, with each other, and in the family. This, being eſſential to the chriſtian's proſpe-

8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compaſſion one of another; love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwiſe, bleſſing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing.

10 For he that will love life, and ſee good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile:

11 Let him eſchew evil, and do good; let him ſeek peace, and enſue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* againſt them that do evil.

13 And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, happy *are ye:* and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear:

16 Having a good conſcience; that, whereas they ſpeak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be aſhamed that falſely accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt.

17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be ſo, that ye ſuffer for well doing than for evil doing.

18 For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the fleſh, but

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rity, was a mattter of ſo great importance, that all things in their whole conduct ought to be regulated with reference to it. Perhaps it might alſo be intimated, that in caſe a chriſtian had an unconverted wife, he ought to ſtudy by kind behaviour to conciliate her mind; that ſo ſhe might do nothing to interrupt the ſocial worſhip of the family, but might be induced amicably to join in it.

V. 8—12.] (Notes, &c. c. ii. v. 23. *Rom.* c. xii. v. 10—20. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii. *Eph.* c. iv. v. 1—3. *Phil.* c. ii. v. 1—4.) Theſe exhortations entirely coincide with thoſe, which have been conſidered in St. Paul's epiſtles. As the concluſion, and ſubſtance of all his admonitions, the apoſtle exhorted them, to be of one mind and judgment, as far as poſſible, in the great concerns of religion; to ſympathize with each other in their perſonal trials and ſorrows; to bear a brotherly affection to all their fellow-chriſtians; (c. i. v. 22,) to compaſſionate the miſeries, and relieve the wants of their unbelieving neighbours; to be friendly, obliging, affable, acceſſible, and condeſcending to inferiors, in their whole conduct; endeavouring to conciliate the affections of all men, by every kind of civility and conceſſion, as far as could conſiſt with their other duties; and by no means retaliating injuries, or retorting revilings, but on the contrary ſpeaking kindly to, bleſſing and praying for their contumelious, and malicious enemies. In doing this they might be encouraged and influenced by the conſideration, that God had graciouſly called them, from being his enemies, and expoſed to the awful curſe of his law, by the grace of his goſpel, to inherit a bleſſing in time, and to eternity; and therefore, they ought to copy his love, who had overcome evil with good, in his dealings with them; and to pity the miſery and blindneſs, rather than reſent the injuries of their enemies, who could not poſſibly deprive them of their felicity. (*Matt.* c. v. ver. 43—48. *Luke*, c. vi. v. 27—46.) This accorded to the advice given to young perſons by the Pſalmiſt: (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* xxxiv. v. 11—16.) For if any man deſire to prolong his days and live comfortably on earth, or to poſſeſs the hope of eternal life in heaven; he muſt learn to bridle his tongue, from all wicked, abuſive, or deceitful words, (Notes, &c. *James.* c. iii;) to forſake, and depart far from all evil actions, to do all the good he could; to ſeek peace with all men, and purſue it, though it fled from him. For the omniſcient and omnipreſent God watched over, and would take care of, the righteous. (Note, 2 *Chron.* c. xvi. v. 9. *Pſ.* ciii. v. 17;) and He was ever ready to hear and anſwer their prayers: but he ſet himſelf as a frowning Judge, and an omnipotent Adverſary againſt all impenitent ſinners.

V. 13—18.] Indeed, who could, or would harm them, if they copied his example, who is eſſential and perfect goodneſs; and were *imitators* of every one, who did good to others, as followers of Chriſt? In this caſe none could do them real harm; and ſuch inoffenſive, upright, and benevolent conduct would generally, in time, diſarm the enmity of their neighbours. But if this ſhould not be the caſe; (as ſatan would attempt to inſtigate the natural enmity of men's hearts againſt the goſpel, and by connecting with it the ambition, jealouſy, reſentment, political intereſt, or bigotry of rulers, to perſecute the church;) and they ſhould be called to ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake; they ought to deem this a peculiar honour and happineſs, (Note, *Matt.* c. v. ver. 10—12.) Nor ought they to be diſmayed at the rage, menaces, decrees and power of their perſecutors, which were *their terror*; but which could only kill the body at moſt, and could not ſo much as touch them without God's permiſſion: and therefore, they ſhould not be ſo troubled about ſuch matters, as by confuſion of mind to be unfit for their duty, or in danger of liſtening to temptations, and denying Chriſt; (as the apoſtle himſelf had done on a former occaſion.) To avoid this they ought to ſanctify the Lord God in their hearts, maintaining honourable thoughts of his perfections, fearing nothing ſo much as his diſpleaſure, and truſting their ſouls, lives, liberty, poſſeſſiquickened by the Spirit:

19 By which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon;

20 Which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight ſouls, were ſaved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto, *even* baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us, (not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God,) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt:

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made ſubject unto him.

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ons, reputations, and families in his hands, as in a ſanctuary and a ſtrong tower, (Note, &c. *Iſaiah.* c. viii. v. 13—15.) Inſtead therefore of renouncing, or concealing their religion; they were exhorted, to be at all times ready and prepared, to plead the cauſe of the truth, and to ſhew its excellency and authority, to every man, who aſked a reaſon of the hope that was in them; whether he were a magiſtrate, or a private enquirer, and whatever motives induced him to the enquiry. They hoped in God, through Chriſt, for eternal life; and in this confidence they renounced preſent advantages, and expoſed themſelves to moſt grievous ſufferings; what therefore was the ground and reaſon of their hope? This queſtion they ſhould be prepared to anſwer, by ſhewing the evidences and nature of chriſtianity, the need men have of forgiveneſs and ſanctification; the nature of redemption by the blood of Chriſt, and of the new-creation of the Spirit unto obedience, and the promiſes, ſecurity, and Seal of the new covenant, &c. This they might ſhew from the authenticated word of God, and their own experience, with its effects; that they hoped for happineſs on reaſonable grounds, and acted wiſely in renouncing, venturing, and ſuffering all things for the ſake of it. But cogent arguments alone would not ſuffice in this teſtimony: they muſt alſo ſpeak *with meekneſs*, or modeſty, humility, calmneſs and love; and with fear, or a reverence for God and heavenly things, and a cautious guard over their own ſpirits, leſt their miſmanagement ſhould diſgrace the cauſe of the truth. And they muſt alſo "have "a good conſcience," purged from the diſcouragement of guilt by the blood of Chriſt, that they might be ſatisfied as to the event; and as an enlightened monitor directing them into all holy conduct; that ſo, their perſecutors, who treated them as malefactors, might be aſhamed of thus falſely accuſing men, whoſe habitual deportment as the diſciples of Chriſt was undeniably excellent. And though nature would be moſt ready to repine or rage at undeſerved ſufferings: yet, in fact, if God was pleaſed to call them thereto, it was far better, more deſirable, honourable, comfortable, and profitable to ſuffer for well doing, than for evil doing; as the guilt would in this caſe belong to their perſecutors, and the advantage would be wholly their own. For thus they would be conformed to Chriſt, who once ſuffered, being falſely accuſed of men as an evildoer, and ſo, treated by them with all poſſible cruelty and inſult: but in fact He, being perfectly righteous, was made a ſacrifice "*for ſin*," inſtead of the unrighteous; for having no ſin of his own, and ſuffering *for ſin*, it was evident he ſuffered for the ſins of others. This he ſubmitted to from pure and unſpeakable love; that he might bring rebels, enemies, and condemned ſinners, unto God, as pardoned, reconciled, ſanctified, and made friends and children; that they might be happy for ever in his favour, and be glorified in their ſalvation, and by their worſhip and ſervices. For being thus put to death in the fleſh; in reſpect of his human nature, on the charge of blaſphemy; he was ſpeedily quickened, or raiſed from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, and thus declared to be the Son of God, as he had avowed that he was.

V. 19—22.] It was not to be thought wonderful, that ſo many refuſed to believe in the riſen and glorified Saviour, through the preaching of his apoſtles by the Holy Spirit: as the caſe had been the ſame of old. For Chriſt, as God, and with reference to his future incarnation, had gone, by his Spirit, (c. i. v. 11,) inſpiring his ſervant Noah, to denounce the approaching deluge, and preach repentance to that incorrigible generation, who periſhed in their ſins, and were in the priſon of Hell, (that is the adults among them,) when the apoſtle wrote; being confined there, till the judgment of the great day. For they had ſometime been diſobedient and unbelieving, (c. ii. v. 7, 8.) even during the 120 years of God's long ſuffering, after the deluge was threatened, before it was ſent: at that time Noah was occupied in preparing the ark; ſhewing his faith by his works, and calling on them to repent and ſeek mercy from God. But they unanimouſly and obſtinately rejected his meſſage; and thus they were deſtroyed by the flood, whilſt only eight perſons had their lives preſerved in the ark, being delivered from the waters, and carried above them: ſo that the floods which drowned others, in ſome ſenſe concurred in their deliverance. The like figure, or *the antitype* of which preſervation in the ark and by the water, at that time ſaved chriſtians; even baptiſm. Chriſt, and his church are the true ark; all within are ſafe; all without will be ſwept by the deluge of divine vengeance into deſtruction. Into this ark men enter by true faith; this faith Jews and Gentiles profeſſed, when by baptiſm they entered the chriſtian church: and thus the baptiſmal water formed as it were the ſign of their ſafety. Yet it was not "the waſhing away the filth of the fleſh," or the more outward ordinance of baptiſm, that could effect this; but it was "the anſwer of a good conſcience "towards God;" when a man, by the regeneration of the Spirit, was able to profeſs repentance, faith, and purpoſes of a new life, uprightly, and as in the preſence of God; and to anſwer ſuch queſtions as uſed to be put to perſons on thoſe occaſions. When Jews and Gentiles profeſſed chriſtianity, they were thus received into the church; even as Gentiles had been into the Jewiſh church by circumciſion: but the argument concerning the baptiſm of infants born of chriſtian parents is not at all affected by it.

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1ſt. Exhortations to copy Chriſt's example; and to watchfulneſs, ſobriety, prayer, love, and a faithful performance of particular duties; from the conſideration of the time already miſ-ſpent, the near approach of judgment, and the ſhortneſs of earthly things, 1---11. *2d. Encouragements to patience under perſecutions, and to truſt God under them; with cautions againſt incurring ſufferings by miſconduct; and inſtructions how to behave under trials,* 12---19.

The apoſtle ſpake of baptiſm as the initiatory ordinance of chriſtianity: but he took care to remind men, that the inward grace of baptiſm, even regeneration, from which all holy affections and actions ſpring, could alone introduce them into the true church, the ark of real ſecurity; and that no outward adminiſtration of the outward ſign could effect this bleſſed tranſlation into the kingdom of the Son of God. This ſalvation of believers was conſequent to the reſurrection of Chriſt, which evidenced the acceptance of his ſacrifice, and made way for his exaltation; that he might confer as a Sovereign, and effect by his power, and through his interceſſion, the bleſſings he had purchaſed by the ſhedding of his blood. (Notes, &c. *Eph.* c. i. v. 20—23. c. iv. v. 8—12. *Phil.* c. ii. v. 9—11.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The truths, precepts and grace of the goſpel teach, and form real chriſtians to, a becoming, and beneficial behaviour in all the relations of life; by a happy union of piety, purity, meekneſs, fidelity and holy love. Every perſon ought to uſe proper means for the converſion of ſuch as obey not the word, eſpecially among their relations: but an obliging conſcientious performance of their reſpective duties by inferiors, will go further with their ſuperiors, and win moſt upon them: for when they ſee that religion teaches their wives, children, and ſervants to behave better towards them, than formerly; it intereſts their feelings, and ſhews them that there is an excellency in what produces ſuch happy effects: and it is greatly to be wiſhed, that there were more, who thus preached in every ſtation, employment, and relation of life. In like manner, the inward and incorruptible adorning of wiſdom and grace, ſhining forth in a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is "in the ſight of God of great price," conſtitutes the moſt durable beauty and amiableneſs, and will enſure eſteem and affection; when all outward ornaments, the memorial of our ſins and ſhame, with all that beauty which they are vainly meant to embelliſh, will not ſecure any one from contempt and averſion, whoſe conduct in life is diſgraceful; and they will ſoon leave the poor body to the confinement and corruption of the tomb, and the ſoul that is without holineſs, to be for ever loathſome and abhorred of God. Let then all, who would be the followers and daughters of holy women, who of old truſted in God, copy *their* faſhion, ſeek *their* ornaments, attend to relative duties, do good, fear nothing but ſin, and beware of every thing, that might betray them into it: and let huſbands, profeſſing the goſpel, act towards their wives with that prudent and tender regard, which becomes thoſe, who know the word of God; which may enſure them reſpect from all around them, and tend to render them comfortable under their various infirmities. Thus they will be enabled to live together, as fellow heirs of the grace of life, and nothing will hinder their united prayers for a bleſſing upon each other, their family, and all, who are connected with them.

As peace and love are ſo neceſſary to domeſtic comfort, ſo are they to the proſperity of the church. Chriſtians ſhould therefore ſtudy and pray to be all of one mind, to have compaſſion one of another, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous: and inſtead of rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; they ſhould bleſs their enemies, after his example, who hath called them from their ſtate of enmity to inherit a bleſſing. But "how aſtoniſhing and lamentable is it, that when the way to happineſs is ſo plainly delineated, ſo few ſhould find it! What man is there, who does not deſire life, and to live many days, that he may ſee good? Yet how few tongues are kept from evil; how few lips from ſpeaking guile! How few decline from evil, and do good! How few ſeek peace and purſue it. On the contrary, how much low cunning and artifice; and what diſcords and contentions reign among mankind! And how deteſtable and miſerable do theſe perverſe and ungovernable paſſions render us!" (Doddridge.) But happy are the remnant of the righteous; the eyes of the Lord watch over them, his ears are open and attentive to their prayers; and he delights in doing them good; whilſt he ſets his face againſt the workers of iniquity. Who then can harm thoſe, who are followers of God as dear children, and who walk in his moſt holy ways? Their ſufferings for righteouſneſs ſake will prove an addition to their felicity: ſo that fearing God, making him their Sanctuary, and abiding ſafe and comfortable under his protection; they need not be afraid of the terror of the wicked, nor troubled by reaſon of their rage and malice. They ſhould therefore always be ready to give a reaſon of their hope to enquirers of every deſcription: for it is founded on the moſt irrefragable arguments; and indeed the true chriſtian alone can reaſonably hope to obtain eternal happineſs, or eſcape eternal miſery. Yet in pleading the cauſe of truth, in public, or private, we ſhould not only be prepared with concluſive arguments, but with meekneſs and fear; that a humble, benevolent, peaceable conduct towards men may evidently unite with a reverential awe of the majeſty of God: for wrath, pride, bitterneſs, and irreverence will prejudice men's minds againſt the truth, whatever ability is ſhewn in defending it. Nor can this ſervice be ſucceſsfully performed, except by thoſe, who "exerciſe themſelves to have a conſcience void of offence towards God and man;" for nothing can be ſo well oppoſed to the enmity of the human heart againſt the truth, as the holy lives of its profeſſors, which tend to make thoſe aſhamed, who falſely accuſe their good converſation in Chriſt. However, if this cannot be done, it is better to ſuffer for well doing, than for evil doing; whatever our natural impatience may ſuggeſt: for Chriſt once ſuffered *for ſins,* FORASMUCH then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh, arm yourſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind: for he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh hath ceaſed from ſin;

2 That he no longer ſhould live the reſt of *his* time in the fleſh to the luſts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time paſt of *our* life may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it ſtrange that ye run not with *them* to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of *you*:

5 Who ſhall give account to him, that is

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the Juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God. Whilſt we recollect the end propoſed in the vicarious ſufferings of the divine Saviour; let us enquire whether we are really brought unto God, as his worſhippers, and in the temper of our hearts, and the conduct of our lives? For though his reſurrection was atteſted by the ſame Spirit, whoſe divine power effected it: yet few, even to this day receive him as their Saviour, and flee to Him for refuge from the wrath to come. Nor need we wonder at this, if we conſider what a vaſt majority were diſobedient, when Chriſt, by the ſame Spirit in believing Noah, preached to the old world, whilſt the ark was preparing, during the long-ſuffering of God; and how few were preſerved from the flood: though it may well make us tremble to learn that the obſtinate rebels were caſt into priſon, never more to be releaſed, as utterly unable "to pay the "very laſt mite." Let us then enter the ark, which God hath provided, as the only ſecurity from the deluge of impending vengeance, that will deſtroy a guilty world: let us beware that we reſt not in outward forms, as if that baptiſm could ſave us, which only waſhes away the filth of the fleſh, or any thing, "but the anſwer of a "good conſcience towards God." Whilſt we profeſs ourſelves the diſciples of Chriſt, and partakers of his grace: let us ſeek the true baptiſm of the regenerating and ſanctifying Spirit of God, in behalf of our children and friends; and thus let us truſt in his merits, power, love, and truth, who died for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification; and "who is gone into heaven, and is on "the right hand of God; angels, principalities and pow"ers being made ſubject to Him."

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1, 2.] Seeing that Chriſt, in human nature, and in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, had ſuffered with ſuch conſtancy and patience for the ſins of his people; his diſciples were called on to arm themſelves with the ſame mind; that a reſigned, ſelf-denying, meek, and ſtedfaſt frame of ſpirit, reſulting from confidence in, and love to God, hatred of ſin, and realizing views of eternal things, might fortify their minds againſt deſpondency, terror, and wearineſs; and prepare them to reſiſt temptation, and maintain the conflict againſt the world, the fleſh, and the devil, with reſolution and vigour, even unto death: whereas without this internal armour, they would ſurely faint in the day of trial. As therefore Chriſt had *ſuffered in the fleſh*, when crucified once for their ſins, but had riſen from the dead, to die no more, and had thus done with ſin, as imputed to him: ſo chriſtians, having "*ſuffered in the* "*fleſh*," in conformity to Chriſt, by the mortification of their carnal nature, through his grace, and motives derived from his croſs; had ceaſed from the allowed practice of ſin, expected no ſatisfaction from any forbidden indulgence, and were continually employed in reſiſting the influence of ſin in their hearts, and endeavouring to prevent it's breaking forth in their lives. (Notes, &c. c. ii. v. 24. *Rom.* c. vi. *Gal.* c. ii. v. 20. c. v. ver. 24.) The end or intention of this renewed judgment or conduct, and of the grace, by which the change had been wrought, was, that the chriſtian "ſhould no longer live the remnant of "his time, in the fleſh," or in the body, "to "the luſts of men, or in order to gratify any of thoſe vehement and inordinate deſires of worldly things, by which men are naturally actuated; but that he ſhould thenceforth live to the will of God, ſeeking his favour and glory, and doing his commandments. The word "*fleſh*" is here uſed in different ſenſes: it means in the firſt place *the holy human nature of Chriſt*; 2dly. The *depraved nature, the body of ſin and death*; and 3dly. *The mortal body*, in which the ſoul tabernacles during its continuance in this world.

V: 3—5.] When the ends, for which men were ſent into the world, were duly conſidered by chriſtians; it would appear that the time paſt of their lives might ſuffice to have "wrought the will of the Gentiles;" or to have waſted in commiting thoſe ſins, and purſuing thoſe objects, to which the ignorant heathens were addicted. Some had been Gentiles, and the reſt had acted according to the manners of the nations rather than that as became the peculiar people of God; for they had habitually allowed themſelves, in various laſcivious imaginations, dalliances, geſtures, or ſecret practices, or in more groſs lewdneſs; or they had been guilty of drunkenneſs or exceſs, and had frequented thoſe riotous, luxurious, and diſſipated revellings, and banquetings, where ſuch intemperance was practiſed; and many of them had joined in thoſe idolatries, which were moſt deteſtable in themſelves, and in the licentiouſneſs connected with them. As the Jews at that time were exceeding exact and ſcrupulous in avoiding all approaches to actual idolatry: ſo, it is not at all probable, that the apoſtle meant this of converts from among them. Some had lived in one, ſome in another, and ſeveral of them in many of theſe enormities: thus a great part of their lives had been miſ-ſpent; and this reflection ought to render them the more diligent in ſerving God for the reſidue of their days. But their unconverted neighbours, eſpecially the Gentiles, finding them ſeparated from, and ſet againſt, their old purſuits; and that they would no longer join with them in their revels, and profuſion of riot, were eſtranged from them, and looked on them as a preciſe, unaccountable ſet of people: as therefore, the conduct of chriſtians was a ready to judge the quick and the dead.

6 For for this cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the ſpirit.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore ſober, and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourſelves: for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins.

9 Uſe hoſpitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even ſo* miniſter the ſame one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man ſpeak, *let him ſpeak* as the

ſilent reproof of *their* exceſſes; they ſpake evil of them, and charged them with various crimes of which they were not guilty. But whilſt they thus unjuſtly judged and condemned them; they muſt ſpeedily render an account of themſelves to Him, who was "ready to judge both the "living, and the dead;" being even then poſſeſſed of all power and authority for that purpoſe.

V. 6. *For*, &c.] The goſpel had before this been preached to thoſe, who were ſince dead, (either being martyrs for the truth, or dying in the courſe of providence,) for this very reaſon; viz; "that they might "be judged according to men in the fleſh," and by the proud and carnal judgment of wicked men, be condemned as evil-doers, and ſome of them even ſuffer death at their hands: but that, at the ſame time, being quickened to a divine life by the Holy Spirit, they might live to God as his devoted ſervants, and his witneſſes among their perſecutors; and ſo be prepared for living with him for ever in heaven. Thus their tranſient afflictions, diſgrace, and ſufferings ſoon terminated in perfect felicity; in the mean time, they glorified God in life, and death, and were ſupported and comforted by him; and the goſpel had been the means of preparing them for theſe things; as it ſtill continued to prepare others to glorify God, ſerve their generation, and then, after ſome fleeting ſorrows; to be admitted to everlaſting uninterrupted joy, and unalloyed felicity. This ſeems the meaning of the verſe, which is generally thought very obſcure: but ſome explain it of thoſe, who were *dead in ſin*, to whom the goſpel was preached; that being quickened and converted, their old nature might be judged, condemned and crucified, that ſo they might no longer live to the luſts of men in the fleſh, but to the glory of God by the Spirit: yet, if this had been the meaning, the preſent, rather than the paſt tenſe would probably have been uſed.

V. 7. *But*, &c.] Chriſtians muſt indeed expect tribulations in the world, but they would ſoon be over; for the "end of all things was at hand," and death was about to cloſe their courſe of trials or ſervices; nay judgment would not be ſo long delayed, as that the intervening ſpace ſhould, in the judgment of faith, be compared with eternity. It was therefore incumbent on them to be ſober, conſiderate, temperate in all kinds of animal indulgence, and moderate in all their worldly purſuits: they ought alſo to be vigilant, and to guard againſt the various aſſaults of their ſpiritual foes; and eſpecially to be watchful, that nothing might unfit them for, or lead them to neglect prayer, or to grow remiſs in that duty and means of grace, on which the ſafety and proſperity of their ſouls ſo greatly depended. (Notes, *James*, c. v. ver. 16.) Many expoſitors have explained "the end of all things," to ſignify the approaching deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the whole Jewiſh conſtitution, in church and ſtate: but the chriſtians in Aſia were far diſtant from Jeruſalem; and were not ſo immediately concerned in thoſe events, as in the ſpeedy approach of death and judgment; to which the words moſt naturally lead our minds.

V. 8. *Above*, &c.] (Notes, c. i. v. 22. *Prov.* c. x. v. 12. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii. *James*, c. v. ver. 20.) The apoſtle here again enforced the exhortation to charity, or the *love* of each other; and in doing this he referred to the proverb, that "love covereth all ſins," or "the multi-"tude of ſins." As the love of God in Chriſt covereth the multitude of the ſins of believers from his ſight; ſo they ought to caſt the mantle of love over the number of faults, into which their brethren would fall in their conduct towards them: and thus to hide them from their eyes, by forbearing and forgiving one another, as Chriſt had forgiven them. (*Eph.* c. iv. v. 31, 32. *Col.* c. iii. v. 13, 14.) Thus the peace of the church and the communion of the ſaints might be preſerved, which otherwiſe muſt be interrupted: for there were ſo many things amiſs in all of them, that unleſs love covered, excuſed, and forgave in others ſuch miſtakes and faults, as every one would need to be borne with in himſelf, ſatan would prevail to excite perpetual diviſions and diſcords among them. To ſuppoſe, that charity or love, will ſo cover or make amends for the multitude of the man's ſins, who exerciſes it, as to induce God to forgive them, is ſubverſive of the whole goſpel; for "if righteouſneſs come by the law, then Chriſt died "in vain:" and the abuſe of theſe words, which are ſo obvious and important in their true meaning, hath encouraged ſo many to continue neglectful of Chriſt, and impenitent in their ſins, from a vain hope of being pardoned for the ſake of a proud benevolence, or ſome ſelfiſh alms-deeds; that a particular proteſtation againſt it ſeems neceſſary.

V. 9—11.] (Note, *Rom.* c xii. v. 6—13. *Heb.* c. xiii. v. 2.) In general chriſtians were exhorted to ſhew their love, by hoſpitality to ſtrangers, without grudging, or inwardly repining at the expence to which it put them: and, more particularly, whatever gift any man had received of God's free bounty, whether it were natural abilities, learning, influence, wealth, or ſpiritual endowments, he was required to employ and improve it for the advantage of his brethren; that ſo they might all reciprocally be uſeful to, and derive benefit from, one another, both in their temporal, and ſpiritual concerns; and thus act as became good, faithful, wiſe, and active ſtewards of thoſe manifold talents, which God, of his abundant mercy, and oracles of God; if any man miniſter, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be praiſe, and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inaſmuch as ye are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings; that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy *are ye*; for the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you: on their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil-doer, or as a buſy-body in other men's matters.

16 Yet if *any man ſuffer* as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 For the time *is come* that judgment muſt

grace had entruſted to them, for their own, and each other's advantage. (Notes, &c. *Luke* c. xii. v. 42. c. xvi. v. 1—12. 1 *Cor.* c. 4. v. 1, 2.) This eſpecially, though not excluſively, concerned miniſters, and thoſe employed in managing the affairs of the church. If any one, therefore, ſpake, either as a public teacher, or in private converſation; let him diſcourſe in conſiſtency with the oracles of God, which infallibly declare his truth and will to mankind: and if any man acted as a deacon, or in any other way miniſtered to the ſupport and comfort of believers; let him do it to the beſt of his ability, as given to him of God for that purpoſe; and let him communicate to the relief of others, not as if he gave them any thing that was properly his own, but as imparting a portion of what God had, for this end, committed to his ſtewardſhip: that ſo God might be glorified, by their conſcientious, chearful, and becoming performance of their ſeveral duties, and improvement of their talents, from faith, and in a diſpoſition to give the glory to Him of all they had and did; and to aſcribe to Him, through Jeſus Chriſt, all the honour of his perfections and wonderful works for evermore.

V. 12—16.] (c. i. v. 7.) The apoſtle here again exhorted his brethren to patience, fortitude, and chearfulneſs, under their ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt. He had before ſpoken of theſe, as intended to prove their faith, and purify their ſouls, even as the furnace tries and refines the gold. They ought not, therefore, to be ſurpriſed, or thrown into deſpondency, or conſternation by the fiery trial, which God had appointed to try them, and which they muſt needs paſs through; as if ſome ſtrange thing had happened to them, which was not experienced by others of the Lord's people. On the contrary, they ought the rather to rejoice, at being conformed to Chriſt, by ſuffering from the ſame deſcription of men, and in the ſame cauſe, in which he ſuffered; for their trials were to be conſidered as pledges of love, and introductory to the participation of his glory, when that ſhould be revealed at his coming, and they admitted to partake of it with exceeding joy. (Notes, *Rom.* c. viii. v. 17, 18. 2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 8—18. 2 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 10—13.) For he muſt again remind them, that if they were reproached, becauſe they bare the name, profeſſed the truth, and obeyed the commands of Chriſt; they were happy and favoured perſons: (c. iii. v. 14.) As this evinced that the Holy Spirit, who is glorious in his eternal Deity, and the Author of all that is truly glorious or excellent in men, even of the divine image, the beginning of heavenly glory, reſted upon them. (1 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 8. *Eph.* c. i. v. 17.) Thus the glory of God was ſeen in their conduct and diſpoſitions, and this excited the enmity of the carnally-minded: ſo that, on the part of their revilers and perſecutors, the Holy Spirit, and his operations, as well as Chriſt, and the Father who ſent him, were evil-ſpoken of and blaſphemed; but on their part the Lord was glorified, as they patiently ſuffer for his ſake the effects of that enmity, which their holy profeſſion and conduct had excited. But the caſe would be evidently different, if they expoſed themſelves to ſufferings by their crimes; for this would be moſt diſhonourable to God, and injurious to themſelves. It behoved them, therefore, to be careful, that none of them were brought before the magiſtrates, caſt into priſon, or condemned, for committing murder, or theft, or any other violation of wholeſome laws; nay, that they did not incur reproach, by intermeddling in the affairs of other men, whether they were of a private, or public nature; or by paſſing their judgment and cenſures, or intruding into the management of ſuch concerns, as belonged not to them; as if they had been appointed, or were authorized and qualified to overſee, and give orders to thoſe employed about them. Theſe were common reaſons for men's ſuffering public puniſhment or private reproach; and profeſſors of chriſtianity might be drawn into ſuch miſconduct, and yet fancy they were perſecuted for their religion! But if they avoided ſuch imputations, and ſuffered as chriſtians, for acting conſiſtent with that honourable character; they ought by no means to be aſhamed of the reproach, or ignominy connected with their puniſhment, though it were impriſonment, ſcourging, or even a violent death: nay they ought rather to praiſe and glorify God for counting them worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his ſake. (*Acts*, c. v. ver. 41. *Phil.* c. i. v. 29.)

V. 17—19.] It was indeed to be expected, that they would be thus called to ſuffer for Chriſt's ſake: for the time predicted by him, when he would firſt begin his judgments, by ſharply trying his profeſſed diſciples, or the family of God, was then arrived: and if ſuch fiery trials muſt needs prove and purify the church, and purge out hypocrites from among them; before judgments were executed on the Jewiſh nation, and other open enemies; what would be the end of thoſe, who did not obey the goſpel? The perſecutions, by which the church was tried were introductory to begin at the houſe of God: and if *it* firſt *begin* at us, what ſhall the end *be* of them that obey not the goſpel of God?

18 And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?

19 Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their ſouls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

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the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the tremendous ruin of the Jews; and preparatory to the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. ix. v. 6. *Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 9—13. *John*, c. xvi. v. 1—3.) If then the righteous were ſaved *with difficulty*; and, if, notwithſtanding their intereſt in Chriſt, and their conſcientious ſelf-denying obedience, ſo many trials, dangers, conflicts, and ſufferings were deemed needful for them; and if, according to their own feelings and apprehenſions, they were often but juſt ſaved, and got to heaven at laſt through many narrow eſcapes, as a ſhip-wrecked mariner ſcarce gains the ſhore on a plank: where would the impenitent ſinner, and the ungodly deſpiſer or oppoſer of chriſtianity appear, at the day of judgment? What refuge from the wrath of God could he expect to find? Or how could he hope to eſcape the everlaſting puniſhment, with which he was threatened in the holy ſcriptures? As therefore the trials of chriſtians were ſo trivial, compared either with the perdition of ungodly men, or the felicity prepared for the righteous; they ought, when ſuffering in the cauſe, and according to the will of God, to commit the keeping of their ſouls, (as well as the protection of their lives and all their other concerns,) to his Almighty care; who, being their Creator, had a propriety in them as his rational creatures, and who regarded them as his redeemed ſervants, new created unto holineſs, and intereſted in all the bleſſings of his covenant, and in his faithfulneſs to perform it to them. Taking care, therefore, to perſevere in well doing, and to ſuffer with meekneſs, patience, and conſtancy; without turning aſide from their duty, either through fear, reſentment, or worldly motives, let them truſt themſelves to his faithful care; who, being the Creator of the world, could not want power to ſupport, comfort, deliver, and eternally ſave them; and who would certainly over-rule every thing to their final advantage.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The chriſtian ſoldier, in preparing for the battle, muſt peculiarly remember to arm himſelf with the ſame mind, that was in Chriſt the captain of his ſalvation: that love, zeal, ſpirituality, hatred of ſin, contempt of the world, fortitude, patience, meekneſs, and hope, may concur in determining him to venture and ſuffer all things, for the glory of God, the good of men, and the joy ſet before him. Thus, being crucified with Chriſt, by the virtue of his ſufferings for us in the fleſh; and deeming himſelf dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God; he will be enabled to reſiſt temptation, to “ ceaſe from ſin, and no longer “ to live the reſt of his time in the fleſh, to the luſts of “ men, but to the will of God.” Indeed we may all ſay, (though ſome more emphatically than others,) that the time paſt of our lives ſhould ſuffice us, to have wrought the will of thoſe, who know not God: and we cannot but regret, if brought to our right mind, that ſo large a portion of our precious time has been waſted to no purpoſe; whether we have eſcaped the groſſer pollutions of the world, or have walked in its laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs and riot; or in thoſe revellings and banquetings, where God is no more regarded, than amidſt the abominable idolatries of the Gentiles. Very few of us indeed have ſo avoided the luxurious and diſſipated feaſts, which profeſſed chriſtians generally make, and often under pretence of commemorating ſome of the events relating to redemption: but, when we ſeparate from them, and refuſe to run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, they think it ſtrange, and revile us; as by our conduct we condemn them. This we muſt not mind; but, having ſhewn them our reaſons, as far as we have opportunity, we muſt leave them “ to Him, who is “ ready to judge the quick and the dead;” to whom they will have a dreadful account to give at the laſt day. Vaſt numbers, who are now dead, have ſuffered the ſame revilings before us: the preached goſpel called them to ſeparate from, and bear teſtimony againſt the wickedneſs of their former companions in ſin; they were therefore “ judged according to men in the fleſh,” and by their carnal rules, to deſerve reproach and perſecution; but, they lived according to God in the Spirit, and when they were removed out of the world, they were found meet to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance. Our's is indeed a favoured day in this reſpect: yet if the Spirit of life dwell in us, the world will judge us worthy of ſcorn and reproach, whilſt God will account us deſerving of that glorious kingdom, for which we ſuffer. But as the end of all things is at hand: as all our worldly purſuits, poſſeſſions, diſtinctions and enjoyments; all our temporal trials, ſorrows and conflicts; our ſeaſon of probation and preparation, and our term of uſefulneſs, will ſpeedily be over: ſo it behoves us to be ſober, and to watch unto prayer. The more ungodly men hate and revile believers, the greater care ſhould they uſe to have fervent love among themſelves; that by mutual candour, long-ſuffering and forgiveneſs, the multitude of offences may be covered, and ſo nothing may interrupt their peace and harmony. This bleſſed grace of love dethrones our natural ſelfiſhneſs, and in connexion with faith in God's promiſes, it will induce us to “ uſe hoſpitality one to another without grudging;” and to conſider every gift, poſſeſſion, or ſituation, as a talent committed to our ſtewardſhip, according to the manifold grace of God, to be uſed for the benefit of the church and the community. It will alſo dictate our words, whether in public or private; that they may be true, pure, kind, and inſtructive, “ according to the oracles of God;” and it will diſpoſe every one in his proper calling to miniſter, or communicate to others, as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified, through Jeſus Chriſt.

When we conſider the upright, harmleſs, benevolent, and uſeful conduct of true chriſtians, we are prone to think

CHAP. V.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. *Exhorting miniſters to diligence, and chearfulneſs in their work; to avoid avarice and ambition, and to an exemplary conduct; and younger perſons to ſubmiſſion to their Seniors; and all of them to ſubjection to their ſuperiors, to humility, confidence in God, watchfulneſs, and believing reſiſtance of temptation, &c,* 1---9. 2*d. Concluding with prayers, ſalutations, and benedictions,* 10---14.

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am alſo an elder, and a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and alſo a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight *thereof*, not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being enſamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away

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it ſtrange, that they muſt paſs through ſuch fiery trials, from the enmity of wicked men, and that God will permit them to be ſo abuſed and afflicted. But we muſt not indulge ſuch thoughts; for our part is to prepare for tribulation, as the excellent of the earth have always been thus abuſed; and God hath purified all his gold in this furnace. We ought therefore to rejoice in being made partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings, that when his glory ſhall be revealed, we may be glad alſo with exceeding and eternal joy. We may indeed deem ourſelves happy, when wicked men diſcern "the ſeal of God in our forehead," and reproach us for the name of Chriſt; and becauſe "the Spirit of glory, "and of God reſteth upon us," and ſo revile us, becauſe we reſemble, belong to, and glorify God. But we cannot be too careful not to give the enemies of the goſpel any juſt cauſe to revile, or hate us: and though it is not *common* for profeſſors of evangelical truths to ſuffer, as murderers, thieves, or malefactors; yet they often bring odium upon themſelves by a conceited officiouſneſs, and by intermeddling with ſuch matters as do not at all belong to them; as well as by various other evident and palpable faults: and then many of them will charge the reproach caſt on them to the perſecuting malice of their enemies! This we ſhould watch againſt; and carefully diſtinguiſh between thoſe things, which we ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt, and of righteouſneſs, and thoſe that we bring on ourſelves by our imprudence and miſconduct. In the former place we ſuffer as chriſtians, and ſhould glorify God in that behalf; in the latter we ſhould be ſilent, or humbly confeſs our ſin and folly, as the cauſe of our ſorrows. In vain do men expect to eſcape the trial of their profeſſed faith: judgment will begin at the houſe of God; his people will be more ſeverely chaſtiſed for their ſins, than other men are; and hypocrites will incur the deepeſt condemnation. They who would be ſaved, muſt ſtrive, wreſtle, labour, watch, pray, deny themſelves, and take up their croſs daily: and though all true believers will ſurely be ſaved, it will be with difficulty, and through many perils, conflicts, and tribulations. (*Acts*, c. xxvii. v. 22. 31. 44.) What then will be the end of thoſe, who obey not the goſpel of God? And where will the infidel, the profligate, the licentious, the oppreſſor, the perſecutor, and the enemy of all goodneſs appear, when Chriſt ſhall come to judge the world? If ſuch ſufferings are inflicted on God's beloved children, what will be the doom of his implacable foes? Let us then ſee to it, that we obey the goſpel, by a penitent faith, working by love; and if called to ſuffer, according to the will of God; let us commit the keeping of our ſouls to him, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—4.] The Elders were in general the rulers and teachers of the churches; and St. Peter, waving the mention of his apoſtolical office, addreſſed them as one of their company, and as acquainted with the nature, and difficulties of their work. He had alſo been a ſpectator of the ſufferings of Chriſt, in the Garden, and on the Croſs; and was appointed to bear witneſs to thoſe intereſting events, and to his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and ſubſequent exaltation. Moreover, he was fully aſſured, that as a pardoned and juſtified believer, and as ſealed by the ſanctifying work of the Holy Ghoſt, he was intereſted in, and would at length be made partaker of the glory, which ſhall be revealed, and publicly beſtowed on all true chriſtians, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall come to judge the world. As he therefore was employed in preaching the goſpel of ſalvation by a ſuffering Redeemer, whoſe ſteps he was endeavouring to follow, in patiently bearing afflictions for the truth's ſake; and as He was ſupported by the joyful expectation of future felicity, to diſregard preſent things; whilſt from love to Chriſt he fed his ſheep and lambs: (Notes, *John*. c. xxi. v. 15—19:) ſo he exhorted all thoſe, who were appointed to the ſame work, to apply themſelves diligently to the performance of it, with the ſelf-denying tenderneſs and patient care, with which the ſhepherd feeds and tends his flock. (*Acts*. c. xx. v. 28.) They ought to conſider the congregations over which they preſided, and among whom they laboured, as a part of the purchaſed and beloved flock of God; and therefore, it would become them, to take the overſight of them, not merely becauſe a neceſſity was laid upon them, and they could not ſafely do otherwiſe; but willingly, from zeal to the glory of God, and love to the ſouls of his people; and as men that were ready to encounter difficulties, face dangers, and endure loſſes, reproaches and perſecutions in ſo good a work. And when the counſel of inſpired perſons, or other pious miniſters, concurring with the wants and deſires of the people, called on any perſon to engage in the paſtoral office; he ought not to be ſo reluctant to it, as ſome were found to be; partly from modeſty and diffidence, yet not without a meaſure of unbelief, and undue regard to the eaſe, quiet, and ſafety of a private ſituati-

5 Likewiſe ye younger ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder: Yea, all *of you* be ſubject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Caſting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8 Be ſober, be vigilant; becauſe your adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered awhile, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle *you*.

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on, a want of zeal and love or a preference of more profitable employments: whence it became neceſſary almoſt to conſtrain them to engage in this arduous, laborious, and perilous work. Yet at the ſame time, ſome improper perſons of inferior ſtations might be induced to undertake it, from the expectation and deſire of a better maintenance, than they could otherwiſe obtain; and ſuch, as had been ordained, might be tempted to go through with their ſervices, rather to earn their wages, than from better motives; and to modify their inſtructions in ſubſerviency to their own intereſts: but ſuch things muſt ſcrupulouſly be avoided; as the lucre thus ſought would be moſt filthy and baſe, and the wages of the vileſt proſtitution; (Notes, *John*, c. x. v. 12, 13. 1 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 3—8. *Tit.* c. i. v. 7) as all true miniſters ſhould enter into that office, and perform its duties, "of a ready "mind," diſpoſed to delight in the work, and deſirous to glorify the Lord, and be his inſtruments in doing good to the ſouls of men; and conſidering their own temporal intereſts as a matter of a very inferior nature, and even their maintenance, rather as neceſſary in order to the due performance of their office, than an object to be aimed at in it. Nor ought they to aſſume a lordly authority, or aſpire at ſecular power and honour, by means of their miniſtry; as if they had dominion over the faith or conſciences of thoſe, who belonged to God, as *the lot* of his inheritance: when they were appointed to ſhew them *his* truth and will, and to engage their obedience to him, not to *themſelves*. Inſtead, therefore, of uſurping authority over their brethren, or endeavouring to convert their office into a lucrative trade; they ought to behave in ſuch a manner, as to be "examples to the flock," and to elucidate by their own piety, purity, humility, ſelf-denial &c, the inſtructions, which they gave to the people. This would not, indeed, tend to their worldly affluence, or dignity: but it would enſure to them a moſt abundant future recompence. For when "the Chief Shepherd, from whom their paſtoral charge was derived, on whom they depended for all their ſufficiency, to whom the flock belonged, and to whom they muſt finally give account, ſhall appear as the judge of the world; then they, and all ſuch faithful miniſters, will receive a crown of unfading glory, infinitely better and more honourable, than all the authority, reputation, wealth and pleaſure of the world could poſſibly be. (Note, *Heb.* c. xiii. v. 20, 21.) The words rendered "*taking the overſight*," literally ſignify "*performing the epiſcopal office*," and muſt be allowed to be a deciſive evidence, that no expreſs diſtinction was eſtabliſhed between Biſhops, and preſbyters, when the apoſtle wrote this epiſtle. (Notes, &c. *Acts*, c. xx. v. 28. 1 *Tim.* c. v. ver. 21—25. *Tit.* c. i. v.)

V. 5—7.] The word *younger* ſeems not to relate to any particular ſtation in the church; but in general denotes *juniors*, whether in the paſtoral office or not, who were exhorted to ſubmit themſelves, and ſhew a proper deference to their ſeniors. Yea, they were all directed to be ſubject to one another, according to their different relations in life: thus the people were required to obey their paſtors, children their parents, ſubjects their rulers, and ſervants their maſters, according to the precept of God's word: and as pride in juniors and inferiors militates againſt due ſubordination, even as in ſuperiors it prompts to tyranny; ſo they were all admoniſhed to be clothed with humility, as their chief ornament or upper garment, which might cover over their manifold defects; and ſo recommend them to others, as to diſpoſe them to make candid allowances for them; and that they might thus be influenced to ſubjection, notwithſtanding any meaſure of ability, or ſpiritual gifts beſtowed on them. This ought above all things to be ſought for; ſeeing that God contended, by his omnipotence, againſt all proud perſons: and ſhewed favour to none, but thoſe who were deeply ſenſible of their unworthineſs; and conferred his ſpecial grace on all, who were humbly deſirous of it. It therefore behoved them to humble themſelves, as guilty, polluted and wretched ſinners, under the powerful hand of God, which was ſufficient to cruſh the ſtouteſt of his enemies, and to uphold the feebleſt of his friends; that ſo, ſubmitting to his righteouſneſs, they might be reconciled to him by faith in Chriſt, and in due time exalted to the glory, honour and immortality prepared for his ſaints, after the trials here allotted them. (Note, &c. *James*, c. iv. v. 6—10.) In the mean while, indeed, they would meet with various trials and difficulties, and be aſſaulted by many ſolicitous cares, about their temporal, or ſpiritual concerns, and thoſe of the church; but being attentive to their preſent duties, they were encouraged, and required to caſt all their anxieties upon the Lord, by faith and prayer; aſſured that he would manage every thing for their advantage, according to his unerring wiſdom, and unfailing truth; ſeeing he cared for, pitied, loved, and delighted in, the proſperity of all thoſe, who thus truſted in him. (Notes, *Matt.* c. vi. v. 24—34. *Phil.* c. iv. v. 6, 7.)

V. 8—11] The apoſtle here again renewed his exhortation to ſobriety and vigilance, (c. iv. v. 11;) that, 11 To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I ſuppoſe, I have written briefly, exhorting and teſtifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye ſtand.

13 The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you*, ſaluteth you; and *ſo doth* Marcus my ſon.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiſs of charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

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being free from the intoxication of ſenſual pleaſures, or worldly intereſts, they might not be lulled aſleep, or found off their guard, in the great concerns of eternity. (*Luke*, c. xxi. v. 34—36.) To excite them to this watchfulneſs they muſt be reminded, that the devil, the prince of the darkneſs of this world, and of the apoſtate angels, the accuſer of the brethren, and the law adverſary of believers was walking about, like a roaring lion, full of rage and fierceneſs, ſeeking whom he could find aſleep or unarmed that he might at once devour them. (Notes, &c. *Job.* c. i. v. 6. 12. *Zeph.* c. iii. v. 4—5. *Rev.* xii. v. 10.) The terrible perſecutions, that were inſtigated by this enemy of God and man, as working in the children of diſobedience, ſeem to be peculiarly intended. Thus outward terrors, and inward ſuggeſtions drove numbers into apoſtacy, or a temporal denial of Chriſt; and many were finally ruined, from fear of man, and love of life, and *even* others narrowly eſcaped this downfall, being found careleſs and ſecure. His aſſaults therefore, they ought to reſiſt and repel; being ſtedfaſt in their profeſſion of the faith, aſſuredly believing the truths of the goſpel, and conſtantly looking to, and depending on, the power and love of Chriſt to repel and drive away the hated tempter. And to excite them thus ſtrenuouſly to reſiſt temptation, and ſtrive againſt ſin, though it were unto bonds, ſtripes, or death; they ſhould know aſſuredly, that their brethren, diſperſed in other parts of the world, fully and conſtantly endured afflictions of the ſame kind, in the ſame cauſe, and from the ſame ſort of perſons. He did not therefore pray, that they might be exempted from ſuch ſalutary and honourable trials; but he beſought "the God of all grace," who was plenteous in mercy, and the inexhauſtible and only ſource of every kind and meaſure of grace; who by his word and Spirit had called them to the hope, and ſure earneſts of eternal and moſt glorious felicity, through Jeſus Chriſt, that, "after they had ſuffered a while," for the trial and increaſe of their faith, He would make them mature and complete in every chriſtian grace; eſtabliſh them in the peace and hope of the goſpel; ſtrengthen them to reſiſt all kinds of temptations, to endure all ſufferings, and to perform all their duties, by invigorating their holy affections; and that he would ſettle them, firm and immoveable, as a compact building on a good foundation, ſo that no ſtorms or aſſaults, or ſtratagems of the enemy might overthrow them. This would redound to his praiſe, as the work of his power and ſovereign authority, to whom all glory and dominion were univerſally and eternally to be aſcribed.

V. 12—13] Silvanus ſeems to have been the ſame perſon, who generally attended St. Paul, and who was frequently called Silas. The apoſtle ſuppoſed, and concluded from all he ſaw and heard, that he was "a faithful brother," a true believer, and a zealous miniſter of Chriſt, *unto them*, among whom he had commonly laboured. He had therefore taken the opportunity of writing by him, a brief epiſtle, exhorting them to be ſtedfaſt in, and to act conſiſtent with their chriſtian profeſſion: and to add his teſtimony to the truths of the goſpel; that they might be ſatisfied, that the doctrines of grace, which they had embraced, and in the faith and experience of which they ſtood accepted with God, were indeed the truths of Chriſt; and that the power of them upon their hearts, and the fruits of them in their lives, evinced them to be partakers of the grace of God, and fully eſtabliſhed in his favour. This ſeems to determine that St. Peter wrote to confirm in the faith, the churches which had been planted by Paul and his companions, againſt all the inſinuations of thoſe, who pretended that he preached a different doctrine than the other apoſtle: and indeed the attentive reader will remark a great ſimilarity in the ſentiments of thoſe two great apoſtles, and their connecting doctrine and practice together. There is no ground to ſuppoſe, that by Babylon, the apoſtle meant Rome *myſtically*; for there appears no reaſon why he ſhould withhold the name of that city, when he wrote this epiſtle. Yet if any chooſe to avail themſelves of this *only ſcriptural proof*, that Peter ever reſided at this great antichriſtian metropolis; Proteſtants are not concerned to diſpute it with them. Probably Marcus was a different perſon than John Mark, and the penman of the goſpel, which bears this name. The reſt accords to St. Paul's manner of concluding his epiſtles.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who moſt know the nature, difficulties, ſnares and temptations of the paſtoral office, are beſt qualified to exhort their brethren, and will ſpeak with the trueſt authority on ſuch topics. An experimental acquaintance with the ſufferings of Chriſt gives the beſt grounded confidence of being partakers of the glory, which ſhall be revealed; and they, who would counſel to the greateſt effect, muſt not unneceſſarily uſe the language of ſuperiority. Miniſters ſhould unite ſkill, vigilance, diligence, faithfulneſs, love, zeal, patience, diſintereſtedneſs and ſelf-abaſement, in their characters and conduct; both, in order to feed the flock of God, and to be examples unto them: they ought to perform the moſt laborious ſervices, and endure the greateſt hardſhips for the Lord's heritage, "not by conſtraint, but willingly, "not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind," and without aſſuming any perſonal authority over them. This is not, indeed, the road to great preferments in the outward church: but "when the chief Shepherd ſhall ap-"pear, ſuch paſtors ſhall receive of him a crown of "glory, that will never fade away. And what, compared with this, are all thoſe riches, eminent ſtations, or lordly authority, of which ſo many nominal paſtors are greedily deſirous? Or where will the avaricious, the ſlothful, the ſenſual, or the tyrannical men, who have borne the name of miniſters, appear, when the great Judge ſhall come, and call them to give an account of their ſtewardſhip? The ſentence to be then denounced againſt, and executed on, them, is already recorded; may they read it, and tremble, and flee from the wrath to come! (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 48—51.) But every ſtation and age has its peculiar duties: ſubordination is the Lord's plan; the younger ſhould ſubmit themſelves unto the elder; and all, in their ſeveral relations, ſhould be ſubject to thoſe placed over them. This will be the caſe, as far as men "are clothed with humility;" and God never ſhews favour to a proud man except when he brings him down into the duſt of ſelf-abaſement; (*Dan.* c. iv. v. 37:) nor will any humble ſoul come ſhort of his grace, or of eternal life. Let us then humble ourſelves under the mighty hand of God; for he is able to ſave, and to deſtroy: then he will exalt us in due time; as much as is good for us in his church on earth, and among his ſaints in glory everlaſting.

Being thus humbly dependant on, and ſubjected to our reconciled God; we are allowed and commanded to caſt all our care upon Him, and aſſured that he careth for us, as a Father for his own children: and this will bring far ſweeter peace and greater comfort into the ſoul, than could ariſe from the moſt complete gratification of pride and ambition. Thus alſo we ſhall be ſafe: for humility will induce us to be ſober and vigilant; diligently attending to duty; and means, which are our part, and ſimply leaving events to the Lord, to whom they belong. When we conſider the indefatigable malice, power and ſubtlety of our adverſary the devil, who goeth about, ſeeking whom he may devour, and recollect what numbers he continually deſtroys; we cannot help perceiving our need of vigilance and confidence in God. Did a roaring lion, at any time traverſe our ſtreets, devouring the careleſs and inattentive; we ſhould proceed with vaſt caution and circumſpection, if obliged to go out in ſuch circumſtances of danger: yet a far more formidable enemy continually watches his opportunity of deſtroying our ſouls, nor can we have any ſafety, except we watch and are ſober. Thus we may hope to be kept from falling into temptation: but if we muſt encounter this dreadful foe, we ſhould reſiſt him ſtedfaſt in the faith; and then the Lord will conſtrain him to flee from us. In whatever form he aſſaults us, or by whatever agents; we may know aſſuredly, that our brethren experience the ſame conflicts, temptations, and tribulations. We ſhould therefore pray for them alſo, that after they have ſuffered awhile, the God of all grace, would perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen and ſettle them. This he will do for all, whom he hath called to his eternal glory, by Jeſus Chriſt; that they may celebrate his praiſes, as his willing ſubjects for ever and ever. All the apoſtles and evangeliſts exhort us to theſe things, and teſtify that this is the true grace of God; may we then ſtedfaſtly adhere to this primitive chriſtianity, and not liſten to cunningly deviſed fables! Thus it will appear that we were elected together with thoſe, who are now in glory; that we are indeed faithful brethren with all the family of God; that we deſire to live in love with them, and to ſhare that peace, which belongs to all, that are in Chriſt Jeſus, and to them excluſively.

The Second EPISTLE general of PETER.

This epiſtle is ſuppoſed to have been written a ſhort time before the apoſtle's martyrdom, about three, or four years after the foregoing, and to the ſame perſons: though it has no particular addreſs. It ſeems to have been immediately intended to put chriſtians upon their guard againſt falſe teachers, who perverted the goſpel; and ſceptical oppoſers, who ſtarted objections to the truth of it; and it is replete with practical exhortations, cautions and inſtructions. Some doubts have formerly been ſtarted about its authenticity: but learned men have fully anſwered the objections, on which they were founded; ſo that the internal, and external evidences of it's being genuine, have put that matter beyond all further controverſy.

CHAP. I.

Contains 1*ſt. The introductory benediction,* &c; *a general account of the bleſſings, to which God had called believers; and urgent exhortations to holy practice, connected with ſuitable warnings, and encouragements,* 1---11. 2*d. The apoſtle aſſuring them of his care to admoniſh them in ſuch things; giving ſome intimations of his approaching death; confirming the truth of the goſpel, and of Chriſt's future coming, by what he had witneſſed on the mount of transfiguration; referring them to the more ſure word of prophecy; and giving inſtruction concerning its interpretation, and origin,* &c, 12---21.

SIMON Peter, a ſervant and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteouſneſs of God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jeſus our Lord;

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godlineſs, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes; that by theſe ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.

5 And beſide this, giving all diligence,

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1, 2.] Perhaps St. Peter deemed it proper to ſtyle himſelf an apoſtle, as well as a ſervant of Chriſt; becauſe he meant in this epiſtle to oppoſe certain falſe teachers, who did great miſchief in the church. He addreſſed "them who had obtained like precious faith," with him and his brethren. The nature and effects of true faith were precious, and it intereſted the poſſeſſor in moſt valuable bleſſings: it was therefore equally precious in a private chriſtian, as in an apoſtle. Thus he tacitly diſtinguiſhed the faith of God's elect, from that dead and worthleſs faith, by which many were deluded; (*James*, c. ii. v. 14—26.) This faith, as allotted to them, "was in the righteouſneſs, "*of our God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*," as the words are literally rendered; they were taught to believe and truſt in the obedience unto death of the Lord Jeſus, as their incarnate God and Saviour, for their juſtification, and for all the bleſſings connected with, and reſulting from it. This is the moſt obvious meaning of the words; but if any think that the expreſſion "Our God" refers to the Father; they ſhould alſo remember that the meritorious obedience of the incarnate Son is often called "the righteouſneſs of God:" nor can we form any idea, in what ſenſe a chriſtian's faith could be ſaid to be either *in*, or *through* the righteouſneſs, or *juſtice* of God, conſidered as a divine attribute; when it reſts mainly on his mercy and truth, and only views his juſtice, as ſatisfied, and as it were, conſenting to the ſinners ſalvation, through the meritorious work of Chriſt. Our tranſlation "*through* the righteouſneſs, &c," though it ſeems not to be the exact ſenſe of the paſſage, yet conveys a very important meaning: as the faith, by which we receive Chriſt for ſalvation, is given to us "through the "righteouſneſs," which he finiſhed as our Surety; for it ſprings from the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, as given to us through his mediation. In behalf of all ſuch chriſtians the apoſtle prayed, "that grace and peace "might be multiplied to them, through the knowledge "of God, &c:" (Note, *John*, c. xvii. v. 3. 2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 3—6:) for in proportion to the degree of our *believing*, *ſpiritual*, and *experimental* knowledge of the perfections of God, in their harmony and glory, as diſplayed in the Perſon, character, and ſalvation of Jeſus our Lord, ſo will all our gracious affections be exerciſed: and our peace, hope and conſolation will abound, as that knowledge abounds in us.

V. 3, 4.] It might be expected, that this progreſſive work of illumination, ſanctification, and conſolation, would be carried on in believers, according to what had already been given to, and done for them, by the divine power of the Lord Jeſus. In conſequence of his exaltation, and mediatorial authority, he had given to his people "all things pertaining to life, and godlineſs;" whatever was requiſite for their ſpiritual and eternal life and final felicity, and for their acting ſuitable to their relations and obligations to God, during their paſſage through this evil world to heaven. Inſtructions, motives, encouragements, means, principles and aſſiſtances; together with pardon, peace, grace and knowledge, had been given them, through the regeneration of the holy Spirit; and all the fulneſs of Chriſt, and the engagements of the everlaſting covenant had been ſet before them in the word of the goſpel: ſo that, notwithſtanding their inward, and outward impediments and conflicts; they might ſtill be enabled to ſerve God acceptably in this world, and obtain everlaſting life in the world to come. All theſe things had been freely beſtowed on them, through the knowledge of God, who had called them, *through* his glorious grace and mercy, and the powerful virtue, or energy of his quickening Spirit: or to partake of his eternal glory, and to a conſtant, and courageous profeſſion of the goſpel, and obedience to Chriſt, amidſt all the trials and ſufferings of their preſent ſtate. For the words *glory* and *virtue*, may either refer to God, who called them, or to what they were called to: the former ſeems the more literal conſtruction; but the unuſual uſe of the word rendered *virtue*, in applying it to God, hath induced many to adopt the latter interpretation. By this knowledge of God in Chriſt, through the goſpel, and by their efficacious calling, exceeding great and precious promiſes had been given them. The promiſes of ſcripture relate to things moſt needful to ſinners, ſuitable to their caſe, anſwerable to all their wants, and abundantly ſufficient to render them moſt bleſſed for evermore; whereas without them they muſt have been for ever miſerable: they are therefore exceeding great, and precious beyond expreſſion. Theſe are ſet before men by the goſpel, and they are invited to come and partake of the promiſed bleſſings: but they are *given* only to believers, who may conſider them as ſo many valuable ſecurities, or good bills, payable when their circumſtances and beſt intereſts render it neceſſary: for being united unto, and partakers of Chriſt, all the promiſes belong to them through him, and by his covenant. (2 *Cor.* c. i. v. 20. They were moreover beſtowed on them to the end, that they "might be partakers of the divine nature," inſtead of that depraved and diabolical nature, which they had as apoſtate ſinners; that by their union with Chriſt, and add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godlineſs;

7 And to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs; and to brotherly kindneſs charity.

8 For if theſe things be in you, and abound, they make, *you that ye ſhall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

9 But he that lacketh theſe things is blind, and cannot ſee afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure: for if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall:

11 For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtered unto you abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to

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the in-dwelling, and new-creating power of the Holy Spirit, the divine Image might be renewed upon their ſouls; that ſo a new nature might be formed within them, and a new direction given to their underſtandings, wills and affections, conformable to the holy nature of God; and capable of loving, and delighting in him, and finding happineſs in his ſervice. When this change of heart and nature was begun, in regeneration, it influenced thoſe, who experienced it, to ſeparate "and eſcape from the pollution, that was in the world through luſt," or from all thoſe outward vices and enormities, into which men are drawn, by their exceſſive and idolatrous cravings after the pleaſures, poſſeſſions, or diſtinctions of the world. Such evil practices have always filled the earth, and they are pollution and filthineſs in the judgment of God. When ſinners profeſſed to repent and to embrace the goſpel, they outwardly relinquiſhed theſe iniquities, (c. ii. v. 20;) and all regenerate perſons actually and finally eſcaped them; that is, the allowed, or habitual practice of any of them.

V. 5—11.] The apoſtle here called on his chriſtian brethren, not to reſt in their apparent converſion, or the reformation connected with it: but in dependance on the promiſes of the goſpel, and in purſuance of the end for which they were given, to cleanſe themſelves from all remaining filthineſs of fleſh, and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God. (2 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 1.) Beſides that change, which had taken place, they ought to give, or uſe, all diligence, in the uſe of every appointed means, from an earneſt deſire of increaſing holineſs; and thus "to add to their faith, virtue," that they might with fortitude and manly conſtancy, profeſs their belief in Chriſt, and obey his will, in the midſt of their perſecutors; and ſhew a compoſure of mind, notwithſtanding the difficulties and dangers to which they were expoſed. They ought furthermore diligently "to add to their virtue, knowledge:" that by an increaſing acquaintance with the whole truth and will of God, they might be enabled to regulate their zeal and courage, with judgment and diſcretion; knowing how to behave in all circumſtances, and to all perſons, like well informed intelligent perſons, who could not juſtly be charged with any thing raſh, fooliſh, or contrary to the duty of their place, in the church or the community. (Note, *Phil.* c. i. v. 9—11.) To knowledge, they muſt add "temperance," or an exact government of the animal appetites, in ſubordination to the will of God, and the benefit of themſelves and others; as well as great moderation in, and indifference about, all worldly things. To temperance they muſt unite "patience," or a chearful ſubmiſſion to the will of God, under afflictions, meekneſs amidſt injuries and affronts, perſeverance in well doing, notwithſtanding ſevere trials, and a quiet waiting for the Lord, to interpoſe for their comfort and deliverance. To this "godlineſs" muſt be added; as conſiſting of all thoſe holy affections and diſpoſitions which conſtitute the ſpiritual worſhipper, and truly devoted ſervant of God, in all his ordinances and commandments: and to this "brotherly kindneſs," or an unfeigned fervent love of chriſtians, as brethren in the Lord, (Note, 1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 22;) and to all the reſt they muſt join "charity," or love to all men, according to the commandments of God, and in imitation of his compaſſion and kindneſs to the ſinful children of men. Theſe holy diſpoſitions, and the effects of them upon their conduct were to be diligently and carefully added together, as different voices in harmony form a chorus: that ſo, the exerciſe of each other might connect with, regulate, and bound, that of the reſt; and prevent their exceeding or degenerating. Thus the chriſtian character would appear well proportioned, and beautiful: whereas, if any of theſe graces were remarkably defective, the others would *appear* to be redundant; being changed for, or mixed with thoſe natural diſpoſitions, that moſt reſembled them; and the character would appear deformed and diſproportioned; whilſt one man would be bold without knowledge, or love; another gentle and kind without firmneſs or fortitude; and the ſame would appear in various particulars. Moreover, this ought to be peculiarly attended to; as their uſefulneſs and comfort depended greatly upon it: for if theſe things were rooted in their hearts, and abounded in their lives; they would effectually prevent them from being *ſlothful*, or unfruitful, in their knowledge of Chriſt; for they would excite them to continual activity in his ſervice, and to ſuch a behaviour in all relative duties, and in the improvements of their talents, as would be very uſeful to mankind. But on the other hand, the profeſſed chriſtian, who was wholly deſtitute of theſe gracious diſpoſitions, or even remarkably defective in them, was to be conſidered as ſpiritually blind; for his moſt exact notions only ſhewed that he had *heard* that ſuch things were, but his conduct proved, that he had never *ſeen* their real put you always in remembrance of theſe things, though ye know *them,* and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to ſtir you up by putting *you* in remembrance;

14 Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me.

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my deceaſe to have theſe things always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but were eye witneſſes of his majeſty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

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nature, uſe, glory and excellency. At leaſt he muſt be very ſhort-ſighted, and incapable of perceiving any thing of the genuine tendency of the goſpel: nay he had forgotten the very meaning of his own profeſſion, when he embraced chriſtianity and was baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus; as that ſymbolical ordinance repreſented the purging away of a man's old ſins, in conformity to the death, burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. vi. 1 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 21;) that being dead unto ſin, and riſen to newneſs of life, he might thenceforth live unto God. As therefore this outward profeſſion could not profit them, without a renewal of their hearts to holineſs: ſo the apoſtle exhorted his brethren, "the rather to give diligence to make "their calling and election ſure;" that by earneſtly and vigorouſly uſing every means of grace, applying themſelves to the performance of all their various duties, mortifying every ſinful propenſity, and cultivating every holy affection; the evidence of their "calling," or regeneration, might become more complete, clear and indiſputable to themſelves, as well as to others. And by this their election would alſo be aſcertained; and they might aſſuredly infer, that God had from the beginning choſen them to ſalvation, and would preſerve them to his eternal glory: (Notes, &c. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 29, 30. *Eph.* c. i. v. 1—12. 2 *Theſſ.* c. ii. v. 13. 1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 2.) For if they diligently practiſed thoſe things that had been mentioned, they ſhould never fall; it would thus be manifeſt, that they were true believers, who would be preſerved from total and final apoſtacy, into which many profeſſors were drawn: and in proportion to their diligence, they would be kept from the ſnares of ſatan, and from falling into ſuch ſins, as would be a ſcandal to the goſpel, and very diſtreſſing to themſelves. Thus they would be preſerved in a comfortable and honourable walk with God, and from all thoſe declenſions and failures, into which others were betrayed: and when at laſt they left the world, an entrance would be afforded them into the everlaſting kingdom of Chriſt; every thing would be ſo arranged, as to conduce to their felicity; they would be favoured at the approach of death with ſatisfactory aſſurance that they were going to heaven; they would enter that bleſſed eſtate, as a ſhip comes into harbour, richly laden from a proſperous voyage, with a fair gale and a full tide carrying it above all impediments, and terminating all its dangers; and they, who were left behind would have no doubt of their being gone to be with Chriſt, in his glorious and eternal kingdom. Whereas looſe and ſuſpicious profeſſors would probably, have darkneſs and doubt for their companions in the hour of death, others would be diſpoſed to heſitate in reſpect of the event; and in many ways they muſt ſuffer loſs, even though they were ſaved, as by fire, (Note, 1 *Cor.* c. iii. v. 10—15.)

V. 12—15.] Seeing things were, as he had ſtated, the apoſtle aſſured his brethren that he would not be negligent in his duty; but would embrace every opportunity of putting them in remembrance of theſe important matters; even though they knew them, and were eſtabliſhed eſpecially, in that truth, which he then inculcated; namely the neceſſity of holineſs, in order to an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of Chriſt. This was the caſe with many of them, who would be glad to have their memories refreſhed, and their holy affections invigorated by his animated exhortations: but others might be in a declining or wavering frame of mind; eſpecially as many were employed in propagating opinions of a contrary tendency. However, the apoſtle deemed it right, as long as he ſojourned in the frail body, as in a tabernacle, to ſtir them up to increaſing and perſevering diligence in every good work; by putting them in remembrance of thoſe truths, which they had before learned, but were too apt to forget. To this he was excited by the aſſurance, that his death approached; when his body would be taken down like a tent, or laid aſide as a garment by one who was going to reſt; not indeed by a natural diſſolution, but by a violent death, as his beloved Lord had ſhewed him long before. (Note, *John,* c. xxi. v. 18, 19.) The compoſure with which Peter, on this occaſion, ſpake of the very painful death, that awaited him, as if it had been no more than putting off his garment, or removing his tent, may very properly be contraſted with his terror, and denial of his Lord, when he had been left to himſelf in order to his humiliation. Until the time of his death ſhould arrive, his chief concern and endeavour would be to uſe every means, that might enable his brethren, after his deceaſe, to have theſe practical inſtructions in remembrance: for, though he wrote to the churches in Aſia, yet he evidently intended his exhortations for the benefit of chriſtians, in other ages and nations.

V. 16—18.] The apoſtle was ready to lay down his life in atteſtation of the goſpel, and earneſt to eſtabliſh others in the faith; becauſe he was conſcious and confident that he and other miniſters of Chriſt had not followed, artful and ingenious fables, deviſed for the purpoſe of ſoothing

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day ſtar ariſe in your hearts:

20 Knowing this firſt, that no prophecy of the ſcripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God ſpake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

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men's paſſions, and gratifying their depraved inclinations, and thus advancing the perſons, that propagated them, to wealth, authority, or reputation. This had been the nature, intention and effect of many of the Pagan fictions, and of the inventions of Jewiſh rabbies: but there was nothing of this ſort, in the doctrine taught by the apoſtles, concerning the power and authority, to which Chriſt had been advanced, in conſequence of his crucifixion and reſurrection, and the ends for which he reigned; or in what related to his ſecond coming to judge the world, to perfect the ſalvation of his diſciples, and to execute vengeance on his enemies. Theſe doctrines were not ſuited to pleaſe carnal men, or to procure ſecular advantages to thoſe that taught them: but, as they were ſure to offend ſuch, as were not brought by them to repentance, faith, and holineſs; ſo they were authenticated in the moſt ſatisfactory manner. For Peter, with James and John, had been eye-witneſſes of their Lord's majeſty, even during the ſeaſon appointed for his humiliation: for his eſſential dignity, and his approaching mediatorial exaltation were manifeſt in the ſplendour of his countenance, and in the appearance of Moſes and Elias, to ſurrender up their honours to him, at his transfiguration. But eſpecially, he received the moſt diſtinguiſhing honour and glory from God the Father; when there was heard from the bright cloud, the ſymbol of the divine Preſence in his tranſcendent glory, a voice ſaying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed:" and the apoſtle himſelf, together with his brethren, had heard this voice from heaven, when he accompanied their Lord to the mount of transfiguration, which was properly called "holy," from this ſignal diſplay of the divine Majeſty. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xvii. v. 1—8.)

V. 19—21.] The recollection of Chriſt's transfiguration gave great confidence to the apoſtle, and his teſtimony concerning it might be a great confirmation of the faith of other chriſtians: yet they had alſo "a more ſure word of prophecy." The appearance and voice on the mount were tranſient, and only three perſons witneſſed the intereſting ſcene: however *ſure* it might therefore render *them*, it was not ſo well ſuited to ſatisfy the minds of men in general, as the prophecies of ſcripture were. Theſe from the beginning foretold and deſcribed one extraordinary Perſon, and gave intimations of his birth, character, miracles, doctrines, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, and exaltation; together with the eſtabliſhment, extent, proſperity, and duration of his kingdom, and his final coming to judgment: and, when compared with their accompliſhment in Jeſus, they conſtituted a permanent and general proof, that he was the Meſſiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and more powerfully corroborated the apoſtles doctrine concerning his exaltation and ſecond coming, than any thing which Peter had ſeen on the mount: and the more this word of prophecy ſhould be conſidered, the fuller conviction would it communicate. To this, therefore, all who read the epiſtle, would do well to give peculiar attention; for it was to be conſidered as a light ſhining in a dark place, not only in reſpect of the total ignorance of the Gentiles, and the comparative darkneſs of the Moſaic economy; but as the earth was at all times a dark place, except as God's word had diffuſed light in it, by leading men to Chriſt, the Light of the world. They ought therefore to attend to the prophecies of ſcripture, for their direction and conviction concerning the truth of the chriſtian religion; until the Holy Spirit ſhould diſcover to their ſouls the glory and excellency of the goſpel, and by his ſanctifying and comfortable influences, give them the dawning of heaven in their hearts; and, till the knowledge of Chriſt, and the experience of his power, truth, and love, had formed within them an aſſurance and anticipation of the light, holineſs, and felicity of the ſaints, in the preſence of their glorified Saviour; even as the morning ſtar preceded and uſhered in, the riſing Sun and the perfect day. (Notes, *Prov.* c. iv. ver. 18. *Hoſ.* c. vi. v. 3. 1 *John*, c. v. ver. 10.) This inward demonſtration of the truth of chriſtianity would render the external evidences leſs neceſſary: as they could no longer doubt of it, when they ſaw the glory, taſted the comfort, and experienced the truth and power of it in their hearts, and manifeſted it in their conduct. But in taking heed to this light, they muſt firſt know, as a matter of the greateſt importance, that "no prophecy of ſcripture was of any private interpretation." This hath been much diſputed, and variouſly explained: ſome render it, "*of any private impulſe*," as if it related rather to the giving, than the interpreting of prophecy: but the word cannot properly be ſo rendered, as it implies the "*looſing of a knot*:" and it would alſo render the next verſe a mere repetition of the ſame thought, in the form of a reaſon aſſigned for what went before. Many have oppoſed the text to the right of private judgment, in order, to ſupport a ſuppoſed authority inherent *ſome-where* in the church, and its miniſters, and to make themſelves the ultimate object of faith, by fixing the ſenſe of the ſcriptures for the people: yet, at laſt, this is as much private interpretation, as any other can be; for every church puts its own meaning upon the word, and that often contrary to the truth. Some have referred the words to the general application of ſcripture promiſes by believers to their own caſe; as being a common property of the church, and not the appropriate excluſive right of the individuals, to whom they were at firſt given. But the apoſtle was not diſcourſing of promiſes, in this place; as his argument related

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. Warnings againſt certain falſe teachers; with general intimations of their corrupt principles and ſelfiſhneſs, and the fatal effects of their influence, 1---3. *2d. God's ſeverity in puniſhing apoſtate angels, the inhabitants of the old world, and thoſe of Sodom, &c; with his kindneſs to Noah and Lot, adduced in proof that he would certainly preſerve his people, and execute vengeance on the wicked,* 4---9. *3d. A more particular account of the ſeducers above-mentioned, of their vile character and practices; and of the hopeleſs condition of thoſe, that were deceived by them,* 10---22.

entirely to predictions; and this ſeems to me to point out the true meaning. Men's warm imaginations often lead them to ſuppoſe events to be accompliſhments of ſcripture prophecies, which in fact have no relation to them: and this way of miſapplying them, as fancy, inclination, or paſſion dictates, hath always tended to render them ſuſpected, or diſregarded. Inſtead then of employing a lively fancy, to diſcover ſome agreement between our own private concerns, or thoſe of our party, and the predictions of ſcripture; and ſo pretending to foretel future events from them: we ſhould remember, and be aſſured, that every prophecy has its preciſe and determinate meaning, which no human ingenuity can alter. We ſhould therefore exerciſe our judgment, with proper helps, and in dependance on divine teaching, to diſcover as far as we can the real meaning of the predictions, and the accompliſhment of them in the public concerns of Chriſt and his church, and in thoſe of the world as connected with the church: and to reſt ſatisfied with underſtanding ſuch as have evidently been fulfilled; without too curiouſly prying into thoſe, which appear to be hitherto unaccompliſhed. Thus the abuſe of prophecy would be prevented, and the objections againſt the argument brought from it, in proof of the divine inſpiration of the ſcriptures, would be anſwered. The prophecies, that have been already moſt evidently fulfilled, in the Perſon and ſalvation of Chriſt, and in the grand concerns of the church and of the world, form a moſt unanſwerable demonſtration of the truth of chriſtianity; and the accumulating evidence ariſing, from the fulfilment of further prophecies, from age to age, muſt at laſt rouſe the attention of the moſt heedleſs, and ſilence the cavils of the moſt ſceptical. But the miſapplication of prophecy, as if it were of private interpretation, and every man were at liberty to put his own fanciful meaning upon it, only ſerves to furniſh objections, gives the whole an air of uncertainty, and ſo confuſes the ſubject. For the prophecy came not in ancient times, at the inſtance, and according to the inclinations of men; nor can it be properly thus interpreted: but the events, to which it related, were, fixed in the eternal counſels of God, to be accompliſhed in their appointed ſeaſon; and holy men of God, who ſerved, and were ſpecially favoured of him, ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt; and they were ſo far from modelling their predictions according to their inclinations, that they frequently could not diſcover the meaning of their own words, (1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 10—12.) The apoſtle doubtleſs intended the prophecies of the Old Teſtament; but his arguments are equally concluſive reſpecting thoſe of the New Teſtament alſo.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould careſully examine, whether our faith be of a like precious nature and efficacy with that of the primitive ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt: for if we have obtained this ineſtimable benefit, we are certainly intereſted in the righteouſneſs of our God and Saviour; and grace and peace will be multiplied unto us, in proportion to our knowledge of God and of Jeſus our Lord, until they are perfected in the felicity of heaven. We can expect nothing too great and valuable from Him, whoſe divine power hath already given us all things pertaining to life and godlineſs; through the knowledge of Him, who hath called us by his new creating Spirit, in order to bring us to his everlaſting glory. As exceeding great and precious promiſes are contained in his holy word; ſo if we have that precious faith which embraces, and relies on, the promiſe, and which renders Chriſt precious to the ſoul; we poſſeſs all that is eſſentially valuable, and need not deſire thoſe trifles, which carnal men idolize, as if they compriſed the ſubſtance of all happineſs. But let us remember, that theſe promiſes were given to us, in order to our being "partakers of a divine nature;" and this will not only induce us to inquire, whether we really flee from, and eſcape the pollutions which are in the world, through the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life; and whether we are really renewed in the ſpirit of our minds? But it will teach us to convert all theſe promiſes into prayers for, the purifying and transforming grace of the Holy Ghoſt, to make us indeed partakers more and more of the image of God in righteouſneſs, goodneſs, and truth. We ſhould therefore give all diligence to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godlineſs, brotherly, kindneſs, and charity; that it may appear, that we are one with Chriſt, and with the Father through him. (*John*, c. xvii. v. 20—23.) When theſe graces dwell in the heart, and abound in the conduct, they conſtitute a conſiſtent, active, and fruitful chriſtian: and a degree of zeal for, and diligence in good works, to which other men are ſtrangers, will mark the excellency of thoſe doctrines, which are ignorantly ſuppoſed to lead to licentiouſneſs. But the light, that is in many evangelical profeſſors, is darkneſs: and whilſt they deem themſelves more clear ſighted, than practical chriſtians and teachers, whom they revile as legal, or confuſed in their views &c; their own deficiency in the graces and good works of true religion proves them to be blind, or at leaſt very dimſighted; men who can ſee nothing but a few things belonging to their own narrow, bigotted ſyſtem, without perceiving the enlarged nature and beneficent tendency of the goſpel; and who have forgotten that even baptiſm ſignifies "a death unto ſin, and a new birth unto righte-"ouſneſs"; and that all chriſtians, by their very profeſſion, are bound "to mortify all evil and corrupt affections, and "daily to proceed in all virtue and godlineſs of living." As therefore ſo many "are pure in their own eyes, who "are not waſhed from their filthineſs," (*Prov.* c. xxx. v.

BUT there were falſe prophets alſo among the people, even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord

12;) and as every one of Chriſt's apoſtles bears moſt decided teſtimony againſt ſuch a worthleſs form of knowledge, ſuch a dead, and ſolitary faith; "we ought the "rather to give diligence to make our calling and election "ſure." Many indeed preſume themſelves to be elect, becauſe they believe, *in their way*, the doctrine of election; though they have no evidence that God hath called them with an holy calling: but, if we would not be deceived, we muſt diligently make ſure to our ſouls, by the indiſputable fruits of the Spirit, that we are called by ſpecial grace; and we may thence ſafely infer our eternal election, and our final preſervation. It is not ſaid, that if we hold certain doctrines we ſhall never fall; but "*if we do theſe things, we ſhall never fall:*" and in the practice of every good work, we ſhould wait for, and expect, an abundant entrance into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

It then behoves all miniſters, after the example of Peter, diligently, and at all times, to put their hearers in remembrance of theſe things, in connexion with evangelical truth: otherwiſe they cannot "take them to record, that "they have declared unto them all the counſel of God," however exactly they have preached the doctrines of grace. This is not only neceſſary with ſuch as are ignorant, or waver, in ſuch matters; but even amongſt thoſe, who know them, and are, as to their judgment, eſtabliſhed in them: for allowed truths often lie dormant in the mind, except as they are rendered active by animated exhortations; and a carnal treacherous memory ſoon loſes ſight of ſpiritual inſtructions. As theſe practical ſubjects do not generally prove moſt acceptable to the majority of hearers, in congregations, where the doctrines of grace are preached; ſo miniſters will often be tempted to omit them, or to hurry them over in a general and ſuperficial manner; and this tends to deceive ſouls, and to diffuſe a falſe and looſe religion. We are therefore bound, in juſtice to men, as well as in duty to God, as long as we are in theſe tabernacles, to ſtir up our people, by putting them in remembrance of the various good works, by which they muſt glorify God, and adorn the goſpel; and to conſult rather what is profitable for, than pleaſant to, them. For we ſhall ſhortly put off theſe our tabernacles, and nothing can tend ſo much to produce compoſure in the proſpect, or in the pangs of death, and in expectation of our great account; as conſciouſneſs, that we have not ſought to pleaſe men, or to obtain wealth, reputation, eaſe, or indulgence to ourſelves; but that we have faithfully and ſimply ſerved the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ſought his glory, and the ſalvation of ſouls, as the great aim of our miniſterial labours. Indeed the ſpeedy approach of death ſhould not only excite us to prepare to meet it with comfort; but to uſe every proper means, that all around us ſhould have the ſubſtance of our inſtructions in remembrance, after our deceaſe. We cannot expect ſuch extenſive and permanent ſucceſs to our feeble and defective endeavours, as attended the writings of inſpired men of God: yet when we are conſcious that our teſtimony tends to lead men to the ſcriptures, to Chriſt, and to holineſs, we may hope for ſome good to come from them after our deceaſe: whilſt many of the admired productions of ingenious infidels, heretics, and ungodly men will continue to corrupt the principles, to deprave the morals, and to murder the ſouls of numbers, from age to age, to the accumulating guilt and condemnation of thoſe, who left ſo fatal a bequeſt to poſterity. For, whatever clamours be made about bigotry and uncharitableneſs; it is moſt certain, that they only, who preach ſalvation for ſinners through Jeſus Chriſt, and who make known his power, and coming to judge the world, are free from the charge of following cunningly deviſed fables: and therefore they ought to be the moſt earneſt in their work, without regarding what the conſequence may be reſpecting their temporal intereſts. We have none of us indeed been eye witneſſes of ſuch things, as the apoſtles ſaw, in relation to the majeſty, honour and glory of Chriſt; nor have we heard the voice of God the Father from the excellent glory ſaying; "This is my beloved Son, in whom "I am well pleaſed:" but we have a more ſure word of prophecy, which will more fully ſatisfy the diligent inveſtigator of it, than any tranſient miracle could do; it lies open to every man's examination, and continually becomes more concluſive, by the further accompliſhment of its predictions. To this grand evidence of the truth of chriſtianity, and its great doctrines, every ſerious enquirer will do well to take heed; eſpecially in this ſceptical age, when ſo many engines are at work to draw the attention of the unſtable from the goſpel, as if it were a cunningly deviſed fable. In this way then, let ſuch perſons wait; and taking heed to this light, that ſhineth in a dark place; they will gradually be directed to Chriſt; and their experience of his power, truth, and love, will be the day-dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſing in their hearts, and a ſure earneſt and foretaſte of everlaſting happineſs. But in ſearching the ſcriptures, and eſpecially in conſidering the prophecies and their accompliſhment, we ſhould beware of ſelf-conceit, an ungovernable fancy, and the influence of ſelfiſh paſſions. Though we have a right to judge for ourſelves, and to call no man maſter on earth; yet it is requiſite we ſhould exerciſe our judgment with ſobriety, modeſty and docility: nor is it generally ſafe to indulge a fondneſs for novelty, or to deviate from the approved judgment of eminent ſervants of God, in other ages of the church, without evident need. Above all, we ſhould examine ſuch matters with prayer for the teaching of the ſame Spirit, by whom holy men of God ſpake their prophecies: that we may be enabled to diſcover what was his meaning in them, as far as this is good for us. Under his guidance, we ſhall be kept from interpreting ſcripture, according to our private fancy, humour, or inclination; we ſhall diſcover the relation of all the prophecies to Chriſt and his church; and that ſo many of them have already been fulfilled, that we are fully authorized to expect the accompliſhment of all the reſt; till his ſecond coming to judge the world, to perfect his people's ſalvation, and to ſhut up the wicked in hell, ſhall fulfil the laſt of theſe predictions, to the everlaſting glory of his truth, power, love, wiſdom, and right-that bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwiſt deſtruction.

2 And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways; by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of.

3 And through covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words make merchandiſe of you: whoſe judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation ſlumbereth not.

4 For if God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment;

5 And ſpared not the old world, but ſaved Noah the eighth *perſon*, a preacher of righteouſneſs, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into aſhes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an enſample unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly;

7 And delivered juſt Lot, vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in ſeeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous ſoul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the

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couſneſs, and the eternal joy and admiration of all his redeemed people.

N O T E S.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—3.] As the falſe prophets oppoſed the holy men of God, under the old diſpenſation; and by their flattering and deceitful words obtained a pernicious aſcendancy over the minds of the people and the rulers of Iſrael: ſo there would be falſe teachers in the chriſtian church, who would by ſimilar methods draw off profeſſors from the holy doctrine of the apoſtles, and other faithful preachers. The deceivers would not openly and directly oppoſe the leading truths of chriſtianity: but they would work with unſuſpected ſubtlety; and by degrees under ſpecious pretences, they would clandeſtinely introduce ſuch falſe doctrines, as would ſubvert the very deſign of the goſpel, make grievous diviſions in the church, and end in the eternal deſtruction of thoſe, who were deceived by them. For they would "deny the Lord that bought "them;" men, profeſſing to believe, that the Lord Jeſus redeemed the church with his own blood, and pretending to conſider themſelves as bought with that ineſtimable price; inſtead of glorifying him by devoted obedience, would caſt off his yoke, renounce his authority, and refuſe to have him to reign over them. We need not ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle meant to declare, that the Lord Jeſus had died with an intention of redeeming theſe very perſons: it ſufficed for his argument, that they denied him as their Lord, in whom they profeſſed to hope as a Redeemer; as all avowed Antinomians do. Thus Chriſt ſometimes addreſſed the Phariſees according to their miſtaken notions of themſelves, and argued with them from their own principles, (*Luke*, c. xv. v. 7. 31.) The inconſiſtency and baſeneſs of their conduct was evident from their own profeſſion, and it was not the way of the ſacred writers to expreſs themſelves with that ſyſtematic exactneſs, which many now affect. (*Rom.* c. xiv. v. 15—20. 1 *Cor.* c. viii. v. 11.) It appears, to me at leaſt, very unnatural to explain the words "the Lord that bought them," of Iſrael's redemption from Egypt, which would ſcarce have been thought of in this connexion, had not controverſy led men to exerciſe their utmoſt ingenuity, to evade the arguments, and anſwer the objections of their opponents. Thus, exact ſyſtem leads men to do violence to the ſcriptures; and this injures the cauſe, they are ſo anxious to defend. Doubtleſs Chriſt *intended* to redeem thoſe only, who, he foreſaw, would *eventually* be ſaved by faith in Him: yet his ranſom was of infinite ſufficiency; the propoſal of it in ſcripture is general, and men are continually addreſſed according to their profeſſion, even when it is intimated that they are not upright in it, (c. i. v. 9.) Theſe falſe teachers by denying, or refuſing to obey him, as their *Maſter*, whom they pretended to truſt in as their Redeemer, and by teaching others ſuch abominable doctrines, were bringing on themſelves ſwift deſtruction, which would come on them unawares, and ſuddenly. But in the mean time many would follow their pernicious ways, imbibing their poiſonous principles, and copying their baſe examples: by reaſon of whom the way of truth would be blaſphemed by ignorant perſons, who would conclude that chriſtians in general held ſuch licentious doctrines, and that they ſecretly indulged themſelves in wickedneſs; though only ſome of them were detected, or were bold enough to avow it. In this manner, by flattery, and falſe pretences to love, zeal, and attachment to the doctrines of free grace, they would pay court to men's paſſions and carnal inclinations, in order to gratify their own avarice; and ſo they would carry on a baſe merchandiſe for the ſouls of the people, conſigning them to deſtruction in order to enrich themſelves. But, whilſt they thus proſpered by their damnable hereſies, and hoped for impunity in their crimes; the puniſhment intended for them had long before been predicted, the place of torment had been of old prepared, the judgment by which they would be condemned did not linger, and the vengeance of God, that would certainly conſign them to eternal deſtruction, did by no means ſlumber. Indeed the Lord bare with them in his longſuffering, till his own holy purpoſes ſhould be effected, and their meaſure of iniquity filled: and they inferred, that the predicted judgment lingered, and the threatened damnation ſlumbered; but the event would ſoon awfully undeceive them. (c. iii. v. 4.)

V. 4—9.] The method, in which the Lord was uſed to proceed in ſuch caſes, was to be evidently collected from examples. When angels, who were created godly out of temptation, and to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the fleſh in the luſt of uncleanneſs, and deſpiſe government. Preſumptuous *are they*, ſelf-willed; they are not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accuſation againſt them before the Lord.

12 But theſe as natural brute beaſts, made

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of a far ſuperior order than men, ſinned againſt God; he ſhewed them no mercy, and exerciſed no compaſſion towards them; but, on the firſt inſtance of their rebellion, he caſt them, as guilty and polluted, from his holy habitation in heaven: and allotted them their reſidence and portion in hell, even in that place of torment, which his righteous vengeance had prepared for them and their great ringleader in rebellion. (*Matt.* c. xxv. v. 41.) Thus they were bound, as criminals, and reſerved to take their trial at the day of judgment; when ſentence will be openly paſſed, and finally executed upon them: in the mean time their incurable enmity and wickedneſs, and the omnipreſent and omnipotent juſtice of God hold them faſt, as in chains of darkneſs, miſery and deſpair, from which there can be no poſſible eſcape. Their doom is therefore irreverſible: though the Lord for wiſe reaſons, as it were, lengthens their chains, enlarges the bounds of their priſon, and defers the extremity of their puniſhment; which reſpite and relaxation, they employ in oppoſing to the uttermoſt his purpoſes of love to mankind, and in attempting their deſtruction: but this will all be over-ruled for the fuller diſplay of God's glory, the accompliſhment of his eternal counſels, and the more conſpicuous exerciſe of his awful juſtice in the everlaſting miſery of ſuch implacable enemies. Thus he was alſo pleaſed to bear with the wicked ſeducers, above mentioned, till their impiety and enmity were ſufficiently evinced: and when his wiſe and holy purpoſes were accompliſhed, he would execute deſerved vengeance upon them and their adherents; and ſo terminate the temptation, to which his people were expoſed, through their artifices. The ſame leſſons might be learned from the Lord's dealings with the old world. He had indeed preſerved Noah, the eighth perſon, (ſeven others having been ſaved with him, for his ſake, and in the Ark prepared by him:) and during the 120 years of his long-ſuffering, Noah had been a preacher of righteouſneſs to that corrupt generation, among whom he lived, which muſt have expoſed him to manifold trials and temptations; as none, that we know of, were brought to repentance, faith in the promiſed Saviour, and obedience to God's commandments, by his long-continued labours. So that, at length the Lord executed the vengeance denounced, and ſpared none of all the millions who then lived on earth; but by bringing in the deluge he deſtroyed them all; "and Noah only remained alive, and they that "were with him in the Ark." (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. vi. vii. viii. *Heb.* c. xi. v. 7. 1 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 19, 20.) In like manner, the Lord after having long borne with the extreme wickedneſs of Sodom &c, till their meaſure of ſin was filled up; at length, when they did not at all expect it, ſent fire from heaven to burn their cities and all the inhabitants of them; that the tremendous overthrow, to which they were condemned, might be a ſolemn warning, and an inſtructive example, to all thoſe in future ages, who ſhould live in ungodlineſs and wickedneſs, (Notes, *Gen.* c. xix.) Yet at the ſame time the Lord delivered, in a moſt gracious and wonderful manner, righteous Lot from the deſtruction of his neighbours: for though he had been very faulty in many reſpects, and was ſeverely corrected; yet, being a true believer, and a juſtified ſervant of God, he was taken care of, and brought out of Sodom, before it was deſtroyed. He had indeed, from carnal motives, gone to reſide in that wicked place, and had very pertinaciouſly adhered to the fooliſh choice, which he had made, (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. xiii. xiv:) but he was extremely uneaſy there, being continually vexed, and harraſſed by the filthy conduct and diſcourſe of the abandoned Sodomites, and their clamorous and furious oppoſition to his counſels and inſtructions. For what he ſaw and heard of their unlawful, and hateful crimes, cauſed his righteous mind daily vexation and inquietude; ſeeing he could not prevail in any degree to ſtop the inundation of their wickedneſs: but this diſpoſition to hate, avoid, mourn over, and be troubled at the ſins of his neighbours, joined to his general conduct, proved him to be a real godly man; and therefore, whilſt he was ſtripped of his poſſeſſions, as a correction for his ſin, and his family was either deſtroyed, or greatly corrupted and diſgraced by means of it; the Lord mercifully ſnatched him, as a brand out of the burning, and ſaved him, from ſo perilous and enſnaring a ſituation. Theſe examples, therefore, ſufficiently ſhewed, that the Lord knew how, in the beſt time and manner, to deliver the godly out of temptation, to reſcue them from the moſt formidable dangers, in the critical moment; to diſtinguiſh the moſt feeble and defective of them from their ungodly neighbours; and to arrange all his diſpenſations in the beſt manner for their ſalvation. This he hath engaged to do; and his wiſdom muſt be truſted to ſelect the beſt time and manner of performing his faithful promiſes, which cannot fail, whatever appearances may be. But, he alſo knows how "to reſerve "the *unrighteous* to the day of judgment to be puniſh"ed:" whilſt he bears with them, and permits them to proſper in vice; they are bound, as it were, in the chains of their ſins, and ſhut up in the dungeon of his immutable juſtice, till the day of his wrath; then will he bring them forth to judgment, and execute on them the more terrible puniſhment, becauſe of his long patience with them, and their perverſe abuſe of it.

V. 10—16.] The preceding obſervations were applicable to wicked men of all ſorts, but eſpecially to hypocritical profeſſors and falſe teachers of Chriſtianity: yet they were chiefly intended for, and would peculiarly be verified in, the licentious ſeducers, of whom the apoſtle to be taken and deſtroyed, ſpeak evil of the things that they underſtand not; and ſhall utterly periſh in their own corruption;

13 And ſhall receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs, *as* they that count it pleaſure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemiſhes, ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings while they feaſt with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin; beguiling unſtable ſouls: an heart they have exerciſed with covetous practices; curſed children:

15 Which have forſaken the right way, and are gone aſtray, following the way of Balaam *the ſon* of Boſor, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs.

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb aſs ſpeaking with man's voice forbad

diſcourſed, and of their abandoned followers. Theſe perſons habitually "walked after the fleſh," and indulged their ſenſual appetites, "in the luſt of uncleanneſs;" as if they had propoſed to themſelves the inhabitants of Sodom, for an example: and whilſt they exerciſed no government over their own paſſions and inclinations, they deſpiſed the government of others. As they denied Chriſt, in reſpect of his kingly office, and would not obey him as their Lord and Maſter, (v. 1;) we may ſuppoſe that they contemptuouſly diſregarded the ſpiritual authority of the apoſtles, and that of other paſtors and rulers of the church: but they ſeem alſo to have treated civil government with ſcorn, as if they were determined, like genuine ſons of Belial, to caſt off every yoke, and to be wholly their own maſters! For they were preſumptuous, full of ſelf-conceit, without reverence of, or any due regard to God, aſpiring to pre-eminence, and ſuppoſing themſelves qualified and authorized to do whatever they choſe: they were alſo ſelf-willed, determined to follow the impulſe of their own mind; proudly ſet againſt counſel, not to be influenced by argument, diſregarding all conſequences, and bent upon their own raſh and fooliſh purpoſes. They were therefore not afraid to revile dignities, in a ſlanderous and abuſive manner; and inſtead of honouring the perſons and authority of thoſe, who were in exalted ſtations, according to the word of God, and as his miniſters and repreſentatives; they calumniated and railed at them, without fear of conſequences: and doing theſe things under the pretence of religion, they expoſed chriſtianity to ſcandal, and gave colour to the accuſations and perſecutions of their enemies, (1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 13—17.) But angels, who were far greater and more powerful than men, and perfect in holineſs, did not act thus in reſpect of the governors of the earth: for, though as miniſters of providence, they reported to the Lord the execution of their commiſſions, with reſpect to kings and rulers; they did not bring any virulent, or bitter accuſations againſt them; but ſtated facts as they were, and reſpected them as God's vice-gerents; though they could not but abhor the crimes, which they often witneſſed, and ſometimes were employed to puniſh. So that, the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who ſlandered, and reviled dignities, did not copy the example of holy angels, but rather that of ſatan, the falſe accuſer of men, in the preſence of God. Indeed they were as natural brute beaſts, which being bent on the gratification of their appetites, rage againſt, and are ready to devour, all who oppoſe them: and as wild beaſts ſeem made only to be taken and deſtroyed, to prevent the havock they would otherwiſe make of the human ſpecies: ſo the ſeducers, the apoſtle deſcribed, would certainly expoſe themſelves to deſtruction; they would be proſcribed as nuiſances and enemies to the community; ſatan caught them with his baits and took them captive at his will, and they were in the way to eternal deſtruction: for, being impatient of counſel or controul, they vented vehement revilings againſt the perſons, authority, laws, and meaſures of their rulers, which they were incompetent to underſtand, or had never ſufficiently examined; and in ſo doing, they not only incurred *their* diſpleaſure, but that of God likewiſe; and ſo would utterly periſh in, and by, their own corrupt practices. For, notwithſtanding their religious profeſſion, and vain conceit of their imagined privileges, they would certainly "receive the reward of their unrighteouſneſs:" ſeeing their pleaſure was not ſought in obeying God, but in riotous feaſtings, and intemperance, in which they indulged, even during the light of the day, without ſhame or remorſe. They were, therefore, ſpots and blemiſhes, that deformed and diſgraced the chriſtian ſocieties, which did not expel them; whilſt they wantonly ſupported themſelves, and indulged a kind of inſulting triumph, in their own deceivings; as if they were the chief favourites of heaven, and perſons uncommonly illuminated in the grace and liberty of the goſpel; when in fact they were not believers at all, and were thus vapouring and boaſting on the brink of deſtruction. So that, whilſt they were allowed to feaſt with chriſtians, by partaking of the Lord's ſupper, or by joining in the religious feaſts, in which the rich and poor ate together in a loving manner; their conduct was ſo ſhameful, that they reflected ſcandal on the whole company, with which they aſſociated. For beſides their riot, luxury and exceſs; "their eyes "were full of adultery," or "*of an adultereſs*" as if their infamous paramours had never been out of their ſight; ſo conſtantly were their imaginations employed about, and their deſires fixed upon, their habitual wicked practices! Nay "they could not ceaſe from ſin;" not from external conſtraint, or *natural inability*, (which would have been an extenuation of their guilt;) but from the violence of their ungoverned paſſions, and the ſtrength of their long continued habits of vice; through which, they were perfectly enſlaved to their luſts, and indeed judicially given up to a reprobate mind. But, notwithſtanding all their wickedneſs they pleaded ſo ſpeciouſly and confidently for their corrupt principles, and ſo extenuated or apologized for their crimes, that they beguiled many profeſſed chriſtians, who had not been eſtabliſhed in knowledge, faith, grace, and experience. Thus they ſupported the expence the madneſs of the prophet.

17 Theſe are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempeſt; to whom the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever.

18 For when they ſpeak great ſwelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, *through much* wantonneſs, thoſe that were clean eſcaped from them who live in error.

19 While they promiſe them liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the ſow that was waſhed to her wallowing in the mire.

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of their ſenſualities, by flattering and quieting men's conſciences, in the indulgence of their luſts: as their hearts were exerciſed with covetous practices; and they cordially employed themſelves in deviſing artful methods of obtaining money from their deluded followers, till inured to ſuch baſe purſuits, they felt no remorſe about them; which ſhewed them to be the children of a curſe, and expoſed to the wrath of God for their multiplied abominations. They had evidently forſaken the right way of holy obedience from evangelical principles, and were gone aſtray; not ſo much from an erroneous judgment, as from the ſenſuality, ambition, and avarice of their hearts: ſo that they followed the example of Balaam, the ſon of Beor, or Boſor, who loved ſo well the wages of unrighteouſneſs, that he endeavoured in diſobedience to the injunction of Jehovah, to go unto Balak, and curſe the people whom God had bleſſed. But he was rebuked for his iniquity, not by the immediate voice of God, nor by one of his prophets; but by the aſs on which he rode, which though naturally dumb, was yet miraculouſly enabled to ſpeak; that by ſo deſpiſed a creature God might, in the moſt mortifying manner, forbid the prophet, who was very proud of his viſions and revelations, to proceed in his infatuated courſe of rebellion againſt him. (Notes, &c. *Num.* c. xxii. xxiii. xxiv. xxxi. v. 8. 16.)

V. 17—22.] The teachers, whom the apoſtle expoſed, were like wells, from which men expected to draw water, but which could only diſappoint their expectations; they were as clouds, which gave hopes of fructifying rains; but inſtead of yielding any advantage to others, they were themſelves carried about with tempeſtuous winds: thus theſe teachers were driven about with their own paſſions, and by every wind of doctrine, from one falſe opinion to the other, to the increaſe of deluſion and iniquity; for indeed they were given up of God to final hardneſs, as the miſt, the dimneſs, confuſion and diſmay of darkneſs, or of wickedneſs deſpair and miſery, were reſerved for them, as their everlaſting portion. For, they were not only very wicked themſelves, but the cauſe of ſin and ruin to others; whilſt they ſpake great ſwelling, high-ſounding, and pompous words, which had no meaning, except as they ſhewed the vainglorious, and oſtentatious diſpoſition of their hearts: yet they thus allured, by their confident boaſting and ſpecious pretenſions to extraordinary clearneſs in their views, and purity in their doctrines, ſuch unſtable profeſſors, as were glad to ſuppoſe that the luſts of the fleſh, and much wantonneſs, or laſciviouſneſs, could conſiſt with the ſalvation of the goſpel: and ſo they drew off thoſe perſons, who had *actually*, as to their outward conduct, eſcaped from among thoſe, who lived in error; but who only abſtained from their former indulgences from fear, whilſt their unrenewed hearts ſtill hankered after them. But whilſt they paid court to the carnal minds of unſound profeſſors, by promiſing them liberty from every yoke, as if God's ſervice had not been the moſt perfect freedom; they themſelves were the *ſlaves* of corruption, or of the moſt corrupt and vile affections: as it was a general rule, that a man muſt become the bond-ſervant of him, by whom he was vanquiſhed and taken captive; and they were evidently vanquiſhed, taken captive, and enſlaved by the devil, and their own luſts: and it was impoſſible that they could lead their followers to any better condition. For if, after any of them had fled from, and eſcaped the outward pollutions of the world, by the knowledge of Chriſt, as far as convictions and a notional faith could reach, (c. i. v. 4;) they were again, by the artful ſeductions of falſe teachers, entangled in thoſe polluting practices, as if conſiſtent with the ſervice of Chriſt; and ſo overcome by temptations, as habitually to indulge in them; their latter end, after they had learned thus to abuſe the goſpel, would be worſe than the beginning, when they ſinned in ignorance; as they muſt have done violence to far clearer light and fuller conviction. It would therefore have been better for ſuch wretched heretics, or rather apoſtates, if they had never known the way of righteouſneſs, and the truths, promiſes and precepts of chriſtianity; than after all their inſtructions, convictions, and profeſſion, to turn in avowed diſobedience from the holy commandment which had been given them, to repent of their ſins, to believe in Chriſt, and to love and obey Him; as this would leave them more deeply condemned, and completely hardened. But it was not to be wondered at, that ſuch teachers made many proſelytes; as it had happened unto them, according to the true proverb of Solomon; (Note, *Prov.* c. xxvi.

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Reminding his brethren of the promiſed coming of Chriſt, and predicting, that ſcoffers would ridicule their expectation of that event, 1---4. *2d. Shewing the reaſon of its being delayed, and the awful manner, circumſtances, and conſequences of Chriſt's coming; with ſuitable exhortations and encouragements,* 5---14. *3d. Commending Paul's epiſtles, ſhewing how ſome men perverted certain paſſages in them; and concluding with admonitions, &c,* 15---18.

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v. 11;) and to another of ſimilar import: the one of which hath been explained; and the other is too obvious to need explanation. They are the two moſt diſguſting and loathſome emblems, which the whole animal race can ſuggeſt; and are adduced to illuſtrate the filthineſs of thoſe, who after convictions, profeſſed repentance, and reformation, returned back to their wickedneſs, becauſe of the carnal love of their hearts towards it. But if the power of God ſhould change the ſwine into a ſheep, (the regenerate man's emblem,) it might be thrown into the mire; yet it could no more wallow in it with delight, but muſt be moſt uncomfortable, till cleanſed from it. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 43—45. *Luke*, c. xi. v. 24—26. *Heb.* c. vi. v. 4—10. c. x. v. 26—38.) The difference between this chapter, and the reſt of Peter's epiſtles, in the ſtyle and manner; and its coincidence with that of Jude, have made ſeveral expoſitors ſuppoſe, that they both borrowed their language from ſome ancient book, which is now loſt: but of this every reader muſt judge for himſelf.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The unbelief, ſelfiſhneſs, and impiety of man's carnal heart, give riſe to falſe teachers ſpeaking ſmooth things to draw away diſciples after them, for their own credit, or lucre's ſake; and many will generally turn away their ears from the truth, and will be turned unto fables, who will liberally reward ingenious men for helping them to deceive themſelves. Hence it hath come to paſs, both in the Jewiſh and the chriſtian church, that men have ariſen who have found their account, in corrupting the humbling holy truth of God, by bringing in damnable hereſies: and who have denied, and caſt off obedience to the authority of the Lord, whilſt they pretended to glory in his ſpecial favour and abundant mercy: and have attempted to ſeparate the redemption, and the commandments of the Lord Jeſus, and to expect pardon through his blood, whilſt they yielded no obedience to his laws! Thus they deceive themſelves, and others, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction. For theſe ſpecious refinements, which ſeem to many to be the goſpel of free grace in all its purity, are in fact damnable hereſies, which bring deſtruction upon numbers, who follow ſuch pernicious ways; and alſo cauſe the way of truth to be evil ſpoken of, by thoſe, who ſee the bad tendency and effects of ſuch deluſions, and charge them on all, who preach and profeſs the doctrines of free ſalvation. The ſober teachers of practical and experimental chriſtianity need not be ſurpriſed to find their hearers drawn from them by theſe ſpecious, and looſe preachers; for even in the primitive times, before miracles ceaſed, their delicious poiſon found many purchaſers; and their merchandize of ſouls by feigned words; brought in amlpe gains, whilſt love of the truth and of the brethren were the pretence, but covetouſneſs was the concealed principle of their conduct. In vain do men of this character hope to eſcape with impunity: the judgment ſo long ſince foretold, and the damnation menaced, will ſpeedily arrive; though unbelief may fancy that God's juſtice lingereth and ſlumbereth, becauſe he endures with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath, which are fitted for deſtruction. His manifold goodneſs, if it do not lead men to repentance, and engage them to obedience, will no more ſecure them from condemnation, than the creating kindneſs of God to angels induced him to ſpare ſuch of them as ſinned in heaven itſelf: but as he caſt them down to hell, to be reſerved in chains of darkneſs to the day of judgment to be puniſhed; ſo will he in due ſeaſon, execute the vengeance, that is written, on all impenitent ſinners. The deſtruction of the antedeluvian world, and its millions of inhabitants, and that of Sodom and Gomorrah ſtand on record to confute the vain notions of thoſe, who imagine that God is ſo lenient, that he will not take vengeance of his rebellious creatures. But his mercy does indeed ſhine forth moſt conſpicuouſly, in preſerving Noah and his family; and in delivering him, not only from the flood, alſo from that perverſe generation, to whom he was ſo long a moſt unſucceſsful preacher of righteouſneſs; but ſtill more in reſcuing Lot, and dealing with him as a righteous man, notwithſtanding all the blemiſhes of his character. But his vexation in Sodom, and his eſcape, with the loſs of every thing, except his life, from that devoted city, loudly warns us to keep ſeparate, as much as we can, from ungodly connexions, if we would avoid the moſt heart-rending anguiſh, and the moſt painful corrections. Yet, if we indeed do fear, truſt in, love, and endeavour to obey the Lord; we ſhould recollect in all our conflicts and trials, that he knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation: that he hath ten thouſand ways of reſcuing us, of which we never thought; and that his wiſdom and power will ſurely effect the purpoſes of his love, and the engagements of his truth: whilſt wicked men often eſcape ſuffering here, becauſe they are reſerved to the day of judgment, to be puniſhed with the devil and his angels.

But whilſt we take encouragement from the tender mercies of our God, let us alſo ſtand in awe of his holineſs and juſtice. None have more cauſe to tremble, than they, who are emboldened to gratify their ſinful luſts, by preſuming on his grace and mercy: nor can any thing more fully illuſtrate the deſperate wickedneſs of the human heart, than the abominations, in which men have wallowed, whilſt profeſſing to be religious, and contending for the holy doctrines of the goſpel! Many, both in ancient and modern times, have deemed themſelves at liberty to walk after the fleſh, in the luſt of uncleanneſs; and have deſpiſed government of all kinds: as if licentiouſneſs and anarchy were the only deſirable freedom; preſumption and ſelf-will, equivalent to holy

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CHAP. III.

THIS ſecond epiſtle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were ſpoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour:

3 Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts.

4 And ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

confidence and boldneſs in the Lord; and calumnies, or abuſe of the powers that be, the proper way of "rendering to Ceſar the things that are Ceſar's, and to God the things that are God's" Such liberty of conſcience, and licence of ſpeech and conduct, holy angels, who are greater in power and might, never deſired. If we were more like them, we ſhould be more cautious in ſpeaking and acting; and more ſcrupulous not to bring a railing accuſation againſt our governors, though we did not approve of either their character, or their meaſures. But there have been in every age, profeſſors of the goſpel, who have acted like natural brute beaſts, made to be taken and deſtroyed; who have deemed themſelves authorized to ſpeak evil of thoſe things, which they did not underſtand: and if they venture to ſpeak evil of God's law, and deem themſelves freed from all obligation to obey it; no wonder that they would caſt off every yoke, diſcard all ſubordination, level all diſtinctions, and diſdain ſubjection to every human authority; which muſt be defective, and liable to blame. But let chriſtians, as much as they can, ſtand at a diſtance from ſuch conteſted matters: for alas, many profeſſors, running into ſuch exceſſes, bring their characters into ſuſpicion, and open the mouths of ſuch, as ſpeak evil of us, as of evil doers; nay, many utterly periſh in their own corruption. But eſpecially let us fear a licentious profeſſion: doubtleſs they will receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs, who count it pleaſure to riot in the day time. Theſe are indeed the ſpots and blemiſhes of the church, who ſport themſelves in their own deceivings; who join with chriſtians in ſacred ordinances, and with the world in their laſcivious and diſſipated revels; and attempt to reconcile theſe things by abuſing the doctrines of the goſpel, and boaſting of their liberty and privileges. But could it have been conceived, if ſcripture and facts did not evince it, that teachers and profeſſors of the holy doctrine of Chriſt, (in a certain partial aſpect of it,) could preſerve their confidence, credit and influence, whilſt "their eyes are full of adultery, and they cannot ceaſe from ſin;" that unſtable ſouls could be beguiled by ſuch men, and that ſucceſs ſhould attend the covetous practices, in which their hearts are exerciſed? Or that they ſhould be conſidered as bleſſed, who are indeed the children of the curſe, and evidently deſcribed as ſuch in the word of God? Thus hereſies have grown out of the ambition, avarice, and licentiouſneſs of teachers hearts; and men have forſaken the right way, and gone aſtray, after Balaam's example, and from his principle; becauſe they loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs: but they will be rebuked for their iniquity, and puniſhed for their madneſs, with as much contempt and ſeverity as he was: for, being wells without water, and clouds carried about, as the wind of favour, or lucre changes; it is too plain, that to them the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever. They, who would eſcape their deluſions, ſhould conſider that they abound in high-ſwelling words of vain boaſting and oſtentation; and ſpeak of themſelves, as if a monopoly of wiſdom and knowledge belonged to them; at the ſame time that they give great indulgence to the luſts of the fleſh: thus they allure, with the hope of ſenſual gratification, and impunity in much wantonneſs, ſuch ſtony ground hearers, as under convictions and tranſient affections, had eſcaped for a time from thoſe, that live in error. Such profeſſors, not reliſhing the liberty of obeying God's commandments, are diſpoſed to liſten to thoſe, who promiſe them liberty of another ſort, and aſſure them that their practical inſtructors had held them in a legal bondage: and thus antinomian tenets are embraced, as a covert way of returning to the world and ſin, and as a more ſpecious, and quiet kind of apoſtacy. For the liberty promiſed by thoſe, who are overcome by, and the ſlaves of, their luſts and paſſions, can be no other than licentiouſneſs: and if, after men have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, by the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled in ſuch deluſions, and brought under the dominion of their luſts; the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning: nor is ſuch a departure from practical chriſtianity, to antinomian *principles*, and *behaviour*, a whit more leſs fatal, than an open apoſtacy; and perhaps ſerves to keep conſcience entirely aſleep, even better than any other opiate in the world. It would therefore have been better for ſuch men, had they never known the way of righteouſneſs, than that they ſhould depart from the holy commandment delivered unto them. Alas, how many are there, who thus verify the true proverb, by turning as the dog to his own vomit again, and as a ſow that is waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire! But this ſhall never happen to any, who are in Chriſt new creatures, and made partakers of a divine nature: let us then pray continually, "create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me:" let us remember, that a holy commandment is given to us, as well as exceeding great and precious promiſes; let us beware of turning from the precepts, as much as of rejecting the truths, of chriſtianity; and let us equally avoid antinomian corrupters, and phariſaical oppoſers of the goſpel, as alike the enemies of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—4.] This ſecond epiſtle appears, by the opening of this chapter, to have been primarily addreſſed to the ſame churches, as the former; though they were not mentioned at the beginning of it. The apoſtle's deſign in both of them was, not ſo much

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ſtanding out of the water, and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, periſhed:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire, againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, as ſome men count ſlackneſs: but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the hea-

to inſtruct them in truths, which they had not learned; as to ſtimulate, and animate, their pure, ſincere and upright minds, to the practice of their duty, by recalling to their remembrance, the truths and precepts, which they had been taught: leſt remaining ſinfulneſs, temptation, forgetfulneſs, &c, the artifices of falſe teachers ſhould turn them aſide from it. He therefore wrote to them, in order to make them mindful of the words, which the holy prophets of old had ſpoken, concerning the ſalvation, and kingdom of Chriſt; and of the commandment, which had been given them by him and the other apoſtles of their Lord and Saviour, to prepare for his coming to judgment, with patient expectation, and diligence in their ſeveral duties. Of this they would need to be admoniſhed; as they ought to know in the firſt place, and as a matter of chief importance; that under the chriſtian diſpenſation, and after ſome time had elapſed, there would certainly come among them a ſet of ſcornful men, endeavouring to ſubvert their faith, by deriding their expectation of the coming of Chriſt to judgment, and treating the great truths of the goſpel with infidel contempt and profane ridicule; whilſt they walked after, and indulged without reſtraint, the ſeveral carnal deſires and inclinations of their own evil hearts. Theſe perſons would inſolently demand, what was become of the promiſe, which their Lord had left them, that he would appear a ſecond time amongſt them, to complete their ſalvation, and deſtroy their enemies? Had it not manifeſtly failed? And would they ſuffer themſelves to be any longer impoſed on, or continue to adhere to his ſelf-denying, perſecuted religion? For it could not be denied, that ſince the fathers, the primitive teachers and profeſſors of chriſtianity, or the ancient patriarchs and prophets, to whom it was firſt revealed, had fallen aſleep, all things had continued, as they had been uſed to do, from the beginning of the world; without any material alteration anſwerable to the extraordinary things, which had been ſpoken on that ſubject

V. 5—7.] The ſcorners, of whom the apoſtle wrote, (ſome of whom, ſeem to have been even then, at work in the church,) were willingly ignorant of the ſcriptural account of the creation, and of the dealings of God with men in former ages; as they perverſely withdrew their attention from ſuch ſubjects, becauſe they tended to confute their ſelf-conceited, and profligate infidelity, and to confirm the doctrine of a future judgment, &c. Otherwiſe, they would have known from the books of Moſes, that the heavens, and the earth were originally created by the omnipotent word of God; who "ſpake and it "was done, who commanded and it ſtood faſt:" and that the earth eſpecially, was formed out of that Chaos, which had been previouſly brought into exiſtence for that purpoſe; the dry ground being, at the command of God, ſeparated from the waters, which retired to the channels prepared for them. Thus the earth, with its productions and inhabitants, as diſtinguiſhed from the ſeas, ſtood up out of, and above the water; yet it was ſurrounded *by* the water, which was needful to moiſten, purify, and render it fruitful. Yet, when the wickedneſs of men had provoked the Lord to execute vengeance on them; this very arrangement, in itſelf ſo conducive to the welfare of mankind, became the means of their deſtruction: for all the parts of the globe, being deeply covered with waters, by the omnipotence of God, the world, that then was, periſhed; all the inhabitants of the dry ground, and all the works of men were entirely deſtroyed; nothing remained, but Noah, and they that were with him in the ark; the external form of the earth was doubtleſs extremely altered, and a new race of inhabitants were raiſed up to people it. At the ſame time the Lord promiſed and covenanted, never more to deſtroy the earth by an univerſal deluge: yet intimations had been given of a total diſſolution, that was to terminate the preſent ſtate of things; (*Pſ.* cii. v. 26. *Iſaiah*, c. li. v. 6;) and it had, under the new teſtament diſpenſation, been more expreſſly revealed that this was to be effected by fire. It might therefore be ſaid, that the viſible heavens, and the earth with all the lower creation, were condemned to be deſtroyed by fire; and, by the word of God, which could not be broken, were treaſured up, as fuel, for the general conflagration, which would certainly take place about the ſame time with the great day of judgment, which would prove the day of perdition to ungodly men, who would then be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction &c. (2 *Theſ.* c. i. v. 8—10.) The event was therefore certain; and the ſame power was engaged to effect it, as had created the world, deſtroyed it with the deluge, reſtored it to its preſent form, and ſtill continued to uphold it in that ſtate.

V. 8, 9] Whatever infidel ſcoffers were willingly ignorant of, or perverſely cavilled at; as if delays were failures, or reſpites impunity: yet chriſtians muſt not be ignorant of that one thing, which tended to clear up all the reſt; namely, that the diviſions of time among men bear no proportion to eternity, with which all the Lord's counſels and purpoſes are immediately connected.

vens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burned up.

11 *Seeing* then *that* all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner *of perſons* ought ye to be in *all* holy converſation and godlineſs,

12 Looking for, and haſting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.

and therefore, that one day, and a thouſand years, are with him, the ſame thing: for as every event comes to paſs, at the time, which he hath appointed for it; ſo the intervention of a thouſand years is no more than one day, in reſpect of thoſe things, which he will moſt aſſuredly accompliſh in their ſeaſon. It was therefore by no means to be ſuppoſed, that the Lord was ſlack, or dilatory, concerning the performance of his promiſe; as ſome men, (both profane unbelievers, and impatient believers,) might underſtand that expreſſion: but in fact, the delay of judgment was the effect of his long-ſuffering towards the church, and the human race; whatever bad uſe ungodly men might make of it. (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 48—51.) He, therefore moſt patiently endured the provocations of the wicked, and even the ſcornful defiance of infidels; becauſe he would not be influenced by their crimes, to terminate the preſent ſtate of things, till all his choſen people were brought to repentance, and prepared for the kingdom; as he was not willing, that any of them ſhould periſh. Moreover, as he delighted not in the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live; ſo his long ſuffering gave ſinners ſpace for repentance: and as all things were ready, and all were invited, yea commanded to repent; ſo, *in this ſenſe*, God had ſhewn himſelf unwilling that any ſhould periſh, and willing that all ſhould come to repentance; though many would abuſe his long ſuffering to their deeper condemnation. Men's impenitence ariſes from their unwillingneſs to return to God, not from his unwillingneſs to receive them: and therefore, God is doubtleſs willing that all ſhould come to repentance and be ſaved, who are diſpoſed ſo to do. Many, that were then chriſtians, owed their ſalvation to God's long-ſuffering, who thus gave them time, as well as grace, for repentance: and even ſome of thoſe, who were then objecting to the delay of Chriſt's coming, as if it invalidated the truth of the goſpel, might at length be converted, and know that "God was not willing that they ſhould periſh, but that "they ſhould come to repentance." Theſe are two diſtinct, but conſiſtent views, which may be taken of the ſubject: the one accords to the condition of ſinners, when firſt taught to attend to the word of ſalvation; to them the long ſuffering of God, the proviſions of the goſpel, the general invitation, the command to all men to repent, and the promiſes that none ſhall be caſt out who come to Chriſt, are ſo many aſſurances, that the Lord is not willing that any, (who ſeek ſalvation,) ſhould periſh, but that ſinners of all deſcriptions ſhould come to repentance: and that they, who repent, do that, which pleaſes him, and ſhall be accepted. But the other refers to God, known unto whom are all his works, from before the foundation of the world: and according to it, the eſtabliſhed believer aſcribes his willingneſs to repent to ſpecial grace, and acknowledges, that if he had been left to himſelf, he ſhould have periſhed in obſtinate love of ſin, and enmity to God, as numbers of his fellow ſinners do. Both views are true; each has its uſe; and there is no occaſion to oppoſe them, as the controverſialiſts of contrary ſyſtems do: though what follows induces the opinion, that the more general view was peculiarly intended by the apoſtle. (v. 15.)

V. 10—13] Whatever delays ſeemed to be made, whilſt the Lord waited to complete the counſels of his mercy, and to manifeſt the implacable enmity of impenitent ſinners: yet his great and terrible day would certainly come; and ſuddenly, when not expected; and with moſt ſurpriſing conſternation, and inevitable deſtruction to all, that were found unprepared. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 42—44. 1 *Theſ.* c. v. ver. 2, 3.) At that important cataſtrophe, the heavens, and all the hoſts of them, (as far at leaſt, as connected with this earth and its inhabitants,) will paſs away, and ruſh into confuſion and deſtruction, with a tremendous noiſe, of which thunders, earth-quakes, and all other convulſions of nature are wholly inadequate to give the leaſt conception. Then all the elements, of which the earth and its atmoſphere, and all the luminaries connected with it are compoſed, ſhall melt with intenſe heat: and not only one vaſt city, or one whole nation, but all the earth, with all its cities, foreſts, mountains, yea the contents of its bowels to the very centre; as well as all the works of men, (however admired, or magnificent,) that cover the ſurface of it, will conſtitute one vaſt conflagration, and be reduced to as confuſed a Chaos, as that, from which it was at firſt created. As, therefore, all thoſe things, that were then the objects of their ſenſes, and the coveted, admired, or envied poſſeſſions of men, would certainly be diſſolved, and periſh, as to their preſent mode of exiſtence: what manner of perſons ought chriſtians to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs? For it muſt be evident, that at the period referred to, they muſt be moſt miſerable, who had no treaſure ſecured in heaven, nor any intereſt in Him as a Saviour, who would then come as the Judge of the world. Ought not chriſtians therefore to be continually "looking for," and preparing to welcome that ſolemn ſeaſon, called "the "day of God;" haſtening to have all ready to meet him with comfort, and even longing for the ſolemn cataſtrophe, which would perfect their felicity? Though it was in itſelf ſo terrible to think of, "the heavens being on fire "and diſſolved, and the elements melting with heat;" yet the goſpel ſuggeſted ſuch conſolations, and inſpired ſuch hopes, that believers had no reaſon for terror, or uneaſineſs: for though all other inheritances and diſtinctions muſt then be terminated; nevertheleſs they, according to the ſure word of God's promiſe, looked for, and expected, "new heavens, and a new earth," another, and far more

14 Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs.

15 And account *that* the long-ſuffering of our Lord *is* ſalvation; even as our beloved brother Paul alſo according to the wiſdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As alſo in all *his* epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe things; in which are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as *they* do alſo the other ſcriptures, unto their own deſtruction.

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glorious and bleſſed ſtate of things, and an abiding habitation, into which righteous perſons alone could find admiſſion, and in which all the inhabitants would be perfected in purity, obedience, and love of each other; ſo that no ſin can enter to defile, or diſquiet them to all eternity. In ſome places "new heavens and a new earth," figuratively deſcribe the moſt proſperous and peaceful days of the church on earth; (*Iſaiah*, c. lxv. v. 17. c. lxvi.. v. 22. *Heb*. c. xii. v. 26:) but here the ſtate of the righteous after the day of judgment and the diſſolution of this preſent world, is evidently intended: but what is meant by it, as to *locality* &c, the fulfilment alone can properly determine.

V. 14—16.] From the preceding conſiderations, the apoſtle took occaſion to exhort his beloved brethren, who profeſſed to believe, and look for ſuch things, to prove that they did ſo, by diligence in every duty and means of grace; that they might be found of Chriſt at his coming, in peace with God, their own conſciences, each other, and all men; being alſo "without ſpot, and blameleſs." For if they thus evinced themſelves intereſted in the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by the diligent obedience of faith and love; they would certainly be then preſented faultleſs before God, and as perfect, in regard to ſanctification, as they were at that preſent in reſpect of their juſtification. They ought alſo "to account the long-ſuffering of their gracious Lord to be ſalvation:" Every day that their lives were ſpared, gave them opportunity of diligently ſeeking to make their calling and election ſure: mere profeſſors had thus, ſpace afforded them to ſeek a real experience of the work of divine grace: and the goodneſs of God was ſuited and intended to lead ſinners to repentance. All, therefore, who read the epiſtle, ought to account the long-ſuffering of the Lord to be ſalvation; as they owed it to that alone, that they were not then in the place of deſpair and final miſery, inſtead of the land of hope, of prayer, and forgiveneſs; or in the way of peace and ſalvation. This, the apoſtle obſerved, that his beloved brother Paul alſo had written to them, according to the wiſdom, which God had beſtowed on him. A paſſage to this effect hath been already alluded to, (*Rom* c. ii. v. 4, 5:) but it is not obvious in what ſenſe this could be ſaid to be written to thoſe whom Peter addreſſed. They therefore, who ſuppoſe that he wrote to the Jewiſh converts excluſively, point out ſome paſſages in the epiſtle to the Hebrews, to which they think he referred. (c. ix. v. 27, 28. c. x. v. 36, 37:) but that ſeems to have been addreſſed to the churches in Judea, and not to the Jewiſh converts in Aſia. However, though the apoſtolical epiſtles were written to ſome particular church, or deſcription of chriſtians; yet they were alſo intended for general inſtruction: and as Peter had read the epiſtles of Paul, ſo they, to whom he wrote, had probably done the ſame, in reſpect of thoſe, that were addreſſed to other churches. The falſe teachers, whom Peter oppoſed, ſeem to have grounded their damnable hereſies on a *miſapplication* of ſome paſſages in St. Paul's epiſtles, which might appear to many, contrary to St. Peter's exhortations: ſo that the general tenor of St. Paul's epiſtles to ſome of the Aſiatic churches, or of that to the Hebrews, rather than detached expreſſions, ſeems to have been meant: for certainly, when properly underſtood, they are as exhortatory and practical as St. Peter's. Indeed, the apoſtle obſerved, that this was the caſe in all his epiſtles, (as thoſe to the Romans, the Corinthians, the churches in Macedonia, and to Timothy and Titus;) for in them all he ſpoke of the coming of Chriſt, and the preparation to be made for it, with warnings and admonitions to different deſcriptions of perſons. Yet in theſe epiſtles, connected with plainer ſubjects, were ſome things hard to be underſtood; namely, ſuch as related to the divine decrees, and the deep diſpenſations of his government; the ſovereignty of his grace in ſaving ſome, and leaving others to be hardened, and other things connected with the doctrine of eternal election: for of theſe doubtleſs Peter principally ſpake. Such things would not be properly underſtood, except by thoſe, who had come to ſome maturity in knowledge, grace and experience, and who received them in humble and ſimple faith and love. Unlearned, and unſtable perſons, therefore, even ſuch as were *untaught* in the ſchool of Chriſt, or *unteachable* through ſelf-conceit, prejudice and carnal paſſions, and uneſtabliſhed in faith and by ſanctifying grace, *wreſted*, or perverted them by a forced and unnatural interpretation, inconſiſtent with the context, and the apoſtle's general doctrine; and adduced them in ſupport of their proud, bitter, corrupt, and licentious principles and conduct, and thus they compaſſed their own deſtruction. But this perverſion of Paul's writings, (which Peter ſeems to ſpeak of as a part of the ſacred ſcriptures,) muſt not be charged on them; but on thoſe, who thus abuſed them contrary to their real meaning and tendency: for they did the ſame alſo with the other ſcriptures, both the books of the Old Teſtament, and as may of the New Teſtament as were then extant, and allowed to be of divine authority: for proud, carnal, ambitious, covetous or licentious men could wreſt ſome things in any of them, to a *ſeeming* agreement with their pernicious doctrines, and ſo pervert them to their own deſtruction; in the ſame manner, as they made a fatal uſe of the myſterious ſubjects, which Paul diſcourſed on. It was therefore proper to warn, and inſtruct men to read them with humility and a teachable ſpirit; and not to perplex themſelves with hard

17 Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know *theſe things* before, beware leſt ye alſo, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs.

18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

things, till they were eſtabliſhed in ſuch as were plainer. But this was no reaſon why, either Paul's epiſtles, or the other ſcriptures ſhould be laid aſide, or put out of ſight: for men left to themſelves will abuſe every good gift of God, and the corruption of the beſt things becomes the worſt.

V. 17, 18.] As the chriſtians, whom Peter addreſſed, had been previouſly inſtructed in, and warned concerning theſe things: they ought to be upon their guard againſt the inſinuations of deceivers, and to beware of the rock, on which ſo many had ſplit; leſt being drawn from the ſimplicity of believing obedience to the Lord Jeſus, through the errors and deluſions of wicked men, eſpecially of thoſe licentious teachers, whom he had before deſcribed; they ſhould fall from that ſtedfaſt adherance to the truths of the goſpel, that conſtant profeſſion of faith, and that uniform courſe of conſiſtent behaviour, which they had hitherto maintained; and which conſtituted a ſtedfaſtneſs peculiar to them, and diſtinguiſhing from numbers of unſtable profeſſors. In order to be aſſured, that this would never be their caſe, they ought to uſe every means, with the greateſt earneſtneſs, in order to have every holy diſpoſition invigorated in their hearts, that their grace might be growing to more confirmed habits, and be productive of good works in greater abundance: and that they might alſo increaſe continually, in a believing, ſpiritual, experimental, and transforming knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, as their Lord and Saviour. After this important exhortation, the apoſtle concluded with aſcribing glory to Chriſt, as to a divine Perſon; and with deſiring that it might, or rejoicing that it would, be given to Him, both at that time, and for ever. Amen.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The *pureſt* minds of men on earth want ſtirring up by way of remembrance; that by habitual attention to the doctrine and precepts, delivered by the holy prophets and apoſtles, they may be kept ſtedfaſt in faith, fervent in love, and diligent in obedience. The only wiſe God, our Saviour, by predicting the ſcoffs, and contemptuous objections of infidels and profane men, in ancient, and modern times, hath taken care, that even their perverſe oppoſition to the ſcriptures ſhould furniſh an additional proof of their divine inſpiration! No wonder, that men, who walk after their own luſts, endeavour to deride our expectation of a future judgment, and of the eternal deſtruction of all thoſe, who will not have Chriſt to reign over them: or, that they catch at every thing, which can help to buoy up their hopes of eſcaping the damnation of hell. Moſt of their cavils and ſneers expoſe their ignorance of the ſcriptures, and of the power of God: but their very ignorance is the conſequence of their ungodlineſs, and wilful oppoſition to thoſe parts of divine truth, which, they know, condemn their darling iniquities. But none, who read, and believe the ſcriptures, can be ignorant, that the omnipotent Creator of the heavens and the earth, who upholds, preſerves, changes, or deſtroys his own work, as he ſees good, has his whole plan before him; that he alone is competent to determine about times and ſeaſons; and that, with him, one day is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day. He makes no delays; whatever may appear to our unbelief, and ſcanty knowledge: he is not ſlack concerning his promiſes, (according to men's notions of ſlackneſs;) but he is ſlow to anger, he waiteth to be gracious, he delighteth not in the death of a ſinner, and he is willing that any periſhing rebel, ſhould come to repentance, and apply for his ſalvation. But his counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure: the heavens and earth, which now are, are reſerved unto fire, againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men: that great day of the Lord ſhall come, as a thief in the night; as ſurely as the deluge came, and equally unexpected by unbelievers. What will then be the ſurpriſe, terror, and anguiſh of proud ſcoffers, infidels, and all ungodly and worldly men, "when the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great "noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the "earth alſo, and all the works that are therein, ſhall be "burnt up!" Here imagination itſelf is baffled, deſcription would be vain; and we can only apply the inconceivable ſubject to practical purpoſes. As all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought we to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs? Surely chriſtians ſhould lay not up their treaſures on earth, or ſet their affections on things below! Our buſineſs is to prepare for this great cataſtrophe by daily looking for, and haſting to, the coming of the day of God; that we may poſſeſs a triumphant hope of lifting up our heads with joy, when the heavens and earth form one immenſe conflagration, and when no refuge will remain to the wicked from the intolerable wrath of their offended Judge, and that everlaſting fire to which He will doom them. May we then look for the new heavens, and the new earth, which God hath promiſed: and remembering that righteouſneſs dwelleth there, without alloy, or interruption; may we give diligence to be found of Chriſt at his coming, in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs! Let ſinners alſo account the long-ſuffering of our Lord to be ſalvation; ſeeking him while he may be found, and calling on him while he is near; that they may have the privilege of bleſſing him to eternity, for ſparing them, when others were cut off in their ſins. We ſhould alſo avail ourſelves of the apoſtle's caution, whilſt we read the epiſtle's of St. Paul, and other difficult parts of the holy ſcriptures. Moſt evident it is, that untaught, unteachable, ſelf ſufficient, unſtable, and unconverted men, wreſt many things of this kind to their own deſtruction. Yet have they a moſt important uſe, in the ſyſtem of divine truth; and if men will pervert them, they do it at their peril. But let us ſeek to have our minds prepared for the reception of ſuch things, as are hard to be underſtood, by properly digeſting, and reducing to practice ſuch parts, as are moſt ſimple and intelligible: and let us take care not to give ſtrong meat to babes, who cannot digeſt it; as it only belongs to thoſe, that are of full age, and who, by reaſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern good and evil. Thus taking things in their proper order, and proceeding with humility, caution, prayer, and practice; we ſhall be prepared to derive benefit from the deepeſt and moſt myſterious truths, and to perceive their conſiſtency with the reſt of divine revelation. Let all then, who know and read theſe things, beware, leſt, being led away by the error of the wicked, they fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs: and may we all grow continually in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt, and aſcribe glory to Him for ever. Amen.

The Firſt EPISTLE General of JOHN.

Univerſal tradition aſcribes this, and the two following epiſtles to the apoſtle John; who was the penman of the goſpel, that is called by his name, &c; and all competent Judges of ſtyle and diction muſt be fully ſatisfied, that they were written by him. This firſt, ſeems to have been a general circular letter to all the chriſtian churches, as well as deſigned for the edification of after ages. Probably it was penned ſubſequent to all the epiſtles, which we have conſidered: but the time when, the place whence, and the perſons to whom, it was primarily written are alike uncertain. The aged apoſtle ſeems eſpecially to have intended it, as a caution to chriſtians againſt the ſeveral heretical teachers, who corrupted the doctrine of the church, in reſpect of the perſon of Chriſt, as God manifeſt in the fleſh: but he expatiates alſo on the greatneſs of the love of God to us in the ſalvation of the goſpel; exhorts believers to love each other, and to be ſtedfaſt in the faith, and zealous of good works; and he lays down a variety of marks and evidences, by which true chriſtians might be diſtinguiſhed from hypocrites. In ſhort, this epiſtle differs exceedingly in ſtyle and manner, from thoſe, that we have before attended to; but it perfectly harmonizes with them in doctrine and practical inſtruction.

Anno Domini 90. *Anno Domini* 90.

CHAP. I.

Contains *1ſt. A general declaration of the great ſubject of the epiſtle, even Chriſt the Word of life, and of the apoſtle's deſign in writing it,* 1---4. *2d. Holineſs ſhewn to be connected with communion with God, and an intereſt in the blood of Chriſt,* 5---7. *3d. The faithfulneſs of God, &c, engaged for the pardon and cleanſing of thoſe, who confeſſed their ſins; and all who denied themſelves to be ſinners, ſhewn to be deceived,* 5---10.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the Life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen *it*, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto us;)

3 That which we have ſeen and heard declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us: and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

4 And theſe things write we unto you, that our joy may be full.

5 This then is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—4.] (Notes, &c. *John*, c. i. v. 1—18.) The apoſtle began this circular epiſtle, in the ſame abrupt manner, as he did his goſpel; and without any particular addreſs: and he wrote as a witneſs, in a ſententious, and declaratory ſtyle, and not in an argumentative manner. By "That which was from the beginning," though the neuter gender is uſed, he ſeems to mean the Perſon of Chriſt; even as when it is ſaid, "that He "and the Father are One," One Thing, "in the neuter gender, not one Perſon," in the maſculine; or when the angel ſaid, "that Holy Thing, &c." (*Luke*, c. i. v.

4 And theſe things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God

35.) That eſſential Good, that uncreated, and ſelf-exiſtent Excellency, which had been from the beginning, as coequal and coeternal with the Father, and had at length appeared in human nature for the ſalvation of ſinners, was the great ſubject, concerning which the apoſtle wrote to his brethren. If we then underſtand him to mean the Perſon of Chriſt, and it does not appear what elſe could be meant, conſiſtent with the context, "from the beginning" muſt ſignify "from eternity:" for as the *creation* and *time* were coeval; that which was "from the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth," muſt have been from eternity. Indeed the ſame expreſſion, in ſome places may ſignify the firſt opening of the goſpel diſpenſation, (c. ii. v. 7, 8;) but then the context points out that interpretation: whereas in this place it unanſwerably oppoſes it, for it turns the apoſtle's words, into what is called *an identical propoſition*; namely, "he who was the Author of the goſpel diſpenſation, was from the beginning of the goſpel diſpenſation:" and ſurely no ſober chriſtian would aſcribe ſuch an unmeaning aſſertion to an inſpired apoſtle. That eſſential Good, which was from the beginning with God, and was God, by whom all things were created; had become fleſh to dwell on earth among men, and the apoſtle and his brethren had heard him deliver his doctrine and publiſh his ſalvation: they had ſeen him with their eyes, whilſt they beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; they had not only viewed him with a tranſient glance: but had accompanied him, and contemplated him, both in reſpect of the wiſdom and holineſs of his character, the power of his miracles, and his abundant love and mercy, during ſome years, till they ſaw him crucified for ſinners, and afterwards riſen from the dead; and their hands had handled him, whilſt he condeſcended to give them this full proof of his reſurrection, that they might witneſs it to others. (*John*, c. xx. v. 20. 25. 27;) This divine Perſon, "the Word of life;" the Word of God, became incarnate, that he might be the Life of men, the apoſtle declared to mankind; and St. John wrote to aſſure his chriſtian brethren of the reality of his human nature, which ſome in thoſe days denied, and that of his divine nature, which his reſurrection fully demonſtrated, (*Rom.* c. i. v. 4.) For, "the Life," the Source and Author of life, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal, who poſſeſſed life in him, neceſſarily and unchangeably, and who might therefore be called "the Life," in the abſtract; life being eſſential to him, and derived from him to all creatures; even He had been manifeſted in the fleſh, to be the Life of fallen men. (Notes, &c. *John*, c. i. v. 4. c. v. ver. 26. c. x. v. 10. c. xi. v. 26. c. xiv. v. 6. 19. *Col.* c. iii. v. 3, 4:) and when the Son of God, the eſſential Life of all creatures, was thus manifeſted, the apoſtles were peculiarly favoured, in being choſen to be his attendants, and to ſee him, during his miniſtry, at his death, after his reſurrection, and at his aſcenſion; that they might bear witneſs to others of theſe things, and ſhew them that eternal Life, which had always ſubſiſted with the Father, as one with, and yet diſtinct from, him, being One in the undivided eſſence of the Godhead, but poſſeſſing diſtinct perſonality, as the only begotten Son of the Father, by an eternal and incomprehenſible generation; and who, in the fulneſs of time, was manifeſted as the Author and Giver of eternal life to ſinners, through the redemption of his blood, and by the communication of his new-creating Spirit. They did not therefore proceed upon hear-ſay, or inſufficient proof, when they went to the nations, and encountered all manner of hardſhips, dangers, and perſecutions, in preaching the goſpel to them. But they declared to them the things concerning the Perſon, doctrine, and ſalvation of Chriſt, which they had ſeen and heard, and had the moſt abundant opportunity of learning from his own lips; and of which they had been aſſured by his miracles, reſurrection, and aſcenſion: moreover, they declared theſe things to them, not from any ſelfiſh or carnal motives, but from the pureſt benevolence and love; in order that they might have fellowſhip with them, and ſhare all their immunities, hopes, comforts and everlaſting advantages: and whatever an ungodly and carnal world might imagine, concerning the condition of ſuch poor, deſpiſed and perſecuted men, whom they treated, as the "off-ſcouring of all things;" yet *truly*, their "fellowſhip was with the Father, &c." They ſhared the ſpecial love and favour of God the Father; they were intereſted in all his perfections; they were made partakers of a divine nature, and of his holineſs; and they had the aſſured hope and bleſſed earneſts of enjoying Him, as their all-ſufficient and eternal Portion. Moreover, they had a free acceſs to him, as their Father; and, a ſacred union having been formed between Him and their ſouls, through Jeſus Chriſt, and by the power of the Holy Spirit; a moſt honourable, and happy communion, and intercourſe was continually carried on between them: whilſt they poured out their inmoſt ſouls before Him, made him their Hope and Confidence, aimed to do his will; and manifeſt his glory celebrated his praiſes, were his devoted worſhippers, and ſought their felicity in his ſmile, and acceptance; and whilſt he graciouſly heard their ſupplications, accepted their perſons and ſervices, communicated to them his holy conſolations, ſhewed them his will, ſupplied them with wiſdom and ſtrength ſuited to their wants, and took on him the care of all their concerns. This their fellowſhip with the Father, was connected with, and aroſe out of, their "fellowſhip with his Son Jeſus Chriſt:" by faith they were intereſted in him, and all his purchaſed ſalvation; ſo that He was "made to them Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption:" and, by a continued regard to his Perſon, mediation, and grace, and an habitual reliance on Him, as the Life and Salvation of their ſouls, they had acceptance with, and acceſs to God as a Father; and thus, through the incarnate Son, and his ſacrifice, and interceſſion, &c, and the communion maintained with Him by faith, they had communion with the Father alſo, notwithſtanding their ſinfulneſs. This was no enthuſiaſtic imagination, or hypocritical pretence, as many were diſpoſed to repreſent it; nor was it an unſais Light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.

6 If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.

8 If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us *our ſins*, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.

10 If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

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tisfactory, or inefficacious tranſaction, as others might ſuppoſe, who denied not its reality: but they had the happy experience of it in their ſouls, and evidenced the excellency of it in their lives; and ſhared with others, in this ſacred communion, ſuch comforts and ſubſtantial ſatisfaction, as made them ample amends for all their loſſes, ſufferings, and hardſhips. Being therefore aſſured, that this alone was ſufficient to make men happy, which nothing elſe could do; and knowing the inexhauſtible fulneſs of Chriſt, and his precious ſalvation: they deſired exceedingly, that their fellow-ſinners on every ſide would come and ſhare their felicity; and, leaving the lying vanities of the world, or the empty forms and ſuperſtitions of falſe religion, would ſeek with them this fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This deſire, glowing with intenſe ardour in the hearts of the apoſtles, and united with zeal for the honour of their Lord, animated them to all their ſelf-denying labours, and reconciled them to all their ſufferings, in promoting the goſpel: and the ſame principle induced St. John, to write this epiſtle to the churches, that, rejecting the heretical doctrines of falſe teachers, having fellowſhip with Him, and thoſe, who adhered to the apoſtles doctrine; and avoiding whatever could interrupt their communion with God; their holy joy might be complete, and they might live in actual poſſeſſion of thoſe invaluable privileges, to which they were called by the goſpel. The communion *of* the Holy Spirit is not particularly mentioned in this moſt intereſting paſſage; becauſe the communion of believers with the Father, and the Son, and their loving communion with each other, are effected and maintained, by the communication and influences of the Holy Spirit; who is the immediate Author of their ſpiritual life, hope, love, joy, peace, and holy affections; the bond of union between Chriſt and his myſtical body; and between every member of it and all the others; the great bleſſing communicated from the Father's love; and through the incarnation and mediation of the Son; and the ſeal and pledge of, and preparation for, all other bleſſings, in time and to eternity. As the Holy Spirit is therefore, the great agent, in our communion with the Father, and the Son; it was not neceſſary, that communion *with* him ſhould be ſeparately mentioned, (2 *Cor.* c. xiii. v. 14.)

V. 5—7.] In order that chriſtians might obtain that fulneſs of joy, of which the apoſtle ſpake, and that they might be upon their guard againſt all deluſive appearances of it, and all falſe pretenſions to communion with God; it was needful for him, to ſtate to them the meſſage, or declaration, which they had heard from Chriſt, concerning the nature and perfections of God himſelf, (*John*, c. xvii. v. 26.) The ſubſtance of which is "That God is Light," pure perfect intellect, an all pervading, all penetrating Spirit, eſſential knowledge, wiſdom, holineſs, love, and felicity: ſo that "in Him is "no darkneſs at all;" no ignorance, error, moral evil, or infidelity; and therefore none of theſe could be derived from Him, (Note, *James*, c. i. v. 13—17.) As this, therefore, is the nature of God; the doctrines and precepts, which came from Him muſt be of the ſame kind: true religion might be diſtinguiſhed from counterfeit, by that criterion, and eſpecially his ſpiritual worſhippers, who really had communion with Him, might be known by their conformity to Him. If then, any perſons, profeſſing chriſtianity, affirmed as a matter of experience, that they had fellowſhip with God, according to the goſpel, and conſequently were partakers of his ſalvation: whilſt at the ſame time, "they walked in "darkneſs," or were deluded by ſatan through ignorance and falſe doctrine, to live in the habitual practice of ſin, and ſo to have "fellowſhip with the unfruitful "works of darkneſs;" ſuch perſons ſpake falſhood, and were either deceiving, or ſelf-deceived, hypocrites, whoſe conduct belied their profeſſion: nor did they practiſe what was ſincere and faithful, and according to the truths of God's word. But if the profeſſed diſciples of Chriſt, walked in the light, as He was in the Light," acting habitually as became thoſe, who knew God, and his holy truth and will; and imitating his purity, righteouſneſs, goodneſs and truth, in their behaviour among men: they were to deem this a ſufficient evidence, that they were partakers of Chriſt, and intereſted in the Father's love through Him; they were warranted to conclude, that their fellowſhip with God, and the intercourſe maintained between Him and their ſouls was the very ſame in nature and efficacy with that, of which the apoſtles ſpake; they really were admitted to the communion of the ſaints, and entitled to all their privileges and bleſſings, and ought to be the objects of their ſpecial love and complacency: and they might, alſo, be fully aſſured, that the atoning blood of the Son of God had taken away the guilt of all their former ſins, and did remove that of all their daily defects, defilements, and unallowed tranſgreſſions; nay, that the Holy Spirit, as given through the merit of his atonement, was cleanſing away, and would at length perfectly deſtroy all the ſinfulneſs of their fallen nature.

V. 8—10.] Whilſt the apoſtle ſtrenuouſly inſiſted on the neceſſity of an habitual holy walk, as the effect and evidence of the knowledge of God in Chriſt Jeſus, and communion with Him; he guarded with equal care a-

CHAP. II.

Contains the apoſtle 1*ſt. Diſſuading believers from ſin, and pointing out Chriſt as the Advocate with the Father, and the propitiation for the ſins of the world,* 1, 2. 2*d. Shewing that the knowledge of Chriſt, and union with Him muſt be evidenced by obedience to, and imitation of him, and love of their brethren; and that thus the love of God is perfected; and declaring thoſe, deceived, blind and hypocritical, who lived in hatred and malice, &c,* 3---11. 3*d. Warning believers of every attainment, &c, againſt the love of the world; giving an inventory of its contents, and ſhewing the vanity of them, compared with the eternal happineſs of thoſe, who did God's will,* 12---17. 4*th. Cautioning them againſt many antichriſts, who fatally ſeduced unſound profeſſors; declaring that the unction of the Holy Spirit was the effectual preſervative againſt them; pointing out the true doctrine of Chriſt; and exhorting them to adhere to his truth, and abide in him, in expectation of his coming; and to prove their regeneration by their habitual righteouſneſs,* 18---29.

gainſt the oppoſite error of ſelf-righteous pride. If, therefore, any of them, whilſt they ſeemed to walk in the light, ſhould be ſo elated with a conceit of their own attainments, as to ſay "that they had no ſin;" but were perfectly pure, and as holy in heart and life as the law of God required: they were certainly deceived in a moſt lamentable manner; nay the truth was not in them, as a principle of life, ſenſibility, and illumination; or they never could have fallen into a miſtake, which implied ſuch groſs ignorance of God, of his ſpiritual law, and of their own hearts. On the other hand, ſuch of them, as confeſſed their ſins, with unreſerved, ingenuous, and ſincere humiliation *before God*; (for that alone can be here intended;) owning their guilt, and deſert of wrath; not attempting to extenuate, or deny their offences, but caſting themſelves wholly on God's mercy for the pardon of them; would certainly find Him faithful to his promiſes, and juſt to his covenant engagements to Chriſt their Surety, and to them through Him; yea, his very juſtice (as ſatisfied by the atonement of his Son,) would conſent and induce him to forgive all their ſins, how numerous and aggravated ſoever they had been; and to cleanſe them not only from the guilt, but gradually, and at length perfectly, from all the pollution of their unrighteouſneſs, (*Ezek.* c. xxxvi. v. 25—27. 2 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 1.) But if any of them continued ſo proud and ignorant, as to deny that they had ſinned, and ſo needed not to confeſs guilt, or ſeek forgiveneſs and cleanſing from ſin; they in fact, "treated the words of God as a lie," and his declaration of man's ſinfulneſs, as a libel on them; nay, they virtually denied the truth of the whole goſpel, which every where ſpeaks of men as loſt ſinners; ſo that the word of God was not in them, by faith, or the teaching of the Holy Spirit. In this latter verſe the apoſtle oppoſed ſuch perſons, as totally denied their ſinfulneſs, their need of mercy, or their deſert of wrath; by whatever method, they deceived themſelves into a conceit, that they had never ſinned, or had in ſome way or other made amends for their offences, and were not juſtly deſerving of puniſhment. But in the former verſe, he ſeems to have ſhewn the groſs error of thoſe, who imagined, that, through the goſpel, they were ſo perfectly ſanctified, as to have no ſpot or blemiſh of ſin in them. (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* xxxii. li. *Prov.* c. xxviii. v. 13.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our moſt lively gratitude is due to the Lord for that well authenticated revelation, which he hath given us concerning "the Word of life," by thoſe, who heard and ſaw him, and who had the teſtimony of their ſenſes to the reality of his incarnation, and his reſurrection. But what words can expreſs the praiſes of his love to ſinners, in cauſing "the Life to be manifeſted," even the eternal Life, that was with the Father, in order that we, condemned rebels, who were dead in ſin, might live by Him? This appears the more admirable, when we conſider the deep abaſement, and the agonizing ſufferings, to which this manifeſtation expoſed the incarnate Word and Son of God; and how his very humiliation hath given occaſion to the children of men, to rob him of his glory, to deny his Deity, and to ſpeak of Him, whom all angels worſhip, as if he were altogether ſuch a one as themſelves. Faithful and zealous miniſters, though they have not ſeen and heard the Lord of glory, with their outward ſenſes may yet declare to men, what they have known and experienced of his mercy, truth, and power: and as he became incarnate, that ſinners might have fellowſhip with him, as dwelling in their nature, and in the love of the Father through Him, for their everlaſting felicity; ſo they are willing to labour and ſuffer, that their fellow-ſinners may be brought to have fellowſhip with them, in their moſt precious bleſſings. However men may deſpiſe and revile them, and caſt out their names as evil, or deem them fools, madmen, bigots, enthuſiaſts, or hypocrites: yet verily, they poſſeſs the greateſt honour, pleaſure, privilege, and advantage imaginable, in communion with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and in their liberty of acceſs with boldneſs at all times into the preſence of the eternal God; whilſt all the perfections and Perſons in the Godhead, are engaged by covenant to make them moſt bleſſed for evermore. Theſe benefits are not like the ſcanty poſſeſſions of the world, which are congenial to the ſelfiſhneſs of our fallen nature, and inſpire the jealouſy of every competitor; becauſe the more ſhare them, the leſs each perſon can appropriate. But the joy and felicity of communion with God, correſponds with the enlarged philanthropy of the regenerate ſoul, and tends to increaſe it: becauſe the good enjoyed is infinite, and all-ſufficient; ſo that any multitude may partake of it, without its being at all diminiſhed; nay, the felicity ſeems enhanced to each poſſeſſor, by its being communicated to increaſing numbers. This fellowſhip with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, is "the ſecret of the Lord," which is peculiar to thoſe that fear him; and ungodly men *muſt* therefore treat it as the deluſion of an heated imagination: and no doubt there

MY little children, theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not. And if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our ſins: and not for our's only, but alſo for *the ſins of* the whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know

are both enthuſiaſts and hypocrites, who are deceived, or mean to deceive others, by mere counterfeits: yet that is not worth counterfeiting, either by ſatan, or wicked men, which itſelf is of no value, or reality. There are then thoſe, who are warranted to ſay, that truly their "fellow-"ſhip is with the Father, &c;" and they all deſire to bring others to partake of the ſame bleſſedneſs: and indeed it is the deſign of all the inſtructions in the word of God, to lead us to poſſeſs theſe conſolations, that ſo "our joy may "be full." Let us then regard the meſſage ſent to us by thoſe, who "declare that God is Light, and that in him is "no darkneſs at all:" for as his perfect felicity is inſeparable from his perfect holineſs; ſo our happineſs muſt be proportioned to our ſanctification. By this rule we may alſo judge, who, *truly* have fellowſhip with God; for if any man profeſs this, and walk in darkneſs, he is a liar, and does not the truth: but if we habitually walk in the light of holy obedience, as becomes thoſe, who have the transforming knowledge of God; we have fellowſhip with prophets and apoſtles, and with all ſaints; yea with the Lord of ſaints himſelf; and the blood of Jeſus cleanſeth us from all ſin. For chriſtianity is, in every reſpect "the religion "of a ſinner;" and they, who walk moſt nearly to God, in holy conformity and obedience, are moſt ſenſible, that their beſt days and duties are mixed with ſin, and need cleanſing with the atoning blood. No encouragement is, therefore, given in ſcripture, to any of thoſe, who ſay they have not ſinned, or that they have no longer any ſin to repent of, to be pardoned, or to be cleanſed away: ſuch men are blinded by pride, and deceive themſelves: yea, they make God a liar, and his word is not in them: they arraign the truth of his declarations, and the juſtice of his government; and cannot poſſibly offer the ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart before him, or properly underſtand the nature and value of his goſpel of abounding grace. Let us then learn to plead guilty before God, and be humbly willing to know the worſt of our caſe; let us ingenuouſly confeſs all our ſins, and all their aggravations; relying wholly on his mercy and truth, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for a full and free forgiveneſs; and let us truſt in, and wait on him to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs, until no more at all remain in us.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1, 2.] John was probably the only ſurviving apoſtle, when he penned this epiſtle; and his old age, and long continued uſefulneſs, faithfulneſs, and love to chriſtians muſt have given him a kind of parental authority, throughout the whole church, as far as it adhered to the pure goſpel of Chriſt. It was therefore peculiarly proper for him, to addreſs them, as his ſpiritual family, whoſe welfare he had greatly at heart: and as moſt of them were young in years, compared with this beloved and venerable diſciple of Chriſt, who ſeems to have been the oldeſt chriſtian on earth at that time; none ever could, with ſuch propriety, adopt the endearing language of his Lord, and call his fellow chriſtians, "my little, or *dear* children," as he did; (*John*, c. xiii. v. 33;) for the diminutive is commonly uſed by way of endearment, and to expreſs peculiar affection. He was deſirous of counſelling, warning, and encouraging them, as a father doth his children. (*Theſſ.* c. ii v. 11, 12;) and the things, which he had written to them in the former chapter, and what he was about to add, were intended eſpecially to preſerve them from committing ſin: as every part of the doctrine of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, was ſuited to diſplay the malignant nature and effects of ſin, to teach men to hate, dread and flee from it; and to lead them to the love of God, and holineſs; as well as to give the moſt effectual encouragement, motives, and aſſiſtance to repent, and do works meet for repentance. Yet, "if any man had ſinned," he ſhould remember, that, "they had an Advocate with the Father, &c. Superficial ſpeculators might here have been ready to charge the apoſtle with inconſiſtency, as if the latter part of the verſe had contradicted the former: but the ſtate of a chriſtian in this world is ſuch, that encouragements *after having ſinned*, are as neceſſary as warnings againſt ſin: for through the remaining power of ſin in his heart, the manifold ſnares of the world, and the power of ſatan, he cannot always ſtand upright. The valiant ſoldier will be moſt furiouſly attacked by the enemy; and may ſometimes be foiled; and deſpondency is as inimical to watchfulneſs, diligence, and holy obedience, as even carnal ſecurity itſelf. No man, on ſcripture principles, can conclude himſelf to be any better than a hypocrite, who habitually commits ſin, becauſe of God's readineſs to forgive the penitent: but the fallen, who deſire to ariſe and renew the combat, have abundant encouragement ſo to do. From the ſinner's firſt conviction of guilt, to the end of the chriſtian's warfare by death, the general rule is applicable; that, "if any man ſin, we have "an Advocate with the Father;" one, who hath undertaken, and is fully qualified and authorized, to plead in the preſence of God the Father, in behalf of every one, who applies for pardon, ſalvation, and all things pertaining to them, in his name, and in dependance on his meritorious interceſſion. This gracious Advocate never refuſes his patronage, to any ſinner, who ſeeks it, and he never pleads in vain. For He is "Jeſus;" the Saviour, Emmanuel, the incarnate Son of God; and "Chriſt," the Meſſiah, the anointed One, choſen, appointed, commiſſioned, and conſecrated, to his office, as an High-Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec. And he *alone* is "the "righteous One," who received his human nature pure from all ſpot of ſin, and as our Surety perfectly obeyed the whole law of God, and ſo fulfilled a righteouſneſs more valuable in itſelf, and more honourable to the Father, than that of all *mere* creatures could have been. Moreover "He was the propitiation for their ſins:" for, through the atonement of his ſacrifice on the croſs, and his ſubſequent interceſſion, he rendered a holy and righteous God *propitious* and favourable to ſinners; ſo that he waiteth to be gracihim, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that ſaith he abideth in him ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you: which thing is true in him and in you: becauſe the darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth.

9 He that ſaith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkneſs even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in

ons upon the true mercy ſeat, or *propitiatory*, of which that above the ark of the covenant was merely a type, and ſhadow. (Note, *Rom.* c. iii. v. 25, 26.) Nor was the benefit of this propitiation to be confined to the Jewiſh nation; on the contrary, ſinners all over the whole earth were admitted to ſhare in it: ſo that all men, in every land, and through ſucceſſive generations, were to be invited to come to God, through this all ſufficient atonement and by this new and living way; and all, who accepted of this invitation were as much intereſted in Chriſt, and all his purchaſed bleſſings, as if he had become incarnate, and died upon the croſs for them alone. (Note, *John.* c. i. v. 29.) So that there was moſt abundant encouragement to every one, in the whole world, who heard the goſpel, to repent, and ſeek ſalvation by faith in the blood of Chriſt: but none to any man, to continue impenitent and unbelieving.

V. 3—6.] True chriſtians might be overtaken in a fault, or fall into a grievous ſin; and their infirmities and deficiencies in their daily walk would be many: yet an habitual obſervance of God's commandments was to be conſidered as the proper evidence of a ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, and of God the Father in Him. (Notes, &c. *John.* c. xvii. v. 3. 2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 3—6. *Phil.* c. iii. v. 8—10. 2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 2. 3. 8.) The knowledge of Chriſt evidently ſignifies a believing, ſpiritual, and experimental acquaintance with him, and a cordial acceptance of his ſalvation. Profeſſors would want to *know*, or be aſſured, that they were intereſted in Him; and that their faith and experience were genuine, and diſtinguiſhable from thoſe of all hypocrites: now the apoſtle, and his brethren "knew "that they thus knew Chriſt," not by their exact notions, high affections, or even miraculous powers, &c; but by a diſpoſition of heart, habitually, unreſervedly, and willingly to keep his commandments: and any other man might know his profeſſion to be ſincere, and his knowledge of Chriſt, ſpiritual and ſaving, by the ſame medium. (*John,* c. xiv. v. 15. 21—24.) And he, who profeſſed to be acquainted with Chriſt, and to believe in him, whilſt he kept not his commandments, in his habitual conduct, was to be adjudged a liar, and a hypocrite; in whom there was no ſincerity, and in whoſe heart the truth had no place. But, whoever he was that remembered and obſerved the counſels, and obeyed the precepts of Chriſt, in him *verily,* or *really,* the love of God was perfected; the love of God to him, as a choſen and redeemed ſinner, had attained its end, in his ſanctification; and his love of God had produced its fruit, and was in a mature and perfect ſtate; as the grafted tree is, when loaded with its intended, and valued increaſe. (Note, *James.* c. ii. v. 22.) By this, apoſtles and primitive chriſtians knew that they were in Chriſt through faith, and the communion of his Spirit; and thus alive to God through him, (Note, *John.* c. xv. v. 1—8:) and indeed if any man profeſſed to abide in Chriſt, he ought ſo to walk, as Chriſt had walked, in an habitual courſe of righteouſneſs, holineſs, truth, love &c; or elſe he could not expect to be believed by thoſe, who knew the transforming efficacy of the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt. It is evident, that the obedience here ſpoken of, is the humble, ſincere, unreſerved, and loving obedience of a believer in Chriſt; which is not perfect, but attended with continual repentance, and application to his atoning blood for pardon and acceptance; as well as with a conſtant dependance on the Holy Spirit for grace, to enable him in any meaſure to perform it. Yet even this obſervance of the holy commandments of Chriſt, in imitation of his example; though far from real perfection, conſtitutes a degree of holineſs and excellency, of which none but true chriſtians have any adequate conception, and which, if univerſal, would render the earth in no ſmall degree like heaven itſelf.

V. 7—11.] In exhorting chriſtians to obey, and imitate their Lord, as the proper evidence of their love to him, the apoſtle wrote no new command to them; but that which they had received from the beginning of their acquaintance with the goſpel; and which from the firſt had been repeatedly enforced by Chriſt himſelf. Nay, in fact it had been virtually in force from the beginning of the world, as it could not compriſe more than was contained in the law, which required Iſrael "to love the Lord with all their "hearts," and "their neighbour, as themſelves;" and to be holy as God was holy. Yet this old commandment, eſpecially that which inculcated the love of their brethren, might be called a new commandment, as it was given to, and enforced on chriſtians. (*John,* c. xiii. v. 34. 35. c. xv. v. 17.) This was true, in reſpect of him, their Lord and Saviour; in that He had *newly* ſhewn them the immenſity of his condeſcenſion, compaſſion, and ſelf-denying love to ſinners, and had laid them under *new* obligations to obey and imitate Him; eſpecially in loving one another, as he had loved them. Moreover the command was now darkneſs, and walketh in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goeth, becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes.

12 I write unto you, little children, becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name's ſake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, becauſe ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, becauſe ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that *is* in the world, the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

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enforced by his mediatorial authority, to the full exerciſe of which he has been lately exalted. It was alſo true *in them*; as their ſituation was *new*, and differed widely from that of the Gentiles around them, and even from that of God's people under the Moſaic diſpenſation: and as they were united by a new bond of union, as fellow-ſoldiers, fellow-travellers, brethren, and co-heirs of heavenly felicity. So that the love of chriſtians to each other, as ſuch, though virtually compriſed in the love of their neighbours as themſelves, and ſomewhat like that of the Iſraelites to each other; was *new* in reſpect of its exerciſe, motives, rules, and obligations. This aroſe from the change, that had taken place; as the darkneſs of the preparatory diſpenſation was paſt, and the true light then ſhone in full ſplendour: ſo that chriſtians might be expected to be more exact in their obedience, and more full of love to one another, and to all men, than even believers had been under the darker diſpenſation of the law. He, therefore, who profeſſed, that he walked in the marvellous light of the goſpel, as partaking of the ſpecial grace and mercy of God, (1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 9, 10;) and yet hated his brother, (either any of his fellow-chriſtians, or of his neighbours,) was evidently in darkneſs even to that time: for though the true light ſhone around him; he was blinded by his pride and ſelfiſhneſs, and ſo continued a ſubject of the prince of darkneſs, the author of all malice, envy, murder, and malignity; whilſt the illumination of the true knowledge of Chriſt was always transforming in proportion to its degree, and produced a loving diſpoſition in every heart, that really partook of it. He, therefore, who loved his brother, and habitually ſhewed himſelf diſpoſed to goodneſs, mercy, and forgiveneſs, evidently lived, and walked in the light of the goſpel, and was influenced by the inward efficacy of the truths, that he profeſſed: and there was nothing in the general prevailing diſpoſition of his heart, by means of which ſatan could ſucceed in tempting him to ſcandalous ſins; or that was likely to prove an occaſion of his ſtumbling himſelf, or throwing ſtumbling blocks in the way of others, to their deſtruction. Whereas, he, who hated, or bare habitual malice againſt his brother, or any man, was ſtill in darkneſs; and as men walking in the dark, know not whither they are going, nor at what they ſtumble; ſo ſuch a perſon would proceed in an ignorant, uncertain, and unholy manner, not aware of the dangers that beſet his path, nor ſenſible that it led to deſtruction; as the darkneſs of error and ſin had blinded his eyes: till at length he would fall into ſome damnable hereſy, or ſcandalous crime, and not only ruin himſelf, but cauſe others to fall likewiſe.

V. 12.—17.] The apoſtle had before addreſſed chriſtians in general, as "*his* little children; but here he ſpake of ſuch as were young in years, or newly converted, and diſtinguiſhed them from thoſe, who were further advanced in the life of faith and grace. He particularly addreſſed his exhortations to thoſe new-born babes, who had taſted, that the Lord was gracious, (1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 2, 3:) becauſe their ſins were as certainly forgiven them, for the ſake of Chriſt, and through faith in his name, as thoſe of their more eſtabliſhed and experienced brethren were; though their weakneſs of faith, and want of diſtinct and exact knowledge might prevent them from poſſeſſing the abiding comfort of it: and the counſel, he was about to give them, would preſerve them from many ſnares and ſorrows, enable them to obtain the aſſurance of their acceptance, and direct them in making a ſuitable return for ſo invaluable a benefit. He wrote alſo to the fathers; having the ſame counſel and admonitions to give to thoſe chriſtians, who were old diſciples, matured in knowledge and experience; and who ought to be guides and examples to their juniors, as well as to ſhine as lights in the world. Theſe had long known Him, that was from the beginning, (v. 3—6. c. i. v. 1—3;) and their long acquaintance with Chriſt, and with the eternal Father, in and through him; and all their diſcoveries of his glory, and experience of his love, truth, and power, with which they had been favoured, ſhould engage them to ſimple dependance, lively gratitude, fervent complacential love, devoted obedience, and ſteady confidence in God, and zeal for his honour and that of the goſpel. Moreover he wrote to the ſame effect to the young men, who had for ſome time profeſſed the goſpel, and had paſſed through the ſtate of childhood, but were not arrived at that maturity in grace, to which the fathers had attained: theſe he addreſſed and exhorted, from the conſideration, 18 Little children, It is the laſt time: and as ye have heard that antichriſt ſhall come, even now are there many antichriſts; whereby we know that it is the laſt time.

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that "they had overcome the wicked one:" they had ſucceſsfully encountered the firſt trials and temptations, which attended their ſeparation from ſin and renunciation of the world; and had overcome the aſſaults of ſatan, by giving up their ſecular intereſts, breaking off their bad habits and connexions, and entering in at the ſtrait gate of true converſion. As they had therefore, thus far conquered "the wicked one," who had tried all methods in vain, to keep them from embracing the goſpel, and giving themſelves up to the ſervice of Chriſt: they ought to go forth in his ſtrength, aſpiring after further victories; and endeavouring to ſpend the vigour of their ſpirits, or the prime of their years, in the ſervices, to which they were called, for the honour of Chriſt, and the benefit of the church; and not in ſeeking worldly advantages. But in order to give his exhortation the greater emphaſis, the apoſtle again addreſſed the different deſcriptions of chriſtians; and admoniſhed the little children, (for though the word be changed, the meaning ſeems to be the ſame) (*John*, c. xxi. v. 5;) as thoſe, who had known the Father, and had already experienced his parental compaſſion and love for them; for which they were called to make the due returns of filial confidence, ſubmiſſion, gratitude and obedience. The addreſs to the fathers exactly coincides with that, which went before: to the young men he added, that they "were ſtrong" in faith, hope, love, and all holy affections; they were in the prime of their fitneſs for active ſervice, to which the mature experience of old age might be leſs adapted; and as the word of God, which they had received when they were converted, abode in them, as appeared by their victory over the temptations of ſatan; ſo it ought to be manifeſted in its effects, by their increaſing fruitfulneſs in all good works. The general counſel and exhortation, therefore, which he meant to enforce on all of them was, "not to "love the world, or the things, that were in the "world." The world, as God created it, was very good, and a proper object of a meaſure of love; but as ſin hath marred it, our affections ought to be wholly alienated from it. The men of the world, as diſtinguiſhed from believers, are enemies of God, and ſubjects of ſatan: we are, therefore required to renounce their friendſhip, to avoid their intimate ſociety, and to abhor their ungodly principles and practices; whilſt we pity their miſeries, love their perſons, and try to do them good. The things of the world may be deſired, poſſeſſed, and valued, for thoſe uſes and purpoſes, which were intended by God, when he created them: and in ſubordination, to his favour, authority, and glory: But for thoſe purpoſes, to which ſin hath abuſed them, and ſinners idolize them; we muſt not deſire, ſeek, or value them, in any meaſure, or manner: and if any man thus love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: his idol has never been dethroned, his heart remains unchanged, he is not reconciled to God through Jeſus Chriſt, and hath no true filial love of him in his heart. (Notes, &c, *Luke*, c. xiv. v. 25—33.) For all that is in the world, as thus idolized and abuſed by men, who ſeek their happineſs from it, and not from God, may be ſummed up under three heads. 1ſt. Such things, as are ſuited to excite and gratify "the luſt of the fleſh;" or the irregular, inordinate, and polluting hankerings and cravings of the carnal heart, and the animal appetites after ſenſual pleaſure; as if man's happineſs conſiſted in it: 2dly. Such things, as were ſuited to excite and gratify "the luſt of "the eyes;" or the deſires of the carnal heart after ſuch poſſeſſions, embelliſhments, decorations, and enjoyments as the eye is apt to look at with coveting and inordinate deſire of obtaining: ſuch as treaſures of gold and ſilver, or precious ſtones, houſes, lands, gardens, ſtately manſions, elegant furniture and equipages, coſtly garments; and in ſhort all that wealth can purchaſe, which gratifies the beholder's eye, or his other ſenſes, but is not directly to be conſidered as groſs animal indulgence. 3dly. "The pride of life," or thoſe titles and dignities, that authority and honour, that reputation and ſplendour, which form the ſummit of earthly exaltation, and the higheſt prize in the poor lottery of this preſent life, to which the pride and ambition of man's apoſtate nature can aſpire; and the greateſt gratification of that deſire, which is congenial to the old temptation, "ye ſhall be as "gods." For a poor vain glorious worm to be advanced to ſuch dominion over his fellows, or to poſſeſs ſuch honour among them; as to be tempted to forget his own mortality, as well as his Creator, and Judge; and to be ſo ſurrounded with vaſſals, attendants and flatterers, or ſo emblazoned with high ſounding titles, and encumbered with magnificence, as to have nothing on earth that he can behold above him, and to diſregard Him, that is higher than the higheſt: this is the perfection of the pride of life, and all pre-eminence and diſtinction above others partakes of the ſame nature. All theſe things, to which every earthly object, that any man is tempted to put in competition with the will, favour, and glory of God, muſt be inferred, are "not of the Father:" this abuſe and idolatrous deſire of created things, did not attach to them, or to man, as God made them; they do not conſiſt with his preſcribed uſe of them; they are not beſtowed on thoſe he loves for ſuch purpoſes; nor do they, who are his children, and influenced by his grace, deſire, ſeek, or uſe them in this manner. But "they are of the world," as lying under the wicked one: theſe deſires after, and this uſe of, created things, are the effects of man's apoſtacy and ſubjection to ſatan; they are thus made the baits, by which men are ſeduced into ſin, and kept in rebellion againſt God, and the incentives to all their vile paſſions; they ſuit the taſte, and form the ſupreme good of worldly men, and are their only portion; and for the ſake of them the whole earth is filled with violence, fraud, crimes and miſery. But the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof; all its pleaſures, treaſures, honours, and ſplendour, will ſoon vaniſh for ever, (Note, 1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 24;) and they, who have luſted for them, and idolized them, will be eternally diſappointed and miſerable. Whereas the man, who doeth the will of God, as revealed to ſinners by the goſpel, will abide for ever in the poſ-

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifeſt that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you becauſe ye know not the truth, but becauſe ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

ſeſſion and enjoyment of that ſubſtantial good which he hath been enabled to make choice of. It is evident, that the apoſtle did not ſpeak of the lawful, moderate, ſubordinate, and holy uſe, poſſeſſion, or deſire of God's good creatures, for the ends, to which he hath appointed them; but of the unlawful, inordinate, unholy, and idolatrous hankering after, and valuation of them, to which all men are addicted, ſo long as they remain in an unregenerate ſtate. Many vain effects have been made, by limitations, diſtinctions, and exceptions, to evade the force of this paſſage; and many have written on it, as if they meant to prove how far we might be carnally-minded, and lovers of the world: but in the apoſtle's evident meaning, we are no more allowed to love the world at all, than we are to worſhip Dagon; for we cannot ſerve God and Mammon; or love the Lord, and the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. A man may carry on any buſineſs, fill any ſtation, or poſſeſs any wealth, as God's ſervant and ſteward, according to his commandments, for his glory and for the good of mankind; and he may deſire food and raiment, and things ſuitable to his rank in life, and uſe them with thankfulneſs, temperance and humility: but he cannot love, or deſire them, to gratify his ſenſuality, pride, avarice, or ambition, or ſeek his happineſs in them, without being an idolater. Every regenerate man is delivered from the dominion, and allowed indulgence of the love of the world, and ſtrives and prays againſt the remains of it, as it works in his heart, or breaks forth into his life: he deſires to love God ſupremely, and ſeek all his happineſs from Him alone; and to love all other things in him, for his ſake, and as his bounty, and to uſe them in ſubmiſſion to his precepts and providence. In proportion as men get this victory over the world, the reality of their grace is evidenced, and they are prepared for labouring and ſuffering in the cauſe of Chriſt: but unleſs it is begun in the heart; a man has no root in himſelf, and he will either fall away in time of temptation, or remain a mere unfruitful profeſſor. (c. v. ver. 4, 5. Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 18—23.)

V. 18, 19.] The love of the world, as unſubdued in profeſſed chriſtians, gave ſatan his greateſt advantage, not only in tempting them to open apoſtacy, but alſo in ſeducing them by deſtructive hereſies; through which they were enabled to reconcile a quiet conſcience with a carnal mind; and the indulgence of their favourite paſſion, in a religious garb. The tranſition was therefore natural, from warning profeſſors againſt the love of the world, to putting them upon their guard againſt falſe teachers. The apoſtle therefore, ſhewed his beloved children, eſpecially ſuch of them as were young and inexperienced; that it was the laſt time, or the laſt diſpenſation, which God intended to introduce on earth, under which he would eſtabliſh the kingdom of his Son upon the ruins of that of Satan; and which ſhould continue till all enemies were put under the Redeemer's feet. But they had all heard, both from the predictions of ancient prophets, and from thoſe of Chriſt and his apoſtles, that under this diſpenſation Antichriſt ſhould ariſe: for ſatan, unwilling to loſe his uſurped dominion, would not only oppoſe the goſpel by exciting perſecutions, but alſo by corruptions of the faith; and eſpecially by one great enemy to the Perſon, truth, authority, and glory of Chriſt, would obtain immenſe power and influence in the viſible church, (Notes, &c. 2 *Theſ.* c. ii. v. 1—12:) and as Paul declared, that this myſtery of iniquity did already work; ſo John obſerved that "there were "many Antichriſts," or oppoſers of the pure goſpel of the Lord Jeſus, whoſe character, principles, intentions, and machinations were of the ſame ſtamp, as thoſe of the great Antichriſt would be, and who were evidently his fore-runners. By this they might know that it was the laſt time; and that whilſt God was ſpecially at work to honour his Son, the devil and his ſervants were peculiarly active in endeavouring to defeat the deſign. (Notes, &c. 1 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 1—3. 2 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 1—9. c. iv. v. 3, 4.) Theſe Antichriſts did not ariſe from among ſuch, as had before been avowed unbelievers; but they were profeſſed chriſtians, who ſeparated from the church, and became leaders of heretical ſects, contrary to the apoſtle's doctrine, and derogatory to the honour of Chriſt. But, though they went out from the diſciples, having been admitted to outward fellowſhip with them; yet they had never been of them, as regenerated perſons, and living members of the body of Chriſt: for if this had been the caſe, they would, *without all doubt*, have continued with them; as the Lord would not have given them over to a ſtrong deluſion, but would have put his fear into their hearts, that they ſhould not depart from him; according to the engagements of his everlaſting covenant to all true believers. But, as they had not received the truth in love; ſo they had been left to the pride and luſts of their hearts, and to the artifices of ſatan, to be deceived into fatal hereſies, and to ſeparate from the churches of Chriſt; that it might evidently appear, that all they, who profeſſed the goſpel, were not true diſciples. Thus the church was purified; and true chriſtians were approved, and rendered more watchful and humble; whilſt the diſtinction between them, and hypocrites was more ſtrongly marked. (*John.* c. xv. v. 2—6. 1 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 18, 19.)

V. 20—25.] The apoſtle wrote to his fellow chriſtians, for their caution, comfort, and eſtabliſhment; though his obſervations were calculated to put all profeſſors on ſelf-examination, and to prevent new converts from ſelf-deception. However, they, whom he peculiarly addreſſed, had "an unction from the Holy One;" they were anointed by the Spirit, as ſent forth through Chriſt the Holy One of God, to illuminate, ſanctify and conſecrate them, to be a ſpiritual prieſt-hood unto the Father. By his gifts, and influences, they knew all things, that related to the prin-

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jeſus is the Chriſt? He is antichriſt, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father alſo.*

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning ſhall remain in you, ye alſo ſhall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, *even* eternal life.

26 Theſe *things* have I written unto you concerning them that ſeduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the ſame anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he ſhall appear, we may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteouſneſs is born of him.

ciples of Chriſtianity, in a ſpiritual and experimental manner, (*John*, c. xvi. v. 14, 15;) ſo that no Antichriſt could fatally delude them. He had not therefore written to them, becauſe they knew not the truth; for if he had addreſſed perſons of that deſcription, it would have been requiſite for him to have diſcuſſed his ſubject more copiouſly; and after all, he ſhould not have had ſo good hopes of ſucceſs: but he had written to them in particular, becauſe they did know the truth, and that no lie belonged to it, or could conſiſt with it. The general ſelf-evident propoſition was not more certain, than the particular application of it to the deluſions of their ſeducers; whoſe falſe doctrines could not proceed from the ſame ſource with the truth of God: for who was a liar, but the man, who denied that Jeſus was the Chriſt? Some of theſe hereſiarchs denied the Deity of Chriſt; others explained away his incarnation, and ſo denied his humanity, and the reality of his ſufferings; and ſome oppoſed his kingly authority. Thus, whilſt they pretended to retain the name of chriſtians, they virtually denied his Perſon, as the Chriſt the Son of God, and the Son of Man; or his offices, as the anointed Prophet, Prieſt and King of his church: they denied that God was manifeſted in the fleſh, to ranſom the church with his own blood; that in virtue of his one oblation, he might for ever appear in the preſence of God, as our great high Prieſt, and reign over his redeemed people, as his willing ſubjects, to the end of the world, and for ever. Now, whether they denied his divine, or his human nature, his atonement or his authority; they virtually denied Him to be the Chriſt; as they who had the unction of the Holy Spirit would readily perceive. Such a teacher was, therefore, in fact, an Antichriſt, who denied both the Father and the Son; ſeeing the Father can only be known, approached, worſhipped and glorified by ſinners, in, and through his incarnate Son; and they who honour not the Son, honour not the Father that ſent him. (Notes, *Matt.* c. xi. v. 25—27. *John*, c. v. ver. 23.) The denial of the Son was, therefore, a denial of the Father; and the ſupreme Being, the ſuppoſed Deity, which ancient, or modern deniers of the perſonal, or mediatorial honour of the Son have profeſſed to worſhip, was in fact the creature of their own imagination, and not the wiſe, juſt, holy, merciful and faithful God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He, therefore, that denied the Son, had not the Father, as his God, his Friend and his Portion; but he, that in true faith acknowledged the Son, had the Father alſo. This laſt clauſe is printed in Italics, becauſe it is wanting in ſome of the ancient copies; yet it is found in ſo large a majority, that it may fairly be concluded to be genuine. As theſe things were ſo, the apoſtle exhorted his beloved children, to let that abide in them, and ſink deep into their hearts, which they had heard from the beginning of their profeſſion of the goſpel, concerning the Perſon and ſalvation of Chriſt; for if the doctrine which they had at the firſt heard from the apoſtles and evangeliſts, remained in them practically and efficaciouſly; they alſo would continue in union and fellowſhip with the Son, and with the Father through him: and they ought to remember, for their encouragement, and confirmation againſt the artifices of falſe teachers; that the promiſe, which God had irreverſibly given to all true believers, engaged to them eternal life, and felicity, and all things pertaining thereto.

V. 26—29.] Theſe admonitions the apoſtle wrote to his beloved chriſtians, concerning thoſe falſe teachers, who attempted to ſeduce them, and had prevailed with many, that had once belonged to their company, though not truly of them. He meant, as an inſtrument in the Lord's hand, to caution and fortify them, againſt the ſpecious inſinuations of deceivers: but in reſpect of real believers, the anointing, which they had received of Chriſt, abode in them, as an incorruptible principle of life, light, and ſpiritual diſcernment: ſo that they needed not that any man ſhould teach them; except as that ſame anointing taught them; and by ſtirring up their pure minds, in the way of remembrance; for by this teaching of God himſelf, they were inſtructed in all things, eſſential to ſalvation, and could not be fatally deluded. Now this teaching was altogether truth, and no lie; they could not, therefore, have any occaſion to change the doctrine, which they had thus received by the inſtrumentality of apoſtles and evangeliſts, for any new improvements, as if it had been a falſhood. On the contrary, they who wanted to induce them to this change, evidently aimed to ſeduce them from the truth to believe a lie; whereas the apoſtle only ſought to eſtabliſh them in the truth, that had been preached to them, with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven: and indeed, they

CHAP. III.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Admiring the love of God, in making believers his children, and giving them preſent privileges, and the hope of an inconceivable felicity; and ſhewing them that this hope was always connected with holineſs, which diſtinguiſhed God's children from thoſe of the devil, 1---10. *2d. Repreſenting love of the brethren, as the diſtinguiſhing evidence of converſion; explaining the nature and effects of that love, and contraſting it with enmity and ſelfiſhneſs; and ſtating the confidence in God, which was connected with love, and a conſcientious obedience to his commandments,* 11---22.

who had thus been taught would abide in *him,* or in *it,* in Chriſt, or in the truth of his goſpel. He therefore needed only to exhort them, with all parental affection, to abide in *Him,* or in Chriſt; for the apoſtle's mind, being full of thoughts about, and warm affections towards his beloved Lord, ſpake frequently of him, by a pronoun without an antecedent, and ſo without naming him. Let them, then, adhere ſtedfaſtly to the truth of the goſpel; live in a conſtant dependance on Chriſt by faith, for every thing; attend diligently on his ordinances, and yield a loving ſimple obedience to his commandments: and thus, they might be aſſured, that when he ſhould appear to judge the world; they would not be aſhamed, as all hypocrites and apoſtates will be; but would have confidence before him, as his approved ſervants, at this his ſecond coming, and amidſt all the ſolemn and important events of that deciſive ſeaſon. In this, the apoſtle joined himſelf; intimating, that he took the ſame method of preparing for the coming of his Lord and Judge, as he recommended to them; and that their abiding in Chriſt would then increaſe *his* confidence and joy. As they therefore could not but know, that He, their Lord and Saviour, was righteous; ſo they might be aſſured, that all, who habitually practiſed righteouſneſs, as what they loved and delighted in, were born of Him, by the regeneration of his Spirit, and ſo were the children of God, and the heirs of heaven. So that abiding in Chriſt, and bringing forth much fruit, by working righteouſneſs, was the proper method of preparing to meet him in judgment with confidence and joy. The expreſſion, *born of Him,* which is moſt obviouſly interpreted of Chriſt, of whom the apoſtle ſpake; and thus becoming the Sons of God, (c. iii. v 1,) clearly ſhews what John believed concerning his Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The goſpel, when well underſtood, and duly received, ſets the heart againſt all ſin, and effectually prevents the allowed practice of it: at the ſame time, that it gives the moſt bleſſed relief to the wounded conſciences of thoſe, that have ſinned; by the hope of pardon, through our Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and his all-ſufficient propitiation. Thus the divine original of the ſcriptures is evinced; by the commenſurate ſuitableneſs of the remedy therein propoſed, to the actual ſtate of men in this evil world: whilſt all other ſchemes are founded on principles, that are unreal; and therefore they are totally inapplicable to the caſe, and cannot effectually bring peace to the conſcience, and lead the heart to abhor all iniquity. Whilſt we ſeek for grace to make a holy uſe of the interceſſion and atonement of our heavenly Advocate; and encourage our fellow chriſtians to do the ſame; we ſhould remember, that "He is the "propitiation, not for our ſins only, but for thoſe of the "whole world;" and, therefore, if any ſinner, in any part of the earth, is made willing to accept of this ſalvation, he will ſurely be made partaker of it: and we ſhould deſire and endeavour, by every proper means, to be the inſtruments of bringing others to ſhare with us in ſo precious a benefit. But we ſhould alſo be afraid of abuſing the abundant proviſion of the goſpel for the forgiveneſs of our ſins, into an encouragement to diſobedience: "hereby we know that we know Chriſt, if we keep his "commandments;" and "he is a liar, and the truth is "not in him," who pretends to know him, and does not habitually obey him. What then ſhall we ſay to the unguarded language of ſome perſons, who have argued, or aſſerted, that ſanctification is not the proper ground of aſſurance, and evidence of our juſtification; and that it is *legal* for men to look to their works as the proof of their being true believers, &c? We can only ſay, that they directly contradict the apoſtle, and that, therefore, they are moſt certainly miſtaken. "Whoſo, "then, keepeth the word of Chriſt, in him verily is "the love of God perfected." By this, apoſtles knew that they were in Chriſt, and by the ſame means we muſt know it alſo, if we would not deceive ourſelves: he, therefore, that *ſaith* he abideth "in Chriſt, ought him"ſelf ſo to walk, even as he walked;" and no competent judge will believe his aſſertion, if his ſpirit and conduct habitually be contrary to thoſe of his Lord; for at laſt he will be found to be the beſt chriſtian, who hath moſt cloſely copied Chriſt's example. Theſe are no new commandments, or declarations, but the ſame, which the diſciples have heard from the beginning; though ſome perſons affect to treat them as novelties, even as others do the peculiar doctrines of a gratuitous ſalvation. Chriſtianity, inſtead of rendering the love of God and men, and good works ſuperfluous and unneceſſary, furniſhes us with new motives, and lays us under further obligations to abound in them, and it gives us new directions concerning the love of our neighbours, by requiring the love to our brethren for Chriſt's ſake, and that of our enemies after the example of his love *to us.* As theſe things are true and important, according to His conduct towards his redeemed people, and their peculiar privileges and obligations; becauſe the darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth: ſo we muſt remember, that hatred of our brethren, or neighbours, and the prevalence of any malignant paſſion, is proportionably a proof, that a man is ſtill in darkneſs. The degree of our holy love is the proper criterion and ſtandard of our illumination; as well as the beſt preſervative from ſin, and active principle of obedience. He that moſt loveth his brother, abideth in the cleareſt light, and will be beſt kept from ſtumbling, or from occaſioning the falls of others; but he, who is of a virulent, ſelfiſh, and malicious temper, however he may

CHAP III.

BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the ſons of God,

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boaſt of his knowledge, walketh in darkneſs, and is in the road to deſtruction; though he is not at all aware whither he is going, becauſe the darkneſs, and the prince of darkneſs have blinded his eyes. Theſe things demand our cloſeſt attention, and moſt ſerious ſelf-examination; and ſhould lead us earneſtly to pray, that God would ſhew us what we are, and whither we are going?

But when there is real faith *that worketh by love*, even little children and weak believers may be aſſured, that their ſins are forgiven them, for the ſake of Chriſt: and though there are different degrees of growth, ſtrength, knowledge, and every grace, among the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty; and though ſome of them have obtained more victories over the wicked one, or are more fit for active ſervice, or to give wiſe counſel, than others are; yet they are all alike dear to their heavenly Father. They all have ſome knowledge of, and love to him; and, through his word abiding in them, he will lead forth the young ones of his family to the ſame victories, and train them up to a meaſure of the ſame vigour and maturity, to which others have already attained. But all, who would ſhare theſe bleſſings, muſt be careful, not to love the world, or any of it's polluting vanities: this idolatry, remaining unſubdued in the hearts of many profeſſors, hath occaſioned their apoſtacy, or total unfruitfulneſs: nay, through ſome remains of it, numbers are kept from comfort and aſſurance; their ſpiritual life continues low and feeble; they are mere babes, or dwarfs to the end of their days; and enter eternity, before they know what will become of them. Indeed all that is in the world, as it is apoſtate, and ſo the kingdom of the devil, is diametrically oppoſite to the holineſs, ſpirituality, temperance, humility, and lowlineſs of the chriſtian religion: it's pleaſures, intereſts, pomps and honours, can only excite and ſtrengthen the vileſt propenſities of our fallen nature, which it is our great buſineſs and intereſt to ſubdue and crucify. The purſuit, acquiſition, or enjoyment of them, only tend to pollution and condemnation; they are ſoon paſſing away, to be poſſeſſed no more; whilſt the portion of him that doeth the will of God, ſhall be for ever. Yet are theſe vanities ſo alluring to the remains of corruption in our hearts; that without conſtant watching and prayer, we cannot eſcape from, or obtain victory over, the world, and him, who is the god and prince of it. Let us then endeavour to ſearch out, and caſt from us the reliques of this original and univerſal idolatry: then ſhall we be leſs liable to be deceived by the ſeductions of thoſe many antichriſts, who, in every age and place, endeavour to corrupt the goſpel, and to oppoſe the honour, and cauſe of Chriſt. Many thus go out from us, but they were not of us: at leaſt they never were true believers; for if they had belonged to that bleſſed company, they would no doubt have continued with them: but indeed damnable hereſies as much prove the faith of profeſſors, as furious perſecutions do; though in another way. The unction from the Holy One alone can teach that knowledge, which will ſurely preſerve a man from ſuch deluſions: and when we are *thus* eſtabliſhed in the great truths of the goſpel; we ſhall know that no lie is of the truth; and ſhall therefore diſregard the eloquence, learning, ingenuity, and confidence of thoſe, who contradict the Bible; and be ſatisfied with oppoſing the expreſs teſtimony of the truth itſelf, to their well varniſhed, and ably defended lies. We ſhall in this manner moſt clearly perceive, that every man is an antichriſt, who denieth the Perſon, or any of the offices of Chriſt; and that in denying the Son, he denieth the Father alſo, and hath no part in his favour, whilſt he rejects his great ſalvation. Candour and liberality of ſentiment are good words; bigotry, fanaticiſm, and a contracted mind ſound very harſh: but let us not aſpire to the reputation of liberality, or deſire to eſcape reproach, more than the apoſtles did. Whilſt we judge favourably of, and live in love with, all, who truſt in Chriſt as a divine Saviour, and obey his word; let us pity and pray for thoſe deluded men who deny the Deity and atonement of Chriſt, and the work of his new-creating Spirit; and yet proteſt againſt their antichriſtian doctrine, and refuſe all needleſs intercouſe with them. Let them that abide in all, who have profeſſed the goſpel, or would be deemed chriſtians, which was taught the primitive diſciples; that they may continue in the Son, and in the Father; and that the promiſe of eternal life may belong to them. Theſe things are peculiarly needful to be written to profeſſors at this day, concerning thoſe that ſeduce them, and would perſuade them, that it is of no conſequence what they believe concerning the Perſon, or doctrine of Chriſt. This faſhionable ſpecies of infidelity directly contradicts the whole word of God, and in fact does its utmoſt to antiquate the Bible as an uſeleſs book, in theſe days of wiſdom and illumination! We ſhould deſire to teach no man any thing, except what the Holy Spirit hath taught us in his word, to which our appeal muſt be made; and the ſame Spirit teaches all thoſe, who partake of his ſacred anointing, the grand truths of the word, though they may be left to differ in leſs eſſential matters. May we then receive from Chriſt more and more of his anointing, to abide in us, and to illuminate our minds in the truth, unmixed with error; that we may abide in it, even as they did, who of old adhered to the doctrine of the holy apoſtles: and let all, who profeſs the truth, and appear to have come to Chriſt, abide in Him; without liſtening to the ſuggeſtions of any modern *illuminators* of mankind; that when our Judge ſhall appear, we may all, with prophets and apoſtles, have confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming. Yet, let us not hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, but remember that they only are born of God, who bear his holy Image, and walk before Him in his moſt righteous ways.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—3.] The apoſtle, having declared, that they, who did righteouſneſs, were born of God; here brake out into a joyful and admiring view of and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know that, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.

4 Whoſoever committeth ſin tranſgreſſeth alſo the law: for ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.

5 And ye know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins; and in him is no ſin.

6 Whoſoever abideth in him ſinneth not: whoſoever ſinneth hath not ſeen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth ſin is of the devil; for the devil ſinneth from the beginning. For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.

9 Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifeſted, and the children of the devil: whoſoever doeth not righteouſneſs is not of God,

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the love of the eternal Father, in having beſtowed on them the unſpeakable honour and felicity of being called his *children*. What manner of love was this, or by what words could it be deſcribed? Whether *His* majeſty, purity, and juſtice; or *their* guilt, vileneſs, and miſery were deſcribed; whether the bleſſing conferred on them, or the method, in which it was beſtowed, were contemplated; the love of the Father therein muſt be adored, as paſſing knowledge, and comprehenſion. Indeed the world of ungodly men, among whom the children of God lived, commonly in poverty, affliction, and contempt, would not acknowledge their claims, approve their character, or deſire their privileges: but this was the effect of their ignorance of God, and contempt of, and alienation from, his holy excellency; ſo that when the only-begotten Son of the Father appeared on earth, they knew him not, but rejected, deſpiſed, and crucified him. But whatever the world thought of them; true believers, even in their afflicted condition on earth, were the children of God, regenerate, adopted into his family, the ſpecial objects of his love, and the heirs of his kingdom: and, whatever their trials were, their Almighty Father would ſurely protect, provide for, comfort, and bleſs them. It did not indeed then appear, what, or how glorious they would at length be; nor could even the beloved apoſtle frame an adequate conception of heaven, and its ineffable felicities, which would be ennobling and rapturous beyond all his thoughts. Yet, they knew in general, that when He, even Chriſt, or God in human nature, ſhould be manifeſted; his believing people would be made completely like him, both in the incorruptibility of their bodies, and the perfect holineſs of their ſouls: for in the beatific viſion, when the eyes of the Lord's people ſhall behold his glory in the Perſon of Chriſt, and their ſouls will know his fulneſs and excellency by immediate perception; the beholding of him *as he is* will complete the renewal of the divine image upon them, and for ever deſtroy all unholy affections; and thus they will be prepared for the conſummate, unalloyed, and moſt felicitating enjoyment of God, in, and through, Jeſus Chriſt, of which we can gain the moſt remote idea. But wherever the regenerating Spirit of God had produced this genuine hope in a man's heart; it would certainly induce him to deſire, and follow after holineſs, as the preparation for, and anticipation of, his final happineſs: for he, who expected to be perfectly happy, when fully conformed to the holy image of the divine Saviour; would alſo be aſſured that his preſent comfort muſt be proportioned to his ſanctification; the aſſurance, that his labour in following after holineſs would not be in vain, would alſo give energy to his endeavours; nor would he ever reſt ſatisfied with his attainments, ſo long as ſin remained in him: but he would uſe all means, and wait on God for the performance of his promiſes; till all his affections and powers were fully ſanctified, all ſinful paſſions deſtroyed, all holy diſpoſitions perfected, and all his words and actions made conformable to thoſe of his beloved Lord. But as this can never be fully attained in this life; the true chriſtian's diligence, in purifying himſelf as Chriſt is pure, muſt be continued till death: then, the ſoul will be admitted into his preſence, and perfected in his likeneſs: but the complete conformity of the chriſtian to his Lord, in body and ſoul, will not be, till the reſurrection.

V. 4—10.] According to what had before been obſerved, they, who did not follow after holineſs, could not poſſeſs the genuine hope of the goſpel: but the apoſtle further remarked, that he, who committed, or practiſed ſin, tranſgreſſed alſo the law, or violated, and directly oppoſed, the authority, and requirements of the moral law; (for the ceremonial cannot here be intended.) Thus it was taken for granted, that the holy law of God was the rule of conduct to all his true ſervants; and that none of them wilfully and habitually did any thing contrary to it. For ſin is a tranſgreſſion of the law, or a *lawleſs conduct*. Whatever, in any degree, exceeds, comes ſhort of, or deviates from the law; and in thought, word, or deed is not perfectly coincident with it, is ſin, a violation of the law, and deſerves death, according to the covenant of works: but an habitual commiſſion of ſin tends to the deſtruction of the law and its authority, and can never be allowed of, by any diſciple of Chriſt. For, they know, that He was manifeſted in human nature, to take away the ſins of his people, by atoning for their guilt, and by renewing them to his own holy image. Moreover, in him was no ſin, and the perfection of his holineſs, and actual neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the meſſage that ye heard from the beginning, that we ſhould love one another.

12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and ſlew his brother. And wherefore ſlew he him? Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

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obedience, both magnified the precept of the law, made him a proper Perſon to be a ſacrifice for ſin, and was intended as an example to his people. Whoſoever, therefore, abides in Chriſt, as united to, and maintaining communion with him, doth not ſin, in his allowed and general conduct: and whoſoever ſinneth wilfully and habitually, hath never ſeen the glory of Chriſt by faith, or had any experimental, ſaving knowledge of him; or he would be transformed, in a meaſure, into the Holy Image of Him, in whom there was no ſin. The apoſtle, therefore warned his beloved children, as others before had done; (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 9. *Gal.* c. vi. v. 7. *Eph.* c. v. ver. 6. *James*, c. i. v. 22. 2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 9;) not to let any man deceive them, by plauſible pretences, into an opinion, that they might live in habitual ſin, and yet be true chriſtians! For he, who practiſed righteouſneſs, as his buſineſs and delight, was a righteous man; and his conformity to Chriſt, (being righteous as he was righteous,) was the proper evidence of his intereſt by faith in his vicarious obedience and propitiation. On the other hand, he who committed ſin, as his buſineſs and delight, was evidently of the devil's party, family, and diſpoſition; as he was the firſt ſinner, and had practiſed rebellion and iniquity from the beginning, and had no pleaſure in, or appetite for any thing elſe. But it muſt be impoſſible to imitate, and adhere to, the devil, and at the ſame time to be a diſciple of Chriſt: ſeeing the Son of God was manifeſted, for the ſingle, and expreſs purpoſe of deſtroying, aboliſhing, or undoing the works of the devil, in behalf of all his people. He came to deliver them from that condemnation and ſlavery, into which the influence and temptations of ſatan, had reduced them and all mankind; and to reſtore them to the favour, image, and ſervice of God. This was done by atoning for, and pardoning their guilt, and by a new creation of their ſouls to holineſs: but whilſt men lived habitually in pride, infidelity, impiety, injuſtice, fraud, cruelty, malice, intemperance, or licentiouſneſs; or in the neglect of a ſober, righteous and godly life; it could not be ſuppoſed, that the works of the devil had been deſtroyed, or his fortifications in their hearts caſt down, by the power of Chriſt. Conſequently the end of his incarnation and humiliation had not been anſwered in reſpect of them; and therefore they could not be warranted to account themſelves his diſciples. For all, that belonged to Chriſt, and were intereſted in him, were born of God; (Notes, *John*, c. iii. v. 1—8;) and none, who was thus regenerate, lived in the commiſſion of any allowed ſin: becauſe the incorruptible ſeed of the divine word, being made to grow and live in his heart by the Holy Spirit, remained in him, and rendered it impoſſible, that he could ſin with allowance, continuance, and ſatisfaction: even as a fiſh cannot live out of water, becauſe it is out of its element, and can only languiſh and die, unleſs it be put again into it. This muſt be all that the apoſtle's general words can mean: becauſe, if ſtrictly taken they would not only prove, that ſome men are perfect, but that all regenerate perſons were incapable of ſinning any more for ever; an inference, which no man, who either reads the Bible, or the book of man, will ever admit. But general declarations of this kind muſt always be explained according to the argument of the ſacred writer: otherwiſe, an antinomian may prove, that God juſtifies thoſe, that are in every ſenſe ungodly, and who never do good works, of any kind, or for any purpoſe, as long as they live, (*Rom.* c. iv. ver. 4, 5:) and a man, who runs into the other extreme may prove, that all God's children are perfectly ſinleſs, and that no regenerate perſon can poſſibly fall into any ſin. But ſcripture muſt be explained by itſelf, and ſoberly; and the context evidently ſhews, that the apoſtle ſpake of an allowed practice of ſome habitual ſin: this he declared to be impoſſible to the regenerate, and a full proof of a man's being the child of the devil. For in this eſpecially, the children of God, and the children of the devil, were manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from one another: and he, who did not practiſe righteouſneſs was not of God; whatever his creed, profeſſion, gifts, or pretended experience might be: nay, this was to be carried to ſo great a ſtrictneſs; that he who loved not his brother, but ſhewed a ſelfiſh, envious, and malignant ſpirit, in his general conduct, was not to be accounted one of God's family, but one of Satan's.

V. 11, 12.] The meſſage, which had been delivered from the beginning, to chriſtians, in the name of their Lord, had eſpecially required them to love one another, as the diſtinguiſhing evidence of being diſciples. They were not, therefore, to be conſidered as chriſtians, who were manifeſtly deſtitute of this grace; but were to be ranked with Cain, who, being a profeſſed worſhipper of God, ſhewed himſelf to be of that wicked one, the devil, by envying, hating and murdering his brother Abel. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* c. iv.) But for what cauſe did he commit this atrocious murder? What provocation had he received? What injury had been done him? Truly none at all: but he hated the holy image of God in Abel, and the example of his humility, faith, and piety; he was angry with God for accepting his brother's oblation in preference to his; and ſo he was enraged to that degree, that he ſlew him, becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

V. 13—15.] As this was the genuine temper of the children of the devil, who had deſpiſed, hated, and crucified Chriſt for the ſame reaſon: ſo chriſtians ought

15 Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, becauſe he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

17 But whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels *of compaſſion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

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not to wonder, that the world hated them; ſeeing the men of the world were in ſubjection to the wicked One, and under his influence, as the children of his family. Indeed no chriſtian, who was well acquainted with the heart of man, could wonder at any effects of the contempt and enmity of ungodly people againſt the children of God; for it was the moſt unequivocal proof, that themſelves had paſſed from that ſtate of condemnation and ſpiritual death, in which they all once lay, into a ſtate of life, and acceptance with God; when they were conſcious that they loved the brethren. Humble diſintereſted love of men, for the Lord's ſake, is indeed a good evidence of regeneration: but it is manifeſt that the apoſtle ſpake of the love of chriſtians, as ſuch. Naturally they all were diſpoſed to deſpiſe, hate, deride, revile, and injure thoſe, who profeſſed the truths of the goſpel, bare the image of Chriſt, and were ſpiritual worſhippers and ſervants of God, through Him: they had once been ready to deem them unſociable, preciſe, moroſe and troubleſome fanatics, or hypocrites; and to ſhun, and diſlike them as ſuch. But, being born of God, and having thus paſſed from death unto life, they were made congenial with them in judgment and diſpoſition; and thus they were brought to love, eſteem, honour, ſympathize with, do good to, and take pleaſure in them, as the excellent of the earth. This affection for them was not on account of their belonging to the ſame party, or holding the ſame notions; but, becauſe it appeared to them, that they loved Chriſt, bare his image, and were devoted to his ſervice. Thus "they had purified their hearts, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren:" (1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 22:) but, on the other hand, he, who did not love his brother, even every one of thoſe, who appeared to be chriſtians, with cordial affection, and indeed every one of his neighbours, with good-will, abode ſtill in death, condemned, and unregenerate. "For whoſoever hated his brother was a murderer;" that is, he had the heart of a murderer; and the pride, ſelfiſhneſs, envy, and malice, that habitually ruled therein, conſtituted the root of bitterneſs, whence murder naturally ſprings; ſo that, if all reſtraints had been removed, and ſuitable temptations interpoſed, the act of murder would have infallibly been the conſequence. And they "knew, that no murderer had eternal life abiding in him;" that is, no one, who had habitually the heart of a murderer, and a diſpoſition to perpetrate that crime, could be a regenerate perſon, or partaker of the Spirit of Chriſt. No doubt David, when in one dreadful inſtance he was guilty of murder, had eternal life abiding in him; nor is there any ſingle ſin, into which it is impoſſible for a regenerate man to fall: but the apoſtle was ſhewing, that no true believer could live in habitual ſin: and he ſtated, that he, who loved not his brother, did in effect hate him; and he who habitually hated his brother, was conſtantly of the temper of a murderer; that is, he bare the image, and was of the diſpoſition of the devil, and therefore was one of his children; and not one of the children of a God of love.

V. 16, 17.] The effects of genuine love of the brethren required to be aſcertained; and this might be underſtood, by conſidering the love of God to ſinners. The reality, and immenſity of his love was perceived eſpecially, in that He, in the perſon of Chriſt, as incarnate, laid down his life for his people, to atone for their ſins, and ranſom their ſouls. Many copies read *His love*, and not *the love of God*; ſo that the ſame weight cannot be laid upon this paſſage, as on a ſimilar one. (*Acts*, c. xx. v. 28.) If this love of Emmanuel to loſt ſinners was duly conſidered, it muſt appear, that chriſtians were required, according to the perfection of their rule and example, to lay down their lives for their brethren, when the caſe was urgent, and a proportionable good might be done by it; and, therefore, all leſſer things ought ſurely to be given up for their benefit, when circumſtances called for it. If then a man had "this world's good;" and poſſeſſed what was ſufficient for his own neceſſary expences, and had ſome to ſpare for indulgence, or to hoard up: and ſhould ſee his brother have need, through ſickneſs, calamity, or diſtreſs; yet, inſtead of chearfully ſupplying his wants, from his own abundance, ſhould ſhut up his bowels from him, and ſtifle his compaſſionate feelings, through reluctancy to be at the expence of relieving him, and ſo leave him in want and miſery: how could it be thought that the love of God abode in that man's heart? By what could it be known, that he had a true ſenſe of the love of Chriſt for periſhing ſinners, when he laid down his life for them? or that the love of God had ever been planted in his heart by the Holy Spirit? as the love of the world, and its good, (c. ii. v. 15—17,) overcame and ſtifled the riſings of compaſſion to his ſuffering brother. Every inſtance, and degree of this ſelfiſhneſs muſt weaken the evidence of a man's converſion: and when it is habitual and allowed, it muſt decide againſt him, that he doth not belong to God; but more reſembles Cain; ſeeing he would rather leave the children of God to ſuffer, or die, than part with his money to alleviate their ſorrows or ſave their lives. This might be deemed *conſtructive murder*; as ſuch a man refuſed to preſerve life, when it was in his power, and his bounden duty, to do it: and if the Lord had acted thus towards ſinners and enemies, we muſt all have periſhed.

V. 18—22.] (Note, *James*, c. ii. v. 13—17.) From

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandments, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight:

23 And this is his commandment, That we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

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the preceding conſiderations the apoſtle earneſtly admoniſhed his dear children to love one another, and their poor brethren and neighbours, "not in word, neither in "tongue," or merely in profeſſion, and with kind and obliging language; "but in deed and in truth," ſhewing the ſincerity and ſtrength of their affection for them, by their actions, and in ſelf-denying liberal communication to the ſupply of their wants. If they did this, from faith in, and love to Chriſt, they would "thereby "know, that they were of the truth;" theſe fruits of the Spirit would ſhew that they held the truth in love, and experienced the power of it on their hearts: and ſo they would be able "to aſſure their hearts before "God," in humble confidence of his acceptance, and enlarged expectations of having all their wants ſupplied from the riches of his liberality. But they could not have this warranted aſſurance of his love, if they allowed themſelves in known ſin, or the neglect of known duty: for if their own hearts and conſciences condemned them of ſecret wickedneſs, or of ſelfiſh diſregard to the diſtreſſes of their brethren; they could not but know, "that God was greater than their hearts, and knew all "things;" and the conſideration of his acquaintance with all their ſins, his holy hatred of them, his impartial juſtice, and his Almighty power, muſt fill them with fears of his vengeance, and prevent their confidence in Him. For if they could not but decide againſt themſelves, when made judges in their own cauſe, notwithſtanding their partial ſelf-love, their inſenſibility to the odiouſneſs of their ſins, and their proneneſs to forget them and their aggravations; how could they hope to ſtand in judgment before the infinite God? According to the law, and the covenant of works, every man's heart muſt condemn him; in proportion as he knows his rule, and examines himſelf according to it. Even, according to the goſpel, every man's heart muſt condemn him of hypocriſy, who lives in allowed habitual ſin: unleſs his conſcience be ſeared, and God have given him up to be judicially blinded, and hardened. Nay, when true believers are betrayed into any known ſin, of omiſſion, or commiſſion; they are arraigned at the tribunal of their own hearts, and condemned for it; and their confidence in God is weakened, till deep humiliation, and faith in the atoning blood for pardon, make way for the renewal of their peace, and the revival of their confidence: and, if, through more grievous declenſions, their conſciences loſe this ſalutary, though painful ſenſibility; ſevere corrections will ſurely be employed, as the merciful means of preventing their total ruin. But if the hearts of chriſtians, did not condemn them, of any allowed, or unrepented ſin, or neglect of duty; then had they confidence towards God, through the Spirit of adoption, and by faith in their great High-Prieſt; and thus coming to the throne of grace, they might aſk what they would of their reconciled Father, and would certainly receive it, (if good for them;) becauſe their conduct evidenced the reality of their repentance and faith; as they uprightly kept his commandments, and habitually did thoſe things, that were pleaſing in his ſight. And he had eſpecially commanded ſinners by the goſpel, to believe in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and to come to him pleading his name and merits; that they might thus receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and all the bleſſings of ſalvation; and that, for Chriſt's ſake, and after his example, they ſhould love one another, in a forgiving, compaſſionate, liberal, and ſelf-denying manner; even as Chriſt had given them commandment. He, therefore, who uprightly obeyed theſe commandments, and others connected with them; was thereby proved to "dwell in" "Chriſt," his ark, refuge, and reſt, and in the Father through Him; and it was alſo manifeſt, that Chriſt dwelt in him, as the Lord of his affections, and as exerciſing his power, and diſplaying his glory in, and by him: and it was known, that this myſtical union ſubſiſted between Chriſt and their ſouls, by the Spirit, which he had given them. This could not relate to the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit, which were no full proof of this gracious indwelling; but to his new-creating energy, producing holy love, and renewing the image of Chriſt on their ſouls, and then witneſſing with their ſpirits, that they were the children of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We can never ſufficiently admire the love, which the Father hath beſtowed upon us, or rejoice in our own felicity; if indeed we are numbered among the children of God! Who and what were we, or what had we done; that the infinite Lord ſhould condeſcend thus to notice and diſtinguiſh us? What manner of love was this, that He ſhould ſo redeem, regenerate, adopt and bleſs, ſuch worthleſs worms, ſuch guilty polluted rebels! doubtleſs it was vaſt beyond conception, and incapable of being illuſtrated by any compariſon! May we then be followers of him, as his dear children; and thus ſhew our ſenſe of his unſpeakable mercy, and expreſs that obedient, grateful, and humble mind, which becomes us. Should the world diſown, and deride our pretenſions, of being the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty; or even treat us with the utmoſt contempt, enmity and cruelty:

CHAP. IV.

Contains 1ſt. Cautions againſt pretenders to inſpiration, and directions for diſtinguiſhing the Spirit of truth, from that of error, 1--6. 2d. Exhortations to love, enforced by the example of God in giving his Son for ſinners; and various conſiderations tending to ſhew the neceſſity, benefit, and efficacy of this ſacred affection, 7--21.

we may recollect, "that the world by wiſdom knew not "God:" and that even his profeſſed worſhippers knew not "the Brightneſs of his glory, the expreſs Image of his "Perſon;" but crucified him, whom all angels worſhip! But as they could not exclude the Firſt-born from his inheritance; ſo neither will they be able to prevent the eternal felicity of thoſe, whom he graciouſly owns as his brethren. Even in our loweſt eſtate, and under our heavieſt trials, we are the children of God, if we indeed believe in Jeſus Chriſt; and we ſhall experience ſuch conſolations, and poſſeſs ſuch hopes, as will ſupport us under our tranſient ſorrows: but none on earth can conceive, in an adequate manner, the nature of "that exceeding "and eternal weight of glory," into which we are ſoon to enter! However, though it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; enough is known to animate us to the conflict: for what more can the believer deſire, than to behold his beloved Saviour, as he is, in all his inexpreſſible glory, to be perfected in his image, filled with his love, and enabled to praiſe and ſerve him in a manner worthy of his infinite excellency, and his own immenſe obligations? But let none ſuppoſe that this holy hope is in them, if they do not now deſire, purſue, and practiſe holineſs: for *every man*, without exception, in whoſe heart it is planted by the holy Spirit "purifieth himſelf," in dependance on the grace and in contemplation of the glory, of Chriſt, unto increaſing conformity to his perfect purity. This diſtinguiſhes the living hope of God's children, from the preſumption of all kinds of hypocrites. The Redeemer did not magnify the law and make it honourable, that his diſciples might violate, and deſpiſe it; but that they might be delivered from its righteous condemnation, and taught to obey, and delight in, its moſt holy and reaſonable precepts. As in him was no ſin; ſo none, that abide in him, allow themſelves in any tranſgreſſion of the divine law: and he, who habitually committeth ſin, hath not ſeen, or known Chriſt; and is miſerably deluded, if he thinks he has. Let then, no inexperienced perſon, ſuffer any man to deceive him, in ſo important a matter: for, whatever interpretation we put on the apoſtle's expreſſions, in order to render them conſiſtent with other parts of God's word: yet they muſt prove, beyond all reaſonable doubt, that he only is righteous before God, as a juſtified believer, who is taught, and diſpoſed by the renewal of the Holy Spirit, to practiſe univerſal righteouſneſs, in the general tenor of his conduct: and that a man's conformity to Chriſt's example is the only adequate evidence of his being intereſted in his redemption. Moreover, all, that are not of God's family, as regenerate perſons, are of the devil; and whilſt they copy his example, who ſinneth from the beginning, they are no doubt his children; and will be heirs of his inheritance, if they die unchanged. For the Son of God was manifeſted on purpoſe to deſtroy the works of the devil: ſo that, they cannot have received the ſpecial benefit of his incarnation; in whoſe hearts the works of the devil are not deſtroyed, in any degree; but who ſtill continue, proud, ſelfiſh, ſenſual, malicious, envious, and alienated from the life of piety, purity and righteouſneſs. Whoſoever is born of God, doth not *commit* ſin: yea he cannot do it; for his new nature, the divine ſeed, that remaineth in him, effectually hinders him: even unallowed deficiencies, or ſuch tranſgreſſions, as he may be ſometimes betrayed into, give him the moſt poignant diſtreſs; and it is impoſſible, that he can live in habitual known ſin, or take any pleaſure in ſuch a courſe; becauſe it is impoſſible to deſtroy the principle of divine life, and ſenſibility of conſcience, that hath been communicated by the regenerating Spirit; or to turn again *the heart of fleſh* into an unfeeling ſtone. In this the children of God are manifeſted, and the children of the devil: and whoſoever doeth not righteouſneſs is not of God. May all profeſſors of the goſpel lay theſe truths to heart and examine themſelves by them: and let all miniſters be ſure, as they will anſwer it before the Lord Jeſus at the day of judgment, to inſiſt fully on theſe topics, and make them plain to their hearers: for numbers are moſt certainly deceived by vain words; ſin on that grace may abound; make the lamented fact of a believer's liableneſs to be overcome by temptation, a palliation of their habitual wickedneſs; and hope for heaven, whilſt living in the ſecret, nay perhaps, the open commiſſion of thoſe things, for which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of diſobedience.

In aſcertaining our ſtate and character, as well as in enquiring after our duty, it behoves us to advert eſpecially to the meſſage, delivered to chriſtians from the beginning, to love one another. For the children of God, are diſtinguiſhed by humble, harmleſs, and ſelf-denying love; as thoſe of the devil are by proud, ſelfiſh, and miſchievous hatred: the former love all men, and deſire the happineſs of thoſe, whoſe crimes they deteſt, and whoſe ſociety they ſhun; though the houſhold of faith attracts their ſpecial affection, and are the objects of their cordial eſtimation and complacency: but the children of the wicked one, whilſt they live in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another, above all, deſpiſe, revile, envy, deteſt, and perſecute thoſe, who bear the image, profeſs the truth, worſhip the name, love the cauſe, and ſeek the glory of Chriſt. For they are like Cain, who was of that wicked one, and ſlew his brother; merely, becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Whilſt we remember, that the ſame nature belongs to, and the ſame ſpirit works in, all the children of diſobedience, as prompted Cain to murder Abel, and the Jews to crucify the holy Jeſus; we cannot marvel if the world hate us; nor ought we to be diſconcerted, by any inſults or injuries, that we meet with: and, if indeed we love the brethren; we may know, that we have paſſed from our natural ſtate of enmity and ſpiritual death, and are brought into the company of thoſe, who are alive to God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. But if this radical grace be wholly wanting; the moſt plauſible

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CHAP. IV.

BELOVED, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is of God:

3 And every ſpirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is not of God: and this is that *ſpirit* of antichriſt, whereof

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profeſſor abideth in death; yea he is a murderer in his heart, he bears the image of ſatan, and hath not eternal life abiding in him. Nor is it enough for us to avoid expreſs malice and revenge: our love of our brethren, of our neighbours, and even of our enemies, muſt be poſitive and active, like that of our God and Saviour, who laid down his life for thoſe, whom he loved when enemies, in order that he might make them his friends and brethren. (*John*, c. xv. v. 12—15.) If then it may ſometimes be our duty, to lay down our lives for our brethren; ſurely we are bound continually, to labour, expend, and deny ourſelves, in various ways, to alleviate their ſorrows, and promote their good; as circumſtances may require, and opportunities are given us! What then ſhall we ſay to ſuch profeſſors of the goſpel, as are rich in this world, and either hoard the greateſt part of their wealth, or ſpend it in gratifying "the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, "or the pride of life;" whilſt they behold their poor brethren in diſtreſs, and refuſe to pity them, or to part with any due proportion of their abundance for their relief? How can it be thought, that the love of God dwelleth in them? How can they help dreading "judgment without, "mercy, who have ſhewn ſo little mercy?" Or how can "they ſuppoſe themſelves followers of Chriſt, when this world's good is more valued by them, than his example, commandment, glory, and favour; or the comfort, and lives of their brethren? (2 *Cor*. c. viii. v. 9.) But all chriſtians, whether rich, or poor, ſhould be careful to love one another, not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth; leaving cheap and hollow compliments to the children of the wicked one, as the neceſſary varniſh of their ſelfiſhneſs. Thus, in proportion as grace expands our hearts in love, and the fruits of it abound in our conduct, we ſhall know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before God: and there can be no reaſonable doubt, but that chriſtians would in general be more ſatisfied of their acceptance, and enjoy more abundant conſolation; if they were more diligent, ſelf-denying, and liberal, in adminiſtering to the relief and comfort of their brethren. But when our hearts condemn us, of acting contrary to our duty, and inconſiſtent with our profeſſion; the conſideration of the greatneſs, holineſs, and omniſcience of God, muſt weaken our confidence; and give us apprehenſions of being dealt with after our own meaſure of niggardlineſs, and ſeverity: whilſt the Spirit of God being grieved by our ſelfiſhneſs, will leave our hearts diſconſolate, and full of darkneſs and terror. But when our hearts do not condemn us, of any allowed deviation from our duty; then, like children, who are conſcious of having done aright, and aſſured of their loving parents approbation, we have confidence with God; and whatſoever we aſk we receive of him, becauſe, we, not only ſay we repent and believe, but ſhew it, by "keeping his commandments, and "doing thoſe things, which are well pleaſing in his ſight." Thus a gratuitous ſalvation, and the holy obedience of love are inſeparably connected: as the ſubſtance of the command of God to ſinners is faith in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love to one another, for his ſake. This obedience, though utterly inſufficient for our juſtification, (except as we are made the righteouſneſs of God in Chriſt;) proves that we dwell in him and He in us; the ſanctifying Spirit, which he hath given us, forms, and maintains the ſacred union, and ſeals us the children of God; whilſt his conſolations are the foretaſtes of our eternal felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—3.] Whilſt the extraordinary gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit were vouchſafed to the church, as well as his ſanctifying and comforting influences; it was peculiarly incumbent on chriſtians to be upon their guard againſt falſe prophets, and important for them to be able accurately to diſtinguiſh between them, and ſuch as really ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt. The apoſtle, therefore, exhorted them, not to believe every ſpirit, or every man, who ſeemed to ſpeak to them by ſome ſupernatural impulſe, and profeſſed to be under the guidance of the Spirit of God: but to make trial of all ſuch pretenſions, whether they who made them were of God, or not. This was abſolutely neceſſary; becauſe many falſe prophets were gone forth into the world, who were inſtigated and prompted by ſatan, to propagate deſtructive hereſies, in oppoſition to the doctrine, and glory of Chriſt; (*Matt*. c. xxiv. v. 24.) In giving this direction the apoſtle did not make his appeal to the miracles wrought by the true prophets; for perhaps theſe falſe teachers pretended to work miracles, and might be enabled to impoſe on men's minds by lying wonders; (Note, *Deut*. c. xiii. v. 1—5.) But he deemed it more deciſive to determine the matter by the agreement, or diſagreement of their doctrine with that, which the apoſtles had preached with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven: for this was confirmed by the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament; by all the miracles of Chriſt, and all the prophecies fulfilled in him; by his reſurrection, and the accompliſhment of his engagements and predictions; and by all the miracles performed by the firſt preachers and profeſſors of chriſtianity, during a number of years; and nothing done by thoſe falſe prophets, who oppoſed their doctrine, could pretend to equal this multiplied demonſtration. This ſhews that chriſtians, who are well acquainted with the ſcriptures, may, in humble dependance on divine teaching, know for themſelves, who preaches according to the doctrine of the apoſtles, and who contradicts it; and that they are bound to make this trial of men, and their tenets: that no pretences to the Spirit, to inſpiration, or new revelations are to be regarded as any thing but Satanical deluſions, when they are brought to diſprove, or oppoſe the fundamental doctrines delivered by the apoſtles: that even apparent miracles would be totally inſufficient to authenticate ſuch a doctrine; and conſequent-ye have heard that it ſhould come; and even now already is it in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for

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ly, that new philoſophical reaſonings, and human authority are to be entirely diſregarded: which concludes equally againſt Myſtics, Enthuſiaſts, Papiſts, and modern Socinians or Deiſts: who may mutually deſpiſe, and oppoſe each other; but all agree in ſetting up *new lights*, againſt the authenticated and complete light of divine revelation. The apoſtle, therefore, exhorted his brethren, in determining who ſpake by the Spirit of God, to obſerve, that "every ſpirit, which confeſſed Jeſus Chriſt, *who had come* "in the fleſh, was of God." (Note, c. ii. v. 18—22. *Matt.* c. x. v. 32.) This muſt be underſtood of an intelligent confeſſion of the doctrine delivered by the apoſtles concerning the Lord Jeſus, his Perſon, and his offices. The reality of his human nature was no doubt peculiarly adverted to by the expreſſion, "come in the fleſh:" but, who could have doubted of his having been *really a Man*, if it had been generally underſtood and believed, that he was *merely a Man?* And if the apoſtle had not known that, as the Son of God, he could have come otherwiſe, than *in the fleſh*; he would ſcarce have noticed, his *coming in the fleſh*, as an eſſential part of this confeſſion: for who would have ſaid that John Baptiſt, or John the apoſtle came *in the fleſh*, when they were employed in preaching the goſpel? As they muſt have come in human nature, ſeeing they had no other nature. But the coming of Chriſt in human nature, when God the Word became fleſh and tabernacled among men, was indeed eſſential to the apoſtle's doctrine concerning his redemption. So that they, who did not confeſs him, as come in the fleſh; or advanced any tenets contrary to his being the Chriſt, the Son of the living God, or any of thoſe offices, which as God manifeſted in the fleſh he was anointed to perform; were not of God, whatever pretences they advanced to inſpiration, or appearances they exhibited of miraculous powers. For the ſpirit, that ſuggeſted ſuch hereſies, was that of antichriſt; and they, who ſpake thereby, were men of the ſame infidel, ambitious, and impious diſpoſition, as the principal antichriſt would be, of whoſe coming they had heard; and who in fact was already in the world, in the various falſe prophets, that were raiſed up to oppoſe the true doctrine of Chriſt, of whom the Roman antichriſt would prove the genuine ſucceſſor. Theſe very heretics, whom the apoſtle here ſhewed to be the fore-runners of the principal antichriſt, might be proved to be the very ſame perſons, whoſe ſentiments the Socinians, &c, adopt and patroniſe as primitive chriſtianity: and there is even reaſon to apprehend, that the moſt fatal prevalence of antichriſt, which is yet ſuppoſed to be future, will be in the garb of infidelity, or open oppoſition to the Deity, and atonement of Chriſt; that is "denying that Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, is "come in the fleſh, to be the propitiation for the ſins of "the world;" and not in that of popery, which ſeems nearly antiquated: and probably this event is not very diſtant.

V. 4—6.] (Note, c. ii. v. 20.) The chriſtians, whom John ſo affectionately addreſſed, were of God, his children, bearing his image, and adhering to his truth and will; and they had overcome theſe falſe prophets, who were of the wicked one: they had been enabled to withſtand their aſſaults, and to reject with deciſion their pernicious doctrines. This had been done, through the teaching and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Chriſt, who dwelt in them; and who was more powerful to uphold and preſerve them, than the evil ſpirit, that dwelt and wrought in theſe deceivers, and in the whole world of unbelievers, was to aſſault, or injure them. Perhaps, alſo the ſuperior miracles and holy lives of true chriſtians and faithful miniſters, had in many places given them decided advantages over the falſe teachers, and driven them away with diſgrace. The falſe teachers were indeed of the world, though they profeſſed to be chriſtians: they belonged to ſatan's kingdom; they were of a worldly diſpoſition, and aſpired at ſecular diſtinctions and advantages. They, therefore, ſpake of the world, agreeable to its wiſdom, maxims, and taſte; ſo as not to offend, but to gratify carnal men, who loved the world, and to enſure their friendſhip; by flattering them, and giving them encouragement, whilſt they indulged their worldly luſts: and, on this account the world heard them with approbation, they made rapid progreſs, had numerous followers, and drew off many looſe profeſſors from their faithful teachers. But the apoſtle might ſay with confidence of himſelf and his brethren, "we are of God:" and thoſe who knew the holy and glorious character of God, and had an experimental acquaintance with him, through regeneration, heard, and adhered to, their doctrine and inſtructions: whereas, they who were not born of God, and did not truly belong to him, would not hear them, but attended to the more amuſing, or flattering ſpeculations of other teachers. And by that, they might know the Spirit of truth, and that of error: for they, who were influenced by the Spirit of truth, adhered to the doctrine of the apoſtles, whilſt their genuine piety and holineſs ſhewed that they belonged to God; but they who were guided by the ſpirit of error, oppoſed the doctrine of the apoſtles; and the worldly diſpoſition and conduct of thoſe, who propagated and embraced ſuch deluſions, as well as the tendency and effects of them, ſhewed evidently that, neither they nor their religion were of God. The ſame is the teſt and ſtandard of truth to this day; nor can we, by any other rule try, the ſpirits, whether they be of God, or not.

V. 7—12.] The apoſtle here returned to his exhortation to thoſe, who adhered to the true doctrine of Chriſt, that they would cultivate the moſt endeared affection towards one another: for this holy, ſpiritual, and ſelf-love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love.

9 In this was manifeſted the love of God toward us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our ſins.

11 Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another.

12 No man hath ſeen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

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denying love, was "of God;" the effect and evidence of regeneration: inſomuch, that every one, who thus loved chriſtians with ſpecial affection, and took pleaſure in doing them good, becauſe of their likeneſs, and relation to Chriſt, was certainly born of God, and had a ſaving knowledge of him, (c. iii. v. 14;) whereas he, who did not thus love the image of God in his people, was not born of God, and was deſtitute of any transforming knowledge of him. For GOD is LOVE, or eſſential goodneſs and benevolence: it is, as it were, his very nature, to be kind, to communicate life, and impart felicity; and to provide for the happineſs of his creatures in all caſes and methods, that conſiſt with his infinite wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and holineſs; according to which love muſt be exerciſed by a perfect Being. The earth is filled with the goodneſs of the Lord, and doubtleſs the immenſity of the creation is the ſame: holy angels derive from, and enjoy in, God, complete and endleſs felicity: and rebellion alone has made any rational creatures ſuffer pain and miſery. Being and happineſs could not have been communicated in that vaſt extent and degree, that it is and will be, without the creation of intelligent agents. Theſe muſt form a kingdom to be governed by a perfect law, and a righteous Sovereign. The very law of God, is Love, as well as his nature: love of Him and of each other, conſtitutes the whole of its holy, juſt, and kind requirements; and all would have been perfectly happy, had all perfectly obeyed it. Unleſs infinite wiſdom had ſeen it proper, that omnipotence ſhould be exerted to prevent free agents from tranſgreſſion; which it did not: this law muſt be guarded by ſanctions, and they who break it muſt be expoſed to a puniſhment proportioned to the offence: and love to creatures at large dictated both the law and its ſanctions. When angels ſinned, a God of love, in kindneſs to his obedient creatures, turned thoſe from heaven to hell, who would have converted heaven into hell, if they had continued there; except ſome other act of omnipotence had prevented it. When man's apoſtacy took place, the love of God was not only ſhewn in ſparing ſinners; and giving them ſuch a rich profuſion of temporal benefits, whilſt the ſentence denounced againſt them was in part reſpited; but even their pains, ſorrows, and temporal death were expreſſive of his wiſe compaſſion, and tended greatly to prevent the multiplication of crimes, and increaſe of condemnation. But eſpecially the proviſion of the goſpel, for the forgiveneſs of ſin, and the ſalvation of ſinners, in conſiſtency with the glory of God's law and juſtice; whilſt preſent ſufferings are made the means of final and eternal felicity, doth undeniably manifeſt, that "God is Love." So immenſe were the obſtacles to be ſurmounted, and ſo aſtoniſhing the method, by which mercy is honourably exerciſed to hell-deſerving rebels, that, even if the entrance of ſin had been prevented; or impunity and recovery to holineſs could have been enſured to all tranſgreſſors, without any ſuch expedient: the love of God would not ſo clearly have appeared to be infinite and incomprehenſible. Something we can now ſee of its immenſity: and though myſtery and obſcurity reſt upon many things reſpecting it; yet it will ſurely at length be ſeen reſplendent as the noon-day ſun, that the moſt perfect Love preſided, when, in the infinite wiſdom of God, the entrance of ſin was permitted; and when infinite juſtice, holineſs, and truth determined to leave many rebels, in their impenitency, as veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction; as connected with the choice, redemption, and ſanctification of the veſſels of mercy, who are thus prepared before unto glory: ſo that, if *wiſe*, and *holy* love, in its moſt perfect exerciſe towards univerſal being, through eternity, had required it; no pain would have been ſuffered by any creature, much leſs would any have been left to be finally miſerable. But to argue from hence, that none will be finally miſerable, in direct oppoſition to *his* teſtimony, who is TRUTH, as well as LOVE, is the height of impiety and preſumption! What do we know, concerning the purpoſes of love to unnumbered millions, through eternal ages, which may be anſwered, in the infinitely wiſe counſels of God, by leaving *comparatively* a ſmall number of rebels, to the *merited* puniſhment of their crimes? Men might, on the ſame principles, argue, that priſons and executions could not have any place in the dominions of an eminently benevolent prince: when in reality wiſe, and equitable benevolence to numbers, would dictate ſeverity to a few atrocious criminals, who would otherwiſe make many wretched. Indeed we might as reaſonably argue, that ſince "God is Love," there can be no ſuch thing as miſery in the creation; for omniptoence could certainly exclude it: but if infinite wiſdom, juſtice, holineſs, and truth require, that Love Himſelf ſhould cauſe his creatures to endure anguiſh; (and here facts preclude the vain hypotheſis, which proud ſpeculation might otherwiſe have adopted;) no created underſtanding can determine, in what degree, to what duration, or in how many inſtances, the wiſe, righteous, and holy purpoſes of eſſential "LOVE," may require the ſuffering of his rebellious ſubjects. So that all arguments, and calculations of this kind prove nothing, but the vain ſelf-wiſdom of fooliſh man, who deems himſelf competent to determine what God ought to do, and what he will do; and in this preſumption, oppoſes his arguments to God's own expli-

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have ſeen and do teſtify that the Father ſent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

15 Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment: becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect

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cit teſtimony; and pretends to honour his love, whilſt he treats his truth as a lie, and ſuppoſes his awful threatenings to be terrifying deluſions, to frighten the ignorant part of mankind into good behaviour, and to be deſpiſed by the more diſcerning! But it is enough for our purpoſe; that God hath ſo ſhewn himſelf to be Love, in his dealings with us, that after all our crimes, we cannot come ſhort of eternal happineſs, except through our unbelief and impenitent rebellion; whilſt ſtrict juſtice would have conſigned us to hopeleſs and final miſery, as ſoon as ever we tranſgreſſed our Creator's law. In this, therefore, the love of God *towards us*, loſt ſinners, hath been eſpecially manifeſted; "becauſe he ſent his "only begotten Son into the world, that we might live "through him." (Note, *John*, c. iii. v. 16—21.) Hence it appears, that Chriſt is called the only begotten Son of God, previous to his incarnation, or coming into the world: and that the love of God, in giving his *own* Son, to aſſume our nature, in order to his expiatory ſufferings, was more conſpicuous, that even in giving him, *when incarnate*, to the death upon the croſs for us. When God deſigned ſo vaſt a bleſſing as life eternal for fallen ſinners, in his infinite compaſſion and mercy; his moſt perfect juſtice and holineſs rendered it impoſſible for him to do it; (for he cannot deny himſelf;) except an all-ſufficient atonement could be made for their ſins: and when no other method, or none ſo proper for this end, was perceived by his infinite wiſdom, as the ſending of his own Son to be our Surety, and the atoning ſacrifice for our ſins; he ſpared him not, but ſent him into the world that we might live through him. None of our words, or thoughts can do juſtice to ſuch free, rich, aſtoniſhing love of a Holy God, towards ſinners; to whom he owed nothing; who could not profit, or harm him; whom he might juſtly have cruſhed in a moment; who were ſhewn deſerving of his tremendous vengeance, in the very method, by which they were ſaved; and when he could by his omnipotent word, have created countleſs worlds, repleniſhed with far more exalted beings, had he ſeen good. Search we then the whole univerſe for love in its moſt enlarged, and glorious diſplays? We muſt at length be conſtrained to own, that it is to be found in the Perſon, and the croſs of Chriſt. Herein is that love, the ſplendour of which eclipſes all that hath been ſeen elſewhere, from the beginning of the world, and which will be the ſpecial ſubject of admiring, and adoring praiſe to all eternity. Doth love ſubſiſt between God, and ſinners? Herein was the origin of it: not, that we loved God; for we were enemies to his holy character, law, ſovereignty, worſhip, and providence; but that he moſt freely, and with moſt condeſcending compaſſion for forgiveneſs, and liberality, loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiatory ſacrifice for our ſins, (Note, c. ii. v. 1—3.) In this great event, all holy beings will for ever ſee, that "God "is love:" and the more redeemed ſinners underſtand of this ſubject; the clearer views will they have of that love, which can never fully be comprehended: whereas, they who exclude this view of the divine benignity, may ſpeculate about the ſubject, but can ſcarce know any thing concerning its real nature and glory. If then God hath ſo loved us, in providing ſalvation, and bringing us to partake of it; we ought alſo to love one another, in imitation of his example, and in grateful obedience to his command; and to expreſs this love, by a forgiving, peaceable, kind, liberal, and compaſſionate conduct towards each other. For no man hath ſeen God, in reſpect of his divine eſſence, at any time; (ſave, that he, who hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father alſo:) we therefore beſt prove, that we love Him, by loving his image in his people, and by doing good to them for his ſake. Thus it will appear, that God dwells in us, by his new-creating Spirit, and that his love produces its genuine effects upon our hearts, by our renewal to his holy image. (c. ii. v. 5.)

V. 13—17.] Chriſtians may, therefore, know, that they are united to, and dwell in, God, by faith, and He in them, as in his conſecrated temple "becauſe he "hath given them of his Spirit," (c. iii. v. 24:) for, beſides the miraculous powers conferred on ſome of thoſe, whom the apoſtle addreſſed, the ſame Spirit had ſo changed their hearts, and made them partakers of a divine nature, that they loved the children of God, with a holy love, and copied his example in their conduct to each other. Under this influence and energy, the apoſtles, and others who had ſeen Chriſt, and were experimentally acquainted with his precious love, did teſtify to their fellow ſinners, every where; that "the Father had ſent his Son to "be the Saviour of the world," and to confer, pardon, grace, and eternal life, on all men, in every place, who applied for them, as the purchaſe of his atoning blood, through living faith in his name. Whoſoever, therefore, ſhould hear and receive this teſtimony, and confeſs Jeſus to be the Son of God, acknowledging the love of the Father in this gracious diſpenſation, cordially falling in with the deſign of it, and venturing the enmity of ungodly men, in profeſſing the faith of the goſpel, and obeying the divine Saviour; might be aſſured, that he dwelt in God, as love caſteth out fear: becauſe fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.

20 If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother alſo.

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the Refuge and Reſt, and that God dwelt in Him, as his beloved temple. All ſuch general expreſſions muſt be interpreted according to the context: for unleſs ſuch a confeſſion of Chriſt were ſincere, intelligent, and influential; the man could not be a partaker of holy love; and therefore the apoſtle would have contradicted what he before aſſerted; if he had meant a mere confeſſion with the lips, without true faith, and grace in the heart. (v. 8.) But true chriſtians had known, underſtood, and experienced, as well as believed, the love, which God had ſhewn towards them, in the redemption of his Son; and it had had a transforming effect upon them; in bringing them to reſemble God, in the nature and fruits of their love: and ſo, by an habitual exerciſe of this holy affection towards God, each other, and all men, to live in the moſt endeared, and intimate union with him. Thus their love to the Lord was made perfect, or produced its genuine, and valuable effects, in their love to one another: and they cultivated this holy diſpoſition, and acted from it, in order that they might have boldneſs in the day of judgment, (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 31—46:) becauſe it was thus evidenced, that as Chriſt was, ſo were they in this world: like him, they were influenced by holy love to do good to others, in a ſelf-denying manner; and being treated with contempt, reproach, and enmity, with any cauſe; they meekly and patiently endured it, and perſevered in doing good againſt evil, as he had done.

V. 18, 19.] In this love of God, through Jeſus Chriſt, made perfect in love to chriſtians, and to all men, for the Lord's ſake; there was no fear: the obedience, and good works performed from this principle, were not like the ſervile diligence of one, who reluctantly laboured from dread of an hated maſter's indignation; but like that of a dutiful child, who performs ſervices to a beloved father, which conduce to the benefit of his brethren, and on every account are pleaſing, and voluntarily performed. Reverence of the majeſty of God and fear of diſhonouring him, intimately connect with the moſt perfect exerciſes of holy love; but terrifying apprehenſions of vengeance have no place in it, and ceaſe, in proportion as love prevails, and inſpires confidence and gratitude. So that perfect love of God, (and of man for his ſake,) produces ſuch full ſatisfaction of acceptance, ſuch delight in his ſervice, and ſuch experience of his conſolations, as caſt out all ſervile fear; which gives torment, and diſtreſs to the mind, from which the Spirit of adoption proportionably delivers the believer. (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 15.) The remains, and returns of theſe terrors, therefore, in the experience of eſtabliſhed believers, ſhew, that they are not perfect in love; though they have great uſe, in this ſtate of conflict, and imperfection in all reſpects: but the habitual prevalence of them in many perſons ſhews, that they are not duly brought under the influence of the Spirit of adoption, but ſerve God more from ſlaviſh fear, than from filial love. In heaven this love will be perfect, and uneaſy fear will be for ever excluded: and in this world, the more we obey God from love, and the leſs need we have for, and experience of that "fear, which hath torment;" the more of heaven do we enjoy. But this does not imply, that any chriſtians are abſolutely made perfect in love on earth; or that ſlaviſh fears prove a man to have *no love*, or grace; or that exemption from *all fear* is the privilege of believers: it is equally true, "that bleſſed is he that "feareth alway," as that "perfect love caſteth out fear:" for different kinds of fear are meant. (Notes, *Rom.* c. xi. v. 20. 1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 17.) However, they, who ſerve the Lord, from filial affection, not ſlaviſh fear, "love "Him, becauſe He firſt loved them:" not that their love is *merely* gratitude for his previous benefits, which, abſtracted from other exerciſes of love, would be a very ſelfiſh affection: nor could any man in that caſe love God at all, on good grounds, without ſome immediate revelation, to aſſure him that he was the object of his ſpecial love, whilſt he had no grace, and was wholly impenitent, and ſinful. But, the evident meaning is, that if the Lord had not loved them, before they loved Him, even when they were dead in ſin, they muſt for ever have continued enemies to him. His love ſuggeſted the plan, and provided the means of redemption: he revealed to ſinners his glorious perfections, and abundant mercy, in the Perſon and work of his Son; and ſent his word, to inform ſinners of this great ſalvation, and to invite them to partake of it; and he regenerated them by his Spirit, and ſo brought them, by repentance and faith in Chriſt, into a ſtate of acceptance and reconciliation; and thus taught and enabled them, to love his excellency, to value his favour, to be thankful for his benefits, and zealous for his glory. As, therefore, his love to them, was the original ſource of their love to him; ſo from the latter they may infer the former, and take the comfort of the happy change, that hath been wrought in them, whilſt they give him the glory of it.

V. 20—22.] The love of God in Chriſt, produced in the heart of chriſtians by the Spirit of adoption, is to be conſidered, as the grand proof of their converſion; yet that muſt alſo be tried by the effects of it, in their temper and conduct towards their brethren. For if a man profeſs to love God, and yet hate his brother, and either indulges habitual reſentment againſt any man, or ſhews a ſpiteful or ſelfiſh diſpoſition, or a contempt of and enmity to God's image in his children; he is no doubt a liar, a falſe profeſſor: for if a man do not love the holy image of God in his brother, whom he had ſeen, and whoſe good behaviour is ſenſibly endearing and advantageous to him; or refuſes to ſhew kindneſs to his brother in diſtreſs, when he knows this to be the commanded expreſſion of love to God: how can he be ſuppoſed to love God, whom he hath not ſeen, whoſe perfection he can only con-

CHAP. V.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Shewing the connection between faith in Chriſt, regeneration, love to God, and his children, obedience to his commandments, and victory over the world, &c, 1---5. *2d. Stating the manifold teſtimonies, by which the doctrine of Chriſt is proved; and declaring the inſeparable union between faith, and eternal life; and the contrary,* 6---13. *3d. Reminding chriſtians of the Lord's readineſs to hear their prayers, for themſelves and each other; giving an intimation of the ſin unto death, and the regenerate man's ſecurity againſt committing it; marking the difference between the world that lieth in wickedneſs, and true believers; and cautioning chriſtians againſt idolatry,* 14---21.

template at a diſtance; who is not viſibly preſent to excite him to ſuitable returns of affection; and who cannot want, or be profited by any of his ſervices? So that the pretence of loving God, when the love of the brethren is neglected, is no more than a cloke of ſelfiſhneſs, or an excuſe from malignant paſſions. And indeed this is his expreſs command, that our love to God ſhould be ſhewn by the love of our brethren: and how can he be ſuppoſed to love God, who habitually violates his command, and acts contrary to his moſt endearing example?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though we live in an age, in which *only a few perſons* pretend to immediate revelations: yet we have at leaſt as much cauſe to try men's doctrines and religion by the word of God, as they had in the primitive times. For many falſe teachers are gone forth into the world; who agree in ſcarce any thing, but denying “ that the “ Son of God is come in the fleſh, to be the propitiation for our ſins, and the anointed High-Prieſt, “ Prophet, and King of his church.” If indeed no teachers are of God, who do not confeſs the doctrine of the apoſtles, concerning the Perſon, and ſalvation of Chriſt, “ God manifeſted in the fleſh;” and if all others are actuated by the lying ſpirit of antichriſt: we may truly ſay, that antichriſt did not much more prevail in the darkeſt days of popery, than in theſe times of infidelity, ſcepticiſm, ſocinianiſm, arianiſm, myſticiſm, and antinomianiſm; whilſt the ſcriptural doctrine concerning the Perſon, or ſome of the offices of Chriſt, ſeems to be wholly excluded from the religion of moſt of his profeſſed diſciples. But there is a remnant, who are of God, and who have overcome the aſſaults of all theſe deceivers, and will be finally victorious over them: becauſe they are taught and kept by the Spirit of Chriſt, who is greater, than the evil ſpirit, who ſtill worketh in the children of diſobedience. Indeed, they, whoſe wiſdom, principles, ſpirit, and conduct, accord to the judgment and diſpoſition of the world; will be heard, applauded, and followed by worldly men, as far as their conſciences find it convenient to have ſome kind of religion, by way of an opiate: and as the way to deſtruction is broad and frequented, no wonder that they have the majority on their ſide: for hitherto God and his friends have been in the minority, in all ages and places, ſince the beginning of the world. We may not indeed take it for granted, as the apoſtle did, that “ we are of “ God; and that he, who knoweth God, heareth us:” but as far as we can prove, that our doctrine, temper, and conduct are “ according to the oracles of God;” we may be confident, that he will maintain our cauſe, and that upon the whole his friends and children will favour us: and the characters of the perſons, who adhere to, and of thoſe, who reject the teſtimony of preachers, may go far in deciding who declare the humbling holy truths of God, and who ſpeak the dictates of the ſpirit of error: for many are incapable of doing ſuch honour to the miniſtry of God's ſervants, in any other way; as they do by forſaking, deriding, and reviling it: whilſt their actions ſhew to all, who underſtand that emphatic language, the reaſons of their diſlike.

Still we are exhorted to “ love one another, becauſe “ love is of God:” in proportion as this abounds in our heart, and regulates our behaviour, we reſemble God, and ſhew that we are born of him and know him: thus we anticipate the temper and happineſs, and, as it were, breathe the air of heaven: whilſt enmity, ſelfiſhneſs, malice and revenge are from hell, and the beginning of the miſery prepared for the devil and his children. But our God is Love: and with ſuch diſplays of this endearing attribute before us, and ſuch obligations as we are brought under to it; how large, liberal, and fervent ought our love of each other, and of our very enemies to be! Seeing God hath manifeſted his love towards us, in ſending his own Son, to be the propitiation for the ſins of us rebels and enemies, that we might live through him: how earneſt ought we to be, in uſing all means, with perſevering ſelf-denial, to promote the welfare, and ſave the ſouls of thoſe, who are moſt injurious to us! And how ſhould we lay ourſelves out, to do good to our fellow chriſtians for the Lord's ſake! Let us not then think it enough to admire the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus, to us ſinful creatures: but ſince we cannot profit him, whom no man hath ſeen, or can ſee; let us ſhew our love and gratitude to Him, by imitating his kind and merciful conduct, in our dealings with our brethren and neighbours. Thus it will appear that he dwelleth and ruleth in our hearts; and his love will be perfected in us. Whilſt we profeſs to believe the doctrine, which the apoſtles teſtified to mankind, and confeſs “ that the “ Father ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the world:” may our holy loving tempers ſhew, that He hath given us of his Spirit! Thus it will appear that we have underſtood the nature and glory, as well as believed the revelation of the love, which God hath to us: and that as “ God is Love,” ſo we dwell in love, and in God, and he in us. In this way our love will grow unto perfection; and our confidence before the mercy-ſeat will be an anticipation of our boldneſs in the day of judgment; whilſt we are conſcious, that as He, our Lord and Saviour was, ſo are we in this evil world. By this work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, we ſhall the moſt effectually be relieved from

WHOSOEVER believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatſoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?

ſlaviſh and tormenting fears: for the more we feel of the loving temper of children towards our Father, and of affection to our brethren for his ſake: the leſs we ſhall fear being treated as enemies, and the fuller will be our aſſurance of the ſpecial love of God to us. Nor would there be occaſion for our being left to the painful reſtraint and impulſe of terror; if we were more entirely conſtrained by love, in every part of our duty: ſo that all our diſquieting doubts and apprehenſions ariſe from our not being made perfect in love. Let us then pray without ceaſing, that we may more entirely love Him, who hath firſt loved us: and if it be evident, that our natural enmity is changed into filial affection and gratitude; let us bleſs the name of our God, for this ſeal and earneſt of eternal felicity; and in return for his mercy, and in obedience to his commandment, let us do good to our brethren alſo; and thus ſhew, that though our love be imperfect, yet that we eſſentially differ from thoſe falſe profeſſors, who pretend to love God, whom they have not ſeen, and yet hate their brethren whom they have ſeen.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—5.] Every man, who truly believed Jeſus to be the promiſed Meſſiah, and received, honoured, and obeyed him, in that character, according to the predictions of the Old Teſtament, and the teſtimony of the apoſtles concerning him, was doubtleſs born of God: as this faith muſt be the effect of divine life in the ſoul, and could not be ſeparated from repentance, love, and other graces; or thoſe good fruits, that ſpring from them: and all, who credibly profeſſed this faith, were entitled to that love, which chriſtians owed to their brethren, whatever differences there might be in their previous character, abilities, rank, or ſituation. For every one, who loved God, the Father of all the regenerate, muſt alſo love every one of his children: even as men commonly love and ſhew kindneſs to the offspring of their dear friends and liberal benefactors. But as every gracious affection might be counterfeited; it was neceſſary to obſerve, that this genuine love of the children of God might be diſtinguiſhed from all natural benevolence, or party attachments; by its inſeparable connection with the love of God, and a chearful, upright obedience to all his commandments: as the ſame Spirit, that had brought the ſinner's heart to love God's image in his children, muſt alſo have taught them to love his holy character, precepts and ſervice. (Note, *James*, c. ii. v. 10.) Chriſtians might therefore know their love of the brethren to be ſpiritual, and evidential of their having "paſſed from death to life;" by a diſpoſition to love and obey God in all other reſpects: whereas that man could not truly love the children of God, who habitually committed known ſin, or neglected known duty. So that theſe two parts of the chriſtian's character muſt reciprocally prove each other to be genuine. Indeed the nature, tendency, effect, and, as it were, the eſſence, of love to God, conſiſts in its diſpoſing the heart to unreſerved and chearful obedience: and as his commandments are holy, juſt and good, the rule of liberty and felicity; ſo they, who are born of God, and love him, do not deem them grievous, but delight in obedience; and only groan and lament, that they cannot ſerve God more perfectly. Indeed the natural love of worldly objects, which is found in every human heart, and the fear of thoſe inconveniences and ſufferings, which the diſpleaſure of ungodly men threatens and occaſions, (in ſome meaſure at all times,) to the faithful ſervants of God; render obedience in the preſent ſtate of things arduous, and connected with ſelf-denial, and various loſſes, perils, hardſhips, and diſtreſſes; from which, in other circumſtances, it would be wholly exempted. But true chriſtians are poſſeſſed of a principle of divine life, which carries them above all theſe obſtacles and impediments. *That*, which is born of God, that new and heavenly nature, which is communicated in regeneration, tends ſo powerfully to God, and holineſs, and includes in its eſſence ſuch a ſpiritual judgment, and ſuch heavenly affections; that all, in whom it is found, are thereby made victorious over the world: and overcome both their natural love for it's honours, riches, pleaſures, decorations, and friendſhip; and their natural fear of the frown, rage, and contempt of worldly men. Thus they are prepared for loſſes, ſelf-denial, and enduring affliction, in the cauſe of God; and taught to diſregard the maxims, faſhions, cuſtoms, and opinions of ungodly men, however eminent, numerous, or powerful. This new creature, as born of God, hath the aſcendancy in the heart of the youngeſt, and feebleſt true chriſtian; and therefore, they all aſpire after, and attain unto, this victory: for though the conflict of grace with corrupt nature and the allurements and terrors of the world, is often very ſharp; and the regenerate man may be baffled, caſt down, and apparently ſlain in the battle: yet the divine life within him, being invigorated by the Holy Spirit, will again excite him to ariſe, and renew the combat, with redoubled fortitude and reſolution. So that at length the victory will be his decidedly; and he will *habitually* profeſs the truth, and do the will of God, as far as he knows them, whatever loſs, ſuffering, diſgrace or hardſhip may enſue; even if

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jeſus Chriſt; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witneſs in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and theſe three agree in one.

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he ſhould be expoſed to death, in its moſt terrifying form by his adherence to his duty. In acquiring this honourable victory, faith is principally concerned: a realizing belief of God's teſtimony concerning inviſible and eternal things, operating by fear of his wrath, and hope of felicity in his favour; a believing reliance on Chriſt for his redemption, and all the bleſſings that flow from it, working by love and gratitude; with an abiding ſenſe of God's preſence at all times, to witneſs every action, and to ſupport, help, and comfort thoſe, who truſt in him, give ſuch a determination to the true chriſtian's conduct; that he cannot habitually do, what he knows to be contrary to the will of God, whatever emolument, credit, or favour, he might thereby acquire: nor can he habitually neglect what God commands; to whatever loſs, reproach, or ſuffering it may expoſe him. Through temporary weakneſs of faith he may be drawn into ſins and negligences: but he will ſoon find ſuch fear, ſhame, ſorrow, remorſe, and ſelf-abhorrence in his heart and conſcience; that he cannot but return into the way of obedience, and reject the wages of tranſgreſſion; whatever may be the conſequence: nor can this ever be altered; unleſs it were poſſible, that the ſhield of faith ſhould be finally torn from him. (Note, *Luke*, c. xxii. v. 31—34.) This is univerſally the caſe with true believers; though the temporary ſuſpenſion of faith, and a conſequent prevalence of worldly affection may be longer in ſome caſes, than in others; during which lamentable ſeaſons, their evidence of ſincerity muſt be equally weakened: and this is *peculiar* to believers; ſo that we may challenge the whole earth, to produce one inſtance of a man that did not believe in the Son of God, who had in all reſpects ſo overcome the love, and fear of all perſons and things in the world; as not *habitually*, in ſome way or other, to act contrary to his own judgment and conſcience, from a regard to intereſt, reputation, eaſe, liberty, indulgence, friendſhip, or ſocial and relative comfort, and affection; or in order to avoid deriſion, reproach, the cenſure of ſingularity, or more material loſſes and ſufferings. All men, but believers in Chriſt, are habitually enſlaved, in ſome reſpect or other, to the cuſtoms, opinions, or intereſts of the world: and who is there, that dares in all things act according to the conviction of his own mind; without being warped by the general influence of ſociety, or that of his own particular circle? He, and he only, can do this, who "believes that Jeſus is the Son of God," and truſts in him for ſalvation, according to the ſcriptures: his faith, united with humble love, ſpirituality, fear of coming ſhort of ſalvation, hatred of ſin, a conſtant reſpect to his Lord's example, an indifference for worldly objects, and a deep perſuaſion of the miſerable condition of all wordly men, gives him this victory. (Note, *Gal.* c. vi. v. 14.) He habitually in all things follows the dictates of his own conſcience, and the commandments of his Lord; whatever conſequences may follow; and when he is betrayed into an incidental deviation from this rule, he deeply repents of it, and attempts renewed obedience. Hence it is that the world will tolerate all other perſons, except true believers, whatever their forms, or notions be: becauſe all others will, in ſome reſpects comply with the humours, and court the friendſhip of worldly men. But chriſtians are ſo unpliant, and ſo determined to follow their Lord, according to their own judgment of truth and duty; without regarding the opinions, counſels, attentions, deriſion, revilings, or enmity of the many, the wiſe, the great, the learned, or the virtuous; nay without being turned aſide, by perſuaſion, or the dictates of affection and gratitude, from the line of duty; they cleave to their religious ſingularities, (as they are deemed,) at ſo great an expence, and often amidſt ſo many ſufferings; and in ſo many ways they teſtify of the world, that its works are evil, and its wiſdom folly; that they can hope for no quarter from wordly men, but muſt expect to be hated, or deſpiſed by all, for Chriſt's ſake: even as he was, who perfectly overcame the world, as their Surety and Example. It may be proper to cloſe this ſubject, by obſerving, that the chriſtian, in proportion to his knowledge and grace, will be ſingular only where truth and duty require him; and ſtedfaſt, according to the certainty or importance of the truth and duty: but in all things, that he deems indifferent, and where his own will, or intereſt alone are concerned; he will endeavour to be pliant: that he may ſhew, that his pertinacious adherence to his rule, is the effect of conſcientiouſneſs, and not of obſtinacy and affectation.

V. 6—8.] Having mentioned Jeſus the Son of God, the apoſtle obſerved, that this was the anointed Saviour, who came by water and blood. As he entered on his miniſtry on earth, when he was baptized by John, and cloſed it by ſhedding his blood on the croſs: ſo, after his death, water and blood flowed from his pierced ſide, as emblematical of the removal of our guilt, by his atoning ſacrifice, and the purifying of our ſouls, by his grace, after his example, and according to his commandments: (Note, *John*, c. xix. v. 32—37.) For "he came" to ſave ſinners, "not by water only;" not *merely* by teaching them the way of Holineſs, and enabling them to walk in it; "but by water and blood," by atoning for their guilt, and thus making way for their ſanctification, and the acceptance of their perſons, and works of faith and love: and to this the Holy Spirit bare witneſs, both in the miracles wrought by thoſe, who taught this doctrine, and the holy lives, the patient ſufferings, and the abundant conſolations of ſuch as embraced it: and this witneſs of the Spirit to the doctrine "of his atonement, as the Son of "God, come in the fleſh, to ſave ſinners, by his blood-

9 If we receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater: for this is the witneſs of God which he hath teſtified of his Son.
10 He that believeth on the Son of God

“ ſhedding,” could not be objected to, or rejected; “ becauſe the Spirit is truth,” even eſſential truth itſelf, which cannot poſſibly deceive, or be deceived, (v. 20. c. iv. ver. 1. *John*, c. xiv. v. 6.) Indeed theſe doctrines, concerning the Perſon and ſalvation of Chriſt, had been, and were atteſted, in the moſt unexceptionable manner: for there were Three, who from heaven, the Holy habitation, in which the divine preſence and glory is peculiarly diſplayed, had borne witneſs to it: “ The Father,” who repeatedly, in an audible voice from heaven, had declared Jeſus to be his “ beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed;” and had borne witneſs to the ſame truth, as well as the acceptance of his ſacrifice, by raiſing him from the dead: the Word, who was himſelf God, as well as from the beginning with God; who had teſtified, that “ He, and the Father were One;” that “ he who had ſeen Him, had ſeen the Father,” and that “ he would ſhed his blood as a ranſom for many:” whilſt his miracles, and the fulfilment of ancient prophecies in him; the accompliſhment of his own predictions in his reſurrection; and various other events, ſhewed his teſtimony to be divine and the voice of God, come from heaven in human nature, to atteſt theſe truths to man, again: “ And the Holy Ghoſt,” “ who deſcended from heaven, as a Dove, and reſted on Chriſt;” at his baptiſm who had borne witneſs to him, “ by the mouth of all his prophets from the beginning of the world;” and who came forth from the Father and the Son, to atteſt his reſurrection, and exaltation to the mediatorial throne, by the gift of tongues, and other miraculous powers, communicated to the apoſtles, on the day of Pentecoſt: and theſe three divine witneſſes, though perſonally diſtinct, were yet One, in the unity of the Godhead, in a moſt myſterious and incomprehenſible manner. Moreover, there were alſo “ three, that bare witneſs on earth,” perpetuating, as it were, the teſtimony of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe ſpecial abode is in heaven, and whoſe teſtimony was immediately from thence: even “ the Spirit,” in the miraculous powers communicated to the diſciples, by the laying on of the apoſtle's hands; the ſanctifying efficacy of their doctrine; the holy conduct and conſolations of chriſtians; and the prophecies delivered to the new teſtament church, which would be fulfilled from age to age: “ the water,” or the initiatory ordinance of baptiſm, by water, “ into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt,” as the perpetual emblem of the polluted ſinner's ſanctification, by faith in, and grace from the Lord Jeſus: “ and the blood,” or the Lord's Supper, which was appointed as a memorial of, or teſtimony to, the ſacrifice of the death of Chriſt, till his ſecond coming; and permanently atteſts, that pardon and ſalvation can only be obtained, by faith in the atoning blood of Him, whoſe name is Emmanuel, who is God manifeſt in the fleſh, and who will ſurely come to be our Judge. As the accompliſhment of the prophecies, contained in the new teſtament, more than counterbalances the ceaſing of miraculous gifts; ſo theſe divine atteſtations to the doctrine of Chriſt's Perſon, and the two great conſtituent parts of his ſalvation, continue to this preſent day, and ſhall to the end of the world: and we at preſent have abundant teſtimony to thoſe truths: which Our Father in heaven, the incarnate Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, immediately teſtified to the primitive chriſtians. It is well known, that many volumes have been written concerning part of the ſeventh verſe and the beginning of the eighth; in order to prove, or to diſprove its authenticity. It is certainly wanting in many of the ancient verſions, &c: but whether the Trinitarians interpolated it, or the Arians and other Unitarians omitted it, is to this day a matter of controverſy, and not likely to be determined. Upon ſuch queſtions men will in general decide according to their preconceived opinions: yet it is very wrong to deviate from truth, in ſupport of ſyſtem. However, it is, perhaps, ſomewhat more likely that the Arians or Anti-Trinitarians ſhould ſilently omit in their copies, a teſtimony that was ſo deciſive againſt them; (as the papiſts have omitted the ſecond commandment in their formularies for the uſe of the common people, pretending it to be only a continuation of the firſt, and dividing the tenth into two, to keep up the number; leſt their image worſhip ſhould be condemned in their very books of devotion:) than that the Trinitarians ſhould directly forge and inſert it. Moreover the Trinitarian would only be deprived of one argument, with which he might attempt the conviction of his opponent; if this text were wholly rejected as ſpurious: for his doctrine is abundantly ſupported by other ſcriptures: but if this teſtimony were admitted as the unerring word of God; all the ingenuity, and diligence of Unitarians would be inſufficient to explain it away, or to avoid the inference, that muſt naturally be drawn from it. It further appears, to me at leaſt, that the paſſage does not connect, with equal propriety, if the conteſted words be omitted, as it otherwiſe does: for if we read, with the copies in which they are wanting. “ The Spirit beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth: for there are three that bear record,— the Spirit, and the water, and the blood &c;” there ſeems to be a remarkable repetition, and a want of the apoſtle's uſual energy in the paſſage: and it does not appear evident for what reaſon, “ the water and the blood,” or the two great ordinances of the Tew Neſtament, as outward ſigns of ſanctification and juſtification, by the grace, and atoning blood of the Son of God; and as agreeing in One, with the teſtimony of the Spirit, ſhould be mentioned; and yet nothing ſhould be hinted, concerning the teſtimony of the Father from heaven to Chriſt as his beloved Son; or that of Chriſt himſelf, as confirmed by his miracles and reſurrection, and the fulfilment of his promiſe in pouring the Holy Spirit on his aſſembled diſciples. As the words ſtand in our copies, there is indeed a moſt abundant concurrence of divine teſtimonies, to the Perſon and doctrine of Chriſt, pointed out in a moſt compendious and energetic manner: and upon the whole, I am of opinion that the paſſage is genuine; but I would not expreſs that opinion with too much confidence, or earneſtneſs: for whatever may be determin-

hath the witneſs in himſelf: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar[*]; becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

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ed about this ſingle text, we have ſcriptural evidence enough to confirm our faith in one God, ſubſiſting in three co-equal Perſons, "the Father, the Son, and the Holy "Ghoſt," into whoſe One name we were baptized.

V. 9—13.] The teſtimony of two, or three credible men were, by the law, deemed ſufficient to prove any matter of fact; and almoſt all human affairs, even when life, or the intereſts of whole nations, lie at ſtake, are conducted, and determined by "receiving the teſtimony "of men:" and though it be known, that all men are liable to be deceived, or miſtaken, and prone to deceive; yet he that ſhould refuſe to act upon human teſtimony, and ſhould require another kind of demonſtration, in the various concerns of life, muſt ſoon, not only give over all buſineſs, but refuſe his moſt needful ſuſtenance. If then, the witneſs of men muſt be received, how abſurd is it to reject that of God! This muſt be greatly, or more indiſputably certain, (c. iii. v. 20;) as he knoweth all things, cannot miſtake or be impoſed on, can have no poſſible inducement to deceive his creatures, and is eſſential Truth, and cannot lie. (v. 6. *Pſ.* xix. v. 7.) The teſtimony of God is therefore the higheſt kind of demonſtration: and we need only enquire into the evidence, that He hath ſpoken; and into the meaning of his words, which the honeſt, humble and diligent enquirer will not be left greatly to miſtake in; and then we obtain the utmoſt certainty, that can be conceived, in things of the greateſt importance. Thus faith appropriates the information, contained in the teſtimony of God, and in a moſt compendious manner renders a man wiſe unto ſalvation. But the principal truth, which God hath teſtified, in his authenticated word, is that, which relates to his Son, and the way of ſalvation through him: He, therefore, who credits the witneſs of God, will "believe on the Son of God," and apply to him for the bleſſings, which he came into the world to purchaſe for, and beſtow on ſinners: and in conſequence of this faith, he will receive another, and ſtill more ſatisfactory, teſtimony to the truth of the goſpel, and which alſo ſeals to him his intereſt in Chriſt and his ſalvation. For "he "that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witneſs in "himſelf;" his diſcoveries of the glory of God, in the Perſon of Chriſt, and the change thereby produced in his judgment, diſpoſitions and affections: the views he hath received of the evil of ſin, of his own character and condition, of the deceitfulneſs and wickedneſs of his heart, and of the wretched ſtate of the world around him; all of which he now perceives to accord exactly with the ſcripture declarations, though once he ſaw nothing of it: the victory he is enabled by faith to obtain over the world, his own bad habits and propenſities, and the temptations of ſatan: the evident anſwers which many of his prayers receive, and his experience of the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes, and of his providential regard to him: and above all, the love of God ſhed abroad in his heart by the Spirit of adoption; the peace, hope and conſolation connected with it; the pleaſure he finds in communion with God, and obedience to his will, his delight in the ſociety of ſpiritual perſons, and the ſupport he receives when afflicted: theſe and ſimilar experiences, form a "witneſs in himſelf," to which all other men muſt be ſtrangers; for "the Spirit of God thus witneſſes with "his ſpirit, that he is the child of God," and gives him ſweet earneſts and foretaſtes of his eternal inheritance. This puts the matter out of all doubt with him; (except in hours of peculiar darkneſs, conflict, temptation, or humiliating correction;) and he can no more be argued out of his belief of the leading truths of the goſpel, reſpecting the Perſon and ſalvation of Chriſt, by any ingenuity, or ſophiſtry of infidels or heretics; than he could be convinced by logic, that the ſun was a dark, cold body, when he ſaw its light, and felt its genial warmth. (Notes, *John*, c. xi. v. 40. 2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 19.) On the other hand, he, that believeth not God, in reſpect of his teſtimony to his Son, can never receive "the witneſs "in himſelf;" but muſt expect his heavy diſpleaſure; ſeeing "he maketh God a liar," or treats his word as utterly unworthy of credit, or confidence. This is the caſe of every one, "who believes not the teſtimony, "which God hath given of his Son." (*John*, c. iii. v. 18—21. 31—36.) As all revelation centres in, and reſts on, this fundamental doctrine; it is in vain for a man to pretend that he believes the teſtimony of God in other things, whilſt he proudly and impiouſly rejects it in this. His opinion may indeed accord with the doctrine of ſcripture, in matters leſs affronting to human pride, more level with the human underſtanding, or more reconcileable to the love, friendſhip, and purſuits of the world. Thus a man aſſents to ſcripture truths, becauſe he thinks they may be *otherwiſe* proved; at leaſt there is no other evidence to be oppoſed to the teſtimony of God, and nothing to be loſt by aſſenting to it: but if his own reaſonings, or thoſe of ſome proud philoſophy, lead him to a concluſion, contrary to the word of God; he will lean to his own underſtanding, or believe in a philoſopher, and treat the teſtimony of God as a lie! Nay, men, profeſſing to believe the ſcriptures, will reject doctrines expreſsly revealed there, or employ a perverſe diligence and ingenuity to explain them away; merely becauſe they can find no philoſophical, or metaphyſical arguments, with which to confirm God's teſtimony! The light of the ſun is not ſufficient for them, nor will they be ſatisfied with it, unleſs they can ſee the ſame objects by their own dim candle! On the other hand, they will pretend

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we aſk any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatſoever we aſk, we know that we have the petitions that we deſired of him.

16 If any man ſee his brother ſin a ſin *which is* not unto death, he ſhall aſk, and he ſhall give him life for them that ſin not unto death. There is a ſin unto death: I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it.

17 All unrighteouſneſs is ſin: and there is a ſin not unto death.

18 We know that whoſoever is born of

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to believe the word of God, when it accords with the opinion of ſome philoſopher; who perhaps borrowed that glimmering from ſcripture, which preſerves his ſcheme from total darkneſs; and they ſometimes ſuppoſe themſelves doing good ſervice, when they call ſuch witneſſes to ſupport the teſtimony of God! So that in fact, they do not believe God, but other witneſſes, when they aſſent to ſcripture truth: for they directly treat Him as a falſe Witneſs, when he contradicts their preconceived opinions. Thus it is evident, that no belief of the Bible, or of any thing revealed in it, is of any avail, except a man “ believe the teſtimony, which God hath given of his Son;” which is a Subject, as much beyond the reach of man's reaſonings, as it is contrary to his pride, and worldly luſts. (*John*, c. iii. v. 12—16.) And this is the record, of which the apoſtle ſpake; or the ſubſtance of it; “ that God hath given,” of his free mercy and bounty, “ to us” men, ſinners, rebels and enemies, even to all, who accept of the gift in his appointed way, “ eternal life,” or everlaſting felicity, with every thing pertaining to it: “ and this life is in his Son;” in his Perſon as “ God manifeſted in the fleſh;” and in his mediatory offices, as having all *fulneſs* in him, in conſequence of his atoning ſacrifice, for the pardon, ſanctification and ſalvation of every believer: ſo that this eternal life muſt be obtained and enjoyed, by union and communion with Chriſt, both in reſpect of the title to, the meetneſs for, and the earneſts of it. (Note, 1 *Cor*. c. i. v. 29—31. *Col.* c. iii. v. 1—4.) He, therefore, “ that hath the Son hath life;” he that by true faith receiveth Chriſt, as the Son of God, and as his Prophet, High-Prieſt, and King; his wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; who humbly depends on him for all theſe purpoſes, and is thus intereſted in, and vitally united to him, and continually ſeeks and derives the bleſſings of ſalvation from him, through the influences of the Holy Spirit; “ hath life,” is ſpiritually alive, hath the promiſe of eternal life ratified to him, and the ſure earneſts of it in his ſoul, which ſhall certainly iſſue in his everlaſting felicity. “ And he, that hath not the Son of God, hath not life:” he, who denies him to be truly and properly the Son of God, and refuſes to truſt in, and honour him as ſuch; or who proudly refuſes to ſubmit to his teaching as his Prophet; to rely on his atonement, and interceſſion as his High-Prieſt; or to obey him as his King, has not liſe; he is dead in ſin, under condemnation, and the wrath of God abideth on him: nor will his morality, learning, philoſophy, forms of religion, doctrinal notions, or enthuſiaſtical dreams at all avail him. For Chriſt is the believer's life; and if he do not live in Chriſt, by faith working by love, and by the ſupply of his Spirit; he hath no life; whether he be an Infidel, a Socinian, or Arian, a Phariſee, a Myſtic, an Enthuſiaſt, or an Antinomian. To have Chriſt we muſt receive, and abide in him, for all the purpoſes, for which he came into the world: we cannot truly receive him in one character, whilſt we reject him in another; He will not protect, deliver, or accept ſervices from thoſe, as a King, who will not be taught by him, or who deſpiſe his precious blood; and he will not ſave, as an High-Prieſt, thoſe, who will not have him to rule over them. Theſe things the apoſtles wrote unto thoſe, who believed on the name of the Son of God, to confirm their faith, and put them upon their guard againſt the ſeductions of falſe prophets; to aſſure them that their's was the true religion of Chriſt, and that in Him they had eternal life; and to encourage their hope, that they might more conſtantly and vigorouſly exerciſe and profeſs this faith in the Son of God, amidſt all the deluſions, perſecutions, and tribulations, which they met with. The epiſtle might be very uſeful to other deſcriptions of men; but this was the primary intent of it.

V. 14—18.] The confidence, which eſtabliſhed chriſtians had in God, reſpecting the promiſe of eternal life in and through his Son, had an eſpecial reference to his readineſs to anſwer their prayers, through their heavenly Advocate, notwithſtanding their ſinfulneſs. They were aſſured, that if they aſked any thing, however great, or difficult, according to his will, after the preſcribed manner, in humble faith, hope, and uprightneſs; grounding their requeſts upon his promiſes, and ſubmitting themſelves to his wiſe and righteous providence, “ he certainly heard them,” and accepted of their worſhip. And knowing this, they were thence aſſured, that they had the “ petitions, which they deſired of him:” being confident that his omnipotence would certainly effect the purpoſe of his love, and fulfil his faithful promiſes. In ſome things, their prayers were evidently and ſpeedily anſwered; in others, they might be ſatisfied that they were granted, in the beſt manner, though not exactly as they expected: and even, when their requeſts were for the preſent denied, they made themſelves ſure, that, in the beſt time and way, they would at length be anſwered, in caſe that was for the glory of God, and their own real and abiding advantage; and this compoſed their minds, even as if they had already obtained their petitions. Whilſt they thus aſked and received, in their own belief, that their joy might be full; that love, which had been ſo largely inſiſted on, would dictate many prayers for their brethren; eſpecially when they had been overcome by temptation, or were under ſome ſharp chaſtiſement: and they might be aſſured, that the Lord would graciouſly accept and anſwer ſuch prayers; and in anſwer to them, grant repentance unto life to ſuch as had ſinned, but not

God ſinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

19 *And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedneſs.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourſelves from idols. Amen.

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unto death: and that he would remove the corrections, with which they had been viſited. Yet they muſt obſerve, that there was a ſin unto death, which would be an exception to this rule; nor were they required or encouraged to pray for thoſe, that had committed it. It hath been ſhewn, that apoſtacy, after an intelligent, credible profeſſion of the goſpel, when connected with ſtrong expreſſions of enmity, could ſeldom be ſeparated from the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. (Notes. *Matt.* c. xii. v. 31, 32. *Heb.* c. vi. v. 4—8. c. x. v. 26—31.) This no doubt was that ſin unto death, which the apoſtle intended: and when it appeared evident, that any perſon had committed it; they were directed to leave him to the righteous judgment of God, without expecting to ſee him renewed to repentance. Indeed "all unrighteouſneſs," or every deviation from the perfect rule of righteouſneſs, is ſin, and ſo deſerves death or final condemnation, according to the law; and all that turn aſide from, or act contrary to the goſpel merit this puniſhment: yet "there "is a ſin," even of this kind, "which is not unto death;" for being the effect of ſurpriſe, rather than deliberate enmity, many, who were thus overcome in the moment of danger, had been, and might be, recovered: ſo that they were admoniſhed to pray for their brethren, when grievouſly fallen; if they did not ſee in them the marks of determined obſtinacy and enmity. The apoſtle had before obſerved that none, who were born of God, could live in known and allowed ſin, (c. iii. v. 9:) and he here added, that none of them were left to commit the unpardonable ſin: for though ſuch apoſtates had gone out from them, they had never been of them; (c. ii. v. 19.) As the man, who is born of God, (not allowing himſelf in any ſin, but watching and praying, in the faith, fear and love of God, to be preſerved from, or ſupported under, temptation;) "keeps himſelf," by the Holy Ghoſt, out of the way of this fatal tranſgreſſion. So that the wicked one, by whom falſe profeſſors are overcome, and induced to apoſtatize, is not allowed acceſs to him, or can make no impreſſion on him. Satan obtained leave to *ſift* all the apoſtles, and he grievouſly baffled and wounded Peter; but he could touch none of them, except hypocritical Judas, ſo as to prevail with them deliberately to renounce and betray their Lord: for the incorruptible ſeed abode in their hearts; in the genuine faith, love, and integrity produced by it; and therefore they could not thus ſin, becauſe they were born of God.

V. 19. *We,* &c.] The apoſtle, and ſuch eſtabliſhed chriſtians as had the witneſs in themſelves, in love to God and each other, hatred of ſin, and victory over the world, knew aſſuredly that they "were of God," his ſervants and worſhippers, his children and heirs: and they alſo clearly perceived, that "the whole world lay in wicked"neſs," or *in* and *under* the wicked one. All the human race, unleſs, or until they are born of God, and become a part of Chriſt's kingdom, abide in willing ſubjection to the devil, (who is the god, and Prince of this World;) and are his vaſſals and ſlaves. They are overcome by, and brought into bondage to him: they bear his image, and copy his example of pride, envy, malice, deceit, murder, miſchief, ſlander, rebellion, enmity to God, ingratitude, &c: they do his works, and concur in ſupporting his cauſe: they have neither wiſdom, power or will to deliver themſelves; and they all muſt for ever have continued in this dreadful ſtate, if Chriſt had not come to deſtroy the works of the devil. This general declaration includes all unbelievers, whether Jews or Gentiles, idolaters or hypocritical worſhippers; atheiſts, infidels, profligates, profane perſons, and formaliſts; the wiſe and fooliſh, the learned and unlearned, the rich and the poor, the royal and noble, as well as baſe and vile; yea the moral and virtuous, as well as the vicious. All lie in wickedneſs, under the power of unrepented and unmortified ſin; or under the wicked one, as in ſome way or other doing him ſervice; thoſe only excepted, who "are delivered from the power "of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of the "Son of God." This, the well inſtructed, and eſtabliſhed chriſtian knows aſſuredly; and the criminality, ſlavery, and miſery of the human race, excite his lamentations, prayers, and endeavours to ſpread the goſpel; as the only method, by which they can be delivered from their abject condition. Yet other men perceive nothing of it; but are exceedingly offended at the declaration, and at the endeavours uſed, "to turn them from darkneſs to light, and "from the power of ſatan unto God." As the apoſtle made no exception in favour of unbelieving Jews in his day; ſo we can allow of none, in favour of unbelieving, heretical, and carnal men called chriſtians, in this preſent time. (c. iv. ver. 5.)

V. 20, 21.] The apoſtle and his brethren, alſo knew, "that the Son of God was come; and that He," either Chriſt, or the Father, for it is not evident which Perſon was intended, "had given them an underſtanding, to know "Him, that is true;" (Notes, &c. *Luke*, c. xxi. v. 15. c. xxiv. v. 45:) ſo that their believing, ſpiritual, experimental and ſanctifying knowledge of the Son of God, as the true and faithful Witneſs, the Truth and the Life; and of the only true God in him, (*John*, c. xvii v. 3;) was the effect of efficacious grace, through the Spirit, who is Truth, (v. 6.) Thus, having "the witneſs in them"ſelves;" "they knew that they were in Him that is "true," united unto the true and eternal God, by faith and love, abiding in him as their Reſt and Refuge, and living in him by his indwelling Spirit; "*even* in his Son "Jeſus Chriſt;" by Union with Chriſt, they were thus ſpiritually united unto God; becauſe He and the Father are One. (*John.* c. xvii. v. 21—23.) "*This Perſon* is "the true God, and eternal life." (c. i. v. 2.) The language here uſed is peculiarly to be noted: it is not obvious to determine, in ſome clauſes, whether the Father, or the Son was intended: but when "the Son of God, "even Jeſus Chriſt" had been mentioned; the apoſtle made uſe of a perſonal pronoun, (often *improperly* rendered *this man,* when applied to Chriſt, but commonly ſignifying *this Perſon*:) this hath Jeſus Chriſt for its immediate and evident antecedent: and having ſaid "*this Perſon* is the "true God, and eternal Life," he concluded, by ſolemnly cautioning his beloved children "to keep themſelves from "idols;" which muſt imply, that this would be done, by worſhipping the Son, as the true God, and eternal Life. The ſcripture, and the new Teſtament eſpecially, was intended, to draw men off from the worſhip of idols, to ſerve the One living and true God; and can it poſſibly be imagined for a moment, that an *inſpired* writer ſhould ſpeak in this manner of Jeſus Chriſt; if he had not been, equally with the Father, the proper Object of all adoration? If the worſhip of the Son of God were idolatry, (as it muſt be, if he were no more than a creature,) ſurely the apoſtle muſt have introduced his caution againſt idols, in a very unaccountable manner! But if the triune Jehovah, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, three Perſons in One undivided Godhead, be the Object and the only Object of divine adoration; nothing could be more proper, and emphatical: for the Jews, rejecting the Son, and profeſſing to worſhip God in One Perſon, (as the mahometans, deiſts, ſocinians and others in after ages have done;) had really changed the true object of worſhip, the God of the Bible, for an imaginary Being; and could not eaſily be exculpated from the charge of idolatry; as they could not be diſcriminated from thoſe, who worſhipped the ſupreme Being under the Name of Jupiter, or Baal. So that chriſtians in our days, in other places beſides the church of Rome, have more need to be warned to keep themſelves from idols, than is generally ſuppoſed; and to be careful, that they adore the triune God, in whoſe name they were baptized: that whilſt they bow their knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus, they remember to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; in dependance on, and under the guidance of, the omnipreſent and Divine Spirit; that the grace of the Lord Jeſus, the Love of the Father, and the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt may be with them always, Amen.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

True faith in Chriſt always ſprings from regeneration; and all, who are not born of God, are either wholly unbelievers, or poſſeſſed of a dead and unprofitable faith. True chriſtians ſhew their faith by their works: they love God, and all whom they judge to be his children; and this is proved to be genuine, by the pleaſure they take in keeping their Father's commandments; and inſtead of deeming them grievous, they ſeek liberty and happineſs in obeying them. By a new and divine nature, and the grace of the Holy Spirit co-operating with it; and in the exerciſe of faith in the teſtimony, the promiſe, the power and the love of God, they gradually acquire a victory over the world; and learn habitually to do the will of God, without being ſeduced, perſuaded, allured, or affrighted from it, by any perſons, or objects, in the world around them. Indeed this victory cannot be acquired without conflict; and it is never *abſolutely* perfect in this life: yet our faith prevails ſo far above what any other principle can do, that we may boldly ſay, "who "is He, that overcometh the world, but he that be"lieveth, that Jeſus is the Son of God?" Let then all profeſſors enquire whether they have attained, or are contending for this victory? We muſt all, after Chriſt's example, overcome the world, or it will overcome us to our final ruin: true faith always aſpires after, and preſſes forward to it, and is eventually ſucceſsful; but a worldly carnalized goſpel is the peculiar danger of the preſent day, and gives infidels and heretics of every name, their chief advantage againſt the truth of God's word. The goſpel, which is ſo abundantly atteſted, by all the Perſons in the Godhead, by miracles and prophecies, by the great ordinances of the new diſpenſation, by the holy lives, patient ſufferings, and joyful deaths of apoſtles, evangeliſts, and martyrs, relates eſpecially to the Perſon of Emmanuel, to the efficacy of his atoning blood, and the ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience: and as the miraculous powers, communicated by the Holy Ghoſt bare witneſs to the apoſtle's doctrine; ſo his new creating work in our hearts atteſts our intereſt in the great redemption of the Son of God; nor can this deceive us, "becauſe the "Spirit is Truth." As Jeſus, therefore, came not by water only, or by blood only; but by water and blood; let us never attempt to ſeparate what God hath thus joined together: for the Holy lives of all, who profeſs the doctrine of grace, is that teſtimony to the truth of them, which is at preſent principally wanting; in order to ſtop the mouths, and ſilence the objections of all, who oppoſe them.

Nothing can be more abſurd, than the conduct of thoſe men, who will be ſatisfied with nothing but demonſtration in matters of religion: whilſt, in the ordinary affairs of life, they heſitate not to proceed upon credible human teſtimony; and would deem him out of his ſenſes, that refuſed to do ſo: whereas, if we receive the witneſs of men, ſurely the witneſs of God is greater! Indeed, it is impoſſible, that the inviſible things of God, and the eternal world ſhould be known; except by faith appropriating the information of divine revelation: for, in what other way can we know the inconceivable perfections of God, his inſcrutable counſels, or the manner in which he will be pleaſed to ſhew mercy to his rebellious creatures? Theſe are not ſubjects for man to diſcover, or know by ſpeculation and abſtract reaſonings; but will always be beſt underſtood by thoſe, who moſt ſimply believe the ſure Teſtimony of God reſpecting them. And indeed they, who believe in the Son of God, will have an inward Teſtimony to the Truth, through the illumination, renewal, and conſolations of the Holy Spirit, and in their own happy experience; which when poſſeſſed in a large degree is a rational foundation of the moſt entire confidence, that can poſſibly be had by thoſe, who have not come to the immediate viſion and enjoyment of God. But can it be expected, that this "ſe"cret of the Lord," ſhould be with thoſe, who believe not his word, and treat Him, who is Truth itſelf, as a liar and deceiver? This is the caſe of all, who believe not the Record, which God hath given of his Son; and it, therefore, does not become them to treat the ſtedfaſtneſs of experienced chriſtians, as obſtinacy, or their conſolations as enthuſiaſm; when they are ſo fully warranted by the word of God. Diſregarding then their ſelf-wiſe reaſonings, let us thankfully receive the Record of Scripture, that "God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is *in* "his Son;" "that he who hath the Son hath life, and "that he who hath not the Son of God, hath not life:" that we may give diligence to obtain an aſſurance of our intereſt in Chriſt, and know that we have eternal life; and may ſo grow ſtronger in faith, ſtedfaſt in hope, "and always abounding in the work of the Lord; knowing "that our Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord."

Confiding in the love of our heavenly Father, and coming to him through our great Advocate; we may be aſſured that he always heareth, accepteth and will anſwer all ſuch prayers, as accord with his will, and tend to our real benefit. We ſhould, therefore, abound in ſupplication for our brethren, as well as for ourſelves; eſpecially ſeeking to the Lord to pardon and recover the fallen, as well as to relieve the tempted and afflicted: and as we cannot generally know, who hath ſinned unto death; we ſhould not eaſily yield to diſcouragement, reſpecting thoſe, whom we once conſidered as brethren. We ought to be very thankful, that no ſin is unto death, according to the goſpel, of which a man truly repents; and that God will enable all thoſe, who are born of Him, to keep themſelves, that the wicked one may never prevail on them to ſin in that manner, which they do, who are given up to a reprobate mind. If we have ſo grown in faith and grace, as to know that we are of God; we ſhall readily perceive that "the whole world lieth in wickedneſs," and under the power of ſatan: this will ſhew us how vaſt our obligations are to redeeming love and ſpecial grace; and it ought to excite our conſtant prayers and unremitting endeavours, to promote the preaching of the goſpel, and the converſion of ſinners, by every means in our power. Happy are they, who know that the Son of God is come, and to whom God hath given an underſtanding to know, and a heart to truſt in, and rely on, him that is true: may this be our privilege: may we dwell in Chriſt, and Chriſt in us; may we be one with Him and He with us; for *this* is the true God and eternal life: thus our fellowſhip will be with the Father, and the Son, through the Spirit: and we ſhall be preſerved from all idols, and damnable hereſies, and from the idolatrous love of worldly objects; and be kept by the power of God, through faith unto eternal ſalvation.

The Second EPISTLE of JOHN.

The ſentiment and ſtyle of this, and the following epiſtles, ſo exactly coincide with that which precedes; that there can be no reaſonable doubt, that the apoſtle John was the penman of them alſo. Some have conjectured, that the church of Jeruſalem was figuratively meant, by "The elect lady;" and that of Epheſus, where John is ſuppoſed to have at this time reſided, by "her elect ſiſter:" but it hath more generally been thought, that an eminent and honourable chriſtian matron, well known in the church, was addreſſed by the title of "the "elect lady," and that ſome other honourable chriſtian, nearly related to her, was intended by "her elect ſiſter," (v. 13.) *The epiſtle contains 1ſt. The addreſs to, and benediction of the elect lady and her children, with expreſſions of affection towards, and joy in them; and exhortations to brotherly love and obedience,* 1---6. *2d. Cautions againſt falſe teachers, and againſt entertaining or countenancing them,* 7--11. *3d. Intimations of an intended viſit, &c,* 12, 13.

Anno Domini 90.

Anno Domini 90.

THE Elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but alſo all they that have known the truth;

NOTES.

V. 1—3.] The aged apoſtle ſeems to have written this ſhort letter about the ſame time with his general epiſtle; and he only ſtyled himſelf "the Elder," (1 *Pet.* c. v. ver. 1,) knowing that the honourable matron, whom he addreſſed, would know from whom ſhe received it; and properly regard it, without a more explicit declaration of his authority. She ſeems to have been a perſon of ſuperior rank; he did not ſcruple to give her the title of honour, which cuſtom had allotted to her; and his ac-

2 For the truth's ſake, which dwelleth in us, and ſhall be with us for ever.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beſeech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments, This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye ſhould walk in it.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh. This is a deceiver and an antichriſt.

8 Look to yourſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9 Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed:

11 For he that biddeth him God ſpeed is partaker of his evil deeds.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but

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quaintance with her "work of faith, her labour of love, "and her patience of hope," ſatisfied him concerning her "election of God." He alſo addreſſed her children, who were trained up in religion, and ſome of them at laſt were partakers of her grace. He aſſured them, that "he "loved them in the truth;" in ſincerity, and as united by the bond of the truth, of the goſpel which they all believed! Nor was this peculiar to the aged apoſtle; for all thoſe loved them, who had underſtood and known the truth; that is, all ſuch as were acquainted with her, and her family. This affection was borne to them, "for the "truth's ſake, which dwelt" both in this matron and her children, and in thoſe that loved them; and which, would be with them for ever, as the incorruptible ſeed of eternal life. We have repeatedly met with the ſame, or a ſimilar benediction; except as the apoſtle added, "in "truth and love;" which ſeems to refer to the cordiality and fervency, with which he ſought thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings, in behalf of the perſons to whom he wrote.

V. 4. *I*, &c.] The apoſtle had either met with the children of this honourable matron, in ſome place whether he had journeyed, and had found that they "walked in truth," or evinced their ſincerity in profeſſing the goſpel, by an habitual conduct conſiſtent with it; or he had witneſſed this when he was with them. However, it gave great joy to his benevolent and pious mind, to ſee them tread in their honoured parent's ſteps, and likely to be inſtrumental in their turn to the ſupport of the goſpel. What follows accords to that, which hath before been conſidered. (Notes, 1 *John*, c. ii. v. 7—11. c. v. ver. 1—5.)

V. 7—11.] The influence of the falſe teachers would tend to diſunion among chriſtians, as well as to pervert and miſlead the unſtable. (Notes, 1 *John*, c. ii. v. 18—29. c. iv. ver. 1—6.) It therefore behoved thoſe, to whom this epiſtle was addreſſed, and all into whoſe hands it might come, to be upon their guard, and to take heed to themſelves, their principles, ſpirits, and conduct; leſt the labour of their miniſters ſhould prove fruitleſs, and their expectations be diſappointed; and leſt even their own loſſes, ſelf-denial, and diligence in the cauſe of the goſpel, ſhould prove of no uſe to them. This would be wholly the caſe of apoſtates; and in part of thoſe, who were ſeduced into heretical opinions, and an inconſiſtent conduct. Whereas the apoſtle's deſire was, that he and they together might receive a full reward; which would be the caſe, if they were ſtedfaſt in the faith and obedience of the goſpel: as this would at preſent recompence *him*, by his joy in them, for all his labours on their account; and they would at laſt be his crown of rejoicing in the day of Chriſt. But, whoſoever tranſgreſſed habitually, and with allowance, the commandments before ſpoken of; or abode not in the doctrine of Chriſt, had not God for his Father and Portion; as he only, who abode in that doctrine, was intereſted in the ſpecial love of the Father, and the redemption of the Son. If therefore any perſons came to the place, where this elect lady and her family reſided, to propagate their tenets, who brought not with them, in their profeſſion, and preaching, the doctrine of Chriſt, reſpecting his Perſon, as the incarnate Son of God, and his ſalvation from guilt, and ſin; they were warned not to entertain them in their houſe, nor "to wiſh them good ſucceſs in the name of the Lord:" for by thus countenancing their miniſtry, they would partake in the guilt of their evil deeds, and be abetting to the deſtruction of men's ſouls and the diſhonour of God. They might relieve ſuch men in ſickneſs or diſtreſs; or ſhew good-will to them in any way, that gave no ſanction to their pernicious doctrines: but they muſt ſtand aloof from, and proteſt openly againſt them, in this reſpect; that they might prevent their miſchievous ſucceſs, as much as poſſible.

V. 12, 13.] The apoſtle expected much joy and comfort in viſiting, and converſing with this pious matron, and her family; and to be an helper of their joy alſo: that ſo their conſolation in Chriſt might be complete. We

I truſt to come unto you, and ſpeak face to face, that our joy may be full.

13 The children of thy elect ſiſter greet thee. Amen.

know nothing concerning "her elect ſiſter," who ſent ſalutations to them, to which the apoſtle joined his hearty Amen.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

A conſiſtent and fruitful profeſſion of the goſpel is the principal honour even of the noble and exalted of the earth, when they are thus diſtinguiſhed: and that love is moſt cordial and permanent, which chriſtians bear to one another in the truth, and for the ſake of it; for this will dwell in all the powers of the ſoul to eternity, and be with them as the ſource of moſt perfect felicity. All, who know and love the goſpel, will love ſuch as profeſs and adorn it; and will pray, that "grace may be with them, even mercy and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of the Father, in truth and love:" and it will greatly rejoice faithful and zealous miniſters to ſee the honourable of the earth employ their influence, and improve their talents, to promote true religion; to obſerve them educating their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and to witneſs any of their deſcendants walking in the truth and obedience of the goſpel; as ready to ſupport that good cauſe, while they live, and to bequeath a regard towards it to the ſucceeding generation. Some few families of this kind are found amongſt us: may the Lord bleſs them more and more, and their children after them; and raiſe up many others to copy their example! For, alas, moſt of the ſuperior orders in the community, are rapidly diffuſing irreligion, infidelity and vice, in their extenſive circles; and preparing to leave them as a fatal legacy to their poſterity! We ſhould employ every argument and perſuaſion, to induce chriſtians, to abound in love of their brethren, and to render obedience to all the Lord's commandments: for thoſe many deceivers, "who confeſs not, that Jeſus Chriſt," the Son of God, "is come in the fleſh," "to redeem us to God with his blood," will have great ſucceſs among ſuch profeſſors, as are not rooted and grounded in love, and taught to delight in God's commandments. As ſuch deceivers and antichriſts multiply on every ſide: it behoves us to look to ourſelves and to each other; eſpecially miniſters to their people, and parents to their children; that we may not loſe the things, which we have wrought, but may receive a full reward. Let us then equally diſregard thoſe, who tranſgreſs the commandments, and ſuch as abide not in the doctrine of Chriſt; that by maintaining and obeying the truth, we may have both the Father and the Son for our Shield, and exceeding great Reward. Let us proteſt againſt ſuch teachers, as bring not with them the doctrine of Chriſt; not giving them any entertainment, and not ſeeming to wiſh them God ſpeed: leſt any ſhould be thus induced to hearken to their damnable hereſies, and ſo we ſhould be found partakers of their evil deeds; which are often a thouſand times more miſchievous to mankind, than thoſe of profligates, or even aſſaſſins; as they murder far more of the ſouls, than the others can do of the bodies, of men. In obeying this commandment of God, amidſt the clamours, that will be raiſed againſt our bigotry and uncharitableneſs; we ſhould be careful to ſhew great candour to thoſe, who differ from us in leſſer matters, but hold the doctrine of Chriſt's Perſon, atonement, and holy ſalvation: and we ought to pray for, and ſhew all kindneſs to the perſons, even of thoſe deluded men, who deny the fundamentals of chriſtianity; by every method, which implies no countenance of their hereſies. Thus we ſhall ſtand at a diſtance from all appearance of perſecution and intolerance; whilſt we ſtrenuouſly aſſert the difference between the goſpel of Chriſt, and the doctrine of every antichriſt: and between the love due to enemies; and that, which belongs to the ſaints, in whoſe communion we find much of our preſent joy, as an anticipation of our eternal felicity.

The Third EPISTLE of JOHN.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Addreſſing Gaius with good wiſhes, commendations; and exhortations to perſevere in his liberal and zealous ſupport of thoſe, who went forth to preach the goſpel, 1---8. *2d. Cautioning him againſt the preſumptuous and malicious deſigns of Diotrephes; and highly commending Demetrius,* 9---12. *3d. Giving intimations of an intended viſit, &c, with concluding ſalutations,* 13, 14.

III JOHN.

THE elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Beloved, I wiſh above all things that thou mayeſt proſper and be in health, even as thy ſoul proſpereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkeſt in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doeſt faithfully whatſoever thou doeſt to the brethren, and to ſtrangers;

6 Which have borne witneſs of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly ſort, thou ſhalt do well:

7 Becauſe that for his name's ſake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to receive ſuch, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating againſt us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himſelf receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and caſteth *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not ſeen God.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itſelf: yea, and we *alſo* bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

NOTES.

V. 1—4.] (*Rom.* c. xvi. v. 23.) It hath been generally ſuppoſed, that the Gaius, to whom John wrote, was the ſame perſon, of whom frequent mention is made in the writings and hiſtory of Paul; and his character may ſeem to favour the opinion: but John ſeems to have written his epiſtle many years after Paul's death; Gaius was a very common name; and the perſon here addreſſed was probably converted by John's miniſtry: ſo that there is not much ground for the conjecture. After an addreſs, couched in that affectionate and fervent language, for which the apoſtle was remarkable, he added his earneſt wiſh, "that *concerning all things*," (for that ſeems the proper rendering,) "Gaius might proſper, and that "he might be in health, even as his ſoul proſpered." Probably Gaius was of a weak conſtitution, and had ſuſtained heavy loſſes from the rapacity of perſecutors; whilſt at the ſame time "his ſoul proſpered" exceedingly, as the apoſtle well knew: he therefore earneſtly deſired the eſtabliſhing his health, that his valuable life might be prolonged; and that all his well-formed deſigns for uſefulneſs might be proſpered, and his ability for conducting them continued and increaſed. For he had been greatly rejoiced, when certain brethren, (who ſeem to have been preachers of the goſpel,) had come from the reſidence of Gaius, "and had teſtified of the truth that "was in him," and of the conſiſtency of his diſpoſition, diſcourſe, and conduct, with the truths he had received and profeſſed. For the apoſtle had no greater joy on earth, amidſt all his labours, infirmities, and ſufferings, "than to hear that his children," (either chriſtians in general, or ſuch as had been converted by his miniſtry,) "walked in truth;" or ſhewed the ſincerity of their profeſſion, by the effect of the truth upon their temper and conduct: for this would encourage his prayers, and hope in God, and animate him to fervent thankſgivings; and it muſt have highly gratified the zeal and benevolence of his pious heart.

V. 5—8.] The apoſtle deemed it proper to commend his beloved Gaius, as one, who in all things acted as became a believer, and was faithful in the uſe of what had been committed to his ſtewardſhip: this appeared in whatever he did, towards his fellow chriſtians, and the miniſters of the goſpel; and to the ſtrangers, that were driven from home by perſecution, or travelled abroad to preach the word. For they had borne teſtimony to his liberal and hoſpitable love, before the churches of Chriſt, in different places, eſpecially where John then reſided: and in continuing to entertain ſuch perſons, and to defray in part their travelling expences from a regard to the will and glory of God, he would act in a manner becoming his character, and honourable to the goſpel. Becauſe, that from love to Chriſt, and for the honour of his name, they had gone forth as evangeliſts, to preach among the Gentiles: determining to take nothing of them for their ſubſiſtence, to whatever ſtraits they were reduced; leſt they ſhould appear mercenary, and ſo prejudice the minds of men againſt their doctrine. It therefore, became the duty of eſtabliſhed chriſtians, to entertain, and contribute to the ſupport of, ſuch zealous and diſintereſted miniſters: that they might be helpers together with them, in propagating the truth of the goſpel, by enabling them to proceed in their work and labour of love.

V. 9—12.] Some expoſitors think, that the apoſtle only meant, that he *ſhould have written* to the church, had not the report he had heard, concerning Diotrephes, determined him rather to addreſs his letter to Gaius; but it does not appear that the words are capable of that conſtruction. He ſeems to have written to the church, to induce them to help on their journey the perſons before mentioned: but Diotrephes, (who probably was a paſtor of the church, whoſe circumſtances or abilities concurring with his ambition of pre-eminence, had acquired him an undue influence over his brethren,) would not own his authority, or pay any regard to his counſel.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 But I truſt I ſhall ſhortly ſee thee, and we ſhall ſpeak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends ſalute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Wherefore the apoſtle obſerved, that if he came thither, as he intended to do ſhortly, he would publicly cenſure his conduct; or even enforce his deciſion by inflicting ſome miraculous puniſhment upon him: as he was not afraid or aſhamed to vent malicious invectives, and ſlanders againſt him in the moſt indecent, and irrational manner. Nay, he did not think this a ſufficient expreſſion of his contempt and enmity; but he refuſed to entertain, or countenance thoſe evangeliſts, whom John recommended, and even forbad others to do it; and when they regarded the apoſtle's authority more than his prohibition, he proceeded to excommunicate them for ſo doing. It was indeed moſt wonderful, that a profeſſed miniſter of Chriſt ſhould thus pertinaciouſly oppoſe the aged apoſtle; and ſhould acquire that authority over the affairs of any church, as to be ſupported in ſuch a conteſt! The apoſtle, therefore, warned his beloved Gaius, not to be influenced by, or to imitate this ambitious man, or ſuch as he was: let him not "copy the evil, "but the good;" that was to be ſeen in the conduct of profeſſing chriſtians; for "the man, who did good", and was kind, loving, and beneficent, from evangelical principles, was born of, and belonged to God: whereas he, who practiſed evil, had no ſaving knowledge of Him. But whilſt the apoſtle cautioned him, againſt Diotrephes, he pointed out to him another perſon of his acquaintance, that was well worthy of his imitation; as he had a good report of all chriſtians, and of men in general; yea, the very truth itſelf, as it were, bare teſtimony to his humble diligence, zeal, and honourable conduct: to which the apoſtle alſo added his teſtimony; which Gaius knew to be true and faithful; and he would, therefore, be ſure to honour and imitate ſo excellent a man.

PRACTCAL OBSERVATIONS.

How many profeſſors of the goſpel are there, concerning whom the apoſtle's words may be reverſed; and we muſt earneſtly wiſh and pray, that their ſouls might proſper, as their health and outward circumſtances do? For ſpiritual languor, and want of vigour and ſucceſs in every thing conducive to the glory of God, may be obſerved in numbers, to bear proportion to their external proſperity. But there are a few, who are ſo eminent in grace, and zealous of good works; that the precarious ſtate of their health gives concern to all, who love the goſpel: and they earneſtly deſire the continuance of their lives, the increaſe of their ability to do good, and that they may proſper in all things, even as their ſouls proſper. The conduct of ſuch chriſtians gives a joy to their faithful miniſters, which counterbalances their grief on account of thoſe, who diſgrace their profeſſion: and every renewed teſtimony, which is borne to their walking in the truth, renews that inward ſatisfaction; for the rejoicing of ſuch paſtors over their children, and in their fruitfulneſs, and conſolation, differs widely from the ſelfiſh joy of proſperous hirelings, or that of ſuch, as "love to have the pre-eminence." Parents and miniſters ſhould be as ready to commend what is well done, as to point out what is wrong, in the conduct of thoſe, whom they ſuperintend; and this is far more pleaſing to a benevolent mind. The faithful ſtewards of Chriſt, whether they have been entruſted with "the myſteries of God," or with talents of another ſort, will at length obtain a good report: nor can multiplied charities, or hoſpitality without grudging, be ſo concealed, as to remain unknown to the church of God. Applauſe properly introduces exhortations; and indeed it ſhould be conſidered as an admonition to proceed in the ſame commendable behaviour. Miniſters, who are conſtrained by the love of Chriſt, and of the ſouls of men, to go forth and encounter perils and hardſhips in ſpreading the goſpel; and who are content to ſtruggle with poverty in their labour of love, rather than quit their ſtations, or do any thing to prevent their own ſucceſs, are peculiarly entitled to the countenance and aſſiſtance of their fellow chriſtians. Every one, according to his ability, ought to aſſiſt ſuch perſons, as circumſtances require; that they may be fellow helpers to the truth. Indeed the money muſt be well expended, that promotes the *faithful* preaching of the goſpel, in any part of the world: and it is greatly to be wiſhed, that all chriſtians would try to ſave ſomething from their ſuperfluous expences, in order to create a fund for conducting ſuch important deſigns. But alas, we live too much to ourſelves, in theſe lukewarm days: and we need not wonder, if covetous and ambitious men, who love to have the pre-eminence in the churches, diſdain ſuch admonitions from inferior miniſters; when even the apoſtles were not ſecured from the preſumptuous, inſolent and malicious oppoſition of ſuch perſons: but their deeds will one day be remembered againſt them; when every One that exalteth him ſhall be abaſed, and they who humble themſelves ſhall be exalted. Let us not then follow that, which is proud, ſelfiſh, malicious, ſlanderous, and wicked; though the example be given by eminent, and diſtinguiſhed perſons; but let us be followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, after the example of our Lord, and ſuch as have moſt cloſely imitated him: for he, who thus habitually doeth good, is of God; and he "that doeth evil "hath not ſeen, or known God," whatever his notions, gifts, or pretended revelations may have been. We ſhould therefore notice thoſe, "who by well doing have put to "ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men," and who have good report of the truth itſelf, and of its moſt faithful and zealous friends: for by aſſociating with, and copying the example of ſuch chriſtians, we ſhall have peace within, and live at peace with the brethren; our communications with the Lord's people on earth will be very pleaſant, and we ſhall be numbered with them in glory everlaſting.

The EPISTLE General of JUDE.

Contains 1ſt. The apoſtle's addreſs and ſalutation; and his purpoſe in writing the epiſtle, namely to eſtabliſh chriſtians againſt certain falſe teachers, of very bad character, 1---4. 2d. The example of the Iſraelites, that periſhed in the wilderneſs; that of fallen angels, and of Sodom, &c, adduced, to evince the danger, to which they were expoſed, who apoſtatized from, or abuſed the goſpel, 5---7. 3d. The vile character of theſe ſeducers further ſtated, and their doom denounced; with reference to ſome traditions, concerning Michael contending with the devil, about the body of Moſes; and an ancient prediction delivered by Enoch, of the day of Judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, 8---16. 4th. Warnings, counſels, and exhortations ſuited to the occaſion; and a concluding aſcription of glory to God, &c, 17---25.

Anno Domini 70. *Anno Domini 70.*

JUDE, the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, and brother of James, to them that are ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt, *and* called:

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common ſalvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

NOTES.

V. 1, 2.] The apoſtle Jude, or Judas, (*John*, c. xiv. v. 22,) ſeems to have penned this ſhort circular letter, ſoon after Peter wrote his ſecond epiſtle; with an intention of adding his proteſt alſo againſt the ſeducers, whom Peter oppoſed. He ſtyled himſelf "the ſervant "of Jeſus Chriſt, and the brother of James," (namely of James the Leſs, who was the author of the epiſtle, bearing that name;) and he addreſſed himſelf to ſuch, as "were ſanctified, &c." The unuſual aſcription of ſanctification to God the Father, and the order of the words, have induced many expoſitors to explain "ſanctified," of their being "ſet apart," or ſeparated "in "the election of grace," by God the Father; in conſequence of which, they were given to, and preſerved, in and by Jeſus Chriſt, from dying in their ſins, or falling into fatal deluſions; till called by the word and Spirit of God, into a ſtate of actual fellowſhip in the goſpel of Chriſt. Others ſuppoſe the order of the words to have been diſregarded: and then the apoſtle's meaning may be, that the perſons addreſſed were regenerated and ſanctified by the grace communicated from God the Father; that they were thus brought home to the good Shepherd, who bought them with his blood, and were preſerved by his watchful care; and being "called according to his pur-"poſe," they would be kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation. So that there is no material difference between the two interpretations; and every reader may ſafely be left to adopt that, which appears preferable to him. In behalf of theſe perſons the apoſtle deſired, that "mercy" to pardon their ſins, to compaſſionate and relieve their miſeries, and to ſupply their wants; "and "peace," inward, and outward; "and love might be "multiplied unto them:" even the ſpecial love of God to them with all its precious fruits, and their love to him, to one another, and to all men, for his ſake.

V. 3, 4.] When the apoſtle applied himſelf, with all aſſiduity and care to write to his fellow chriſtians, concerning that ſalvation, which was common to them all, and for every man, that would accept of it; it appeared to him upon mature conſideration, moſt needful to addreſs them upon the duty of "contending earneſtly "for the faith," or doctrine, "once delivered to the "ſaints;" by the apoſtles and evangeliſts, who firſt

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having ſaved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward deſtroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themſelves over to fornication, and going after ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewiſe alſo theſe *filthy* dreamers defile the fleſh, deſpiſe dominion, and ſpeak evil of dignities.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when con-

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preached the goſpel after the day of Pentecoſt. They could not but know the great fundamentals of that doctrine, reſpecting the Perſon and ſalvation of the Lord Jeſus, and his mediatorial authority over his redeemed ſubjects; and as theſe were violently aſſaulted at this time; they ought to contend earneſtly for them; refuſing all countenance to thoſe, who oppoſed them; decidedly uſing all their influence to put others upon their guard; and to confirm them in the faith and practice of the goſpel; to ſhew them the falſhood and pernicious tendency of theſe hereſies, and to uſe every means of encouraging the preaching of the true doctrine of Chriſt. Thus their example, profeſſion, converſation, prayers, improvement of talents, &c, might be inſtrumental to impede the progreſs of fatal deluſions, to eſtabliſh the faith of the weak and wavering, and even to recover ſome of the fallen: and an earneſt contending for the faith, with ſuch weapons as theſe, might conſiſt very well with meekneſs and benevolence; and would differ widely from that controverſy, which is conducted with acrimony, ſlander, invective, and reciprocal contempt. Theſe vigorous meaſures were peculiarly proper at that time: as certain men had *glided in* like ſerpents, with ſubtlety, and plauſible pretences, unawares to them and their paſtors, (for the enemy ſows ſuch tares, while men ſleep;) (*Gal.* c. ii. v. 4.) But the Lord had foreſeen them; for they were of old ordained, or regiſtered, "to "this condemnation:" many predictions had from the beginning been delivered to this effect, (v. 14, 15;) and it had been declared, that ſuch perſons ſhould ariſe, and be left to themſelves, and ſo invent and propagate pernicious errors; deceiving men, and expoſing themſelves to the righteous condemnation denounced againſt lying prophets: nay, theſe predictions had been extracts, as it were, from the regiſters in heaven; even the ſecret and eternal decrees of God, "known unto whom are all his works "from before the foundation of the world;" in which he had determined to leave them to their pride and luſts, till they merited, and received this condemnation. (1 *Pet.* c. ii. ver. 8.) They were indeed "ungodly men," who profeſſing chriſtianity, took encouragement from the abundant mercy of God, and the way of free ſalvation therein revealed, to indulge without fear, or ſhame, in the groſſeſt laſciviouſneſs; thus perverting the moſt holy truths into an occaſion to the vileſt unholineſs: in doing which they "denied the only Lord God," caſt off the yoke of his authority, as their Creator; "and that of our "Lord Jeſus Chriſt," by refuſing to have Him to rule over them, or to be the ſubjects of his mediatorial kingdom. (Note, 2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 1—3.) Some have ſuppoſed, that theſe ungodly men denied the doctrine of the apoſtles, concerning the Perſon, and atonement of Chriſt; (1 *John*, c. ii. v. 22, 23;) and they would therefore explain "turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs," of ſome attempts made by them to traduce the doctrines of grace, as tending to licentiouſneſs. But this conſtruction would be very unnatural, and the whole epiſtle ſhews that they were abominable antinomians, who "wrought "all uncleanneſs with greedineſs," under pretence of exalting free grace. Yet it is very probable that they alſo held ſome wild notions concerning the Perſon of Chriſt, &c; for this was generally the caſe with the various deſcriptions of theſe primitive heretics; whoſe abſurd, and preſumptuous reveries, concerning ſuch matters, would be wholly unworthy our notice, did they not illuſtrate the folly of man's wiſdom in matters of religion; the perverſe diſpoſition of the human heart to prefer any ſenſeleſs falſhood to the truths of revelation; and the artifice of ſatan in ſuiting the deluſions, which he propagates by his miniſters, to the taſte and capacities of thoſe, whom he means to ruin by them. The intellectual poiſon, which he adminiſters, in this age of proud reaſoning and ſcepticiſm, is of a more plauſible kind, and can be ſupported with more ſhew of argument; or elſe it would not be ſo generally ſwallowed.

V. 5—8.] (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. x. v. 1—12. 2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 4—11. 20—22.) External privileges, profeſſion, and *apparent* converſion could not ſecure men from the ſevereſt vengeance of God, who thus turned aſide in unbelief and diſobedience. To evince this, the apoſtle deemed it proper to remind his readers, though they had been taught, and had underſtood it; that the Lord, having delivered the whole nation of Iſrael from Egyptian bondage, and made a national covenant with them, as his people, &c; yet afterwards deſtroyed with terrible judgments ſuch of them, as believed not, and ſo would not obey him; though this involved a vaſt majority of the nation: (Notes, &c. *Heb.* c. iii. v. 7—19. c. iv. ver. 1, 2:) and they, who apoſtatized from chriſtianity, or manifeſted their unbelief, by determined and habitual diſobedience; inſtead of being ſecured by their external privileges, would be more deeply condemned on account of them. Even the angels, originally created holy, endued with noble powers, and exalted to great eminence in heaven itſelf; when they were diſſatisfied with, and kept not their firſt eſtate; but, ambitiouſly and rebelliouſly left the ſtation aſſigned them by the Creator, had been caſt down from their holy habitation, and were re-tending with the devil he diſputed about the body of Moſes, durſt not bring againſt him a railing accuſation, but ſaid, The Lord rebuke thee.

10 But theſe ſpeak evil of thoſe things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beaſts, in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and periſhed in the gainſaying of Core.

12 Theſe are ſpots in your feaſts of charity, when they feaſt with you, feeding themſelves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whoſe fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 Raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame; wandering ſtars, to whom

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ſerved, as in chains of everlaſting darkneſs, wickedneſs, miſery and deſpair, until the judgment of the great day; when their condemnation will be as diſtinguiſhed, as the rank was from which they fell. Even as the inhabitants of Sodom, &c, who were favoured with a moſt pleaſant and fruitful country; when, after the manner of apoſtate angels, they daringly rebelled againſt God, (which appeared eſpecially in their giving up themſelves to abandoned lewdneſs, and the ſhameleſs indulgence of their unnatural luſts;) had been exhibited as an example of divine vengeance to the whole earth, in the deſtruction of their cities, and all that was in them, by fire from heaven, and by the perpetual deſolations of their fertile country: ſo that it became a viſible emblem of the eternal fire of hell, into which that judgment ſwept the ſouls of the impenitent; and all the adults ſeem to have been ſuch without exception. In like manner "the filthy dreamers" that the apoſtle ſpake of, who vainly expected liberty and impunity in ſin; and whoſe very dreams were defiled, through the filthineſs of their waking imaginations, affections and practices, followed the example, and would ſhare the doom of abominable Sodom: whilſt they defiled their bodies, that ought to have been conſecrated to God; and deſpiſed all authority, divine and human; and reviled thoſe, that were placed in dignity, or inveſted with power, in ſo inſolent a manner, as would tend to exaſperate them againſt chriſtians in general. In ſhort they would not endure either authority or reproof; but diſdained them, as the inhabitants of Sodom did the gentle expoſtulation of Lot. (*Gen.* c. xix. v. 9.)

V. 9—13.] (Notes, &c. 2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 11—19.) The apoſtle doubtleſs took this account, concerning Michael, &c, from ancient tradition, that was well known among the Jews; and by thus adducing it. he hath given ſufficient atteſtation of its truth. (Notes, *Deut.* c. xxxiv. v. 6. *Dan.* c x. v. 13. 21. c. xii. v. 1.) In ſome of the paſſages here referred to, Michael has been ſuppoſed to be the Son of God himſelf, as the great Ruler over all angels, and worſhipped by them all: but whether we are authorized to underſtand this text of *him*, as ſpoken of in the tradition by that name, previous to his incarnation; or whether one of the chief of created angels be meant, is not eaſily determined. However, this exalted arch-angel had a conteſt with the devil about the body of Moſes; ſatan ſeems to have wanted to make the place of his burial known to the Iſraelites, in order to tempt them to worſhip him; but Michael would not ſuffer him to do it: and probably the devil vented his rage in deſperate blaſphemy. Yet Michael durſt not bring againſt him a railing accuſation; he did not preſume to denounce on him the judgment of blaſphemy, or to retort his revilings; but merely ſaid to him "the Lord rebuke thee." *Zech.* c. iii. v. 2.) Though the hateful character, and atrocious conduct of the devil muſt have excited the holy abhorrence and indignation of the arch-angel; he yet *dared* not to utter any reviling expreſſion; becauſe even in thoſe circumſtances, it would not have been conſiſtent with the perfection of his character. But theſe heretics, pretending ſuperior eminence, as the favourites of heaven, *dared* to ſpeak evil of dignities, whom God had commanded them to honour and obey. Thus they ſpake language concerning their lawful Rulers, which Michael ſcrupled to uſe concerning the devil himſelf: and ſurely they would not pretend, that they were more privileged than the arch-angel, or that their rulers were more execrable than that great enemy of God and man! But indeed they ſpake evil of ſuch things as they underſtood not: for they were men of a baſe groveling mind; whoſe chief attention was paid to the indulgence of their appetites, in ſuch things as they knew naturally, even as the brutes did; and by their exceſſive and lawleſs gratification they wholly polluted themſelves. The apoſtle therefore denounced a woe upon them: for they had gone in the way of Cain; who proudly diſliking the humble obedience of faith, and the ſpiritual worſhip, that God had appointed, failed of finding acceptance with him: and being enraged by this, he murdered his righteous brother, and apoſtatized from the religion he had profeſſed: and theſe wicked men had turned aſide from the pure doctrine of Chriſt, become haters of thoſe, who adhered to it in oppoſition to them, and were in the way to caſt off all their profeſſion of chriſtianity. They had alſo run with eagerneſs and greedineſs in the ſame way, which Balaam had taken, in order to obtain the reward of unrighteouſneſs: like him they had gone contrary to the commandment of the Lord, from love to filthy lucre; they had ſought the ruin of the profeſſing people of God; and they had ſeduced many of them into licentiouſneſs, and thus expoſed them to divine vengeance. Moreover, as, Korah and his company oppoſed the authority of Moſes and Aaron, and excited the people to rebel againſt them; ſo thoſe wicked men had rejected the authority of Chriſt's apoſtles, and contradicted their doctrine; yea, they had induced many others to oppoſe them; and they were about to periſh in this their gainſaying, as Korah and his aſſociates did. Theſe is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.

14 And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam, propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints;

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *ſpeeches* which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him.

16 Theſe are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own luſts; and their mouth ſpeaketh great ſwelling *words*, having men's perſons in admiration because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were ſpoken before of the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;

18 How that they told you there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts.

19 Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves

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were ſpots in their religious feaſts wherein they met together in token of their brotherly love; for feaſting with chriſtians and indulging their appetites without fear; they would, by that, and other ſcandalous practices, be a diſgrace to the whole company. They were indeed "clouds without water," from whom no good could be expected; whilſt their own luſts, and ſatan's temptations, &c, drave them from one folly and wickedneſs to another, as the clouds are driven about by the wind. They might alſo be compared to trees, that ſeemed to take roots, and to give hopes of fruit; but their *buddings* were withered, and they remained wholly unfruitful; ſo that they were "twice dead;" as the ſhort-lived hope that had been given of their receiving life, and taking root, only made way for their being reduced to a more deſperate ſtate, from which they could not be expected to recover: for they were, as barren trees, torn up by the roots, that they might be caſt into the fire. Moreover, they might be compared to "raging waves of the ſea," in the turbulency, clamour, and fury of their conduct; whilſt, by their boaſting, reviling, and filthy language, they foamed out their own ſhame; and proved to all, who judged by the word of God, what ſcandalous perſons they were. They were alſo like "wandering ſtars," whoſe excentrical, or irregular courſes could not eaſily be deſcribed, or underſtood; whilſt their appearance, though apparently luminous, foreboded miſchief to mankind: and the blackneſs of darkneſs, deſpair and miſery were reſerved for their eternal portion; along with the devil and his angels, with whom they had united in oppoſing the authority and honour of Chriſt.

V. 14—16.] In a prophecy, which had been delivered by Enoch to the Antedeluvians, concerning the coming of the Lord to judgment, men of this character had been predicted, and condemned. It had not pleaſed God, that this ancient prophecy ſhould be committed to writing by Moſes, or any other inſpired perſon: but it had been preſerved by tradition; and not only accorded to the general doctrine of revelation, but was authenticated as a part of it, in being thus quoted by the apoſtle of Chriſt. Though Enoch lived ſo ſoon after the creation, as to be the ſeventh in deſcent from Adam; yet he foreſaw and predicted the ſecond coming of the Lord, even of the promiſed Meſſiah, to judge the world: of which the approaching deluge was an emblem. He, therefore, called on the men of that abandoned generation, in which he lived; to behold and take notice, that the Lord would come, and was even then coming, with ten thouſands of his holy ones, his holy angels, and redeemed ſinners, in the moſt conſpicuous manner, to execute judgment upon all wicked men; and to arraign, convict, and condemn all that were ungodly *among them*, both in reſpect of their profane, rebellious, and wicked works, which they had moſt impiouſly perpetrated, in contempt and defiance of him; and of all the hard ſpeeches, the virulent, preſumptuous, ſcornful, blaſphemous, and malicious words, which they had dared to utter, in the proud and carnal enmity of their hearts againſt Him. This conviction, and condemnation, the falſe teachers of whom Jude wrote, could not eſcape; ſeeing their works and words were exactly of the ſame kind, with thoſe deſcribed by Enoch. For they were murmurers, (after the example of the Iſraelites, who murmured with Moſes, and Aaron, and thus ſhewed their enmity to Jehovah;) they quarrelled with the truths, precepts, and miniſters of Chriſt; and *complained* of every reſtraint laid on, or authority exerciſed over them, as well as expreſſed continual diſcontent with the Lord's providential diſpenſations reſpecting them: at the ſame time, they "walked after their own luſts," habitually making their ungovernable carnal inclinations the rule of their conduct, and diſdaining all controul. Yet "their mouths ſpake "great ſwelling words;" boaſting moſt extravagantly of their knowledge, liberty, gifts, &c, as if they were the only favourites of heaven: and they paid court, with abundant flatteries, and profeſſed admiration, to ſuch perſons, as were able and willing to promote their ſecular advantage, without any regard to their characters; by means of which partiality, and mercenary careſſes, they attached proud, and worldly men to their party.

V. 17—19.] (Note, 2 *Peter.* c. iii. v. 2, 3.) As theſe deceivers were making ſuch deſtructive progreſs in the church; Jude deemed it requiſite to exhort his beloved brethren, to recollect the words which the other apoſtles of Chriſt had ſpoken to them when they firſt preached the goſpel to them; as well as of what ſome of them had written to this effect; eſpecially Paul, Peter, and James. For they had warned them, that under the chriſtian diſpenſation, there would ariſe within the viſible church, mockers, who would treat the moſt ſacred truths, and on your moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt.

21 Keep yourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.

22 And of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference:

23 And others, ſave with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent *you* faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy.

25 To the only wiſe God our Saviour, *be* glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

moſt important duties of chriſtianity, with profane contempt; and be a ſcandal to that holy religion, by walking after their own ungodly luſts. (2 *Tim*, c. iii. v. 1—9. c. iv. v. 3, 4.) Theſe warnings and predictions related to thoſe perſons, who at that time ſeparated from the apoſtolical churches, to form heretical ſects; being *ſenſual*, or *natural* men, (Notes, 1 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 14. *Jam.* c. iii. v. 15;) who, not having the Spirit of God dwelling in them, as the Author and Preſerver of divine life, and holy affections, were wholly actuated by pride, ambition, avarice, and licentious inclinations: and it therefore behoved Chriſt's diſciples to remember their Lord's admonition on this ſubject, “ By their fruits ye ſhall know them.” (Note, *Matt.* c. vii. v. 15—20.)

V. 20, 21.) Inſtead of liſtening to ſuch deceivers, the apoſtle exhorted his beloved brethren to be employed in “ building up themſelves on their moſt holy faith.” The doctrine of faith is moſt holy in its nature and tendency; leading men to repent of, and hate all ſin, to love and obey God, and to lead a ſober, righteous and godly life; by which it may be diſtinguiſhed from all falſe doctrines: the grace of faith is moſt holy; as it worketh by love, purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world; by which it is diſtinguiſhable from a falſe and dead faith. Adhering, therefore to the holy doctrine of the goſpel by a living obedient faith; chriſtians ought continually to be ſeeking an increaſe in their knowledge of the Truths of God, and in the experience of the power of them upon their hearts; that they may be more eſtabliſhed in a realizing, and efficacious belief of them, and in all thoſe holy diſpoſitions, and that obedient practice, which depends on it, as the ſuperſtructure reſts upon the foundation. Thus the conſiſtency, ſtability, and circumſpection of their conduct will continually be advancing; and they will better adorn the goſpel, glorify God, and do good to men, as long as they live. In order to build up themſelves, and each other, upon their moſt holy faith, the apoſtle directed them to continue, “ praying in the Holy Ghoſt,” or in dependance on, and under the influence of his ſacred teaching; as in this manner alone, could they eſcape the ſnares, and reſiſt the temptations, which would be laid in their way. Thus they ought “ to keep themſelves in the love of God;” in the aſſurance, and comfort of his ſpecial love to them, which they could not enjoy if they were ſlothful; and in the exerciſe of filial love and gratitude towards him. Yet, with all this aſſiduity, watchfulneſs, devotion and conſcientiouſneſs, they muſt put no truſt in themſelves: but wait for, expect and be continually looking for “ the “ mercy,” ſhewn to ſinners through, and conferred on them by, “ the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and preparing for the “ completion of it, in eternal life,” as the gift of God through Him.

V. 22—25.] It was, moreover, needful for chriſtians, in thoſe perilous times, to know how to act reſpecting ſuch of their brethren, as had been ſeduced by the deceivers; and might probably be recovered. Of ſome they ought to have compaſſion, and to treat them with gentleneſs, tenderneſs, and kindneſs; making a difference between ſuch as had fallen through inadvertency, and appeared penitent, and others who were more hardened and profane: theſe they were ordered “ to ſave with fear;” being cautious, leſt by attempting their recovery, they ſhould be themſelves entangled; (as if a man, being eager to reſcue others from a fire, ſhould fall in, and be himſelf burned:) and they ſhould uſe alarming, and terrifying methods; as they would do, if they ſaw any perſons in imminent danger of being conſumed in the flames, whilſt they were inſenſible of their ſituation, through ſleep or intoxication. All ſuch endeavours muſt alſo be joined with decided abhorrence of the crimes committed by the perſons concerned; and care to avoid whatever led to, or was connected with, “ fellowſhip with them in their works “ of darkneſs;” even as a garment, infected with the plague, would be ſhunned by thoſe, who deſire to keep clear of the malady: thus ought they to hate “ even the “ garment ſpotted with the fleſh,” or whatever had the moſt remote alliance with the ſenſual practices, and licentious doctrines of theſe deceivers. It hath been obſerved by ſome writers, that ſuch ornamental clothing, as tends to tempt others to “ fleſhly luſts,” or is purchaſed with the wages of ſuch licentiouſneſs, may very properly be called, “ garments ſpotted with the fleſh;” and as ſuch ought to be deteſted and loathed, more than the vileſt rags, (however rich, elegant, and *becoming* they may be,) by all thoſe who would be thought chriſtians. But whilſt the apoſtle gave theſe warnings and counſels, he ſhewed his readers where to place their whole dependance, for preſervation, by the form of his concluding doxology. For he addreſſed it, “ to Him, that was able to keep them from falling,” into iniquity, hereſy, or deſtruction; whatever their dangers and temptations might be; and who alone could do it, by his outward protection, and his inward ſupports: and thus he would at length, “ preſent them faultleſs,” perfected in holineſs, and fully juſtified, “ before the “ preſence of his glory,” when diſplayed at the day of judgment before the aſſembled world; “ with exceeding "joy," to each of them on his own account, and in the felicity of all the reſt; to all the holy angels, yea to the Lord himſelf, who would rejoice in, and over them to do them good for ever. To him therefore, as "the only wiſe "God," who knew how to deliver the godly out of temptation, "even the Saviour" of ſinners the apoſtle aſcribed, "glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both then, and "for ever, Amen:" He rejoiced that theſe belonged to, and would for ever veſt in Him, who alone was worthy to poſſeſs, and capable of exerciſing them, in a worthy manner, and for the good of his univerſal and everlaſting kingdom. As the Lord Jeſus alone will viſibly appear at the day of judgment, to preſent his ſaints unto himſelf, (*Eph.* c. v. ver. 27. *Tit.* c. ii. v. 13, 14;) ſo it hath been thought by ſome expoſitors that this doxology was addreſſed perſonally to Him, (2 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 18.) But others ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle had the "One true and "living God" in his mind, without *excluſive* reſpect to any of the perſons in the ſacred Trinity: as God is become our Saviour, in, and through Jeſus Chriſt; and the *glory* of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, in the ſalvation of believers, will be diſplayed at the day of judgment; though Chriſt alone, will viſibly and perſonally appear to judge the world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the ſervants of Chriſt addreſs thoſe, who "are "ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in Jeſus "Chriſt, and called;" and for whom they pray, "that "mercy, peace and love may be multiplied unto them;" they muſt not only inſtruct them with all diligence in things pertaining to the common ſalvation; but ſelect ſuch ſubjects, as moſt ſuit the circumſtances of the times, and tend to put them on their guard againſt prevailing deluſions. A cordial attachment to the doctrines once delivered to the ſaints, and handed down to us in the ſcriptures, will render us earneſt in contending for them, and againſt all innovations; by every means conſiſtent with meekneſs and love: and a competent acquaintance with them will put us upon our guard againſt thoſe ungodly men, who creep in unawares, amidſt revivals of religion, and turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs by their perverſe interpretations, and ſcandalous crimes; through which they deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as if they were determined to be their own rulers in every ſenſe, and to be ſubject to no authority, either human, or divine: and thus they bring upon themſelves that deſtruction, to which they were appointed. Whilſt we therefore, contend earneſtly for the truths, which relate to the Perſon and Salvation of Chriſt; we ſhould guard with equal caution againſt every abuſe of them: for though the Infidel, or Phariſee will as ſurely come ſhort of ſalvation, as the antinomian; yet he doth not ſo diſhonour the goſpel, or do ſo much to ſet mankind againſt it. We ought therefore to remind the people, not to reſt in any profeſſion, notions, or experience, which doth not bring the ſoul into ſubjection to the obedience of Chriſt: for nothing but the renewal of our ſouls to the divine image by the Holy Spirit, can ſecure us from being deſtroyed among the enemies of God. We are continually warned of this: and the examples of God's ſeverity on unbelieving Iſraelites, on apoſtate angels, and on Sodom and Gomorrah, ſtand on record for our admonition, that we ſhould not preſume on former favours, and preſent privileges; or take occaſion from thence, to rebel, or to indulge our ungodly luſts; if we would not be bound in chains of darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day. Whilſt we are on our guard againſt "filthy dreamers, who "defile the fleſh;" let us alſo ſtand aloof from thoſe, whether moral, or immoral in other reſpects, "who de"ſpiſe dominion, and ſpeak evil of dignities," and give themſelves the licence to revile their rulers in ſuch language, as an arch-angel dare not uſe, in reply to the blaſphemies of the prince of darkneſs. When we deem any thing amiſs in the conduct of our governors, and wiſh well to ſober and regular plans of ſecuring liberty, and redreſſing grievances; let us by no means loſe ſight of the meekneſs of wiſdom but leave every matter to the Lord: in the uſe of proper means: and even if oppreſſed and perſecuted, we ſhould, without rendering evil for evil, commit ourſelves to Him, that judgeth righteouſly.

There always have been numbers, who ſpeak evil of things, that they do not underſtand, and corrupt themſelves in ſuch as they know naturally as brute beaſts: the way of Cain, of Balaam, and of Korah hath ever been frequented: and enmity againſt God, concurring with avarice, ambition and ſenſuality drive men headlong in ſuch courſes to their own deſtruction. But when ſuch perſons are admitted to, and continued in, communion with the churches of Chriſt; they are diſgraceful ſpots and blemiſhes in them: whilſt they indulge their appetites and paſſions without fear or ſhame; and bear no good fruit, but diſappoint all the expectations, which promiſing appearances once excited. Such profeſſors, continuing unfruitful after hopeful convictions, and ſo becoming twice dead, and plucked up by the roots; often prove like raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame, in virulent reproaches, arrogant boaſtings, and perhaps horrible blaſphemies: they make a glare indeed for a ſhort time, like meteors, and then they ſink into the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever! The men of God, from the beginning of the world, have declared the doom, that will be denounced on ſuch perſons, when Chriſt ſhall come with all his Saints, to execute judgment on all the ungodly, for all their wicked works, and for all the impious words, which they have ſpoken againſt Him, by reviling his truths, ſervants, providential appointments, and holy commandments. We ſhould therefore avoid ſuch murmurers and complainers, who walk after their ungodly luſts, and want a religion to ſuit ſuch a courſe of life; and we ought to diſregard their great ſwelling words of vanity: whilſt we mark how they have men's perſons in admiration for their own ſecular advantage; eſpecially ſuch as are rich, and can buy flattery and power at a high rate. Let us then remember the words of the apoſtles of Chriſt; and we ſhall find the ſcriptures verified in theſe profane, and licentious ſcoffers, who ſeparate from, and deride thoſe, that adhere to the holy doctrine of Chriſt; and who expect him to ſave them, though they remain carnal and ſenſual, and deſtitute of his ſanctifying Spirit. Let us alſo remember that the doctrine and faith of chriſtians are moſt holy; that we may build ourſelves thereon, in all ſpiritual and devoted obedience to God; praying in, for, and by the Holy Spirit, to be preſerved in the love of God; and ſo waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life. And whilſt with tender compaſſion, or more

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ſolemn and awful warnings, as the caſe may require, we ſeek to recover our fallen brethren from ſuch dangerous hereſies; we ſhould look to ourſelves, and hate even the garment ſpotted with the fleſh; as afraid of being infected with that moſt fatal peſtilence: and ſtill truſting in him who is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory, with exceeding joy; we ſhould aſcribe to him, even God our Saviour, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, all glory, majeſty, dominion and power, now and for evermore. Amen.

The REVELATION of JOHN the DIVINE.

The authenticity of this book hath not only been eſtabliſhed by the moſt irrefragable arguments, in anſwer to the objections that ſome perſons have ſtarted againſt it: but the prophecies contained in it have, in ſo many undeniable inſtances, been moſt circumſtantially accompliſhed, through a long ſeries of years; that it ſtands as little in need of external evidence to prove its divine original, as any book in the whole ſcripture. No doubt it was penned by John the apoſtle, to whoſe name the title of "The Divine," was added ſome time after; either becauſe of the deep and myſterious truths relative to the nature, decrees, and counſels of the Godhead, with which his writings abound; or becauſe he ſpake ſo much concerning the divine Perſon and glory of the Lord Jeſus. The book is ſtyled, "The Apocalypſe, *or* the Revelation;" *as conſiſting of matters chiefly prophetical, which were immediately revealed to John from Chriſt: this took place, when he was in the iſle of Patmos, in the Egean Sea, whither he was baniſhed, as is generally thought, by the emperor Domitian, A. D.* 94, *or* 95: *though ſome think that this happened during the perſecution of Nero, A. D.* 67, *or* 68; *or even before that time. But the arguments, adduced in ſupport of this opinion, are by no means concluſive; and as this book ſtands laſt in the ſacred canon, ſo it ſeems to have been penned laſt, and to have been intended to occupy that place. The Revelation opens with an account of an extraordinary viſion, with which John was favoured, of the glory of his Lord; then follow ſeven ſhort epiſtles from Chriſt himſelf, to the ſeven principal churches in the proconſular Aſia: and after them we find a ſeries of prophecies, ſome, more emblematic, and others more plain; relating to events, that were to take place in the church and the nations of the earth, through all the ſubſequent generations of mankind, to the end of the world, the day of judgment, and the eternal ſtate. This ſeries of prophecy is ſometimes interrupted by explanatory digreſſions; which will be noted as we proceed: ſuch predictions as are ſuppoſed to be already fulfilled, will be compendiouſly ſtated with the events to which they relate, according to the judgment of the moſt approved writers; and an endeavour will be thus far made to render the great outlines of the book, as plain as may be to the unlearned reader; whoſe edification muſt principally be conſidered: but in reſpect of thoſe things which ſeem not to be yet fulfilled; a judgment muſt be formed, and an opinion ventured, with great caution, and in a very general manner. Many indeed have objected to, and ſome have even derided, every attempt to explain, ſo myſterious a book; and no doubt many have wanted to be wiſe above what is written, and have applied general prophecies by a private interpretation, in a very abſurd, and unwarrantable manner.* (Note, 2 Pet. i. v. 20, 21:) *and this ſhould teach others modeſty, reverence, and a ſimple dependance on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in all their enquiries; whatever helps or advantages they may poſſeſs for ſuch inveſtigations. But, if we are enabled to ſtudy, write, and read in this manner; I can have no doubt, but we ſhall derive moſt abundant practical inſtruction, and obtain increaſing vigour to our faith and holy affections, by attending carefully to every part of this moſt ſurpriſing diſcovery of the Lord's purpoſes, reſpecting his church, which was made ſo many ages before they were executed.*

CHAP. I.

Contains 1ſt. An account of the origin, and deſign of the book; with a bleſſing pronounced on thoſe, who duly attended to it, 1---3. *2d. The apoſtle's ſalutation and benediction of the ſeven Aſiatic churches: the coming of Chriſt to judgment, and the terror and diſtreſs of his enemies predicted: and the Lord declaring his own eternity and omnipotence,* 4---8. *3d. The place, time, and circumſtances of John's viſion; with what he heard of the words, and ſaw of the glory of Chriſt; and the commandment given to write theſe things to the churches, &c,* 9---20.

THE Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs; and he ſent and ſignified *it* by his angel unto his ſervant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all things that he ſaw.

3 Bleſſed *is* he that readeth, and they that

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1—3.] The Lord Jeſus, in his mediatorial character, is the great Prophet of the church, the incarnate Word of God, by whom he reveals himſelf to men. *In this ſenſe* ſome things were given to him, "as "his revelation," to be through him communicated to his ſervants; and others were not, (Note, *Mark*, c. xiii. v. 32.) Almoſt an infinity of the divine decrees remain impenetrably concealed in the mind of God, till the event diſcovers them: but he hath ſeen good *previouſly* to make known ſome of his purpoſes, in order to confirm the faith, encourage the hope, and enlarge the views of his people; and that the accompliſhment of them in after times might demonſtrate the truth of the ſcriptures to every diligent enquirer. (Note, *Deut.* c. xxix. v. 29.) This book was, therefore, called "The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt;" becauſe its principal ſubject is, "a previous diſcovery of God's pur-"poſes reſpecting the affairs of the church, and of the "nations, as connected with it, from the time when it was "given, even to the end of the world." This Revelation was given to Jeſus Chriſt, that he might ſhew to his ſervants thoſe events, which would immediately begin to take place; and which would all *ſhortly* be accompliſhed: as the tranſient term of ſome thouſands of years bears no proportion to eternity, in which the whole will at length be ſwallowed up. Theſe things, Chriſt ſent *his* angel, one of his more illuſtrious ſervants in the world above, to ſignify and explain in order to John, who was his principal ſervant on earth at that time, as it is probable he was then the only ſurviving apoſtle. Thus, future events were made known to him, as they had been to ſeveral of the ancient prophets, eſpecially Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. Accordingly he faithfully teſtified, and exactly recorded the word of God, even the teſtimony of Chriſt; and all things, that he ſaw in theſe viſions of the Almighty. To which he adjoined a bleſſing on all, who ſhould read, hear, remember, and obediently obſerve the words of this prophecy &c; of which the accompliſhment was at hand. This ſeems to have been intended on purpoſe to obviate, or anſwer the objections, that would be made in after ages, to the ſtudy of this myſterious book, and to all endeavours to bring others acquainted with it. Nothing tends more to fortify the mind againſt the cavils of infidels and ſceptics, or the incurſions of unbelief; or to produce patient hope amidſt trials and difficulties, than the obſervation and experience of the fulfilment of the ſcriptures in the events, that take place around us: an acquaintance therefore with this Revelation of God's purpoſes reſpecting his church to the end of time, when connected with humility, ſobriety, and the obedience of faith, muſt greatly conduce to the chriſtian's ſtability, conſtancy, hope, peace, and patience: it muſt exceedingly enlarge his views of the great plan of God's providential government as connected with the redemption of ſinners; and direct or encourage his prayers for thoſe proſperous days of the church, in which all her tribulations ſhall terminate; as well as reconcile his mind to thoſe events, which though diſtreſſing in themſelves, evidently form a part of one vaſt deſign; in part accompliſhed, and evidently haſtening to an entire completion; to the eternal glory of God our Saviour, the final victory of his cauſe over all oppoſition, and the endleſs felicity of all his faithful ſervants. Nay, the very myſteries and difficulties of the book are connected with ſuch grand and intereſting diſcoveries of the glory of God, and the work and worſhip of heaven; as are peculiarly ſuited to ſolemnize, enliven, and purify the ſoul of the humble and attentive reader; even when he cannot diſcover the prophetic meaning of them. Nor is it any objection to ſay, that many have read it in another ſpirit, and got much harm by it: for this is the caſe with other ſcriptures; eſpecially with thoſe paſſages, which may be called "ſtrong meat," being peculiarly ſtrengthening to the ſpiritual conſtitution of ſuch as can digeſt them, though not meet nouriſhment for babes; and capable of being turned into a fatal poiſon by the vicious affection of a proud and carnal mind. (Note, 2 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 15, 16.) The reaſons are obvious why infidels, and profane mockers, who walk according to their own ungodly luſts, deride all attempts to explain this prophecy; for ſo much of it hath moſt manifeſtly been already fulfilled, as muſt for ever ruin their cauſe, could men's attention be drawn to the ſubject in a proper degree; and no part of ſcripture more awfully denounces the doom of all impenitent ſinners, and oppoſers of the goſpel. But pious men could never have been induced to object to the ſtudy of it; had not the miſconduct of many perſons in this matter filled them with prejudice, and formed an aſſociation of ideas in their minds, which have no neceſſary relation to each other. However, the Lord grant that the writer, and readers of this attempt to render this myſterious book more intelligible and inſtructive to chriſtians in general, may rely on, and pray for the participation of this bleſſing, in every hear the words of this prophecy, and keep thoſe things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

4 JOHN to the ſeven churches which are in Aſia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the ſeven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jeſus Chriſt, *who is* the faithful Witneſs, *and* the firſt begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.

6 And hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

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part of their progreſs through it: that in faith, humility, reverence, and expectation of great advantage, they may read, hear, meditate on, and keep the things, which are written therein; for the time is at hand, when the further accompliſhment of them will render them ſo plain, that they ſhall no longer be either neglected, or miſunderſtood.

V. 4—6.] The apoſtle addreſſed the ſeven churches of the proconſular Aſia, which are afterwards mentioned, with a benediction ſimilar to what hath been repeatedly conſidered in the epiſtolary part of the New Teſtament; but it is here expreſſed in more ſublime, and myſterious language, in conſiſtency with the nature of the book, to which it is prefixed: he wiſhed and prayed that "grace and peace" might be beſtowed on them, "from Him, who is, and who was, and who is to come;" that is from the ſelf-exiſtent, eternal, and unchangeable Jehovah: this, is here eſpecially meant of the Perſon of the Father; as the One true and living God communicates bleſſings to ſinful man, through the mediation of the incarnate Son, and by the agency of the eternal Spirit; ſo it is obvious, under ſuch an economy, to ſpeak of the Father, in the abſolute ſtyle of Deity, and of the Son, and the Spirit with relation to their aſſumed characters and offices; though in language evidently implying a participation in all divine perfections, and co-equality with the Father, in their original and eſſential nature, and dignity. (*Heb.* c. xiii. v. 8.) "Grace and peace" were moreover ſought for them, "from the ſeven Spirits, which are before the throne." This is generally, and doubtleſs juſtly, interpreted of "the divine Spirit, with reſpect to the abundance, ſufficiency, and variety of his gifts, graces and operations, and in relation to the *ſeven* churches, with and in each of which, and all others, the One and ſelf-ſame Spirit, dwelt, as the Fountain of life, grace and peace, being omnipreſent and omnipotent, and One with, the Father, and the Son, "God over all, bleſſed for evermore." This manner of expreſſion well accords with the enigmatic, or emblematic ſtyle of this book; and it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe any created ſpirits to be joined in this ſolemn benediction, with the eternal Father, and Jeſus Chriſt the Son of the Father. (Notes, *Matt:* c. xxviii. v. 19. 2 *Cor.* c. xiii. v. 14.) Finally this grace and peace were ſought for in their behalf, "from Jeſus Chriſt," as the appointed Medium, through whom the eternal Spirit, with all his gifts, graces, and conſolations, was given to ſinners: and He was deſcribed as "the faithful Witneſs," who came into the world to bear witneſs to the perfections, counſels, truths, and will of God to men, and who fully revealed all that he had received of the Father, for that purpoſe; He was alſo "the firſt begotten from the dead;" being the only-begotten of the Father before all worlds, and the Heir of all things, he had come on earth in that character, to tabernacle in human nature; and having been put to death for declaring himſelf to be the Son of God; he aroſe from the dead, among other reaſons, to evince that he was what he profeſſed to be; thus he became the Firſt-Fruits of the reſurrection, and appeared as the Firſt-Born of the children of God, in, and through whom they ſhall all ariſe again, be manifeſted in their high and honourable character, and inveſted with their eternal inheritance. (Notes, *Luke,* c. xx. v. 36. *Rom.* c. i. v. 4. *Col.* c. i. v. 15—19.) Being thus ariſen from the dead, and exalted to the mediatorial throne, he was alſo "the Prince, or ſovereign Ruler, "of the kings of the earth;" by whom they reign, to whom they are accountable, whoſe glory they ought to ſeek, and by whom, all thoſe will be terribly deſtroyed, that oppoſe, deſpiſe, or neglect Him. This declaration of the Redeemer's ſovereignty over all the kings of the earth, was a proper introduction to the prophecies that were about to be delivered of the oppoſition to be made to his cauſe, and His final triumph over all his enemies. Animated with a view of the glory of his beloved Lord, and contraſting it with the vaſtneſs of his condeſcenſion, and the depth of his ſelf-abaſement; the inſpired writer brake out in adoring praiſes, "to Him, "who," great and glorious as he was, "had loved them," when defiled with the loathſome ſtains of guilt and ſin, and deſerving of the final wrath of God; and whoſe love to ſuch worthleſs objects had been ſo immenſe, that he had even "waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood," which he had willingly ſhed upon the croſs, to make ſatisfaction to divine juſtice, and to purchaſe all the bleſſings of ſalvation for them: and having in conſequence of this atonement "quickened them" by his Holy Spirit; he had taught them, in the exerciſe of penitent, and obedient faith, to purge their conſciences from guilt by the application of his blood; and their hearts from the pollution of ſin, by the grace promiſed through his mediation. In this manner he had not only delivered them from the wrath to come, but he alſo exalted and ennobled them as kings, to reign with him in eternal glory; and conſecrated them as prieſts, to be accepted worſhippers, and to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices unto "God, even his Father," (Notes, 1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 5—9:) and therefore the apoſtle aſcribed unto Chriſt *perſonally* the glory and dominion for ever and ever: (Note, *Phil.* c. ii. v. 11. 2 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 18:) and in thus honouring the Son, he eſpecially honoured the Father that ſent him; as all do, who cordially ſay, Amen, to it.

V. 7. *Behold,* &c.] The prophecy of this book principally relates to the oppoſition, which, in one form or

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they *alſo* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him, Even ſo, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9 I John, who alſo am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt, was in the iſle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the Firſt and the Laſt; and, What thou ſeeſt, write in a book, and ſend *it* unto the ſeven churches which are in Aſia; unto Epheſus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto

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other, would be made to the cauſe of Chriſt, the temporary ſucceſs of his enemies, and his final triumph over them all: and therefore, at the very opening of it, the reader's attention is called to that great day, when theſe ſcenes will be cloſed, and all will ſee the wiſdom and happineſs of the friends of Chriſt, and the madneſs and miſery of his enemies. For "behold" with attention and ſolemn awe, the Saviour who loved his people and waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood, "was coming "with clouds," or in the clouds of heaven, in his own glory as Mediator, and in the glory of the Father, to be the Judge of the world! The intervening ſpace would ſoon paſs away, and it might even then be ſaid "He "cometh! (*Jude*, v. 14, 15.) Then, all nations, being raiſed from the dead, will be gathered before his tribunal, and every eye ſhall ſee *Him*, in human nature, exerciſe omnipotence, omniſcience, and all divine perfections, who once lay proſtrate in unknown agony, at Gethſemane, and was numbered with malefactors on Mount Calvary. Then, they eſpecially, who pierced him, ſhall be compelled to witneſs his glory, as well as to feel the power of his avenging indignation. Caiaphas and the chief prieſts, Pilate and his ſoldiers, with all concerned in his condemnation and crucifixion; and all thoſe in every age, who by their infidelity, apoſtacy, perſecutions, deſtructive hereſies, and daring crimes, have crucified Him afreſh, and put him to open ſhame, ſhall then behold him with unutterable terror, preparing to pronounce and execute the righteous ſentence of their eternal condemnation. And, as all the kindreds of the earth, through ſucceſſive generations, have combined in oppoſing, deſpiſing, abuſing, or neglecting Him, and his great ſalvation, with the exception only of a very ſmall remnant; ſo will they all that time wail becauſe of Him, in horror and deſpair; as neither their numbers, nor their power can defend them from his omnipotent vengeance. The apoſtle, therefore, aſſured of the juſtice of theſe awful proceedings, and knowing that then the redemption of all true chriſtians would be completed; ſubjoined to this declaration, "even ſo, Amen." "Thus let all thine "implacable enemies periſh O Lord."

V. 8. *I am*, &c.] As the Lord Jeſus was evidently ſpoken of in the preceding verſe; ſo it is obvious to conclude that "the Lord," who ſpeaks in this, is the ſame Perſon: nor can the leaſt appearance of a reaſon be aſſigned, why it ſhould be underſtood of "the Father" perſonally; except that men are ſo very reluctant "to "honour the Son, even as they ought to honour the Fa"ther that ſent him." The whole viſion related to Chriſt, from whom immediately the revelation was given: moſt of the expreſſions here uſed, or others equivalent to them, are afterwards ſpoken by Him, and concerning himſelf; and the conſtruction, and arrangement of this paſſage, and the context, would be very intricate, and unnatural; if we were to ſuppoſe God the Father to be the Speaker. The Lord Jeſus, therefore, here declared, "that He is the Alpha, and Omega," which are the names of the firſt, and the laſt letters in the Greek Alphabet, the language in which the apoſtle wrote: this implies, that he is the firſt cauſe, and the laſt end, the Author, and Finiſher of all things, in creation, providence, and redemption: "the Beginning and the End"ing," the Source of exiſtence, of life, of holineſs, and of felicity, and the completion of them, in every ſenſe, and in all reſpects: "Who is, and who was, and who is "to come," as One with the eternal Father, (v. 4:) "the Almighty;" the omnipotent, and ſovereign Ruler of all worlds, by, and for, whom all things were made, and by whom all things conſiſt. No words can more ſtrongly expreſs eternal power and Godhead, than theſe do.

V. 9—12.] The apoſtle next proceeded to relate the manner, &c, in which he received that revelation, which he was about to deliver. The churches would receive this account from John, who eſpecially gloried in being the brother of all believers, even more than in his apoſtleſhip: he was alſo "their companion in tribulation;" being a perſecuted ſervant of Chriſt, and expoſed to the ſame ſufferings in his cauſe, as they were; as a fellow-ſubject with them of his kingdom on earth, and a fellow-heir of his heavenly kingdom: theſe ſufferings he endured, as they did, with that ſubmiſſion, conſtancy, compoſure and perſeverance, which Chriſt required and exemplified; through which he experienced preſent conſolations, and expected a happy event of his tribulations. He was at that time, in the Iſle of Patmos, whither he had been baniſhed for preaching the word of God, and bearing teſtimony to Chriſt: and it is recorded, that he was confined to, and compelled to labour in, the mines, notwithſtanding the infirmities of his extreme old age. But none of theſe things moved him! His ſoul was ſerene, and at liberty amidſt his ſufferings; he had far ſweeter comforts, than the emperor, or any of his proſperous perſecutors could obtain: and he expreſſed no diſſatisfaction, or emotion, on account of the injuſtice

Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to ſee the voice that ſpake with me. And, being turned, I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks;

13 And in the midſt of the ſeven candleſticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as ſnow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the ſound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand ſeven ſtars: and out of his mouth went a ſharp two edged ſword: and his countenance *was* as the ſun ſhineth in his ſtrength.

17 And, when I ſaw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, ſaying unto me, Fear not, I am the Firſt and the Laſt:

18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou haſt ſeen, and the things which are, and the things which ſhall be hereafter;

20 The myſtery of the ſeven ſtars which thou ſaweſt in my right hand, and the ſeven golden candleſticks. The ſeven ſtars are the angels of the ſeven churches; and the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt are the ſeven churches.

and cruelty, with which he had been uſed. Whilſt in this ſituation, "he was in the Spirit," or brought under the immediate impulſe of the Spirit of prophecy, as Ezekiel, Daniel, and others had been, when favoured with viſions of the Almighty. This was "on the Lord's day," which can be meant of no other, than the day, on which the Lord Jeſus aroſe from the dead, even the firſt day of the week: and this is a concluſive proof, that it was ſet apart, and kept holy by the primitive chriſtians, in commemoration of that great event: for on what other account could it have been thus mentioned? Being thus caſt into a trance, or extacy, he heard behind him a voice, loud and clear as the ſound of a trumpet, ſaying ſome of the ſame words, that have been already conſidered, or to the ſame effect. (v. 8. *Iſaiah*, c. xli. v. 4. c. xliii. v. 10, 11. c. xliv. v. 6—8. c. xlviii. v. 12.) They muſt here be underſtood of Chriſt; and this is an additional reaſon for interpreting the others of Him. But if any ſhould ſtill be diſpoſed to underſtand them of the Father; they cannot but admit, that Chriſt and the Father are One: for otherwiſe how can it be conceived, that Chriſt would have uſed the ſame words of himſelf, which had juſt been ſpoken by the Father, as deſcriptive of his eternal Godhead? So that on either interpretation they are concluſive, in reſpect to Chriſt's Deity. The voice then ordered John to write what he ſaw in a book, and ſend it to the ſeven churches in Aſia, on which we ſhall have occaſion afterwards to make ſome obſervations; but ſhall in this place only take notice, that this ſeems to confirm the ancient tradition of John's having reſided and laboured at Epheſus, and in that vicinity, for a conſiderable time before his baniſhment to Patmos.

V. 12—20.] When the apoſtle had diſtinctly heard theſe words, he turned to ſee from whom the voice proceeded; and he then had a viſion of ſeven golden candleſticks; in alluſion to the golden candleſtick with ſeven branches, which was made for the tabernacle, (Notes, *Exod.* c. xxv. v. 31—40:) and in the midſt of them, as preſiding over, and taking care of them, he ſaw one, like unto the Son of man. The apoſtle had been well acquainted with him, when he was on earth, a man of ſorrows; but though he perceived him in human form, and with ſome reſemblance of his former appearance; yet he now ſaw him in ſuch reſplendent glory, that he ſeemed another perſon, "He was clothed," after the manner of the prieſts, with a garment down to his foot," perhaps repreſenting his perfect mediatorial righteouſneſs, and royal prieſthood: this veſture was girt around his breaſts, with a golden girdle; which may denote the preciouſneſs of his love, and the cordiality with which he maintains the cauſe of his people. His hairs like wool, or ſnow may ſignify his majeſty, purity, and eternity. (Notes, *Dan.* c. vii. v. 9, 10. 13, 14. 22.) His eyes as a flame of fire may repreſent his omniſcient acquaintance with the ſecrets of all hearts, and with the moſt diſtant events. His feet like fine braſs, burning in a furnace; may denote the ſtability of his appointments, and the excellency of all his proceedings. His "voice, as the ſound of many waters," may repreſent the energy of his word, to aſtoniſh and terrrify; or its invincible efficacy to convert, or deſtroy, as he ſees good: the ſeven ſtars in his right hand were emblematic of the preſiding miniſters of the ſeven churches, that the apoſtle addreſſed, whom Chriſt upheld, directed, governed and managed by his power, and according to his will. The ſharp two edged ſword out of his mouth ſeems to repreſent his awful and irreſiſtible juſtice, in cutting down his enemies on every ſide, and ſlaying them by the breath of his mouth, (*Iſaiah*, c. xi. v. 4:) moreover his countenance was like the ſun, at noon day, when it ſhines moſt clearly and powerfully, ſo that nothing can be hid from the heat thereof. Upon this diſplay of the Redeemer's glory, even his beloved apoſtle, who had not only leaned on his breaſt at table, but had ſeen his glory on the holy mount; (*Matt.* c. xvii. v. 2,) was utterly overwhelmed with the effulgency of his majeſty. (*Dan.* c. x. v. 5—9.) But the divine Redeemer graciouſly ſupported him, and diſpelled his fears; again declaring

CHAP. II.

Contains 1ſt. Chriſt's epiſtle to the angel of the church of Epheſus; conſiſting of commendation and reproof, a call to repentance, a ſolemn warning, and a gracious promiſe to thoſe that overcame, 1---7. *2d. That to Smyrna, replete with commendation, and encouraging exhortations to faithfulneſs under tribulation,* 8---11. *3d. That to Pergamus; in which are warnings againſt the Nicolaitans, threatenings of judgments on the impenitent, and promiſes to the victorious,* 12---17. *4th. That to Thyatira, nearly of ſimilar import,* 18---29.

himſelf, to be the "Firſt, and the Laſt," (v. 8. 11:) and adding, "I am He that liveth," or the ever-living, ſelf-exiſtent God, to whom, as Mediator, it was given to have life in himſelf, and to be the life of men: and who had alſo been obedient to death for ſinners; but, behold He was alive, as the firſt-fruits of the reſurrection, to die no more; to which the apoſtle ſeems to have added, Amen, as expreſſive of his ſatisfaction therein: nay, ſo abſolute was his conqueſt over the king of terrors, that he had poſſeſſion of "the keys of hell, and of "death." He had obtained the abſolute ſovereignty, as dwelling in human nature, over the inviſible world the ſtate of ſeparate ſpirits, and over death and the grave: ſo that he removes men out of this life, and conſigns their bodies to the grave and corruption, when, and as he pleaſes; he then fixes their ſouls in happineſs or miſery with abſolute authority; and he will ſoon raiſe all their dead bodies, and either receive them into heaven, or ſhut them up for ever in hell, as he ſees good. None, therefore of his friends can have any thing to fear from any creature, either during life, or at the approach of death; as every circumſtance will certainly be ordered in that manner, which may beſt ſubſerve their everlaſting advantage. The Lord Jeſus, therefore, ordered his apoſtle, to write, 1ſt. The things he had ſeen; namely, the circumſtances of that viſion; 2dly. The things, which then were, or what related to the ſtate of the churches at that time; and 3dly. The things, which ſhould be hereafter, even the prophecies, which he was about to receive: and this ſeems to mark out to us the contents of the book. This myſterious, and emblematic viſion of the ſeven ſtars, was then explained to him, to ſignify the ſeven *angels*, or preſiding miniſters of the churches, who were the *meſſengers* of Chriſt to them: and the ſeven golden candleſticks were ſhewn to repreſent the ſeven churches themſelves; as enlightened by the word and Spirit of the Lord; and holding forth that light to others, by the profeſſion and preaching of the word, the adminiſtration of holy ordinances, and their chriſtian converſation and behaviour.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The revelations of God, by Jeſus Chriſt, were intended to inform his ſervants about as much of his deſigns, reſpecting them and others, through the ſhort period of time, and the countleſs ages of eternity, as was good for them to know. They, that are entruſted with the word of God, and the teſtimony of Chriſt, muſt bear record of all things they know; and declare the Lord's whole counſel, as far as it is profitable for thoſe, to whom they ſpeak. Whilſt it becomes us to leave ſecret things to God; we ought carefully to read, hear, keep, and obey whatever he reveals: for every word of God is pure, and doeth good to him, that walketh uprightly; even difficult and myſterious paſſages will be uſeful to the humble believer, though he cannot fathom the depth of them; and the times may ſpeedily arrive, when the diſpenſations of providence ſhall fully illuſtrate the meaning of obſcure prophecies to the moſt unlearned readers. That grace and peace, which comes from the everlaſting and unchangeable love of the Father, by the communion of the omnipreſent Spirit, who dwells in all believers; and through Jeſus Chriſt, the faithful witneſs, the firſt-born from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth; belong to all thoſe, and to thoſe only, whom He hath waſhed from their ſins in his own blood: nor can they ſufficiently admire his love, which paſſeth knowledge; or rejoice in the dignity and felicity, to which he hath advanced them; or devote themſelves too much to the ſacred duties of their royal prieſthood; or aſcribe too great honour to their divine Redeemer, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. This will ſoon appear: for "behold he cometh in the clouds," and every human eye, however averſe to the ſight, ſhall ſee him placed upon the dread tribunal, from which there can be no appeal! What then will be the terror, diſmay, and anguiſh of his crucifiers, and all in every age, who have been of their judgment and diſpoſition! And how will all the kindreds of the earth wail becauſe of him! Whilſt all his faithful followers ſhall rejoice, and ſay, even ſo let it be, Lord Jeſus: Amen, Amen. If we would be numbered with his ſaints in glory everlaſting; we muſt now willingly receive, ſubmit to, and honour him, as a Saviour, who, (we profeſs to believe,) will come to be our Judge: for he is the Firſt, and the Laſt, the Beginning and the Ending, the unchangeable, eternal, and omnipotent Lord, to whom all muſt be ſubject, or periſh for ever: and they, who will not believe him to be the great I AM, and who refuſe to honour him as co-equal with the Father, will become proſelytes to an orthodox creed in this matter; when they ſhall be made to feel the weight of his anger, and the power of that eternal vengeance, which they now deſpiſe.

In the mean time, they who are brethren to the apoſtles, and ancient ſervants of Chriſt, muſt expect to be companions with them in tribulation; and in the patience, as well as the kingdom of their Lord: though few of them are called to ſuffer ſo much, as they endured in this good cauſe. However, a peaceful conſcience, and the conſolations of the Holy Spirit, will enable the afflicted chriſtian to be more joyful in communion with God, when immured in a priſon, than ungodly men can be, in the moſt proſperous circumſtances. If believers are confined, even on the Lord's holy day, from public ordinances, and the communion of ſaints, by neceſſity, and not by choice; they may expect great comfort in meditation and ſecret duties, from the influences of the Spirit; and by hearing the voice, and contemplating the glory of their beloved Saviour; of whoſe gracious viſits no confinement, or cir-

UNTO the angel of the church of Epheſus write; Theſe things ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand, who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canſt not bear them which are evil: and thou haſt tried them which ſay they are apoſtles, and are not, and haſt found them liars:

3 And haſt borne, and haſt patience, and for my name's ſake haſt laboured, and haſt not fainted.

4 Nevertheleſs I have *ſomewhat* againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou haſt, that thou hateſt the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I alſo hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the

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cumſtances can deprive them. But we may well be ſatisfied to walk by faith, during our continuance here on earth: for could we now ſee the Lord as he is, the diſplays of his glory, even as dwelling in human nature, would overwhelm us: and we muſt be totally changed in body and ſoul, before we can bear the effulgency of his majeſty, and find unalloyed happineſs in that beatific viſion. Let us then at preſent hearken to his voice, lean on his arm, and receive the encouragements of his love to obviate our fears: for what can he, the Firſt and the Laſt, even the eternal Son of the Father, with-hold from thoſe, for whom he became incarnate, that he might die for their ſins? And what can be too hard for him, who has the keys of death and hell, and liveth as our Almighty Friend for evermore? May we then obey his word, and walk in his light; may our light, as derived from him, ſhine before men, for their conviction and edification: thus may we expect the time of our departure hence; which, with every thing relative to it, will be appointed by his unerring wiſdom and love, who will come to receive our ſouls to his preſence; and who will at length raiſe and change our vile bodies alſo, that they may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty power, by which he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1—7.] Many expoſitors have imagined, that theſe epiſtles to the ſeven churches, were myſtical prophecies of ſeven diſtinct periods, into which the whole term, from the apoſtle's days to the end of the world, was to be divided. But there is no proof from ſcripture, that there were to be ſeven ſuch periods, and no more, in the ſtate of the church; unleſs the epiſtles themſelves be admitted as evidential of it: nor are there any diſtinct traces in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, in reſpect of ſuch as are ſuppoſed to be already paſt; though a lively imagination, and a prompt invention may advance plauſible things on the ſubject. It cannot be thought from the concluding part of this book itſelf, that the laſt period of the church will be worſe, than any that have gone before; as the Laodicean church was in a more corrupt ſtate, than any of the reſt. Nor can it be found true in fact, that a more flouriſhing period ſucceeded that of the church in the apoſtles days, or that immediately ſubſequent to their death: yet the ſtate of the church of Smyrna was far purer, and more excellent, than that of Epheſus; nay perhaps, than that of Philadelphia, which on this Hypotheſis muſt accord to the Millennium. So that there ſeems no ground at all for this ſentiment, though it hath been ſanctioned by many reſpectable names. But the churches, here addreſſed, were in ſuch different ſtates, in reſpect of purity of doctrine, and the power of godlineſs; that the words of Chriſt to them will always be ſuitable to the caſe of other churches, and profeſſors of chriſtianity, in all ages and places, to the end of the world: and ſome of them contain the proper meſſage to thoſe of one character, and others to thoſe of another, in all the variety which they contain. The Lord Jeſus himſelf, appearing in a viſion to John, ordered him what to write to each of theſe ſeven churches; and to addreſs it to the angel of the church, his ſtated meſſenger, or reſident ambaſſador among them. It ſeems, *to me at leaſt*; more natural to underſtand this of one preſiding miniſter, than of ſeveral elders or paſtors ſpoken of collectively, becauſe one in office; and it countenances the opinion that hath been advanced, concerning the introduction of a moderate kind of epiſcopacy in the primitive church. (Notes, &c. *Acts*, c. xx. v. 28. 1 *Tim.* c. v. ver. 21—25. *Tit.* c. i. v. 5.) The addreſs to the angel of the church doubtleſs implied commendation, reproof, inſtruction, or encouragement to him, and to the paſtors in general; yet the church was principally intended. That of Epheſus was planted by St. Paul. There is no proof that Timothy ever ſtatedly reſided there; and as near thirty years ſeem to have elapſed, ſince the ſecond epiſtle to him was written, various changes had doubtleſs taken place in that time. John himſelf is alſo recorded to have abode at Epheſus, and to have ſuperintended that and the neighbouring churches, for ſeveral years. This city was the capital of the proconſular Aſia, and the apoſtle was directed to write the firſt epiſtle to the church, ſituated therein; as a meſſage from "him, that held the ſeven ſtars, &c," (Notes, c. i. v. 12. 16. 20.) This intimated his abſolute authority over his miniſters, with their entire dependance on him; and his conſtant, though inviſible preſence with his churches, in which he had fixed the light of his precious word and ordinances; his attention to their whole conduct; his readineſs to help and bleſs them, whilſt they made a proper uſe paradiſe of God.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; Theſe things ſaith the Firſt and the Laſt, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and *I know* the blaſphemy of them which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the ſynagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer: behold, the devil ſhall caſt *ſome* of you into priſon, that ye may be tried; and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches; He that overcometh ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death.

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of their light; and his power and purpoſe to remove it, if provoked by their abuſe, or neglect of it. He, therefore reminded them, that he knew, or obſerved and accepted of their works of faith and love; the labour, that they beſtowed in his ſervice; their patient continuance in well doing, under heavy trials and afflictions; and their decided abhorrence of falſe teachers and evil workers, whom they would not on any account endure in their communion. Moreover, he had noticed with approbation, the trial they had made of certain perſons, who falſely pretended to come to them with apoſtolical authority, and had thus attempted to draw them off from the faith once delivered to the ſaints; and how they had found them out to be hypocrites and impoſtors; (1 *John*, c. iv. ver. 1—4. 2 *John*, v. 10, 11.) As they had repeatedly been enabled to endure affliction, and to exerciſe patience in his cauſe: ſo he repeatedly took a kind notice of it; and of their perſevering labours, without wearying or fainting, from a regard to his name. Nevertheleſs, he had ſomewhat to alledge againſt them; becauſe the fervency of their love to him, and zeal for his glory, had ſenſibly declined, ſince they firſt embraced chriſtianity; and had become more negligent, formal, and cold, than they uſed to be. This abatement of holy affection naturally tended to ſtill more apparent evil: the Lord therefore called on them to recollect how lively, zealous, fervent, united, and active they had been; and to compare their preſent fallen condition with it; that thus, they might be excited to repent, and do their firſt works; elſe he would come, by the power of his providence, in a ſhort time and an unexpected manner, and remove their candleſtick out of its place; or deprive them of the light of the goſpel, and the advantage of its ordinances: nor could this judgment be averted by any means without repentance, and works meet for repentance. This ſentence, was after a time, moſt awfully executed: and at this day, Epheſus, which was ſo renowned a city, is an inconſiderable village, in which there are no perſons, that bear the chriſtian name. However, the Epheſian church had one thing favourable in their caſe: though declined in love they were not corrupted with looſe principles or immoral practices, but hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which Chriſt alſo abhorred: we ſhall ſee hereafter that this was a ſect of abominable Antinomians. But, whilſt theſe things were immediately addreſſed to the rulers, paſtors, and church at Epheſus; yet every perſon that had an ear, and could perceive the meaning of the words, was concerned to attend to them; and to all thoſe things, which the holy Spirit, (by whoſe agency the apoſtle had this viſion of Chriſt ſpeaking to him,) thus declared unto the churches. For, the Lord Jeſus promiſed to every man, that by faith in him, ſhould overcome the temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the devil; and eſpecially thoſe to which his peculiar diſpoſition, or circumſtances moſt expoſed him; that he would give "him to "eat of the tree of life;" a figurative expreſſion taken from the account of the garden of Eden, (*Gen*. c. ii. v. 9. c. iii. v. 22—24; and denoting the pure, ſatisfactory, and eternal joys of heaven, and the anticipation of them in this world, by faith in, and communion with Chriſt, and the conſolations of his Holy Spirit. Every victory over ſharp temptation would be graciouſly rewarded with foretaſtes of this fruit; and the final victory with the eternal fruition of the happineſs intended by it, in heaven itſelf, and the preſence and love of God.

V. 8—11.] Smyrna was a large city to the north of Epheſus: the epiſtle ſent to the angel of the church, which had been eſtabliſhed there, was the meſſage of Him, who is "the Firſt and the Laſt. (Note, c. i. v. 17, 18.) Theſe words were ſpoken by Jehovah of himſelf, when declaring his own eternal Deity, and aſſerting "that beſide him there was no God, yea he knew not "any," (*Iſaiah*, c. xliv. v. 6—8:) ſo that the repeated uſe of them by the Lord Jeſus muſt be allowed to be a full proof, that He is the ſelf-exiſtent and eternal God: and, as the diſtinction between the Father, and the Son is every where eſtabliſhed; whilſt yet it is declared that there is but one God: ſo we may aſſert, and might eaſily prove in form, that there can be no *conſiſtent* alternative, between rejecting the Bible, or denying it to be the *unerring* word of God; and acknowledging a plurality of Perſons in the Unity of the Godhead. For the ſame hath been, and may be, ſhewn concerning the Holy Spirit; in reſpect of the attributes and operations peculiar to Deity, and his diſtinct perſonal ſubſiſtence. So that the doctrine of the Trinity is fixed on the firm baſis of divine revelation: and, after all the obloquy and profane contempt, which are thrown upon thoſe, who maintain it; it will always be found, that no unitarian ſcheme, however modified, can be ſupported by any learning, ingenuity, or diligence of man; except with a proportionable diſregard to the oracles of God; and the full eſtabliſhment of any ſuch doctrine muſt be the effect of a total diſbelief of the ſcriptures, *in reſpect of the nature, ſubſiſtence and perfections of the Godhead*: for all attempts at a coalition muſt in this caſe be abortive. All therefore, who believe in One God in three perſons, ſhould conſider the faſhionable unitarian hereſy, whatever ſhape it aſſumes, as the principal, though not the

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; Theſe things ſaith he which hath the ſharp ſword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwelleſt, *even* where Satan's ſeat *is:* and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith, even in thoſe days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to

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ſole antichriſt, of the age; and only a more covert, plauſible, and inconſiſtent ſpecies of infidelity, than that, which was driven from the field, by the able writers of the laſt generation. (See Leland on the Deiſtical Writers.) But the church, as built on the Perſon of Chriſt, cannot be ſubverted by the gates of hell: and though we may well be concerned for our children, and the cauſe of the goſpel in theſe lands; and ſhould therefore uſe every proper method of “earneſtly contending for the truth once “delivered to the ſaints;” yet we may be free from anxiety about the event of the conteſt, and may predict, that the triumphing of thoſe, who ſtrive againſt “the Firſt “and the Laſt,” will aſſuredly be ſhort. Moreover He, who thus aſſerted his own eſſential Deity, in the ſame place gave an intimation of his incarnation, death, reſurrection, and everlaſting interceſſion: and in the character of the omnipotent Friend and Saviour of his people; he aſſured the chriſtians at Smyrna, that he noticed, and accepted of their works, and was well acquainted with their trials, and poverty: for though Smyrna was a rich, and populous city; either the pooreſt of the inhabitants had been converted, or they had been impoveriſhed by perſecution. But though they were poor in the world, as well as poor in ſpirit; yet Chriſt declared, “that they “were rich,” in faith and by an intereſt in his unſearchable riches, and the precious promiſes of the new covenant; in wiſdom, grace, and good works; and as heirs of an unfailing treaſure in heaven: for they were in a very flouriſhing ſtate in reſpect of their ſouls, though greatly reduced in their outward circumſtances. Moreover he knew the blaſphemy of certain perſons, that ſaid they were Jews, and reviled both them and Him. Some think that they profeſſed chriſtianity; but in their zeal for the Moſaic law, they ſpake ſuch things of the Perſon, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as amounted to conſtructive blaſphemy: but it is more obvious to conclude, that they were virulent oppoſers, and perſecutors; who contradicted, and blaſphemed, as the Aſiatic Jews, had done in the time of Paul's preaching among them. They profeſſed to be Jews, and the people and worſhippers of God; but they were not what they pretended to be: whether they were of the Jewiſh nation or no, God allowed them not as his congregation; the rites, for which they contended, were no longer of any validity; their worſhip was carnal and hypocritical; they violently oppoſed the truth and cauſe of God; and they were in fact “the ſynagogue of ſatan,” a company of people, bearing the image, copying the example, doing the works, and combined together to ſupport the kingdom of the devil. What follows ſhews that they were fierce perſecutors, rather than ſubtle deceivers: for Chriſt did not warn his people to beware of falſe doctrine; but to prepare for the croſs. He exhorted them “to fear none of “thoſe things, which they ſhould ſuffer:” for He, “the “Firſt, and the Laſt,” was able to protect, ſupport, comfort, uphold, and deliver them: yet, behold, he ſaw good to permit the devil to prevail ſo far, that he would caſt ſome of them into priſon, by means of his ſynagogue of pretended Jews, who probably ſtirred up the people and magiſtrates againſt them. Their enemies meant that they ſhould thus be deſtroyed; but their Lord and Saviour permitted it, that they might be tried, proved, and purified; (1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 6, 7:) and for this end they would have tribulation ten days: this may either mean ten years, which is recorded to have been the duration of Domitian's perſecution; or a conſiderable time: during which ſpace many of them might be called to ſuffer martyrdom for the truth. The Lord therefore exhorted them to be “faithful unto death;” maintaining their allegiance to him inviolable, fighting valiantly as his ſoldiers, and adhering to his truth, and will; even if called to ſuffer death for his ſake, or till the cloſe of their lives: and in that caſe He “who had been dead, and was alive,” would recompence them, as no other prince or captain can do his faithful adherents; for he would give them “a crown of life,” or eternal glory and felicity. This meſſage alſo concerned all, that could hear and underſtand; as no one, that conquered in this ſpiritual warfare, ſhould be hurt by the ſecond death; though he might die in winning the battle, and though all in general muſt ſubmit to the ſtroke of the firſt death. But He, “that “hath the keys of hell and of death,” engaged hereby to ſecure the ſouls of his ſervants, at the time of their diſſolution, and their bodies at the reſurrection; that they ſhould not be finally ſeparated from God, or ſent away into the everlaſting puniſhment prepared for all wicked men; which is emphatically called “the ſecond “death,” (c. xx. v. 14:) on the contrary they would be preſerved from every degree of this miſery, and receive the gift of eternal felicity, after their tranſient ſufferings in this world. Nothing of reproof or warning is contained in this epiſtle: and it is remarkable, that there are more chriſtians at this day in Smyrna, than at any other place in all that part of the world: the candleſtick hath not *wholly* been removed from them; but ſome glimmerings of light are ſtill continued to the harraſſed remnant of this church.

V. 12—17.] This epiſtle to the angel of the church in Pergamos, (a city to the north of Smyrna,) contains both reproof and threatenings; and, therefore, it was ſent as his meſſage, “who hath the ſharp ſword with two “edges. (c. i. v. 16.) Chriſt took favourable notice of their works alſo, as far as they were obedient to his commandments; and he reminded them that he knew their habitation to be in a place, where ſatan had eſpecially eſtabliſhed his throne, and taken up his abode. This caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael, to eat things ſacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So haſt thou alſo them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight againſt them with the ſword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth *it*.

ſeems to denote that Pergamos was not only a very wicked city, but alſo, as it were, the head quarters of both perſecution and hereſy, the two principal engines of the devil, in oppoſing the pure goſpel of Chriſt; and that from thence they diffuſed their baleful influence to other cities. Yet, even in this perilous ſituation, the church *in general* held faſt and profeſſed the truth of the goſpel, and a zealous regard to the honour, and authority of Chriſt: ſo that they had not denied the faith, either by open apoſtacy, or by temporizing to avoid the croſs; not even in thoſe trying days, wherein Antipas, (who probably was a paſtor of the church,) had been a faithful *witneſs* to the truth of Chriſt, and had been ſlain for this teſtimony, by thoſe among whom ſatan dwelt. Yet had the Lord a few things to alledge againſt them: becauſe they continued in their communion, or otherwiſe connived at ſome of thoſe licentious teachers, againſt whom his apoſtles had proteſted, (Notes, &c. 2 *Pet.* c. ii. *Jude*;) even ſuch as held the doctrine of Balaam: for that wicked man, though really favoured with prophetic viſions, had yet for filthy lucre's ſake, plotted miſchief againſt Iſrael, by teaching Balak to ſeduce them into idolatry, and fornication; (Notes, *Num.* c. xxv:) and thus to throw in their way an occaſion of falling into ſin, and under the wrath of God: and in like manner, they had perſons among them, who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Chriſt hated. Hence it is evident, that the teachers of this ſect loved and ſought “the “wages of unrighteouſneſs,” in their endeavours to corrupt and pervert profeſſed chriſtians; and that in order to obtain them, they laid ſtumbling-blocks in their way, and on ſome pretence or other, encouraged and enticed them to join in the idolatrous feaſts of their neighbours, and on thoſe occaſions, or at other times, to commit fornication. They might, perhaps, inculcate the lawfulneſs of diſſembling their religion to eſcape perſecution, which is an occaſion of falling to numbers in ſuch circumſtances; and their joining in the idolatry and exceſs of the heathen worſhip would effectually anſwer this end: but they certainly grafted this prevarication on more general principles: and an erroneous view of the doctrines of free grace and chriſtian liberty conſtituted the root of bitterneſs, from which their evil practices naturally grew. In ſhort they turned the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, and taught others to do the ſame, and were the Antinomians of the primitive church; a hereſy, which in one form or other hath always hitherto ſprung up, when the pure goſpel of Chriſt hath been ſucceſsfully preached; being a kind of tares, which the enemy will ever ſow among the good ſeed, as far as he is permitted. Many have ſuppoſed, that this ſect derived it's name from Nicolas, one of the primitive deacons, (*Acts*, c. vi;) and ſuch a tradition prevailed early in the church: yet the name was then ſo common, and might be given them on ſo many other accounts; that there is no certainty in it: we read nothing of Nicolas in ſcripture to warrant ſo unfavourable opinion of him: neither Peter nor Jude who oppoſed heretics of the ſame ſtamp, called them by this name, which may thence be ſuppoſed to have been afterwards given them: and ſome have noted that *Nicolaus* in Greek ſignifies the ſame as *Balaam* does in Hebrew, namely “the conqueror of the people;” and have thence inferred, that they were ſo called from the influence they obtained over men's minds, and the fatal uſe, which they made of it; as Balaam had done before them. However, the Lord commanded the church of Pergamos to repent of, and forſake theſe corrupt practices and principles, and to exclude ſuch ſcandalous and pernicious perſons from their communion, and by every means to ſhew a decided abhorrence of their tenets; otherwiſe, he would quickly viſit them in judgment, and fight againſt them with the ſword of his mouth; or inflict threatened vengeance on the ſeducers and their adherents, and even deprive the church of their abuſed privileges. This city is at preſent in a very ruinous condition; very few profeſſors of chriſtianity are found in it, and they are wholly dependant on the church at Smyrna; being in a moſt abject ſtate, and having ſcarce any thing of their religion except the empty name. But what the Spirit ſpake by John to them was meant for the inſtruction of all, who could hear or read it: for whilſt judgments impended over the head of the impenitent; bleſſings were prepared for thoſe, who overcame the multiplied temptations, to which they were expoſed. To each perſon, who thus adhered to the truth, and precepts of Chriſt, he promiſed to give “the “hidden manna;” or thoſe invigorating and ſatiſfying conſolations, which ſpring from the lively exerciſe of faith in a crucified Saviour, a ſtedfaſt contemplation of the glory of God in him, and communion with the Father, and the Son, by the influences of the Holy Spirit. (Notes, &c. *John*, c. vi. v. 47—58.) This manna from heaven, (Notes, *Exod.* c. xvi;) is *hidden* from carnal men, who ſee neither the ſource, the nature, the communication, or the excellency of it; (*Col.* c. iii. v. 3:) it is placed out of the reach of every enemy; nor can the ſupplies of it be intercepted: ſo that it is “the *ſecret* of “the Lord, which is with them that fear him.” He alſo promiſed to give to every conqueror, in this holy war, “a white ſtone:” in thoſe times, when any perſon accuſed of crimes againſt the ſtate, was tried by the ſuffrage of the citizens, they voted for his acquittal by a white ſtone, and for his condemnation by a black one: ſo that Chriſt, the ſole Judge of his people, in promiſing to give them “a white ſtone,” aſſured them of their full juſti-

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; Theſe things ſaith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine braſs;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and ſervice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the laſt *to be* more than the firſt.

20 Notwithſtanding I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt that woman Jezebel, which calleth herſelf a propheteſs, to teach, and to ſeduce my ſervants to commit fornication, and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication; and ſhe repented not.

22 Behold, I will caſt her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I ſay, and unto the reſt in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they ſpeak; I will put upon you none other burden:

25 But that which ye have *already* hold faſt till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron; as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning ſtar.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

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fication at the great day of account; and of the preſent comfortable ſenſe that they were pardoned, and accepted in him. The name written therein may mean that of, "children of God;" and it repreſents the inſeparable connexion of adoption into his family with forgiveneſs of ſins. This name would be, as it were, inſcribed upon the pardon given them, and made legible to the ſoul by the Spirit of adoption, (Note, *Rom.* c. viii. v. 14—17.) But "no man knoweth it, ſaving he that receiveth it:" for the ground of this knowledge is laid in a man's inward conſciouſneſs, and experience; it ariſes from a witneſs in himſelf: the world knoweth not the children of God; (1 *John*, c. iii. v. 1, 2:) even their brethren cannot exactly diſtinguiſh them; but ſometimes ſuſpect or condemn the upright, and think well of ſpecious hypocrites. But when the Holy Spirit illuminates his own work in the believer's ſoul, this new name, and it's real import, become legible and intelligible to him, and he knows himſelf to be a child and heir of God. The expreſſion may alſo ſignify, that the felicity, which awaits the children of God, when they ſhall have obtained a complete victory over all their enemies, can never be underſtood, but by the enjoyment of it: yet, I apprehend that preſent conſolations, as the gracious recompence of victory over particular urgent temptations, were principally, though not excluſively, intended in this paſſage.

V. 18—29.] Thyatira lay to the ſouth eaſt of Pergamos; and the epiſtle to the church eſtabliſhed in that city, was ſent in the name of the "Son of God, who hath "his eyes as a flame of fire, &c," (c. i. v. 14, 15;) which repreſented to them his authority, and omniſcience, and the ſtedfaſtneſs and righteouſneſs of his appointments and deciſions. He reminded them alſo, that he knew their works, and obſerved with approbation their brotherly love, and general benevolence; their diligent attention to the various duties, by which they were called to ſerve him, and each other, in the church, and the community; their bold, and ſtedfaſt profeſſion of his doctrine, in real faith; the patience, with which they endured afflictions and perſecutions; and that their laſt works were more abundant than thoſe were, which they had at firſt performed. Thus far the church ſeemed in a flouriſhing condition: yet there was a worm at the root of this proſperity, which would deſtroy it, unleſs it were removed; but of which they were not ſufficiently aware. Notwithſtanding all this cauſe of commendation, Chriſt had a few things to alledge againſt the paſtors, and church in Thyatira: eſpecially their allowance of ſuch as taught thoſe abominable tenets, and perpetrated thoſe evils, which Chriſt hated; for the ſame hereſy is here oppoſed, as in the foregoing epiſtle. Whether the expreſſion, "that woman Jezebel, &c, is to be underſtood literally, or figuratively, is not agreed. From the reading in ſome manuſcripts it hath been thought, that the wife of the preſiding miniſter was meant; that ſhe had obtained great influence in the affairs of the church, and made a bad uſe of it; that ſhe pretended to prophetic gifts, and under that ſanction propagated her abominable principles; and though her conduct was diſapproved by the ſounder part of the church, yet no proper deciſion was uſed, in cenſuring her, or preventing the miſchiefs ſhe occaſioned. Yet the figurative meaning ſeems more ſuited to the ſtyle and manner of this book: and in this ſenſe we may underſtand it to denote a company of perſons of the ſpirit and character of Jezebel; within the church, under one principal deceiver, (as the Roman antichriſt is repreſented by the Emblem of an abandoned Harlot;) Jezebel, a jealous idolater, being married to the king of Iſrael, contrary to the divine law,

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Contains 1ſt. Chriſt's epiſtle to the church of Sardis; conſiſting of reproofs, exhortations, warnings, and promiſes to the pious remnant, &c, 1--6. *2d. That to Philadelphia replete with encouragement,* 7--13. *3d. That to Laodicea; compriſing ſevere rebukes of the luke-warmneſs, and pride of the profeſſed chriſtians in that city; connected with inſtruction, counſels, calls to repentance, invitations, and promiſes, &c,* 14--22.

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uſed all her influence to ſeduce the Iſraelites from the worſhip of Jehovah, and into idolatry; with which the vileſt licentiouſneſs was connected, and this ſerved to increaſe the temptation: thus theſe perſons, having, perhaps, through the fault of the paſtors and members of the church, found admiſſion among them; and by their artifices and blandiſhments attached a party to their cauſe; employed their whole influence to draw men from the pure religion of Chriſt, into carnal and ſpiritual fornication and adultery, and to poiſon their minds with their abominable doctrines: yet had they not been duly cenſured, and oppoſed; and it is probable, that neither the fatal tendency of their opinions, nor the atrociouſneſs of their conduct had been fully underſtood, till this meſſage was ſent. This evil had long been working: and the Lord had, in his long-ſuffering, given ſpace for repentance to the ringleader, and thoſe that abetted the deluſion; but they ſtill perſiſted in their wickedneſs. The Lord therefore declared that he would caſt the principal offender "into a bed," as viſited with ſome painful and incurable diſeaſe, at length to terminate in death; whilſt ſuch as had been ſeduced to join theſe abominations, would, unleſs they repented of their deeds be thrown into the moſt grievous afflictions. (1 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 30—32.) Moreover Chriſt purpoſed to deſtroy by peſtilence, or other tremendous judgments, the whole progeny of theſe ſeducers: in order, that all the churches might be aſſured, by the detection and exemplary puniſhment of ſuch offenders, that He was that glorious Being who claimed it as his peculiar prerogative to ſearch the reins and hearts of men; to diſcern all their ſecret imaginations, purpoſes, and inclinations; and to render to every one of them according to his works. Here again the peculiar ſtyle of Deity is employed by "the "Son of God; (*Pſ.* vii. v. 9. *Jer.* c. xvii. v. 10. c. xx. v. 12.) It is far more expreſſive to ſay, "I am He, who "ſearcheth &c," than "I ſearch," &c: nor can ſuch language be accounted for, on any other, than the *orthodox ſyſtem*; as ſome affect to call the trinitarian doctrine, by way of deriſion. But to thoſe, who repented of and ſeparated from, theſe evils; and to the reſt of them, who had never received that doctrine, and had no acquaintance with thoſe *depths*, as they called them, (perhaps intimating that they were peculiarly "the deep things of God," but which Chriſt declared to be "the *depths of Satan*;" the moſt ſagacious, and covert devices of that enemy to diſhonour Chriſt, and deſtroy men's ſouls:) to ſuch as had kept clear of, or had got free from theſe myſteries of iniquity, he would give no other command, or injunction, than what they had already received from his miniſters: but he exhorted them to hold faſt thoſe truths, and precepts, till he came to remove them by death, or to judge the world. He alſo promiſed to every man; that overcame theſe perilous temptations, and that kept his words in the obedience of faith; that he would grant him the privilege of ſharing his victories, and the authority connected with them, as far as this could add to his true honour or felicity: ſo that he ſhould be an aſſeſſor with him in judgment, and concur in the ſentence, by which all the nations of his enemies will be daſhed in pieces, as the potter's fragile veſſel, by the blow of an iron rod; (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* ii;) to which all other judgments executed on the nations are preparatory. Thus the victorious believer will receive from Chriſt, glory, honour, immortality, and an immoveable kingdom; even as he hath received of the Father. Moreover he promiſed to give him the morning-ſtar; which may either mean the earneſts of the Spirit, as introductory to the felicity of heaven; as the morning ſtar to the riſing of the ſun: (2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 19:) or to the ineffable glory, with which he will inveſt his victorious diſciples, in the preſence, and enjoyment of Him their Lord and Saviour, and in conformity to his glory. (c. xxii. v. 16.) And this concerned all perſons as much as thoſe, to whom it was immediately written. This church is at preſent wholly extinct; and the city is in a very deſolate condition.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord Jeſus alone can uphold, and proſper his miniſters; their light is wholly derived from, and maintained by Him; he ſupports them by his powerful right hand; and diſpoſeth of them in his ſovereign wiſdom. It therefore behoves all thoſe, who are favoured with able, and faithful teachers to be thankful for, and to walk in, the Light thus vouchſafed them; and to be careful not to provoke the Lord to remove them: and all, who ſuſtain that office, ſhould remember their dependance on, and accountableneſs to Chriſt; and be careful that their doctrine, and practice may be ſuch, as may give them a confidence, that he will make their cauſe his own. The manifold evils, which abound in every part of the church, in a conſiderable degree, ariſe from the miſconduct of its rulers, and paſtors, who ought eſpecially to weigh the import of theſe meſſages of Chriſt, and often to take to themſelves much of the reproof and warning, which they contain. Our Lord is "like a man, who is gone into a far country, having "given to every ſervant his work:" but faith realizes Him, as "walking in the midſt of the golden candleſticks," both in reſpect of his omnipotent Deity, and his omnipreſent, and all-pervading Spirit. He obſerves the conduct of thoſe, who have the light of his word and ordinances; and maintains that light, ſo long as a good uſe is made of it: but he will not fail to rebuke and correct thoſe, that walk inconſiſtently; and he continues his golden candleſtick in one place, and removes it from another, as he ſees good: for all ſecond cauſes are wholly ſubſervient to his will. He ſeeth in ſecret, and is not backward to commend "the work of faith, "and labour of love, and patience of hope" of his ſer-

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven ſtars: I know thy works, that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things

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vants: he marks and approves their abhorrence of that which is evil, and their ſeparation from the company, and proteſtation againſt the miſconduct of unholy profeſſors. (Notes, &c. 2 *Theſſ.* c. iii. v. 6. 14, 15. 1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 5. 2 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 5.) Nor does he leſs approve their examination of the pretenſions of ſuch, as ſpeak in his name, or claim attention, as immediately inſpired by Him; that they may detect and condemn thoſe, as liars, who contradict the doctrine of his holy word. He alſo kindly notices the trials and hardſhips, which his people bear; and the patience with which they endure them; and how, for his name's ſake they labour, and have not fainted. Thus he ſets miniſters, parents, maſters, and ſeniors an example of commending what is right, in thoſe placed under their care; and of thus introducing needful reproof. But he will by no means connive at what is evil, in any kind or degree. Even when believers and churches ſteadily profeſs his truth, attend on his ordinances, and outwardly obey his precepts: yet he hath ſomewhat againſt them, if they decline from the fervour of their firſt love; nay, he not only reproves them for ſuch abatements in affection and zeal; but threatens, that unleſs they remember whence they are fallen and repent, and do their firſt works, he will quickly remove their candleſtick out of his place. Not only are the churches of Aſia alarming inſtances of his truth and juſtice in this reſpect; but in every age he calls on all, “who have eyes to ſee, and ears to hear, to “obſerve the truth of what the Spirit on this occaſion ſaid “unto the churches.” The ſtate of religion, in moſt places, where a reformation from popery took place; and with ſeveral deſcriptions of profeſſing chriſtians among us, where once ſpiritual religion ſhone moſt illuſtriouſly, manifeſtly prove, that he ſtill removes the candleſtick from thoſe, who forſake their firſt love, and do not repent at his call; even though they hate the deeds of Nicolaitans, and all antinomians, which above all things He hateth. This ſhould teach thoſe, who now have the light, to be zealous and repent; leſt they too ſhould be left in the dark. And ſurely this ſingle mention in ſcripture, of men's “forſaking their firſt “love,” when the context and conſequences are well conſidered, gives little encouragement to thoſe, who ſpeak of this as a common, or even an univerſal caſe; and who excuſe luke-warmneſs and ſloth in themſelves and others, as a thing of courſe, by words to this effect: and when they mention chriſtians as “in their firſt love,” they ſeem to mean that it is a low attainment; and that they will grow “leſs fervent in ſpirit ſerving the Lord,” as they get above the infancy of chriſtianity! When the majority of profeſſors in any church adopt ſuch notions, it is a certain ſign, that they will ſoon provoke Chriſt to remove their candleſtick; unleſs they repent: nay, it is the natural language of ſtony ground hearers, whoſe joy and affection have ſubſided, and who, having no root in themſelves, are gradually withering away. For though the aged thriving chriſtian may *feel* leſs vigour of affection, than he *ſometimes* did, ſoon after his converſion, in which novelty and ſelf-love had no ſmall ſhare: yet there is far more conſtancy and energy in his love, to influence him to habitual ſelf-denying obedience, apart from all ſelfiſh motives, than there was before. The former reſembles the tranſient noiſy flame of thorns; the latter is like the conſtant, vehement, penetrating and efficacious heat of a fire made by ſubſtantial fuel. But in the midſt of all the ſtratagems, and open aſſaults of the enemy, which the traitor in the camp ſo often renders ſucceſsful; there are ſome, who, through faith obtain the victory; and to them Chriſt will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God.

As “the Firſt, and the Laſt, who was dead, and is “alive,” is the believer's Brother and Friend; he muſt be rich in the deepeſt poverty, honourable amidſt the loweſt abaſement, and happy under the heavieſt tribulations. Indeed the diſciples muſt expect to be reviled by thoſe, who blaſpheme their divine Lord, and ſay that they are chriſtians but are not; and whom Chriſt will one day ſhew to have been “the ſynagogue of ſatan;” being combined together by every means to run down his truth, and vilify his faithful ſervants. The devil may alſo prevail to caſt them into priſon, or otherwiſe to try them, and they may have tribulation many days: but with ſuch a Friend and Comforter, they ought not to fear any of thoſe things, which they may ſuffer: their trials will only be for a limited ſeaſon, and for gracious purpoſes; they will not be hurt by the ſecond death, for their enemies can only kill their bodies; and if they are enabled to be faithful till that event, the Captain of their ſalvation, who conquered by dying, will give them a crown of eternal life. The chriſtian, who thus holds faſt the Lord's name, and denies not his truth; in thoſe places where ſatan peculiarly erects his throne, and at thoſe times, when his faithful witneſſes are liable to be martyred in his cauſe, ought not to fear his ſharp ſword two edges: even as the beloved wife is not alarmed at the ſword in the hand of her affectionate huſband, but would tremble and faint to ſee it in the hand of an aſſaſſin. But this confidence cannot be ſupported, without ſteady obedience: for the Lord not only hates the principles and conduct of thoſe, who indulge their avarice, or ſenſuality, under the pretence of abounding grace and chriſtian liberty, and ſeduce others into the ſame abominations: but he will come quickly, and fight with the ſword of his mouth againſt thoſe paſtors and churches, who countenance them; unleſs they repent of their connexion with, and ſanction to, the moſt abhorred of his enemies. Even when he knoweth the works of his people to be wrought in love, zeal, faith, and patience; and the laſt to be more than the firſt: yet if his eyes, which are as a flame of fire, obſerve that they allow among them, ſuch as teach licentiouſneſs, and ſeduce his ſervants to commit wickedneſs, or to turn aſide to any falſe worſhip; he will rebuke, correct, or puniſh them, which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou haſt received and heard, and hold faſt, and repent. If therefore thou ſhalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou haſt a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they ſhall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

without reſpect of perſons, man or woman, high or low, whatever influence they may poſſeſs, or however they may be gifted or diſtinguiſhed. He gives them indeed time to repent: but if they do not avail themſelves of his long-ſuffering; he will ſurely caſt them into great tribulation: and perhaps the preſent afflictions, and remarkable diſcoveries of the ſecret wickedneſs of the actors in ſuch corruptions of the goſpel, may ſhew the churches, that Chriſt is He, “who ſearcheth the reins, “and hearts,” and eſtabliſheth his counſels in wiſdom and juſtice: at leaſt this will be evident, when he ſhall come to judgment, to give unto every one of us, according to our works. Let us then avoid, and proteſt againſt ſuch perverſions of chriſtianity; and beware of theſe depths of ſatan, of which they that know leaſt are moſt happy. Let us remember, that Chriſt's yoke is eaſy and his burden light; that he lays nothing on his ſervants, but what is for their good, and authorizes none to add thereto; and that he calls upon us to hold faſt what we have received until he come. When we are tempted to any ſin, let us recollect what conſolations he hath promiſed to the victorious combatant; and, looking to him for help, let us aſpire to “the hidden manna,” the joy, that a ſtranger intermeddleth not with; the aſſurance of acceptance, the Spirit of adoption, and the earneſt of eternal glory: and after every victory, may we follow up our advantage againſt the enemy; that we may overcome, and keep the works of Chriſt unto the end; and at laſt have glory, honour and felicity beyond all our preſent conceptions; and only to be thought of, under the animating idea of receiving power, and authority from the Son of God, according to what He hath received from the Father, as the fruit of his conflicts and victories; being made partakers of his felicity, abiding for ever in his preſence, and having him for our everlaſting Light, and Glory. Let then every one, who hath ears, attend to what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—6.] Sardis lay to the ſouth of Thyatira, and was once the renowned capital of Lydia the kingdom of Creſus. The epiſtle to the paſtors and church in that city was ſent, as a meſſage from him, “who hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven-ſtars,” (c. i. v. 4;) that is, the divine Saviour, through whom the Holy Spirit, in the variety and abundance of his precious gifts and graces, was communicated to all the churches, and to the ſeven here mentioned in particular; and who was the ſovereign Proprietor and Ruler of their preſiding miniſters, and paſtors, on whom they were entirely dependant, and to whom they were accountable for all their conduct. This reminded them, from whom they muſt ſeek grace, for thoſe things to which he called them; and it implied a command to their miniſters to “take heed “to themſelves, and to their doctrine,” and to be active and zealous in promoting a revival in the church. For Chriſt “knew their works” not to be ſuch as he could approve of: they had indeed “a name to live;” they profeſſed the truth, were called chriſtians, poſſeſſed gifts, and had the ordinances of God regularly adminiſtered among them; ſo that they were conſidered by others, and by themſelves as vitally united to Chriſt: but he knew “that “they were dead; numbers of them were mere hypocrites, and dead in ſin; others were in a very torpid, diſordered, and lifeleſs ſtate; and the church in general was rather a dead carcaſe, or a ſtatue reſembling a chriſtian congregation, than a company of living members of Chriſt's myſtical body. The Lord therefore called on them to awake and look about them; to be vigilant in guarding againſt the ſtratagems and aſſaults of their enemies; to be active and earneſt in the duties of their ſeveral ſtations: and to examine carefully into the ſtate of their ſouls, and into that of the church, that ſo they might uſe proper means of “ſtrengthening the things that remained, and were “ready to die;” and endeavour, in dependance on the grace of the Holy Spirit, to revive and invigorate the faith, hope, love, and ſpiritual affections of ſuch as were not wholly dead in ſin; to bring mere formaliſts to repentance and converſion; and to purge out ſuch as were ſcandalous, and infectious to them. In this manner the lamp, that was ready to expire, might be made again to burn more bright; and the ſtate of their church, which ſeemed like a dying man, might revive, and be reſtored to a ſtate of ſpiritual health and vigour. For their heart-ſearching Lord had “not found their works perfect before God;” in general they were formal, and hypocritical; and the reſt languid, partial, ſcanty, and corrupted by ſiniſter ends &c. he could not therefore, commend them in that unreſerved manner, that he had done the more hearty and complete obedience and ſervices of the flouriſhing chriſtians: as they were not ſuch before God, whatever they might appear to be in the ſight of men. He, therefore, called on them to remember the favours, which they had received, and the truths, precepts, and exhortations, which they had heard; that they might hold faſt that pure religion, which they had embraced, and repent of their inconſiſtent

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; Theſe things ſaith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man ſhutteth; and ſhutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have ſet before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it: for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the ſynagogue of Satan, which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worſhip before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that

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and negligent conduct. If, therefore, after this warning, they did not become more vigilant, ſober, zealous, and diligent; he aſſured them, that he would come with ſome unexpected, ſurpriſing, and terrible judgment upon them, without giving any further intimation of his purpoſe, till they were ſuddenly overwhelmed by it. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 42—51. *Luke*, c. xii. v. 35—46. 1 *Theſ.* c. v. ver. 1—6.) Yet even at Sardis, there were a few chriſtians, whoſe names would be at length mentioned with diſtinguiſhed honour, on account of their holy ſingularity: as they had not "defiled their garments," or diſgraced their profeſſion by the worldly luſts, and ſinful practices, to which the reſt were addicted: and Chriſt aſſured them, that they "ſhould walk with him in white," the emblem of perfect purity, triumph and joy; and ſo be his accepted holy and honoured companions in heavenly felicity: "for they were worthy," or meet and proper perſons to be admitted to that glorious and happy ſtate, having approved themſelves to be his faithful friends and ſervants whilſt they lived on earth. (c. vii. v. 9. 13—17.) In ſhort to every conqueror in the ſpiritual warfare, at a place, where temptations and bad examples ſo much abounded, the Lord promiſed, "that he ſhould be clothed in "white raiment," as completely and eternally juſtified, ſanctified, and made glorious in the preſence and favour of God. Neither would "he blot out the name" of any ſuch perſon "out of the book of life," in which his choſen and accepted ſervants are regiſtered; even though the corrupt church, to which he belonged ſhould be ſtruck off the liſt, as it were; and numbers of thoſe, who had a name to live, and were deemed heirs of heaven, were left to apoſtatize, or were rejected as hypocrites; and though the believer himſelf might have many ſuch fears amidſt his conflicts and trials: but on the contrary he would ſurely confeſs his name, as one of his friends and brethren, at the laſt day, before his eternal Father, and all his holy angels. All this related to others alſo, who were placed in ſimilar circumſtances. This once flouriſhing city now lies in ruins: a few perſons called chriſtians are found there; but they are reduced to the moſt abject ſlavery, and have neither church or miniſter among them.

V. 7—11.] Philadelphia lay to the ſouth eaſt of Sardis. The epiſtle to the church in that city, was ſent in the name of Him, that is holy, and "that is true," or of, "*the Holy One*, and *the True One*:" which words contain a very concluſive proof of the Deity of Chriſt: for what mere creature can with propriety ſpeak of himſelf in ſuch language? (*Iſaiah*, xxx. v. 11, 12. 15. c. lvii. v. 15:) It was alſo ſent in the name of Him, "that hath the key of "David;" (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xxii. v. 20—25.) Being the promiſed Son of David, according to the fleſh, and the king of the true Iſrael to all the generations, he hath the abſolute power to open mercy's gate to whom he pleaſeth; to open the kingdom of heaven to the ſouls of his people when removed by death; to open their graves, and bring forth their bodies glorious and immortal, that they may be reunited to their ſouls in everlaſting felicity; and on the other hand to ſhut out, and exclude from mercy, and from heaven whom he will, and to ſhut them up in hell; nor can any reſiſtance be made to his power, or appeal from his deciſion. He alſo hath power to open the underſtanding, and the heart, or judicially to cloſe them; to open a door for the preaching of his goſpel; or for the deliverance of his ſervants out of trouble: and when in theſe, or any other inſtances, he opens; *no one*, either man or angel can ſhut; when he ſhuts no creature can poſſibly open. This Almighty Sovereign knew the works of his miniſters and diſciples at Philadelphia; and they were ſuch as he graciouſly approved: they might, therefore, obſerve for their encouragement, that by his goſpel and the means of grace afforded them, he had ſet before them an open door of acceſs into the family and kingdom of God, and to all the preſent and everlaſting privileges of them, which no creature could ſhut againſt them; or as ſome explain it; he had ſet before them an open door of uſefulneſs, in ſpreading his goſpel, nor could any one prevent the ſucceſs of their work and labour of love for that purpoſe. For though they were not ſo eminent, as ſome other churches, for numbers, gifts, faith, and boldneſs in the cauſe of God: yet they had a little ſtrength; they were upright in their profeſſion of the goſpel; they had ſome vigour of faith, and holy affection; and were uſing their little ability and influence to promote the ſucceſs of chriſtianity: they had alſo kept the word of Chriſt, his truths, commands, and inſtitutions, in faith, obedience, and ſtedfaſtneſs; neither had they denied their relations and obligations to him, or acted to the diſhonour of his name; notwithſtanding their weakneſs, fears and dangers. (Note, c. ii. v. 9, 10.) For they too were expoſed to perſecution from ſome that pretended to be God's people; (*John*, c. xvi. v. 1—3;) but whom he diſowned, and declared to be liars, and the ſynagogue of ſatan; and whom he promiſed that he would at length conſtrain to come and pay court to them in the moſt ſubmiſſive manner; proſtrating themſelves at their feet, and ſupplicating their favour, as convinced of the Lord's love to them. Perhaps the un-faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jeruſalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; Theſe things ſaith the Amen, the faithful and true Witneſs, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.

17 Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and in-

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expected ſucceſs of the goſpel in Philadelphia rendered the chriſtians ſo powerful, that the Jews were glad to ſeek their protection from the rage of the multitude, by which vaſt numbers of them were frequently maſſacred in thoſe turbulent times; and the language leads us to conclude that many of them were converted to chriſtianity, by means of thoſe events. Some indeed think, that *judaizing chriſtians* were meant; but it is more natural to underſtand the word *Jews* in its ordinary ſenſe; and to conſider them as open oppoſers, rather than as falſe profeſſors of the goſpel. Seeing, therefore, the Philadelphians had kept the word of Chriſt, in that conſtancy, and patience, which he had commanded and exemplified; and which he beſtowed on his people, who could not ſtand their ground, unleſs they were enabled to deny themſelves, take up their croſs, and follow him: He promiſed to keep them "from the hour of temptation," or ſome remarkable ſeaſon of perſecution, hereſy, or apoſtacy, which was about to come on all the churches in the world, eſpecially through the whole Roman Empire, to try and prove the ſincerity, and ſtrength of their faith and love. He would, on this occaſion ſhelter them from the fury of the ſtorm, and not let them be ſo ſharply tried, or tempted as other churches were; which might in ſome reſpects have more ſtrength; but had alſo more need of correction, and of being proved and purified. This is generally ſuppoſed to refer to Trajan's perſecution, which was more general and violent, than thoſe under Nero, and Domitian. But, as this city was the laſt of all the ſeven, that was taken by the Mahometans; and as there have been a ſucceſſion of chriſtians there, in every generation to this time: ſo ſome have applied this to their preſervation from that deluſion, which almoſt extirpated chriſtianity in thoſe regions. It is indeed to be feared, that they have at preſent but little of the power of godlineſs among them: yet we may hope, that Chriſt hath had a few real diſciples in every age, and hath ſome even at preſent in this city. He, next called their attention to the aſſurance, that he was coming quickly, to try his profeſſed people, to deliver ſuch as were faithful, to deſtroy their enemies, or to judge the world: and he, therefore, commanded them to hold faſt the truth they had received, and to maintain the ground they had got; that no one might, through any temptation, or terror, deprive them of the victor's crown for which they were contending, or take away that diſtinguiſhed honour, which this commendation conferred on them; for this could not be preſerved, without vigilance, diligence, and perſevering courage.

V. 12, 13] To animate them, and all others, to the ſpiritual conflict, our Lord next promiſed to make every conqueror, "a pillar in the temple of his God;" to eſtabliſh him as an ornamental part of the ſpiritual edifice, which he as Mediator, was building to the glory of his God and Father; that being conſecrated to him, and placed in the ſanctuary above, he might conduce to the beauty, proportion, and magnificence of the whole; and be for ever moſt honourable and bleſſed, as "an habitation of God through the Spirit," without any fear of being ſeparated from him, or deprived of his favours, and preſence. Upon this pillar in the temple above, He promiſed "to write the name of his God;" that all might know to whom it belonged, and to whoſe glory it was erected; according to the cuſtom of inſcribing on ſtately columns the name and exploits of the perſon, to whoſe memory they were dedicated: he would alſo write on it, the name of the city of *his* God, (whom He, in human nature, worſhipped and ſerved;) this is called the new Jeruſalem, is of heavenly original, and derives its glory from the preſence of God therein. (c. xxi.) Thus all would know to what city the Victor belonged, and that he was entitled to all its privileges for evermore. The Lord promiſed alſo to write upon him "his own *new* name;" even that of Emmanuel, Jeſus, the Redeemer of ſinners, which he hath aſſumed in addition to his former titles, of Creator, Upholder, and Lord of all worlds, &c. Thus he would own him as one of his choſen people, a trophy of his victory over the world, ſin, ſatan, and death; and a monument erected to the power of his arm, the truth of his word, the preciouſneſs of his atonement, and the unſearchable riches of his grace. In which declarations all others are intereſted: according to the difficulty and completeneſs of their victory.

V. 14—16.] Laodicea lay to the ſouth of Philadelphia, and in the road to Epheſus: for the ſeven churches were ſituated in a kind of circle, and the progreſs from one to the other of them, in rotation, might be made in the order of theſe epiſtles. A flouriſhing church had been planted here, in the time of the apoſtle Paul: (*Col.* c. ii. v. 1. c. iv. ver. 13—16:) but it had greatly declined before this epiſtle was ſent thither, in the name of "The AMEN," of Him, who is Truth in himſelf; and who will ſurely, confirm and ratify all his words, which are

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creaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayeſt be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayeſt be clothed, and *that* the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten: be zealous therefore and repent.

20 Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock:

eſtabliſhed, and unchangeable as his own nature: for he is the true and faithful Witneſs, (c. i. v. 5;) moſt exactly teſtifying the nature, truths, purpoſes, and will of God to man, and bearing witneſs moſt impartially for or againſt the conduct and characters of his profeſſed ſervants, and all his creatures. He ſent to the Laodiceans alſo, under the title, of "the Beginning of the creation of God," or the *Origin*, *Author*, and *Ruler* of the whole univerſe, who hath authority and power to diſpoſe of all things as he ſees good. This glorious Lord of all knew their works to be ſuch, as were utterly unworthy of his approbation: for theſe manifeſted, "that they were neither cold "nor hot;" they neither wholly caſt off all regard to, and profeſſion of the goſpel; nor yet were they zealous fervent, and diligent in religion. He therefore declared, "that he would they were cold, or hot;" he deſired that they would either renounce their profeſſion, and give over the worthleſs form of attending on his ordinances; or that they would ſhew a becoming earneſtneſs in thoſe things, which pertained to his ſervice, and glory. For whilſt they were called by his name, and reluctantly performed a ſcanty meaſure of external duties, with an evident indifference about and wearineſs in them; their evil tempers, unholy actions, and carnal attachment to the world, to its pleaſures, company and intereſts, diſhonoured him more than their apoſtacy could do; and in the event it would be equally fatal to their own ſouls. For in this manner they would give numbers an unfavourable opinion of chriſtianity, as if it had been an unholy religion, whilſt others would conclude that it could afford no real ſatisfaction: or its profeſſors would not have been ſo heartleſs in it, or ſo fond of borrowing a little pleaſure from the world; or that it was not worth much, as they grudged the little it coſt them, and would not give up any thing of ſuppoſed value for the ſake of it. In ſhort ſuch profeſſors were traitors in the camp, who are always more dangerous than open enemies; or wicked ſervants, who diſgrace and plunder their maſters more, than they can do when turned out of the family. Unleſs, therefore, they became more "fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord;" he was determined to ſhew his contempt and abhorrence of them, by rejecting them; even as a man, whoſe ſtomach nauſeates water that is lukewarm, will caſt it out of his mouth with loathing and diſguſt.

V. 17—19.] Whilſt the ſtate of this church was ſo lamentably declined, that very few real chriſtians, and thoſe of ſmall proficiency remained in it; their ſpiritual pride, and ſelf-confidence had proportionably increaſed: this gave occaſion to the following reproof, inſtruction, counſel, and admonition. They were ready to ſay within themſelves, to each other, and even in a boaſting manner to their neighbours; that "they were rich" in ſpiritual gifts and attainments; that they were "increaſed in goods," and had obtained a larger meaſure of every ſpiritual gift, and endowment, than they formerly had, when the apoſtles were with them; (Notes, &c. 1 *Cor.* c. iv. ver. 8—10. c. v. ver. 2:) ſo that they thought they had need of nothing, but were complete in knowledge, wiſdom, goodneſs, ſtrength, and eſtabliſhment in the privileges and liberty of the goſpel; like poor lunatics, that fancy every houſe and eſtate they ſee, or hear of, to be their own. Thus they preferred themſelves to others; and being proud in ſpirit, inſtead of poor in ſpirit, they could only pray in the Phariſee's manner, (*Luke*, c. xviii. v. 10—14;) and were utterly incapable of the life of faith in Chriſt for all things pertaining to ſalvation. For they "knew "not that they were wretched and miſerable," in a moſt abject, perilous, and periſhing condition, and utterly deſtitute of wiſdom and grace: not only poor as all natural men are, but poor as profeſſors of the goſpel; being Phariſees upon evangelical principles; and proud of their attainments in chriſtianity, when in fact they were wholly unconverted. This deluſion aroſe from their being "blind;" they had only that knowledge, which puffeth up; but they had never ſeen the real glory of God in Chriſt, the evil of ſin, their own vileneſs, the deceitfulneſs of their hearts, or the excellency of the goſpel ſalvation: they, therefore, continued "naked," though they knew it not; being neither covered with the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt, nor adorned by his grace. This was the lamentable caſe of the church in general, and moſt of its paſtors and members in particular, in the judgment and by the teſtimony of Chriſt himſelf: and he counſelled them "to buy of him," thoſe things, of which they were in ſuch urgent need. They could have them from no other Perſon in the world; and he ſold them to the pooreſt, who applied for them, without money, and without price. (*Iſ* c. lv. v. 1—3.) But though even ſuch wretched and indigent ſinners, as they were, might obtain them; yet, as much of what they valued, though worthleſs in itſelf, muſt be renounced in order to appropriate them, it might properly be called buying them. (Notes, *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 44—46. *Phil.* c. iii. v. 7—9.) They were, therefore, counſelled; (and Chriſt's counſels are commands, invitations and promiſes;) to apply to him for, "gold tried in "the fire, that they might be rich." This denotes that true, and precious faith and grace, which have in numberleſs inſtances, endured the hotteſt fire of perſecution, without being conſumed, and have been rendered more reſplendent by the flames; and which would ſtand them in ſtead in affliction, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. Theſe would make them rich in reality, as they would enſure and evidence their intereſt in Chriſt's unſearchable riches, and all the promiſes given through him to his people. He adviſed them alſo to buy of Him "white "raiment, that they might be clothed, and that the ſhame if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

"of their nakedneſs might not appear:" for as their own righteouſneſs was as filthy rags, and their profeſſion of chriſtianity hitherto hypocritical; ſo they muſt ſoon be expoſed, and put to ſhame, before men and angels; unleſs they had his righteouſneſs put upon them for a robe of ſalvation, and were made holy by his ſanctifying Spirit, (v. 4, 5.) But as their pride, and ſelf-confidence had blinded them to the truth of their caſe and character, and conſequently to the value of theſe bleſſings: ſo he directed them to "anoint their eyes with eye ſalve, that they "might ſee:" let them examine themſelves by the rule of his word, and ſeek for the teaching of his holy Spirit to purge away their pride, prejudices and worldly luſts; that they might ſee the nature and preciouſneſs of his ſalvation, and value it in a more ſuitable manner. Theſe warnings and exhortations were not given them in indignation, but in mercy; for it was the general rule of his conduct to rebuke, and chaſten thoſe, whom he loved, (Notes, &c, *Heb.* c. xii. v. 5—12:) and they might conſider theſe rebukes as tokens of his favour; for ſuch they would prove, if properly attended to. It behoved them, therefore, to be zealous and earneſt in theſe moſt important concerns; eſpecially in repenting of, renouncing, cleanſing away, and ſeeking forgiveneſs of the evils, into which they had fallen.

V. 20—22.] To encourage the repentance, and excite the earneſtneſs of the lukewarm Laodiceans, the Lord called on them to notice, with admiration, his condeſcenſion, patience and grace; that, whilſt they were ſo wanting in love to him, he ſtood waiting at the door, and ſeeking to be re-admitted into the church, and into their hearts, from whence their ſins had driven him. He ſtood without, knocking by the diſpenſations of his providence, the warnings and inſtructions of his word, and the convincing influences of his Spirit; and thus requiring them to receive and entertain Him, (Notes, &c. *Sol. Song.* c. v. ver. 2—8.) If then, the church would not admit him; yet, if any man, whether back-ſlider, or unbeliever, was made willing to open, and give up his heart and affections to him; in order, that he might deſtroy his enemies, and rivals, caſt out idols, ſubdue iniquities, and make all things new; and was ready for theſe purpoſes to accept of him, in all his characters, and offices; he would certainly enter in, and take ſuch delight in the work of his grace in his ſoul, and communicate ſuch bleſſings and conſolations; that it might be ſaid, that "he ſupped with that Man, and He "with him;" ſuch intimate communion ſhould be thenceforth carried on between the redeemed ſinner, and his moſt gracious Saviour. In ſhort, to every conqueror over ſuch temptations, as the Laodiceans were expoſed to, the Lord promiſed a bleſſing, proportioned to the difficulty of the conflict; for he engaged to "grant him to ſit with him on "his throne;" and by an inconceivable union, and fellowſhip with him in all his glory, and an intereſt in all the benefits of his mediatorial authority and power, to poſſeſs an honour and felicity, which can never be explained, or conceived, except by thoſe, who experience it. For as theſe victors would be firſt conformed to Chriſt in conflict, ſelf-denial, and ſuffering; ſo would they at laſt be conformed to him in victory, and exaltation: being ſeated with him on his throne; even as he overcame, and hath ſat down with his Father on his Throne. The ſame inexpreſſible dignity would alſo be beſtowed on other conquerors in like difficult circumſtances: as the warnings, and inſtructions were intended for the benefit of all, who heard them, in every age. The ruins of this city ſhew that it once was moſt magnificent; but at preſent no human creature dwells there. So that the ſtate of theſe ſeven cities, both reſpecting chriſtianity and their outward proſperity, exactly accords to the commendation, or rebuke, which were given the churches eſtabliſhed there, by the Spirit of prophecy, ſo many centuries ago: which remarkable coincidence contains an inſtructive leſſon, and a ſolemn warning, to all other cities and nations, that are favoured with the goſpel; not to neglect, or trifle with ſo great a bleſſing.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When He, who hath the fulneſs of the Spirit, and rules over all means and inſtruments, reproves, counſels, or commands; his words imply the promiſe of all needful aſſiſtance to thoſe, who obediently attend to them. But how many profeſſors doth He, who knoweth our works, behold, who have a name to live, and perhaps much celebrity in the church, and yet are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins! Alas, it is to be feared, that many religious ſocieties, who have exact forms and notions, and who profeſs the truth with ſome reputation, conſiſt almoſt entirely of ſuch perſons, and have very little vital godlineſs among them! We ſhould, therefore, be very diligent and impartial, in examining ourſelves by the rule of ſcripture; very earneſt in prayer to the Lord to ſhew us what we are; and very careful not to reſt in the opinion of men reſpecting us: and, whilſt we watch againſt hypocriſy, and all the deceitfulneſs of our own hearts, and the devices of ſatan; we ſhould beware of ſuch profeſſors, as anſwer ſuch warnings and exhortations, eſpecially thoſe, that detect their ſecret ſins, with the cry of *legal*, &c. When it is evident, that we, or the ſociety, to which we belong, have declined; we ſhould ſpare no pains, and neglect no means, which may "ſtrengthen the things "that remain, and yet are ready to die:" for Chriſt often judges thoſe works not to be ſound, and upright before God, which men admire and applaud: and our great concern is with our Judge, not with our fellow criminals. In ſeeking a revival in our own ſouls, or in thoſe of others, it is incumbent on us to remember what we have received and heard; that by comparing our advantages and profeſſion with our proficiency, we

CHAP. IV.

Contains John, in viſion, beholding heaven opened, and the glory of God, as ſeated on an exalted throne; and ſurrounded by twenty four elders, and four living creatures, who united in adoring Him as the Creator and ſovereign Lord of all, 1--11.

may be the more humbled, and quickened, and ſo excited to hold faſt what we retain, and to repent and do our firſt works. But if men will deſpiſe ſuch warnings to watch and pray; Chriſt will ſurely come, when they do not expect him, and appoint ſuch ſlothful ſervants their portion among his enemies. Yet even in very corrupt churches, he hath commonly a few names, who have not defiled their garments: and if our lot be caſt in ſuch a ſituation, we ſhould be ambitious of this true honour; that amidſt many bad examples, and temptations, we may be found a peculiar people, zealous of good works. At preſent we may indeed be hated, or derided for ſuch ſingularity of conduct; but the Lord will admit us to the honour of walking with him in white, as graciouſly accounted worthy of ſo great a felicity; when all unbelievers, and formal profeſſors ſhall have their portion in the blackneſs of eternal darkneſs. For whether few, or many overcome the peculiar temptations of their ſituation; they and they only, will be accepted and triumphant at the laſt: not one of them ſhall have his name blotted out of the book of life; nor will the divine Saviour refuſe to confeſs the meaneſt of their names, before his Father, and all his holy angels.

May we then attend to Him, who is Holy, and True, who hateth ſin, yet performeth his largeſt promiſes to believing ſinners: he reigneth on the throne of David; he openeth the gates of life, and death, of heaven and hell, and none can ſhut them; he ſhutteth and none can open. Whether, therefore, he ſet before us an open door of acceſs to his mercy-ſeat; or afford us an opportunity of uſefulneſs; no created being can ſhut us out from them. Even if we have but little ſtrength: yet if we have kept his word, and have not denied him amidſt our fears and diſcouragements; he will not let any enemy prevail againſt us: and as he hath all hearts in his hands; ſo he often diſpoſes the oppoſers of his people, to ſhew them reſpect, to deſire their friendſhip, to own that he loved them, or gladly to receive the truth from them. (*Gen.* c. l. v. 15—18.) If we would eſcape thoſe ſevere corrections, and violent temptations, which from time to time are permitted to try the churches throughout the earth: we muſt patiently adhere to the truth and will of Chriſt in our habitual walk; and ſhrink from no croſs, that we meet with, when following his example: for a looſe unwatchful conduct makes way for temptation, and unfits men to reſiſt it. Whilſt, therefore, we wait for him, who cometh quickly, we ſhould hold faſt the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end; that none may rob us of our crown, or even of the comfortable aſſurance of obtaining it. For thoſe, who overcome, in the ſtrength, and after the pattern of Chriſt, ſhall be placed by him as pillars in the temple above, to go no more out; and they ſhall for ever enjoy all the privileges, and the felicity of the city of God, to the glory of the Father, and that of the eternal Son, who hath redeemed them with his precious blood; that they might for ever ſhew forth his praiſe, and enjoy his love.

But whilſt we bow our ear to theſe encouraging topics; let us advert alſo to the language of the Amen, the truth and faithful Witneſs, the Ruler of the creation of "God;" whilſt he ſpeaks of the character, and doom of luke-warm profeſſors. Alas, how many are there of the Laodicean ſtamp in every place! Did we ſuppoſe theſe epiſtles to be prophetical, we might be induced to conclude, that the end of the world was nigh: for amidſt the abounding of iniquity and infidelity, the love of many waxes cold; and the ſtate of religion in this highly favoured city and nation too much reſembles that of this ſeventh church. The Lord knoweth, that profeſſors at preſent are "neither cold nor hot;" except as their indifference in eſſential matters is ſtrangely counterpoiſed by a hot, and fiery ſpirit of diſputation about things of far inferior moment! No doubt the Laodicean ſtate of the chriſtian churches, in moſt parts of the world, is one grand hindrance to the propagation of the goſpel among the Pagans; who can ſcarce conceive that religion to be from heaven, the profeſſors of which are ſo "earthly, ſenſual and deviliſh:" and certainly the ſtate of thoſe, who hold the truth too often in unrighteouſneſs, and generally in a luke-warm manner, forms one grand objection and prejudice againſt the goſpel in the minds of numbers in this land; and gives *moral* and *decent* Infidels, Socinians, Arians, &c, their chief advantage againſt us. Yet the perſons, who are chiefly reprehenſible, are leaſt likely to regard ſuch admonitions: for whilſt the Lord is ſaying, "I would thou wert cold or hot; but becauſe thou art luke-warm, &c, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth;" they are boaſting "that they are rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing!" It is indeed a general rule that profeſſors grow proud in proportion as they become carnal and formal: for, like glow-worms, they ſhine moſt in the dark, according to their apprehenſions of themſelves, and their commendations of one another. The phariſaical ſpirit is indeed always odious, and dangerous; whilſt it renders men ignorant of their wretchedneſs, poverty, nakedneſs and blindneſs, and inſenſible of the preciouſneſs of Chriſt and his ſalvation: yet the legal Phariſee is a hopeful character compared with thoſe, who graft the Phariſee on an evangelical profeſſion, and connect it with an Antinomian laxity of morals; as numbers do. However, Chriſt continues to declare to all men their loſt eſtate; and he mercifully counſels even luke-warm and proud profeſſors, as well as others, to come and buy of him unſearchable, and never failing treaſures, unfading robes of righteouſneſs, and that heavenly unction, which renders the moſt ignorant wiſe unto eternal ſalvation. Happy are they, who take his counſel; for all others muſt periſh in their ſins, (Notes, &c. *Prov.* c. i. v. 19—31:) even when he enforces his neglected counſels and invitations with ſharp rebukes, and painful corrections, (which he will do in reſpect of as many as he loves;) if thereby we are made zealous and penitent, we ſhall deem them additional and moſt precious favours. May we then hear the voice

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the firſt voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which ſaid, Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee things which muſt be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was ſet in heaven, and *one* ſat on the throne.

3 And he that ſat was to look upon like a jaſper and a ſardine ſtone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in ſight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty ſeats: and upon the ſeats I ſaw four and twenty elders ſitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

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of his word and his rod; whilſt with infinite compaſſion, and condeſcenſion, he continues to ſtand waiting and knocking at the door of our hearts; that he may enter in, and bring ſalvation with him. Let us earneſtly beſeech him to put forth his Almighty power, and thereby to break down all obſtacles to his admiſſion into, and entire poſſeſſion of our whole ſouls: that we may be aſhamed of our folly and ingratitude in allowing any creature to rival him in our affections, or attempting to divide our hearts between Him, and worldly objects. Then we may hope, that he will ſhed abroad his love in, and communicate his joy to our hearts; that he will delight over us to do us good, and cauſe us to glory and rejoice in him; and that, by his help, and under his banner, we ſhall conquer every enemy; till our bleſſed experience explains to us, what we cannot before underſtand, when as victors we are ſeated with him on his throne, even as he overcame, and is ſet down with the Father upon his throne.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—3.] When the Lord Jeſus had dictated to his apoſtle the preceding epiſtles, and thus inſtructed him to write the things which then were. There ſeems to have been a ſhort interruption of his viſion: but afterwards looking and waiting for further diſcoveries, he beheld, as it were, a door opened into heaven, the holy habitation of God; and then another viſion commenced, which made way for his learning "the "things, which muſt be hereafter," (c. i. v. 19:) for this and the following chapters conſtitute an introduction to the prophetical part of the book; eſpecially to the opening of the ſeals, in the ſeventh chapter. Whilſt he was contemplating the door opened in heaven, he heard a voice, as before, calling him to come up thither, (c. i. v. 10;) which doubtleſs was the voice of Chriſt ſpeaking to him; and immediately he was in the Spirit, &c. It hath been heretofore obſerved, that no external objects ſeem to have been preſented to the ſenſes of the prophets, on ſuch occaſions: but the natural uſe of all their faculties being ſuſpended, their minds were ſupernaturally impreſſed with the ideas of ſuch things, as connected with or illuſtrated the meſſages they were employed to deliver. We ought not, therefore, to ſuppoſe, that the objects afterwards mentioned have a real exiſtence in heaven; which would make way for many groſs and erroneous concluſions: but they were viſionary emblems ſuited to give proper inſtruction to the apoſtle, and his readers; and our chief buſineſs is to develope their meaning, and, as it were, to decypher the hieroglyphics. Being in the Spirit, and caſt into an extacy or trance, we may ſuppoſe that John did not well know "whether he were in the body, or out of the body;" (Notes, &c. 2 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 1—3:) however, he was, as to his own apprehenſion, admitted into the immediate preſence of God, and had the viſion of a glorious throne, on which One ſat, whom he attempted not particularly to deſcribe. This was emblematic of the univerſal, abſolute, and eternal dominion of Jehovah; and of his exaltation far above all creatures, as their great Creator and ſovereign Lord. The viſible glory, (which ſeems to have referred to that above the mercy-ſeat, in the holy of holies; as there is throughout thoſe viſions an alluſion to the temple, &c;) being reſplendent, like to the tranſparent jaſper, might be emblematic of the perfect purity and excellency of the divine nature; and its colour like the *red* ſardine ſtone, might repreſent his awful juſtice and fiery indignation. The rainbow was a well known emblem of the covenant of grace; and its ſurrounding the throne denoted that the holineſs and juſtice of God, and all his diſpenſations as the Sovereign of all worlds, had reſpect to, and harmonized with, his covenant of peace and engagements of love, which he had ratified to his believing people. In this rainbow the ſoft green of the emerald was predominant: which perhaps might imply, that as the green relieves the eye, which ſome other colours fatigue and dazzle; ſo the diſcovery made of the mercy of God in the covenant of grace refreſhes the believer's mind, which the diſplay of his glorious power, holineſs and juſtice would diſmay and confound.

V. 4—8.] Round about, at ſome diſtance from the exalted throne of God, were placed twenty four *thrones* of an inferior order, on which were ſeated ſo many elders. Theſe are generally allowed to have been the emblematic repreſentatives of the whole church of God, both under the old, and the new diſpenſation. The thrones on which they ſat, their white raiment, and their crowns of gold, implied their acceptance, ſanctification, and royal Prieſthood. For, though the church militant was thus repreſented, as well as the church triumphant; yet the whole was deſcribed with relation to the ſecurity of their ſtate, their glorious privileges, and the honour to which the Lord purpoſed to advance them. The number of theſe elders may refer to the twenty four courſes, into which the Prieſts were divided; or to the twelve patriarchs, and twelve apoſtles, as the heads of the old and the new Teſtament churches. The lightnings, thunders, and voices, which proceeded from the throne, according to the ſcene exhibited on mount Sinai, might imply that God was as terrible as ever to the impenitent

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* ſeven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the ſeven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne *there was* a ſea of glaſs like unto cryſtal: and in the midſt of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beaſts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the firſt beaſt *was* like a lion, and the ſecond beaſt like a calf, and the third beaſt had a face as a man, and the fourth beaſt *was* like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beaſts had each of them ſix wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when thoſe beaſts give glory and honour and thanks to him that ſat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever;

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that ſat on the throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their crowns before the throne, ſaying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created.

and unbelieving. The ſeven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, were emblematic of the ſeven Spirits of God, or the manifold gifts and grace communicated to all chriſtians, by the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, and of fire. (Note, *Matt.* c. iii. v. 11.) The ſea of glaſs clear as cryſtal, being perfectly pure and tranſparent, (in alluſion to the molten ſea of braſs in the court of the temple,) ſeems to refer to the "fountain opened for ſin and "uncleanneſs," in which all the ſpiritual prieſthood muſt waſh, previous to their acceptable ſpiritual ſacrifices. But various opinions have been held concerning the four *beaſts*, or *living creatures*, (as it ought to have been tranſlated, in order to adhere to the exact meaning of the original, and to preſerve the truth of the emblem.) The unaccountable notion, that the Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead were repreſented by them; whilſt two emblems were given of the Son, becauſe of his incarnation and ſacrifice, can have no other ſupport, but the reſpectable names that have ſanctioned it; for this plain reaſon, that theſe living creatures were throughout the principal worſhippers, not the object of worſhip. Nor can we allow them to have been repreſentatives of the angels, as the cherubim in Ezekiel's viſion ſeem to have been; (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. i. v. 10:) not only, becauſe angels are perſonally introduced in the ſubſequent part of this viſion; but eſpecially, becauſe theſe living creatures adore Chriſt, who "had redeemed them to God with his "blood, &c." (c. v. ver. 8, 9.) They muſt therefore repreſent ſome part of the church of redeemed ſinners of the human race. Perceiving this, ſome eminent expoſitors have ſuppoſed them to be repreſentatives of the whole church; and the twenty-four elders, of its rulers and paſtors: but it is ſurely far more reaſonable to reverſe this arrangement, and to conclude that the four living creatures repreſent a part, the twenty-four elders the whole of the church: and indeed it ſeems evident that they were emblems of the goſpel miniſtry, in the different parts of the earth. Ezekiel, being about to predict providential diſpenſations reſpecting the nation of Iſrael, had a viſion emblematic of the miniſtry of angels, by which thoſe events would be accompliſhed: but John's predictions relating chiefly to the church in the different regions of the earth, and to the affairs of nations only in ſubſerviency thereto, had a viſion emblematic of the goſpel miniſtry, by whoſe inſtrumentality the intereſts of the church would principally be maintained. Yet, as the temper of mind, and ſpiritual gifts, which qualify men for this work, accord in great meaſure to the affections and endowments of angels: ſo, we need not wonder to find a coincidence in their hieroglyphics. But each cherub in Ezekiel's viſion had four faces, and John's living creatures had the ſame appearances, divided among them: for angels may be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs *ſingly* the ſeveral excellencies, that are given to *many* of the moſt eminent miniſters. Yet in various particulars we ſhall find, that the emblem teaches us what true and able miniſters are, and do: and thus it ſerves to inſtruct and remind them all of their duties. The lion is the known emblem of courage, and magnanimity: the calf, or young ox of ſtrength, hardineſs, and patient endurance of labour: the human face is the emblem of prudence, benevolence and compaſſion; and the eagle of penetration, ſoaring beyond earthly things, contemplation of heavenly objects, and affections fixed on things above. The ſix wings, (Note, *Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 1—4,) denote alacrity, humility, promptitude, and ſpeed in the Lord's work: they were full of eyes before, behind and *within*; which aptly repreſented vigilance, circumſpection, attention to their work and charge, their watchful and cautious obſervance of the motions and ſtratagems of their enemies; and their ſelf-acquaintance, and jealous diligence in ſearching their own hearts, and taking heed to their own ſpirits. Their unceaſing, and unwearied worſhip of the Lord, day and night, may ſignify; that through their inſtructions, exhortations, example, and aſſiſtance, ſinners in every part of the earth were continually bleſſing and glorifying God, and worſhipping at his mercy-ſeat: and the three-fold repetition of the word *holy*, (as in the worſhip of the ſeraphim in the above-cited paſſage in Iſaiah,) might be an intimation of the Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead; to which reſpect was had, whatever Perſon was immediately addreſſed. (c. i. v. 4. 8.)

V. 9—12.] Whilſt theſe four living creatures appeared to aſcribe glory and honour, and to render thanks to the eternal Jehovah, (in the midſt of the circuit of the

CHAP. V.

Contains the apoſtle 1ſt. Beholding a ſealed book, which none could open; and his grief on that account, 1---4. 2d. Aſſured by one of the elders that Chriſt had prevailed to open it; who accordingly came and took it, &c, 5---7. 3d. Hearing the living creatures, and the elders adoring Chriſt as their Redeemer; and angels and all creatures joining in the praiſes of him, that ſat on the throne, and of the Lamb that was ſlain, 8---14.

AND I ſaw in the right hand of him, that ſat on the throne, a book written within and on the backſide, ſealed with ſeven ſeals.

2 And I ſaw a ſtrong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, becauſe no man was

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throne, and nearer than the ſeats of the elders;) (v. 6;) the latter proſtrated themſelves before him in humble grateful adoration; and in acknowledgment, that all their honour and felicity were beſtowed on them of his mere mercy, they caſt their crowns before the throne; and declared Him to be worthy of all honour and dominion, as the great Creator of all worlds; by whoſe ſovereign will they continued to exiſt, as they had been originally formed for his glory. (Note, *John*, c. i. v. 1. 3. *Col.* c. i. v. 15—17.) In the next chapter we ſhall find the ſame company, worſhipping the Son, as the Redeemer of ſinners, and joined by angels, &c, in that holy ſervice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord Jeſus, "having overcome the ſharpneſs of death, hath opened the gates of heaven to all believers;" and if we look unto him by faith, and obediently attend to his voice, whilſt he calls us to ſet our affections on things above; we ſhall by the teaching of the Holy Spirit behold the glory of our reconciled God upon his throne of grace, be encouraged by the engagements of his everlaſting covenant, and draw nigh in humble boldneſs with our worſhip, notwithſtanding the terrors of his juſtice, and the awful curſes of his broken law. For bleſſed are all they who belong to his church in heaven, or on earth! Great is the honour and dignity, conferred on, or prepared for them; yea far greater than all the thrones, ſcepters, diadems, or triumphs, which have excited the ambition or envy of mankind in every age, and place. If then we are baptized with the illuminating, purifying, and transforming influences of the Holy Spirit, waſhed in the pure fountain of the Redeemer's blood, and clothed in the ſacerdotal robe of his righteouſneſs; we ſhall ſoon have done with conflict and ſuffering, receive the victor's honourable crown, and join in the rapturous worſhip of heaven.

But here on earth the Lord conducts the affairs of his church by his miniſters, whom he hath brought nearer to him than their brethren, and who ought to be proportionably more holy than they. Many indeed bear that name, who are far from anſwering the ſcripture character of miniſters; and we all may learn by theſe inſtructive emblems, what need we have to be humbled, and aſhamed of our inconſiſtent conduct and defective ſervices: for though faithful miniſters do emulate the obedience of angels; yet they find they "do not the things which they would." However, it behoves us to look in this mirror, that we may learn what manner of perſons we ought to be, and are: and may thus know what to pray for, and aſpire after: that we may become more bold, laborious, loving, prudent, ſpiritual, active, vigilant, attentive to our own hearts, and devoted to our Lord's work. May he bleſs, uphold, encourage, and proſper all, who in any meaſure anſwer to theſe characters: may he raiſe up numbers of ſuch miniſters in all the four quarters of the globe; and convert blind teachers into ſuch faithful paſtors. Thus the worſhip of the church on earth, under the guidance and inſtruction of able and ſpiritual miniſters, will become more like that of adoring ſeraphim: whilſt the multitude of his people, in every place, as with one heart and voice, aſcribe the whole honour of their redemption and converſion, their preſent privileges, and future hopes, to the eternal, and moſt holy God, who is worthy to receive glory and dominion, as the Omnipotent Creator, and Suſtainer, and the Sovereign Lord of the whole univerſe. May the name of our heavenly Father be thus hallowed on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—4.] The viſion ſtill continuing, the apoſtle next ſaw a book in the right hand of him, who ſat upon the throne, which was written within, and *ſealed on the outſide with ſeven ſeals*. For it appeared as a roll conſiſting of ſeveral parchments, according to the cuſtom of thoſe times: and though it was ſuppoſed to be written within, yet nothing could be read till the ſeals were looſed; ſo that the words "on the back-ſide," muſt refer to the ſealing, and not to the writing. Moreover it was afterwards found to contain ſeven parchments, or volumes, each of which was *ſeparately ſealed*: but if all the ſeals had been on the outſide, nothing could have been read, till they had all been looſed; whereas the looſing of each ſeal was followed by ſome diſcovery of the contents of the roll. This was an emblem of God's ſecret decrees, relative to future events, from which all prophecies are, as it were extracts; but it eſpecially repreſented thoſe purpoſes, which were about to be revealed; and may, therefore, be conſidered, as the ſame for ſubſtance, with that part of the book of Revelation, which follows. A mighty angel, as the Lord's herald to all creatures, enquired who was "worthy," by his perſonal dignity or excellency, or the extraordinary ſervices performed by him, to have the honour of opening this book, &c. But there was *no one*, either angel in heaven, or man on earth, or ſpirit of a man in the ſeparate ſtate, whoſe body lay under the found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders ſaith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to looſe the ſeven ſeals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midſt of the throne and of the four beaſts, and in the midſt of the elders, ſtood a Lamb as it had been ſlain, having ſeven horns and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven Spirits of God ſent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that ſat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beaſts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of ſaints.

9 And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof: for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And haſt made us unto our God kings and prieſts: and we ſhall reign on the earth.

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earth; who could pretend to ſo high an honour; or ſo much as to behold, and obtain the leaſt inſight into ſuch deep things of God, as it contained. When this was made known; the apoſtle, who had come up thither, with earneſt deſires and expectations of hearing things which ſhould come to paſs in after times, wept much at his ſuppoſed diſappointment.

V. 5—7.] One of the emblematic repreſentatives of the church ſeemed to the apoſtle in his viſion, to notice his grief, and to encourage him with the aſſurance, that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, &c, had prevailed to open the book; being diſtinguiſhed from and honoured far beyond all creatures. It is recorded from tradition, that a lion was painted on the ſtandard of Judah, when the nation of Iſrael encamped in the wilderneſs: Chriſt was deſcended from Judah, and had been predicted with reference to the ſame emblem, in Jacob's bleſſing, (Note, *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 9, 10) He was infinitely ſuperior in dignity, and power, to all others of the tribe, and in being terrible to his obſtinate enemies; ſo that this title was peculiarly ſuited to him. He was deſcribed as "the Root of David:" in his human nature, he was a Branch of renown ſprung up from the decaying root of David's royal family; in reſpect of his Deity, he was the Root whence David himſelf ſprang; and as the promiſed Meſſiah, he was the great honour, and the ſource of all the dignity and authority of that diſtinguiſhed race. Whilſt the Elder was informing John, that Chriſt had prevailed to open the book &c: he looked, and ſaw with aſtoniſhment, that near to the throne, and within the circle formed by the living creatures and the elders, (c iv. ver. 6;) there ſtood "a Lamb, even as it had "been ſlain," with the marks of the mortal wounds upon it, though it had been marvellouſly reſtored to life. (Note, *John*, c. i. v. 29.) This was an hieroglyphical repreſentation of Chriſt's High Prieſthood, before God, in our nature, as riſen from the dead, through the merit of his ſacrifice, and in behalf of all, who come to the Father through him: ſo that it was in conſequence of that atonement, which the ſacrificing of ſpotleſs lambs &c, had prefigured, that he prevailed to open the book &c. The ſeven horns of this emblematic lamb, repreſented the power of his providential kingdom, to protect his ſubjects, and annoy his enemies: and his ſeven eyes may denote his prophetical office; and his perſonal knowledge of all hearts and all events; but eſpecially the treaſures of wiſdom laid up in him to be communicated to his church; by "the "ſeven Spirits of God ſent forth into all the earth;" that is the Holy Spirit, as given by him to reveal the truth and will of God to apoſtles &c, that they might be written for the inſtruction of mankind; and as illuminating the underſtanding, and preparing the hearts of his people to receive that inſtruction. (*Zech.* c. iv. ver. 2. 10.) This divine Saviour, therefore, approached, to receive the book from the hand of him, who ſat on the throne.

V. 8—10.] When Chriſt had received the book, and was preparing to looſe the ſeals; the repreſentatives of the miniſters of the church, &c, who had before proſtrated themſelves in adoration of the great Creator; now fell down in like manner to worſhip the Lamb, or the incarnate Son as the Saviour of loſt ſinners; thus rendering him divine honour even in the viſible preſence of the Father's glory: Their harps, (with reference to the muſick and pſalmody of the temple,) were emblems of their melodious praiſes and thankſgivings: the golden vials, or cenſers full of odours, (like the burning of incenſe in the Moſaic worſhip,) repreſented the acceptableneſs of the prayers of the Saints, through the interceſſion of Chriſt, and by the influences of his ſanctifying Spirit. Theſe were preſented by the living creatures, and elders; even as the prayers of Iſrael were offered, whilſt the prieſts were burning incenſe in the ſanctuary. For though heaven be the ſcene of theſe viſions; yet they had continual reference to the temple, and its worſhip; and the ſtate of the church on earth is throughout particularly adverted to. Moreover, they all joined in a ſong of praiſe, which was not only moſt excellent: but it was alſo *new*, in reſpect of the occaſion, and compoſition: for the Old Teſtament church celebrated the praiſes of Jehovah their Redeemer from Egypt, and anticipated the coming of their expected Meſſiah: but the New Teſtament church adored Chriſt, as actually come, yea as having finiſhed his work on earth, by his ſacrifice on the croſs, and as entered into his mediatorial glory. He, therefore, and He alone, was worthy to take the book, and diſcloſe the purpoſes of God to mankind; for

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beaſts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſand of thouſands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto Him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beaſts ſaid, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worſhipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

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he had become incarnate, and for the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men, had willingly given himſelf to be ſlain as a ſacrifice. And thus he had redeemed them to God, by the ſhedding of his all-atoning blood; that he might bring them, as reconciled, and accepted worſhippers, into his preſence: and he had collected them by the preaching of the goſpel, and the power of his grace, out of the various families, languages, and nations of the world, to be exalted and conſecrated, as kings and prieſts, through their union with and conformity to him: ſo that they were aſſured, that on earth they ſhould acquire the aſcendancy both over their perſonal enemies, and thoſe of his church; as well as reign with him for ever in heaven.

V. 11—14.] Whilſt theſe adoring praiſes were preſented from the repreſentatives of the church of redeemed ſinners to their divine Saviour; the apoſtle obſerved all that paſſed: and he heard the voice of many angels, around the throne and encircling *without* the living creatures and elders; whoſe number amounted to many millions; and all of them in perfect harmony, with a loud voice declared that "the Lamb, which had been ſlain," for the redemption of ſinful men, was "worthy to receive power," in his mediatorial character and in human nature, over all creatures in heaven and earth; and "riches," even all the treaſures of grace and glory, for the benefit of his people; and that "wiſdom, ſtrength, honour, glory, and bleſſing" ſhould be veſted in and aſcribed to him, as the Object of univerſal adoration, praiſe, gratitude, and love. Thus the whole innumerable company of angels, though they ſtand not related to him as partakers of the ſame nature, and have no immediate concern in his redemption; are yet repreſented as beholding ſuch divine excellency and glory in him, and his mediatory work, (for into theſe things, they deſire to look down;) that they adore and honour him with moſt rapturous aſcriptions of praiſe, rejoice in his exaltation "far above all principality and power," and ſeem to vie with redeemed ſinners in his worſhip. In this they were immediately joined by all the inhabitants of heaven, and earth, and the ſouls of thoſe in the ſeparate ſtate, whoſe bodies were under the earth, or in the ſea; or by all creatures in the univerſe, according to their ſeveral capacities; with the exception of none but the determined enemies of God: all the reſt rendered, and aſcribed bleſſing, and honour and glory to him, that ſat on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever, and ever: to which the four living creatures joined a cordial Amen. And thus the whole church in its repreſentatives, fell down and worſhipped the eternal God. What words could more fully and emphatically declare, that Chriſt is, and ought to be worſhipped, equally with the Father, by all creatures, to all eternity? Will any one, after reading this aſſert, that he is a mere man, or a created Being; or that it is idolatry to worſhip him? Or will ſuch perſons pretend to believe, that this book is the unerring word of God? Or can they diſprove the divinity of a book, the prophecies of which have already been ſo remarkably accompliſhed? Or can any man, who derides, or oppoſes the worſhip of Chriſt, or the doctrines of his Deity, atonement, and ſalvation through faith in his blood, ſuppoſe that he can ever enter heaven? Or that he could join in, or even endure, the work and worſhip of that bleſſed world?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How vain and preſumptuous muſt all man's endeavours be, to diſcover future events, beyond the diſcernment of a ſagacious probable conjecture: as ſuch things are ſealed up in impenetrable ſecrecy, and no creature in heaven, earth, or hell, is able, or worthy to diſcloſe the leaſt tittle of them; except the incarnate Son of God alone. We need not indeed weep, that we cannot foreſee the future events reſpecting ourſelves in this world: as the eager expectation and proſpect of diſtant proſperity would unfit us for preſent duties, and conflicts; and the foreſight of future calamities would render our moſt proſperous days diſtreſſing. Yet in this diſtracted evil world, we may properly deſire to learn from the promiſes, and prophecies of ſcripture, what will be the final event to believers, and to the church; and in both reſpects the Incarnate Son hath prevailed to procure us all the information that our circumſtances need. May we then value, and ſtudy to become acquainted with every part of that revelation, which he hath given us. What apparently contrary excellences centre in our Redeemer's character! The Lion of the tribe of Judah is alſo a meek and ſpotleſs Lamb, and a bleeding ſacrifice for ſin! And whilſt as a Lion he protects his people; even as a Lamb he is moſt formidable to his obſtinate enemies! (c. vi. v. 16, 17.) The whole univerſe could never, in any other inſtance, ſhew ſuch an union of unſearchable riches, and deep poverty; of ſovereign authority, and willing entire ſubjection; of divine dignity, and immenſe humiliation and condeſcenſion; of majeſty and meekneſs; of holineſs and love of ſinners; of juſtice and mercy; of deſert of honour and happineſs, with patient endurance of moſt complicated ſufferings. In theſe, and various other reſpects, he is altogether worthy of our admiration, con-

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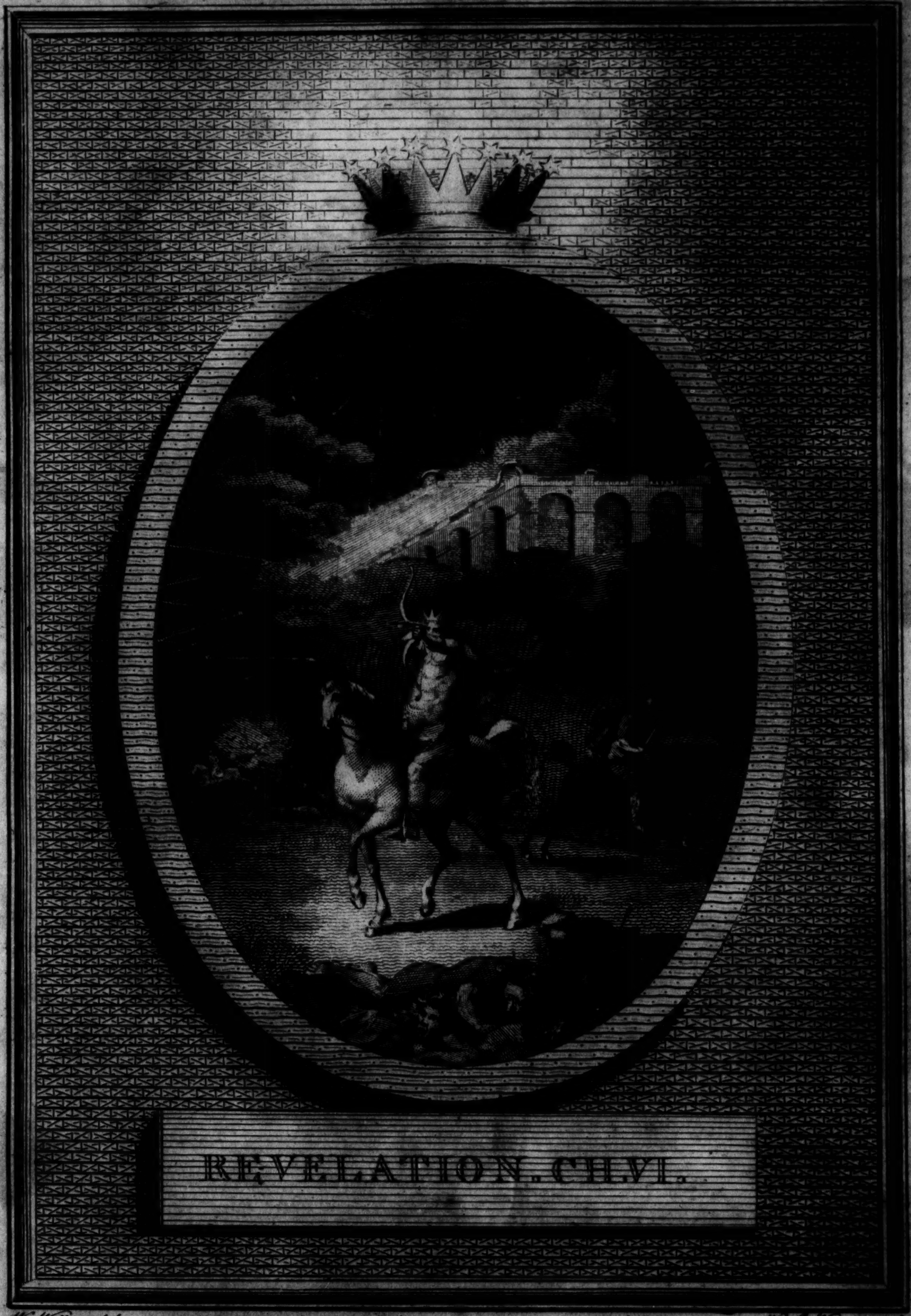

REVELATION. CH.VI.

W. Walker del. W. & J. Walker sculp.

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CHAP. VI.

Contains the opening of ſix of the ſeven ſeals, in order; and the emblematic diſcovery of future events made after each of them, 1---17.

AND I ſaw when the Lamb opened one of the ſeals, and I heard, as it were the noiſe of thunder, one of the four beaſts ſaying, Come and ſee.

2 And I ſaw, and behold a white horſe: and he that ſat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the ſecond ſeal, I heard the ſecond beaſt ſay, Come and ſee.

4 And there went out another horſe *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that ſat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they ſhould kill one another: and there was given unto him a great ſword.

5 And when he had opened the third ſeal, I

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fidence, and imitation, as far as it is poſſible for us to be placed in ſimilar circumſtances. Yet our particular concern with him is in the character of a Redeemer. As the Omnipotent and Omniſcient Lord of all, he rules every thing by his univerſal providence, and the energy of his omnipreſent Spirit, in ſubſerviency to his great concern of "redeeming us to God with his blood." His faithful miniſters, therefore, through all the earth, whilſt they inſtruct men to worſhip the Creator, and Governor of the world; will alſo excite them by their doctrine and example, moſt humbly to adore the Lamb that was ſlain; and to preſent their loudeſt ſweeteſt ſongs of praiſe to him, in and through whom the prayers of the ſaints aſcend as incenſe before the throne of God. He is worthy to reveal and to direct the diſpenſations of providence; yea he is entitled to univerſal adoration: and if all the angels of God with one voice proclaim, "worthy is the "Lamb that was ſlain, to receive authority, riches, wiſ"dom, power, honour, glory, and bleſſing;" and if all holy and accepted creatures in the whole univerſe, give the ſame bleſſing, and honour and glory to Him, that ſitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever: ſurely they, whom he hath redeemed to God with his blood, out of every kindred, and people of the earth, ſhould cordially ſay, Amen, to it! Can we ſuppoſe them to be his miniſters and diſciples, who refuſe that honour to him, which all obedient creatures render him, without one diſcordant voice? If it were poſſible for true chriſtians to refuſe theſe adorations to the eternal Son of the Father, even the very ſtones would cry out in abhorrence of man's ingratitude to Him, who ſtooped ſo low for their ſalvation. We cannot err in adoring Him, whom all the angels of God worſhip. Thus we ſhall moſt acceptably glorify Him that liveth for ever and ever, and be trained up for the work and joy of heaven; for which no ſinner can be qualified, who could not cordially join the new ſong of the redeemed, and aſcribe ſalvation and glory and bleſſing to him that ſitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1, 2.] This chapter relates to the events, which took place from the time of the viſion, to the eſtabliſhment of Conſtantine the Great upon the Imperial throne, as the firſt chriſtian emperor; by which the perſecutions of Pagan Rome ceaſed, and chriſtianity became the eſtabliſhed and favoured religion throughout the empire. When the Lord Jeſus as "the Lamb that "had been ſlain," opened the firſt ſeal, the apoſtle's attention was excited, by a voice like thunder from one of the four living creatures, who called on him to come and ſee, what paſſed: this was the voice of him who was like to a lion; and the ſame took place reſpecting the other living creatures in their order, after the opening of the three next ſeals; but the meaning of the emblem does not clearly appear. The apoſtle then beheld with aſtoniſhment a white horſe, on which was mounted One, who was armed with a bow, &c, as for the battle; to him a crown, denoting royal authority, was given, and he went forth conquering all before him, and ſtill preparing to obtain new victories. They, who ſuppoſe the apoſtle to have had this viſion, in the reign of Nero, about A. D. 68, explain this emblem of the victories gained by Veſpaſian, Titus, &c, among which the taking and deſtruction of Jeruſalem was moſt conſiderable. But it is almoſt incredible that this moſt important event ſhould be only ſo obſcurely hinted at, if it had been then in futurity: and it is far more likely on other accounts, that the apoſtle wrote this book ſome time after that event. Others, therefore, explain this diſcovery of ſome victories obtained by the Emperor Trajan, over the ſurrounding nations. But theſe events had no immediate connexion with the affairs of the church; and Trajan, who was a bloody perſecutor, however celebrated in other reſpects, was not aptly deſcribed by one mounted on a white horſe. This emblem rather denotes righteouſneſs, and purity: and the mild beneficent victories of Chriſt, by his word and Holy Spirit, in the converſion of ſinners to the obedience of faith, ſeems to have been thus predicted. After his advancement to his mediatorial throne, he had gone forth as a merciful, and pacific conqueror, and had obtained many victories: but both Jews and Gentiles to the uttermoſt oppoſed the progreſs of his goſpel; yet the opening of this ſeal ſhewed that he would ſtill go on with his conqueſts, and more widely than ever extend his ſpiritual dominion. Accordingly accurate hiſtorians are of opinion that chriſtianity ſpread more rapidly and extenſively among the Gentiles juſt after this time, than it had before done. (c. xix. v. 11—16. *Pſ.* xlv. v. 3—5.)

V. 3, 4.] The red horſe, which appeared at the opening of the ſecond ſeal, leads our thoughts to wars and conqueſts of another nature, than thoſe before conſidered. The Lord Jeſus, in his righteous providence, ſeems to be here repreſented, as commiſſioning and employing the executioners of his vengeance on his obſtinate enemies. Accordingly hiſtorians record that inſurheard the third beaſt ſay, Come and ſee. And I beheld, and lo, a black horſe; and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midſt of the four beaſts ſay, A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny; and *ſee* thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth ſeal, I heard the voice of the fourth beaſt ſay, Come and ſee.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horſe: and his name that ſat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with ſword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beaſts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth ſeal, I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, ſay-

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rections, bloody battles, maſſacres, and devaſtations of a moſt extraordinary kind, took place, between A. D. 100, and 138: 580,000 Jews are computed to have been ſlaughtered in different places during that period: and even a larger number of the Romans and Greeks ſeem to have been butchered by them, in the moſt barbarous manner imaginable. So that the two parties of the enemies of Chriſt, and the goſpel, ſeemed to vie with each other, in executing his righteous vengeance on their competitors. Thus the inſtruments of his indignation were empowered to take peace from the earth, and to ſet men on to kill one another, and a great ſword of war and ſlaughter was put into their hand. Some make this period to have laſted longer, than is above ſtated; but ſuch difficult queſtions cannot be diſcuſſed in this compendious view of theſe comprehenſive prophecies.

V. 5, 6.] The black horſe, which appeared on the opening of the third ſeal, was a proper emblem of calamity, and mourning: and the balances in the hand of the rider denoted, than in the times referred to, there would be a great ſcarcity of proviſions; ſo that men would have their food weighed out to them with great exactneſs, as is done when any company are reduced to ſhort allowance, (*Lev.* c. xxvi. v. 26. *Lam.* c. v. ver. 10. *Ezek.* c. iv. ver. 10:) and the voice, which proclaimed the price of corn, has the ſame meaning: though to an Engliſh reader it ſeems to denote the contrary. For the meaſure ſpecified, according to the beſt account that we can obtain of it, held no more, than the uſual daily allowance for bread to a labouring man; and the penny, or denarius, (about ſeven-pence half-penny,) was commonly his day's wages: if then a poor man could only earn enough to buy a ſufficient quantity of bread, without any other neceſſary of life; to what ſtraits muſt he be reduced, in endeavouring to ſuſtain a family! The barley indeed was ſtated to have been much cheaper: but then it is much leſs ſerviceable for bread; and the poor could not poſſibly have obtained more than a bare ſubſiſtence on the meaneſt food. Yet the orders given to the emblematic executioner of this ſentence to ſpare the oil and the wine, may imply, that there ſhould not be a total failure of the fruits of the earth. This ſeal is ſuppoſed by ſome expoſitors to have reached from A. D 138, to 193; though others ſtate it differently. However, there is no material diſagreement between them; and there are accounts in the hiſtory of thoſe years of long continued ſcarcities of proviſion, through the whole Roman empire; during which all the care of the emperors, &c, could only juſt prevent the horrors of entire famine. This was another method, by which Chriſt fought againſt the perſecutors of his church.

V. 7, 8.] The pale horſe, on which death rode as a terrific conqueror, followed by hell, (or the grave and ſtate of departed ſouls,) to devour the dead, which appeared at the opening of the fourth ſeal, were apt emblems of the ſeveral divine judgments, which are afterwards enumerated; and through which it is ſaid that power was given to death and hell, over the fourth part of the earth; or a large proportion of its inhabitants, eſpecially throughout the whole Roman empire. Some expoſitors make this ſeal to reach from A. D. 193, to 270: others include only 50 years of that time under it. However within the ſhorter period alone, there were more than twenty emperors, who for a time ruled with great power, and moſt of them with great tyranny and cruelty, as long as their dominion endured: there were alſo above thirty uſurpers in different parts of the empire, who ſupported their claims by war, and periſhed with multitudes of their adherents. Amidſt ſuch inteſtine convulſions, and fierce conteſts *within* the ſeveral provinces of the empire, death, on his pale horſe, muſt have killed immenſe numbers with the ſword. This univerſal war and confuſion, by taking men off from the cultivation of the earth, and deſtroying the fruits of it when produced, naturally made way for famine; which grievouſly prevailed in every place. The ſcanty, low, and unwholeſome diet, occaſioned by hunger, or famine, naturally introduced peſtilence, which is often called death by the eaſtern writers: and the moſt learned men have declared, that ſo extenſive, and deſtructive a peſtilence, as during this period waſted the empire for fifteen years together, is not met with in univerſal hiſtory. Theſe deſolations muſt give opportunity to wild beaſts to increaſe upon the reſidue of the inhabitants; and accordingly we read, that they were forced to wage war with wolves, lions, tigers, &c, and that many were devoured by them. (*Ezek.* c. v. ver. 17. c. xiv. v. 21. c. xxxiii. v. 27.)

V. 9—11.] On the opening of the fifth ſeal, the apoſtle obſerved under the altar, (for there is a continual reference to the appearance of the divine glory in the ſanctuary, and to the peculiarities of the Jewiſh worſhip,) the ſouls of thoſe perſons, who had been ſlain for ing, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon, until their fellow-ſervants alſo and their brethren, that ſhould be killed as they *were*, ſhould be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the ſixth ſeal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the ſun became black as ſackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the ſtars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree caſteth her untimely figs, when ſhe is ſhaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a ſcroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and iſland were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themſelves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And ſaid to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?

believing and obeying the word of God, and for the teſtimony, which they had born to the truth of the goſpel. Theſe appeared as ſacrifices, that had newly been offered; to ſhew their fellowſhip with Chriſt in his ſufferings, and the acceptableneſs of their faithfulneſs unto death, through his propitiatory oblation. They ſeem to have repreſented not only thoſe, who had ſuffered martyrdom before the apoſtle had this viſion; but the whole multitude that were ſlain previous to the prophetic period referred to, beginning about A. D. 270: and with one conſent and a loud voice, they enquired of the Lord, as holy and faithful, (c. iii. v. 7,) how long he would endure the provocations of the perſecutors, before he proceeded to judge their cauſe, and avenge their blood, on the inhabitants of the earth, by the ſubverſion of the perſecuting power of Pagan Rome? This was the language of their zeal for the honour of God, and their deſire of the prevalence of the goſpel. The white robes given to each of them denoted, that they were immediately admitted into a ſtate of felicity, as accepted and holy: but they were required to reſt and wait a ſhort ſpace for the avenging of their blood; as there were others of their brethren, &c, who would ſuffer death in the ſame cauſe, before the purpoſes of God reſpecting the deſtruction of their perſecutors were fulfilled. This ſeems to have been a prediction of the terrible perſecution of the church, under Dicoleſian, which reached much further, and was far more bloody, than any of thoſe that had preceeded it. The fury of it laſted for ten years, which was called by chriſtians the Era of martyrs: but this ſeal is ſuppoſed by ſome expoſitors to relate to the whole time, between A. D. 270, and 304. Yet here again there are *immaterial* differences of opinion among learned men: and as ſo many intereſting events are hinted at, ſo briefly; it can ſcarce be ſuppoſed that after many centuries, we ſhould be able to determine ſuch matters with exactneſs; eſpecially as the hiſtorians of thoſe times were remarkably inaccurate and confuſed in their writings.

V. 12—17.] The great earthquake, (or concuſſion, whether of the earth, or the heavens,) which followed the opening of the ſixth ſeal, was the emblem of extraordinary revolutions in the civil and religious ſtate of the world, attended with vaſt commotions of every kind. The blackneſs of the ſun, and the moon appearing as blood, denote the extinction with horror, and bloodſhed, of the moſt exalted and conſpicuous perſons, ſuch as the emperors, and their chief miniſters: the falling of the ſtars, &c, was emblematic of the degradation or death of illuſtrious perſons in great numbers, ſuch as magiſtrates, ſenators, &c. The departure of the heaven, like the rolling up of a parchment to be laid aſide, and the removal of the mountains and iſlands, repreſented the total ſubverſion of the Pagan Roman empire, by the victories of Conſtantine, and by his acceſſion to the Imperial throne; and the entire, and univerſal change, which took place at that time. "The great lights of the heathen world, the powers civil and eccleſiaſtical, were all eclipſed and obſcured, the heathen emperors and Ceſars were ſlain, the heathen prieſts and augurs were extirpated, the heathen officers and magiſtrates were removed; the heathen temples were demoliſhed, and their revenues were appropriated to better uſes." (Newton.) (*Iſaiah*, c. xiii. v. 10. 13, 14. c. xxxiv. v. 4. *Jer.* c. iv. ver. 23, 24. *Ezek.* c. xxxii. v. 7. *Joel.* c. ii. v. 10. 31. *Hag.* c. ii. v. 6. 21. *Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 29.) Such bold metaphorical deſcriptions of great revolutions abound in ſcripture prophecies: for theſe events are emblems, and anticipations of the end of the world, and the day of judgment: nor could any revolution be more properly repreſented by ſuch language, than the entire ſubverſion of the greateſt fabric of *Pagan* idolatry, tyranny, and perſecution, that ever exiſted on earth. This unexpected change would throw all that party into the utmoſt conſternation and deſpair: and the apoſtle in his viſion ſaw them all, even the ſlaves and free-men, as well as the kings, captains, and great or rich men, endeavouring to ſhelter themſelves in dens and caverns, and wiſhing to be cruſhed by rocks and mountains; if that might but cover them from the power of God, and from the wrath of the Lamb, whoſe goſpel they had oppoſed, and whoſe ſervants they had

CHAP. VII.

Contains 1ſt. The winds reſtrained, till the ſervants of God were ſealed, and the number of them from the ſeveral tribes of Iſrael, 1---8. 2d. An innummerable multitude of all nations ſeen before the throne, &c; with an account of the way, in which they came thither, and the bleſſedneſs they enjoyed, 9--17.

AND after theſe things I ſaw four angels ſtanding on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind ſhould not blow on the earth, nor on the ſea, nor on any tree.

2 And I ſaw another angel aſcending from the eaſt, having the ſeal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four

perſecuted. For the prevalence of chriſtianity, and the acceſſion of a chriſtian emperor, would lead them to conclude with deſperation, that Jeſus was indeed the Lord; that the time was come, when he would take full vengeance on his enemies; and that none could reſiſt, eſcape from, or pacify him. The ſeries of prophetic events obliges us to interpret this ſeal, of the victories and acceſſion of Conſtantine, &c: when the chriſtian church gained a complete deliverance from, and triumph over the perſecuting power of Rome Pagan: but the paſſage may profitably be accommodated to the day of judgment, &c. (*Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 30.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miniſters of the goſpel ought to call men's attention to the prophecies of ſcripture, and the providential works of God as accompliſhing them. The victories of our exalted Redeemer, by the preaching of the goſpel, in bringing the nations to the obedience of the faith, have been and will be progreſſive, till his cauſe be univerſally triumphant: we ſhould, therefore, rejoice to be in any way inſtrumental, in promoting theſe beneficent conqueſts; and our prayers, that "he may ſtill go forth "conquering and to conquer," ſhould continually be preſented before the throne of grace. But he fights in another manner againſt the deſpiſers of his ſalvation, and the oppoſers of his glory: He can raiſe up, and employ ſanguinary potentates, or inſurgents, to execute his vengeance on his enemies; and when he gives them power, and leaves them to their own heart's luſts, they ſoon excite multitudes to kill one another by the force of the ſword. He can alſo with-hold the influences of the heavens, and reſtrain the earth from yielding its increaſe; and ſo viſit the nations with diſtreſſing ſcarcity, or deſtructive famine: or death, when commiſſioned by Him, marches forth on his pale horſe, and peſtilences ſweep away millions; till at length the beaſts of the earth ſeem to acquire the dominion of the deſolated lands, and add to the miſeries of the few remaining inhabitants. How mad muſt it then be for the potſherds of the earth to contend againſt his iron rod! But let us be thankful for our exemption from theſe dire calamities, and for our peace, liberty, plenty, and manifold advantages; and let the rich be reminded, even in times of comparative ſcarcity, to give more liberally to the relief of their poor neighbours. In theſe temporal judgments, the Lord in wrath remembers mercy: His people alſo partake of many of the calamities, in addition to the perſecutions, which they often endure. Vaſt multitudes have already been ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they conſtantly held to the truth; and many more will probably be thus killed, before his purpoſes ſhall be accompliſhed. But the Lord himſelf is the Comforter of his afflicted ſervants: precious is their blood in his ſight; and their patience unto death in his cauſe, is a ſacrifice moſt honourable, and therefore moſt acceptable to him, through Jeſus Chriſt. Their enemies can only kill their bodies: then the Lord delivereth them out of *all* their troubles; white robes of joy and triumph are given to every one of them; they enter into immediate reſt; and after a ſhort ſeaſon, "the earth ſhall diſcloſe their blood," and the vengeance that is written will be executed on all their impenitent perſecutors, by the holy and faithful Lord of all. He hath gained many ſignal victories over the moſt powerful enemies of his church; and vaſt revolutions and convulſions in empires have been effected, in order to the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, in defiance of oppoſing princes and nations: yet hitherto the commanders in this conteſt have rallied their ſcattered troops, and returned to the deſperate charge. But He will ſhortly gain a more decided, univerſal, and durable victory, than any that he hath yet obtained; and with more terrible deſtruction to the armies of the aliens. And if on ſuch occaſions, the moſt powerful kings, and valiant captains and all other oppoſers of his power, are ſo diſmayed, as to hide themſelves in dens and caverns: what will the terror of the wicked be at the day of judgment, when the ſun, and moon ſhall literally be turned into darkneſs; when the heavens and earth ſhall become one common conflagration, till they paſs away, and no place is found for them; and when the great day of the wrath of the Lamb will indeed be come, and none of his enemies will be able to abide it? In vain will they then call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from him, that ſitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; from which none will be preſerved except that deſpiſed company, who have here believed in, loved and obeyed Him: "for heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but his "words ſhall not paſs away." "Be wiſe now, there"fore, O ye kings, be inſtructed ye rulers of the earth; "ſerve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. "Kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry, and ſo ye periſh, &c." (Notes, *Pſ.* ii.) And may all, who look for ſuch things be diligent, that they may be found of him, in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs. (2 *Pet.* c. iii. v. 7—14.)

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—3.] This chapter is a continuation of the ſixth ſeal. (c. viii. v. 1.) The four angels, ſtanding on the four corners of the earth, were the inſtruments of God's providence throughout the nations: and their reſtraining the winds, &c, that no deſtructive tempeſts might be excited by land or ſea, repreſented the tranquillity of the Roman empire, and of all nations ſubangels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the ſea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the ſea, nor the trees, till we have ſealed the ſervants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were ſealed: *and there were* ſealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael.

5 Of the tribe of Juda *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* ſealed twelve thouſand.

6 Of the tribe of Aſer *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Manaſſes *were* ſealed twelve thouſand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Iſſachar *were* ſealed twelve thouſand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Joſeph *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* ſealed twelve thouſand.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels ſtood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beaſts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worſhipped God,

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ſequent to Conſtantine's acceſſion to the imperial throne; which was the more delightful, as it ſucceeded ſuch long continued, and terrible convulſions and deſolations. At the ſame time another Angel came up from the eaſt &c: this ſeems to have been an emblem of Chriſt; for who elſe could have "the ſeal of the living God," even the Holy Spirit, by which his people are ſealed unto the day of redemption? By his goſpel he came from the eaſtern nations where his religion was firſt publiſhed, (as the riſing ſun proceeds from eaſt to weſt;) and he diffuſed that heavenly light to the weſtern, or European, provinces of the empire; and accompanied it by his new creating Spirit, and thus ſealed numbers as the ſervants of God. This great Angel of the covenant, as one having authority, called to the other angels, to whom a commiſſion had been given, after a time, to bring calamities on mankind, by land and ſea; that they ſhould not proceed to execute it, till he, and his miniſters, as the inſtruments of his grace, had ſealed the ſervants of God in the forehead; that they might be evidently diſtinguiſhed from others, and ſo be preſerved during the approaching calamities &c. This ſignified, that great numbers would be baptized, and profeſs themſelves diſciples of Chriſt, during the happy tranquillity, which followed Conſtantine's acceſſion; and that very many would be really converted, and manifeſt their renewal to the image of God, by the ſanctification of the Holy Spirit. The goſpel was very extenſively preached during this period; and immenſe multitudes embraced chriſtianity: and though ſecular motives tended greatly to fill the church with hypocrites, and this introduced a worldly ſpirit, which at length cauſed manifold evils: yet this prophecy fully proves, that real chriſtianity was *at firſt* greatly promoted by the advancement of a chriſtian emperor; and that it obtained an eſtabliſhment in many places, which before had little regarded it.

V. 4—8.] We cannot underſtand this account of the numbers ſealed of the twelve tribes, in a literal ſenſe; for if we ſhould explain it, of Jewiſh converts, we cannot ſuppoſe, that there were exactly the ſame number of each tribe. But Iſrael was the ancient church of God, which after a time was incorporated as a nation: and the chriſtian church, which ſucceeded to it, had after a long time ſupplanted both the Moſaic diſpenſation, and the idolatry of Pagan Rome, and acquired an eſtabliſhment upon the ruins of them. As, therefore, the tribes of Iſrael were numbered, after they were formed into a nation; ſo the numbers added to the church in conſequence of this eſtabliſhment were *figuratively* declared to be, 144,000, or 12 times, 12,000; a large definite number being put for an indefinite: and this being divided into twelve parts, one of them was aſſigned to each of the tribes of Iſrael; intimating that they ſucceeded to their privileges, and occupied their place; for I apprehend, that the gentile as well as the Jewiſh converts were intended. The tribes are here arranged differently, than elſewhere: Judah is placed firſt, in honour of Chriſt, who ſprang from him: Dan is wholly omitted, perhaps becauſe idolatry was firſt publicly eſtabliſhed by that tribe, (Notes, &c. *Judg.* c. xviii.) Levi is numbered with the reſt; and Joſeph is placed inſtead of Ephraim, whilſt Manaſſeh is likewiſe continued. The order of primogeniture is neglected; nor is any regard ſhewn to the children of the free-women above thoſe of the bond-women; as both are alike in Chriſt.

V. 9—12.] Many expoſitors have ſuppoſed, that the preceding verſes relate excluſively to the Jewiſh converts, at this time added to the church; and that theſe refer to the Gentiles, who then embraced the goſpel: and others explain them of the peace and proſperity of the church during thoſe days: but it is far more probable, that the happy eſtate of ſuch, as had adhered to Chriſt during the preceding calamities, and had been faithful unto death, was intended: for though they had been ſlain, or had

12 Saying, Amen: Bleſſing and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders anſwered, ſaying unto me, What are theſe which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I ſaid unto him, Sir, thou knoweſt. And he ſaid to me, Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple: and he that ſitteth on the throne ſhall dwell among them.

16 They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more; neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat,

17 For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

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otherwiſe been removed, before the favourable change in the affairs of the church took place; yet were they no loſers, but the contrary. A multitude ſo large, that no man could number them, being collected from the ſeveral nations of the earth, as known in thoſe days, appeared to ſtand before the throne, being accepted worſhippers and children of God, and "before the Lamb," being his redeemed people. This gives us enlarged conceptions of the ſucceſs of the goſpel during the three firſt centuries; and may encourage us to hope, that numbers lived by obedient faith, and died in Chriſt, unknown to hiſtory; notwithſtanding the lamentable account given us of the hereſies, contentions, and abuſes, which prevailed at that early period. Every one of this company was clothed with white robes, as perfectly juſtified, ſanctified, and made happy in heaven: they had alſo been engaged in war, and as victors they carried the well known emblem of palm-branches: and having obtained complete ſalvation, in reſpect of their ſouls; they aſcribed it in no degree to themſelves, or to their own wiſdom, ſtrength, labours, ſervices, ſufferings, or martyrdom; but gave the whole glory of it to their God and Father, who was ſeated on the throne; as being the effect of his ſpecial love and grace; "and unto the Lamb," as it was beſtowed on them through his atonement and mediation. Whilſt theſe redeemed ſinners ſtood next to the throne, and led the worſhip of heaven, in virtue of their union with and relation to the incarnate Son of God; the angels, (free from the leaſt emotion of envy, and rejoicing in their exaltation, and the glory of God in it,) ſtood without the circle made by the emblematic repreſentatives of the church and its miniſters, and in proſtrate adoration added their cordial, Amen, to the praiſes rendered to God, and the Lamb: and then ſhewed their delight in that ſolemn and rapturous worſhip, by aſcribing bleſſing and glory to their God and Portion, as the fountain of all excellency and felicity; celebrating his manifold wiſdom in theſe ſurpriſing events; joining their thankſgivings to thoſe of redeemed ſinners; rendering him the honour of all his wonderful works; and rejoicing that power and might belonged to him for ever, and ever. This, being connected with their conſent to the praiſes rendered to God and the Lamb, clearly intimated that they honoured the Son, even as they honoured the eternal Father.

V. 13—17.] The ſcene, thus preſented to the apoſtle's mind, related to events that did not occur till above 200 years afterwards, namely in the time of Conſtantine: as he was, therefore, receiving prophetic information, one of the emblematic repreſentatives of the univerſal church, enquired of him, whether he knew who they were, arrayed in white robes? Or whence they came? In order to lead his mind to a clearer perception of the ſubject. And the apoſtle having reſpectfully replied, that he was perſuaded the elder well knew, thus intimating his deſire of inſtruction; he was ſhewn, that "they were the perſons, "who had come out of great tribulation." This could not be meant of the Gentiles converted after the acceſſion of Conſtantine; for the church then enjoyed great peace: and though it might be accommodated to the ſtate of the church in thoſe days, after the preceding tribulations; yet it far more aptly repreſented the caſe of thoſe multitudes, who had been faithful unto death, amidſt the harraſſing perſecutions of the foregoing ages. They had not made their robes white, by their own ſervices or ſufferings, nor had they been originally white: but they had waſhed them from the guilt and pollution that had contaminated them, in the blood of the Lamb; by faith in his atoning ſacrifice, and prevailing interceſſion, and by applying in his name for the mercy and grace, which he died to purchaſe for ſinners. Therefore they had found acceptance with God, and admiſſion into heaven, and ſtood before the throne; where with unceaſing yea augmented pleaſure, they ſerved and worſhipped God day and night; whilſt he graciouſly dwelt among them as their Father and Friend, and by his favour and manifeſted glory filled them with ineffable and rapturous joy. So ſhall all their thirſtings after God and holineſs were now fully ſatisfied; nor were they troubled with one deſire of any other, or greater happineſs, than they ſecurely enjoyed: neither were they expoſed to any affliction, temptation, fear, or perſecution, (like the heat of the noon-day ſun;) as all theſe were finally paſſed away. For the Lamb, who redeemed them to God with his blood; and who, in conſequence of his victory, had ſat down with his Father upon his throne, employed all his power and authority in ſatisfying and anticipating all their wants, and conducting them to the inexhauſtible fountain head of unalloyed felicity; whilſt the eternal Father, as delighting over them to do them good, wiped away all tears from their eyes and turned their former ſorrows into the fulneſs of eternal joy. Nothing on

CHAP. VIII.

Contains 1ſt. The opening of the ſeventh ſeal; and, after a ſhort ſilence, ſeven angels appearing with ſeven trumpets prepared to announce approaching judgments; with reference to Chriſt's interceſſion, and the prayers of his ſaints, 1---6. *2d. The ſounding of four of the trumpets, with the emblematic predictions following each of them; and an intimation of ſtill more awful calamities, under the other three,* 7---13.

AND when he had opened the ſeventh ſeal, there was ſilence in heaven about the ſpace of half an hour.

2 And I ſaw the ſeven angels which ſtood before God; and to them were given ſeven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and ſtood at the altar, having a golden cenſer; and there was given unto him much incenſe, that he ſhould offer *it* with the prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the ſmoke of the incenſe, *which came* with the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the cenſer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and caſt *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the ſeven angels which had the ſeven trumpets prepared themſelves to ſound.

7 The firſt angel ſounded, and there fol-

earth can anſwer to ſuch language as this; and the proſperity of the church at that time ſoon terminated: But ſuch a view of the immediate felicity of thoſe, who followed Chriſt faithfully, in the predicted ſeaſon of perſecution, was very proper to reconcile the minds of chriſtians to their trials, and to animate them to face death in its moſt terrifying forms. Accordingly the church during theſe times ſeems to have ſtudied this book more, and even to have underſtood *this firſt part of it* far better, than the chriſtians in many ſucceeding generations did.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The intervals of peace on earth are cauſed by a poſitive divine interpoſition, to reſtrain men's furious paſſions, and the agency of ſatan; which at all other times naturally tend to confuſion, diſcord, miſchief and miſery. When the Lord Jeſus ſees good to grant his church ſuch ſeaſons of reſt, and to raiſe up men endued with authority, to countenance, and concur in promoting the goſpel; he commonly means to ſeal many by his converting grace, unto the day of redemption; though human depravity and the artifices of ſatan often pervert ſuch proſperous days into an occaſion of negligence, and hypocritical profeſſion; and this makes way for his miniſtering angels to be commiſſioned to bring calamities upon the earth. However, nothing can finally hurt thoſe, who are ſealed by the Spirit: nor let it be deemed futile to obſerve, that this ſeal muſt be on the forehead, viſible both to friends and foes, but not ſo to the believer himſelf, except as he looks ſtedfaſtly in the glaſs of God's word. (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. ix.) It is encouraging to thoſe, who are decidedly on the Lord's part in this evil world, to hear of the increaſe of the true Iſrael of God, and they will pray him to add to their numbers an hundred fold, how many ſoever they be: but though they be not ſpared to witneſs this bleſſed change, they muſt exult to recollect what multitudes are gone before them to heaven; and what acceſſions are daily making to them from all the nations of the earth. The few believers that are ſcattered abroad in this world, ſeem a ſolitary, unfaſhionable company: yet have they innumerable friends, and coadjutors, with whom they will ſhortly, and for ever be united. The whole multitude, who now ſtand before the throne of God, (with all that ever ſhall be ſaved,) were once dead in ſin, and expoſed to wrath; but they were taught their guilt and danger, and led to truſt in the Lamb of God: thus they began to fight the good fight of faith, againſt ſatan, the world, and ſin, amidſt many fears, ſorrows, and temptations: at length they obtained the garments of joy, and the palm of victory; and now they aſcribe their ſalvation to God, and to the Lamb; whilſt adoring angels delight to ſwell the chorus of their joyful thankſgivings. Could we aſcend into heaven, and enquire who they were that were arrayed in white robes? and whence they came? Amidſt ten thouſand differences in other matters, we ſhall learn that every one of them had come out of ſorrow, and of ſin; that they had all been in conflict and tribulation; and that they had all waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Not one diſcordant voice will be heard in heaven for ever; nor could they join the praiſes of that bleſſed world, or even ſay, Amen, to them, who expect ſalvation in any other way. As they all owe their felicity wholly to the ſovereign mercy of the Father, through the atonement of the Son, and by the ſealing and new creation of the Holy Spirit: ſo the work and worſhip of God their Saviour is their element, and his preſence and favour complete their felicity; nor can they conceive of, or wiſh for any other joy. Let us then enquire whether we have, in our judgment, experience and affections, "the meetneſs of this inheritance of the ſaints in light"? All who are admitted to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb, previouſly apply for, and obtain the wedding garment: none will ever join this company before the throne, who have not on earth learned to liſp their ſong, and to anticipate their felicity. If this be our privilege; let us bleſs God for his mercy, and patiently endure our ſeaſon and meaſure of tribulation; expecting ſhortly "to hunger no more, neither thirſt any more;" to have no more ſin, temptation or ſorrow; to be with our beloved Saviour, enjoying the fulneſs of his love, drinking ineffable delights from the living fountains of waters, to which he will lead us, and lowed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were caſt upon the earth: and the third part of trees were burnt up, and all green graſs was burnt up.

8 And the ſecond angel ſounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was caſt into the ſea; and the third part of the ſea became blood:

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the ſea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ſhips were deſtroyed.

10 And the third angel ſounded, and there

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to have all tears for ever wiped from our eyes. I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord!

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—6.] The laſt of the ſeven ſeals contains under it far more than all the others; as it introduces and includes that period, which fell under the ſeven trumpets. When it was opened, there was ſilence in heaven for about half an hour; which either intimated, that the peace of the church and the empire would be of a very ſhort continuance, or it was expreſſive of the ſolemn expectation which was excited on this occaſion. During this interval, the apoſtle ſaw "the ſeven angels who ſtood before God," having been appointed to this ſervice, and of whom we ſhall read more afterwards; and to each of them was given a trumpet, that they might in ſucceſſion ſound an alarm to the nations. At the ſame time another Angel appeared as a Prieſt ſtanding before the altar of incenſe, &c. The appearance of a Lamb was emblematic of Chriſt "our Paſſover as ſacrificed for us;" and this Angel repreſented Him in his prieſtly character, offering up the prayers of all his ſaints before God, accompanied by his all prevailing interceſſion. This being done, the Angel filled the cenſer with fire from the altar, and caſt it into the earth; which occaſioned voices of terror, &c: this denoted, that the approaching calamities would be the effect of God's diſpleaſure with men, for their neglect or abuſe of, and oppoſition to, the goſpel of his Son, and their injurious and cruel treatment of his people; and ſo in fact be inflicted, as an anſwer to their prayers for deliverance, through the interceſſion of Chriſt. After this, the ſeven angels prepared to ſound their trumpets.

V. 7.] *The*, &c.] The emblematic predictions following the four firſt trumpets, principally related to the gradual and complete ſubverſion of the Roman empire, in the weſtern part of the world; though this was connected with multiplied calamities in the eaſtern provinces, which are alſo implied. Conſtantine the Great built Conſtantinople, and made it his reſidence, and the metropolis of the empire; and by a concurrence of circumſtances, ſome time after his death, that vaſt fabric was divided into two parts, governed by two diſtinct ſucceſſions of emperors. But though the weſtern and eaſtern empires were thus ſeparated; yet they were not wholly unconnected: ſo that the ruin of the weſtern empire was attended by great convulſions in the eaſtern; and the ſubſequent ſubverſion of the latter occaſioned manifold evils in the countries, which had conſtituted the former. As therefore the events, that related to the two diviſions of the empire, were ſo involved with one another, it was proper that the predictions of them ſhould be ſo likewiſe: yet the reſidue of the chapter primarily predicts the ſubverſion of the weſtern, and the next, that of the eaſtern empire. The calm, which followed Conſtantine's acceſſion to the throne did not laſt long; even the latter part of his life was not wholly undiſturbed; and after his death, many bloody wars were waged within the empire by his ſons, and other competitors, for the imperial authority: whilſt the church was diſturbed by various deſcriptions of heretics; and unnatural perſecutions were raiſed by men, who called themſelves chriſtians. Theſe and other evils weakened both the church, and the ſtate; and after a time, the Huns and Goths from the northern regions of Europe brake in upon the diſtracted empire, and made terrible ravages in many of its provinces. Theſe events ſeem to have been intended by the ſtorm "of hail and fire mingled with blood," by which a third part of the productions of the earth were deſtroyed; that is, multitudes were killed both high and low, grown perſons, and infants, through the whole Roman empire, which might be deemed a third part of the earth, as diſcovered at that time. (*Exod.* c. ix. v. 22—35.) This period may be ſuppoſed to reach from A. D. 338, to 412: and ſome explain it principally of the incurſions of the Goths under Alaric, who entered the empire A. D. 395; and after ſpreading deſolation by fire and ſword through the provinces, A. D. 410, he took and plundered Rome, with circumſtances of barbarity very correſpondent to theſe emblems, as cotemporary writers have teſtified: eſpecially in that he ſlew without diſtinction, princes, nobles, prieſts, and people, and ſhewed no mercy even to the tender infants; thus deſtroying "the trees, and the green graſs together."

V. 8, 9.] A great burning mountain is an emblem of a mighty deſtructive warrior, and hath been ſo uſed by the moſt celebrated poets: the Roman empire, with its multitude of people and nations, &c, might be aptly compared to the ſea, (c. xvii. v. 15.) This great burning mountain, therefore, being caſt into the ſea, with the effects produced thereby, repreſented moſt emphatically the irruption of the barbarous nations under ferocious leaders into the Roman empire, and their ſhedding the blood of immenſe multitudes, and deſtroying their cities, or deſolating the country with fire and ſword. After Alaric with his Goths had finiſhed his depredations; Attila at the head of a vaſt army of Huns ravaged the empire during the ſpace of fourteen years, maſſacring, plundering and deſtroying all before him, in the moſt barbarous manner, that can be conceived. He even called himſelf "the ſcourge of God, and the terror of mankind;" and perhaps no man ever better merited that title. He was indeed a burning mountain caſt into the ſea, and turning it into blood, &c; for he drenched the countries with the blood of the inhabitants, and deſtroyed every thing that came in his way; nor did any part of the empire wholly eſcape his fury. Theſe events fell a great ſtar from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.

11 And the name of the ſtar is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, becauſe they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel ſounded, and the third part of the ſun was ſmitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the ſtars; ſo as the third part of them was darkened, and the day ſhone not for a third part of it, and the night likewiſe.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midſt of heaven, ſaying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reaſon of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to ſound!

ſeem to have been principally intended; but we may include under this trumpet the various calamities, which befel the empire from A. D. 412, to 450.

V. 10, 11.] The great ſtar falling from heaven, &c, is explained by ſome expoſitors of the Arian, and Pelagian hereſies, and the conteſts and perſecutions connected with them: and ſuch events might very aptly be repreſented by the falling of a ſtar, and its embittering and poiſoning the waters, to the deſtruction of thoſe, that drank of them: and the church was doubtleſs miſerably corrupted, and deformed by hereſy during that period. Yet, the ſeries of the prophecy rather favours the interpretation of thoſe, who explain it of the continuation of thoſe calamities, which ſubverted the empire. An eminent prince ſuddenly appearing in the heart of the empire, and conſpicuous even in the miſchiefs he occaſioned, might be aptly repreſented by a ſtar, or luminous meteor, ſhooting from heaven, and burning as a lamp. The name Wormwood, and the effect of its falling upon the waters, denoted the further deſolations of the empire, and the ruin of the remaining comforts, which were left to the reliques of the miſerable inhabitants; who were ſo harraſſed and afflicted, that they could not ſeek for the neceſſary ſupport of life, without expoſing themſelves to the fury of the invaders. Thus the embittering and poiſoning of the rivers and fountains completed the former judgment of turning the ſea into blood. Accordingly very ſoon after Attila's retreat, Genſeric unexpectedly invaded the empire with 300,000 Vandals and Moors; beſieged and took Rome, and abandoned that city to the cruelty and avarice of his troops; and by this ſucceſs he ſo weakened the empire, that it was ſoon after ſubverted: and as this aſſault was made at the very ſource of its power and proſperity, whence the whole derived its ſupplies; it might on this account alſo be repreſented as poiſoning the rivers and fountains of waters. Moreover he was alſo a bigotted Arian, and a cruel perſecutor of the orthodox chriſtians; and in this ſenſe too he poiſoned the fountains, &c. Theſe events occurred between A. D. 450, and 456.

V. 12. *And*, &c.] Under the fourth trumpet the ſun, moon, and ſtars, or the great luminaries of the Roman empire, were eclipſed and darkened: for the third part, though ſpoken of the luminaries, or the time of their ſhining, ſeems ſtill to refer to the extent of the empire, as containing one third of the then known world. Whilſt the ſplendour of the eaſtern empire was greatly tarniſhed, and it ſhone but with a feeble and almoſt expiring light; that of the weſtern was gradually extinguiſhed. "Genſeric left it in a weak, and deſperate condition: it ſtruggled hard, and as it were gaſped for breath, during eight ſhort and turbulent reigns, for the ſpace of twenty years, till at length it expired, A. D. 476, under Momyllus, who was in deriſion called Auguſtulus, or the diminutive Auguſtus." (Newton.) Still however, though the Roman ſun was extinguiſhed, its ſubordinate luminaries faintly ſhone, whilſt the ſenate, conſuls, &c, continued. But after ſome other changes, A. D. 566, the whole form of the ancient government was ſubverted, and Rome itſelf was reduced, from being the empreſs of the world, to be a poor dukedom, tributary to the Exarch of Ravenna. Theſe compendious prophecies are explained ſomewhat differently, by interpreters; yet moſt of them agree in the grand outlines; and it cannot conſiſt with the plan of this work to enter further into particulars; for that interpretation only can be adduced, which the writer was led, all things conſidered, to embrace as preferable to the reſt.

V. 13. *And*, &c.] This angel flying, &c, to denounce a threefold woe, on the inhabitants of the earth, under the three remaining trumpets, was an emblem intended to excite the greater attention, and to intimate, that evils ſtill greater, more extenſive, and durable would come on mankind in the ſubſequent ages, the events of which were about to be predicted.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The intervals of peace, that the church hath hitherto enjoyed, have commonly been of ſhort continuance. Amidſt the confuſion occaſioned by the vices of mankind, we ſhould rejoice, that the Lord reigneth; and that the prayers of all true believers, being preſented through the meritorious interceſſion of our great High Prieſt, will ſurely be accepted and anſwered. All created angels are miniſtering ſpirits, for the benefit of the heirs of ſalvation; even when they are employed to viſit nations with terrible calamities: nay the fire from the altar, being caſt on the earth, (the vengeance inflicted for men's contempt of the ſacrifice and ſalvation of Chriſt, and the injuries done to his praying people,) cauſes the moſt terrible deſolation, that are made on earth. Whilſt the preſent wrath of God, and of the Lamb, through thoſe executioners of vengeance, who mean not ſo, fills countries with miſery, deſtroys the wretched inhabitants, and embitters and poiſons all the comforts of life; till the greateſt proſperity be totally darkened and extinguiſhed: the meſſengers of the Lord,

CHAP. IX.

Contains 1ſt. The ſounding of the fifth trumpet, and the emblematic prediction of the ſucceſs of the Saracens, and the propagation of the impoſture of Mahomet, 1--12. *2d. The ſounding of the ſixth trumpet; with predictions of the ſucceſſes of the Turks, and the impenitence of thoſe, who eſcaped their ravages,* 13---21.

AND the fifth angel ſounded, and I ſaw a ſtar fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomleſs pit.

2 And he opened the bottomleſs pit; and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit, as the ſmoke of a great furnace; and the ſun and the air

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through all the countries under heaven, are ordered to proclaim aloud, that ſtill more dreadful woes are in reſerve for the impenitent workers of iniquity; for what are all temporal evils, to the deſtruction of body and ſoul in hell? Let ſinners then take warning to flee from the *wrath to come:* let believers learn to value, and be thankful for their privileges; and let them patiently continue in well doing, and ſo look for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—12.] There can ſcarce remain a reaſonable doubt in the mind of any attentive enquirer, who has competent information on the ſubject; but that theſe verſes predict the ſucceſſes of the eaſtern Antichriſt, Mahomet, and his ſucceſſors, as ruling over the Arabians or Saracens. Early in the ſeventh century, (about A. D. 606, or 608;) Mahomet began to pretend to a very extraordinary intercourſe with God, declaring that he had been in heaven, and there had learned a religion, which he was to propagate in the world, as an improvement upon chriſtianity as at firſt delivered, and a reformation of it from ſubſequent corruptions. Theſe pretences were aptly deſcribed by "a ſtar falling from the heaven to the earth;" eſpecially as he ſhone with a very conſpicuous, though peſtiferous light. A key given to him to "open the bottomleſs pit," or the abyſs of hell, was a very ſuitable emblem of the power and influence, which God was pleaſed to permit him to acquire, for the propagation of his ſatanical deluſions; as if hell itſelf had been opened by him, and its deſtructive exhalations allowed to obſcure the ſun, and infect the air. For this moſt artful, politic and proſperous impoſtor gradually acquired ſuch aſcendency among the Arabians, or Saracens, to whom he belonged; that they not only received his religious ſyſtem, but enliſted under his banner, as their captain, and ruler; and he led them forth to conqueſt, that they might by this method compel the nations to receive his doctrine. In this enterprize he, and his ſucceſſors were ſo proſperous; that the light of chriſtianity was obſcured; and many nations, where once it had ſhone in the cleareſt manner, were almoſt totally darkened and infected with this ſmoke from the abyſs. For out of this ſmoke came locuſts, &c: that is, vaſt armies of Saracens were raiſed, by means of Mahomet's impoſture, to ſpread deſolations through the nations. They reſembled locuſts in their numbers; and they aroſe from the ſame regions, whence the largeſt ſwarms of theſe deſtructive inſects have in all ages ariſen. Locuſts are ſaid to be bred in pits, and caverns; and theſe proceeded from the ſmoke, that came out of the bottomleſs pit. Yet, at the ſame time, they alſo reſembled ſcorpions; whoſe ſting gives extreme pain, and often proves mortal: and whilſt locuſts deſtroy the fruits of the earth, and do not hurt the bodies of men; theſe myſtical locuſts were commanded not to hurt the graſs, &c, but only thoſe men, who had not the ſeal of God upon their foreheads: and it is remarkable, that the Saracen armies were laid under a ſimilar injunction. The men, that were not ſealed, were corrupt, and hypocritical profeſſors of chriſtianity: and it is well known, that the Saracens extended their conqueſts principally in thoſe countries, where the worſhip of angels and other corruptions prevailed; whilſt the places, where that religion was preſerved more pure, were ſheltered from their fury: and no doubt God permitted this ſcourge to come on the nations, where his goſpel was abuſed, for their correction, or puniſhment. They were alſo reſtrained from killing thoſe, whom they were commiſſioned to torment: yet, no doubt, immenſe multitudes were ſlain by ſuch cruel victors; this, therefore, naturally ſignifies that they were empowered *durably* to ravage, harraſs, and diſturb the nations, and the church; but not utterly to deſtroy them. Accordingly they miſerably deſolated, and oppreſſed both the Greek, and Latin churches; but they could not totally extirpate them: they repeatedly beſieged Conſtantinople, but were always repulſed; they even plundered Rome, but they could not make themſelves maſters of it; they took from the eaſtern empire many of its richeſt provinces; but they could not utterly ſubvert it. The time alſo was predicted, during which they ſhould diſtreſs, and torment mankind, (v. 10.) This was to be five months: according to the term of life, which naturaliſts aſſign to locuſts. Theſe months of thirty days, each day denoting a year, (according to a method of computations, much uſed in this book,) amount to 150 years: and Mahomet firſt opened the abyſs, and began publicly to propagate his impoſture, A. D. 612; and A.D. 762, (juſt 150 years afterwards,) the city of Bagdad was builded, the Saracens ceaſed from their ravages and became a ſettled people; they made no more rapid conqueſts, and obtained no further acceſſion to their power, which thenceforth began to decline. They then ceaſed to be locuſts; though this woe trumpet continued much longer, as we ſhall preſently ſee. Theſe invaders ſpeedily conquered Paleſtine, Syria, Armenia, almoſt all Aſia Minor, Perſia, India, Egypt, Numidia, Barbary, Spain, Portugal, part of Italy, and the principal iſlands in the Mediterranean ſea: moreover they cauſed ſuch extreme calamities, and miſeries to the inhabitants of the countries which they ravaged, by giving the utmoſt licence to the cruelty, rapacity, and luſt of the ſoldiers; that death muſt have appeared to numbers more deſirable than ſuch a life; and they would have been more merciful, if they had diſpatched the wretched victims of their un-were darkened by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the ſcorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they ſhould not hurt the graſs of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only thoſe men which have not the ſeal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they ſhould not kill them, but that they ſhould be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a ſcorpion, when he ſtriketh a man.

6 And in thoſe days ſhall men ſeek death, and ſhall not find it; and ſhall deſire to die, and death ſhall flee from them.

7 And the ſhapes of the locuſts *were* like unto horſes prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

9 And they had breaſt-plates, as it were breaſt-plates of iron; and the ſound of their wings *was* as the ſound of chariots of many horſes running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto ſcorpions, and there were ſtings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomleſs pit, whoſe name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

12 One woe is paſt; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13 And the ſixth angel ſounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.

14 Saying to the ſixth angel which had the trumpet, Looſe the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were looſed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to ſlay the third part of men.

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bridled paſſions, than thus to conſtrain them to drag on an unwilling life; and ſo to prolong thoſe miſeries, which they ardently wiſhed for death to terminate. The ſhape of theſe figurative locuſts was next deſcribed: they reſembled horſes, (*Joel*, c ii. v. 4,) as locuſts do, eſpecially in their heads; the Arabians were remarkable for their ſkill in horſemanſhip, and their chief force lay in cavalry. The "crowns on their heads like gold," may denote the turbans, which they have always worn; or it may refer to the many kingdoms, which they ſubjected to their dominion. They had beards on their faces, like men; but they wore their hair like women, plaited, or flowing down their backs, as the Arabians are known to have done. Their teeth like lions, (*Joel*. c. i. v. 6,) repreſented their ſtrength and fury to deſtroy: whilſt their breaſt-plates of iron ſhewed their care to protect themſelves by defenſive armour, &c; and the ſound of their wings, prefigured the fury with which they aſſaulted their enemies, and the rapidity of their conqueſts. But though they devoured and cauſed deſolations, like locuſts; yet the principal miſchief they did, was effected by their tails, in which they had ſtings like thoſe of ſcorpions: for wherever they extended their conqueſts, they left behind them the poiſon of their abominable religion; ſo that the conſequences of their victories were more miſchievous, than the ſlaughter made by them. The king over them, who was the angel of, or meſſenger from, the abyſs, ſignified their caliphs in ſucceſſion, who were the chief prieſts of their religion, the commanders of their armies, and their emperors. The name of this king, even "*the deſtroyer*," (for ſo the word means in both languages,) was peculiarly ſuitable to perſons, who thus murdered both the bodies and ſouls of men, by the ſame malignant expeditions; as they ſeemed to be ſatan, (the firſt murderer's,) vicegerents, and viſible repreſentatives upon earth. Every circumſtance of this emblematical prediction ſo exactly accords to the Saracens; and ſo little ſuits the church or hierarchy of Rome, or any of their religious orders, (who gained their advantage by prieſt-craft, not by arms;) that there ſeems no propriety in attempting to explain it of them; eſpecially as they are deſcribed with ſufficient preciſion in what follows afterwards. Prophecies have a determinate meaning; and by giving looſe to a lively imagination to find diſtant reſemblances, we are more like to confuſe, than to ſatisfy the enquirer. After the apoſtle had ſeen theſe things he was informed, that one woe was paſt, and two others were coming.

V. 13—21.] The voice of the angel from the horns of the altar, on which incenſe uſed to be burned, ſtrongly indicated, that the judgments about to be predicted, were appointed to puniſh men for corrupting the goſpel, and ſo turning it into the ſavour of death and condemnation. After the ſixth angel had ſounded his trumpet, he was ordered to looſe the four angels, &c; which was done accordingly. This is explained by ſome of the moſt approved interpreters, to be a prediction of the conqueſts of the Turks or Othmans: nor is there any objection lies againſt this, except the diſtance of time, which intervened, between the events before predicted, and the ravages of the Turks; which is readily anſwered, by obſerving

16 And the number of the army of the horſemen *were* two hundred thouſand thouſand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I ſaw the horſes in the viſion, and them that ſat on them, having breaſt-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimſtone: and the heads of the horſes *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths iſſued fire and ſmoke and brimſtone.

18 By theſe three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the ſmoke, and by the brimſtone, which iſſued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto ſerpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the reſt of the men which were not killed by theſe plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they ſhould not worſhip devils, and idols of gold, and ſilver, and braſs, and ſtone, and of wood: which neither can ſee, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their ſorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

that the three woe trumpets muſt take in all the ſpace, between the ſubverſion of the weſtern empire, and the deſtruction of the beaſt, which is evidently to be hereafter fulfilled. (c. xi. v. 14, 15.) Moreover the Saracens poſſeſſed, though they did not extend, their dominions, till the Turks ſupplanted them; nor can we find any other events ſatisfactorily correſpondent to the diſcoveries made after this trumpet; which their conqueſts, &c, were; nor any other, that will not leave a far greater diſtance between the ſecond and third woe trumpets, than this interpretation leaves between the firſt and ſecond. The Turks pouring into Perſia, and the regions bordering on the Euphrates, in the eleventh century, eſtabliſhed four ſultanies or kingdoms in thoſe parts: but they were prevented from making further conqueſts, eſpecially by the Croiſades, which were made in that, and the two following centuries, by the weſtern chriſtians, who wanted to wreſt Paleſtine out of the hands of the infidels. But when theſe ruinous projects were finally abandoned, the four angels that were bound in the Euphrates, who were emblems of theſe four ſultanies, were looſed, and the Turks uniting, began their ravages and victories; and they made great havock among the inhabitants of that part of the world, which had conſtituted the Roman empire, and which we have often read of, as the third part of men. The weſtern empire had been broken to pieces under the four firſt trumpets; the eaſtern had been nearly ruined under the fifth; and under the ſixth it was finally ſubverted. The Turks conquered all the countries, that had belonged to it: in 1453 they took Conſtantinople, and thus brought to a final end, the whole Imperial Power, which originally belonged to Rome. Theſe powers were prepared for a certain fixed time, which being computed, by a day for each year, according to the prophetic manner; and twelve months of thirty days each being allowed to the year here mentioned; that is 360 days, or years; thirty more being added for the month, and one for the day, &c; the whole amounts to 391 years, and fifteen days. Now the firſt conqueſt of the Turks over the chriſtians took place, A. D. 1281: and the laſt ſucceſs, by which they extended their dominions, was A. D. 1672; being exactly 391 years from the one to the other. So that one of their hiſtorians here divides his narrative, calling the former part "the growth of the Othman empire," the latter, "the decay of the Othman empire. Since that period, they have had little ſucceſs in any of their wars; and their power is ſo much weakened and cramped at preſent by the rival power of Ruſſia, that it is not at all probable, they will ever recover their aſcendancy or renew their conqueſts. Had we records of theſe events ſufficiently exact, we ſhould no doubt find, that the half hour, or fifteen days, was fixed with the ſame punctuality by the Spirit of prophecy. But though the term of their "ſlaying the third part of men," or that, during which they would extend their ravages and conqueſts, was predicted; yet that of the duration of their empire was not; but it will end after the ſounding of the third woe trumpet. (c. xi. v. 14.) Moreover the number of their army of horſemen was declared to be 200,000,000; that is an immenſe multitude; a large definite number being put for an indefinite. Accordingly the Turks brought vaſt armies into the field, often to the amount of four, five, ſix, or ſeven hundred thouſand men, chiefly cavalry: and when the whole multitude is conſidered, who were employed in this manner during the conqueſts of 391 years; we ſhall ſee the propriety of the apoſtle's ſtrong prophetic language. He alſo ſaw both the horſes and their riders, in his viſion, as having breaſt-plates of fire, hyacinth, and brimſtone; which may be conſidered as repreſenting the ſcarlet, blue, and yellow colours, for which they have always been remarkable; the horſes heads like thoſe of lions denoted their ſtrength, courage, and fierceneſs: and "the fire, ſmoke and brimſtone, which iſſued out of their mouths, and killed the third part of men," ſeems an evident, and aſtoniſhing prediction of the invention of gun-powder, and of artillery, which the Turks uſed with great ſucceſs in their wars, eſpecially in the ſiege of Conſtantinople; when very large guns were employed, one of which carried a ſtone of three hundred pounds weight: by theſe the walls of that city were at length battered down, which made way for the final deſtruction of that empire. Theſe tremendous conquerors, before whom deſolation marched, and from whoſe mouths fire and ſmoke, &c, iſſued, not only ſlew men in battle, when they faced them; but they had tails like ſerpents, with heads upon them, with which they hurt men, as by an envenomed bite: that is, the Turks left behind them, wherever they went, the ſame poiſonous, and ruinous religion, which the Saracens had done before them; and this proved more durably miſ-

CHAP. X.

Contains 1ſt. The apoſtle in viſion beholding a mighty angel, with an open little book in his hand; and hearing the voice of ſeven thunders, which he was ordered to ſeal up, 1---4. 2d. The angel ſwearing by the eternal Creator, that at a diſtant time, after the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, 5---7. 3d. The apoſtle receiving, and eating the little book, &c, 8---11.

AND I ſaw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the ſun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he ſet his right foot upon the ſea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a

chievous, than their moſt bloody conqueſts: ſo that the remains of the Greek church, and of chriſtianity, in thoſe countries, was almoſt wholly extirpated; and Mahometiſm became univerſally prevalent, in that part of the world, in which the goſpel was for a long time moſt ſignally ſucceſsful. Yet the reſt of men, who were not deſtroyed, or compelled to become Mahometans, by theſe plagues, did not repent of their evil works: the Latin, or Roman church, &c, who eſcaped this deſtruction, ſtill perſiſted in their idolatrous worſhip of demons, or angels and departed ſaints, by which devils are virtually worſhipped; and in their ſtupid adoration of ſenſeleſs images; for which they have no better plea to uſe, than the Pagans had; in their murders, their maſſacres, bloody wars with heretics, inquiſitions, and other perſecutions; in their ſorceries, or pretended revelations, and *leger demain* miracles, &c; and in "their fornication;" forbidding marriage, yet conniving at concubinage in the clergy; binding numbers by vows to a ſingle life, and yet licenſing brothels by public authority of the Pope, &c, in Rome itſelf, &c: and in "their thefts," or thoſe exactions and impoſitions, by which they fraudulently, oppreſſively and iniquitouſly, drew immenſe treaſures from the nations. So that the eaſtern church, in which many corruptions firſt prevailed, was puniſhed by the firſt woe of the Saracens; and as this did not bring them to repentance; the ſecond woe of the Turks completed its ruin. But the weſtern church, not repenting of her abominations, will at length be over-whelmed with the third woe. For the reformation from popery, and all that hath hitherto taken place in theſe weſtern regions, hath but amounted to the two witneſſes, (c. xi. v. 3,) proteſting againſt the prevailing abominations; and the prevalence of infidelity, ſcepticiſm and hereſy, in proportion to the gradual decline of popery, and ſuperſtition, gives no juſt room to ſuppoſe, that matters are very much mended in the weſtern church. In this ſuperficial, profane, licentious, and ſuperficial age, ſatan hath evidently changed his ground; but the ſcriptural chriſtian will readily perceive that he hath hitherto in great meaſure maintained it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord frequently ſees good to puniſh the abuſe of ſpiritual advantages, by ſpiritual judgments; leaving "the "Sun, and the air to be darkened with the ſmoke of the "infernal pit," and the word of the goſpel to be withdrawn, or corrupted by the artifices of ſatan; becauſe men would not walk in the light, whilſt they enjoyed it: and a fallen ſtar, ſome apoſtate endued with abilities, and poſſeſſed of influence, often proves ſatan's inſtrument in thus blinding and deceiving mankind. However, this judgment would *for the preſent* be little regarded, if other viſitations were not connected with it; but, ſooner or later, devouring locuſts and tormenting ſcorpions will come out of this baleful ſmoke; and the prevalence of falſe religion againſt the truth of Chriſt, will make way for ſuch calamities on guilty nations, as may render life itſelf a burden, and death the apparent and deſired relief. And in the future world, all the wicked will be tormented, but not killed; they will deſire in vain to ſink into non exiſtence; in this ſenſe death ſhall flee from them, and they ſhall never overtake it. As we ought to fear Him, who is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell; more than them that can only kill the body: ſo thoſe deſtroyers are moſt to be dreaded, who act as angels of the bottomleſs pit, and vicegerents of ſatan, by diffuſing pernicious hereſies and impoſtures, contrary to the pure doctrine of Chriſt: for that grand deceiver, when transformed into an angel of light, and his miniſters when they pretend to be teachers of righteouſneſs, do far more miſchief to mankind, than the moſt barbarous and ſucceſsful warriors could ever accompliſh: but he deſerves moſt the title of "the Deſtroy-"er," who murders at once both the ſouls and bodies of men. We may, however, rejoice, that the Lord hath an hook in the noſe, and a bridle in the mouth of every boaſting Sennacherib; by whatever method he threatens to ſubvert his cauſe. He gives ſuch deceivers, or deſtroyers power, till his own purpoſes of judgment or correction are accompliſhed; and then he cuts them off, or lays them by, at his pleaſure. Thus one woe comes after another, on hypocrites, and corrupt churches; but they "who "have the ſeal of God in their foreheads," cannot be hurt: for the Lord binds and looſes, limits or enlarges, increaſes or diminiſhes nations and their rulers, according to the counſel of his own will. The attentive reader of ſcripture, and of hiſtory, may, therefore, find his faith and hope increaſed by thoſe events, which in other reſpects fill his heart with horror and anguiſh, and ſuffuſe his cheeks with floods of tears; whilſt he contemplates men's ingenuity and indefatigable induſtry in the work of deſtruction, and in extending miſery amongſt their fellow creatures: and whilſt he obſerves, that the reſt of men, who eſcape theſe plagues, repent not of their evil works; but go on with their idolatries, impiety, infidelity, iniquity, oppreſſion, cruelty, and licentiouſneſs; till wrath come upon them alſo to the uttermoſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1—4.] In the concluſion of the lion roareth: and when he had cried, ſeven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the ſeven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Seal up thoſe things which the ſeven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven;

6 And ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the ſea, and the things which are therein, that there ſhould be time no longer.

7 But in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, when he ſhall begin to ſound, the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, as he hath declared to his ſervants the prophets.

former chapter the apoſtle had received ſome intimations of the corruptions of the weſtern church, during the period of the two preceding trumpets: but before he was made acquainted with the events, which would follow the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, he was to be ſhewn ſomething more of the ſtate of it. This information was introduced by a moſt auguſt, and conſolatory viſion: he appeared to himſelf to be on earth, and to ſee a mighty Angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, to vail the ſplendour of his appearance, and as an emblem of the darkneſs of the diſpenſations that were predicted; a rainbow, ſignifying the covenant of grace, ſurrounded his head; his face ſhone like the ſun, and his legs as pillars of fire, (c. i. v. 12—20.) This mighty Angel muſt be either Chriſt himſelf, or an emblematic diſplay of his glory. He held in his hand a little open book, as containing the Revelation of the purpoſes of God, which he was about to communicate to his ſervant. This was diſtinct from the larger book beforementioned, (c. v. ver. 1:) being a kind of appendix, or codicil to it. Indeed many of the moſt reſpectable interpreters ſuppoſe this little book to have contained all the following parts of the Revelation; and thus they make it much greater, than the book, the ſeals of which Chriſt opened. This is an objection to that arrangement, to which I could never find a ſatisfactory anſwer: beſides, the great book would end abruptly in the middle of the ſixth trumpet; and the ſame ſubject would be as abruptly taken up in the little book. I apprehend, therefore, that this little book contained no more, than the former part of the next chapter, (v. 1—14;) which was an important appendix to the ninth chapter, as it gives an eccount of the ſtate of the weſtern church, during the period of the fifth and ſixth trumpets. Then the former ſubject proceeds, the ſeventh trumpet is ſounded, and a general view is given of the ſubſequent events to the end of the world: after which the ſecond part of the book proceeds; and the apoſtle is ſhewn a great variety of events coincident with and explanatory of thoſe,. which had before been predicted in a more ſummary manner; but chiefly relative to the ſtate of the church, as the former part had been to thoſe that concerned the empire. This arrangement, (which is *nearly* the ſame, with that adopted by Biſhop Newton, in his diſſertations on prophecy,) makes no material alteration in the plan of the celebrated Mr. Mede, and thoſe, who have followed him; whilſt it avoids the difficulty of making the little book by far the largeſt, and the neceſſity of dividing the ſixth trumpet between the two books. Still every event is referred to the times, to which, according to the Synchroniſms of that able writer, it belongs, and which are evidently deduced, not from vague hypotheſis, but from the internal conſtruction of the prophecy. And the obſervation of another learned writer, (Dr. Hurd,) ſtands equally good, "the knowledge "of this order is a great reſtraint on the fancy of an ex"poſitor; who is not now at liberty to apply the prophe"cies to events of any time, to which they may appear to "ſuit: but to events only falling within that time, to "which they belong, in the courſe of this predetermined "method: and if to this, reſtriction we add *another*, "which ariſes from the neceſſity of applying not one, but "many prophecies, to the ſame time; we can hardly con"ceive how an interpretation ſhould keep clear of all theſe "impediments, and make it's way through ſo many in"terfering checks unleſs it were the *true* One. Juſt as "when a lock, (to uſe Mr. Mede's alluſion,) is compoſed "of many and intricate wards; the key, that eaſily turns "within them, and opens the lock, can only be that, "which properly belongs to it." But to return from this digreſſion, concerning the little book: the mighty angel ſet his right foot on the ſea, and his left on the dry land, to denote his ſovereign authority over the whole earth; and perhaps intimating his determination of ſpreading his goſpel through every part of it; and he demanded attention with a voice like the roaring of a lion, to ſhew the power and terror of his word to his obſtinate enemies. After which ſeven thunders were heard, which in the moſt majeſtic manner uttered intelligible voices: theſe either related to matters proper for the apoſtle to know, but not to be publiſhed; or elſe they are coincident with ſome things, that are afterwards more clearly revealed: therefore they were ordered to be ſealed up, and it does not become us to enquire any further about them.

V. 5—7.] The apoſtle next ſaw the angel lift up his hand to heaven, as was cuſtomary when ſolemn oaths were taken; and heard him ſwear by the ſelf exiſtent eternal Creator of all things, "that there ſhould be time no "longer," &c; or, as it may be rendered, that "*the time* "*ſhould not be yet*," that is, of thoſe glorious things, with which the myſtery of God would be finiſhed; but that further delays muſt be expected, till at length in the days of the ſeventh angel, after he had begun to ſound his trumpet, that would be accompliſhed, according to the predictions of former prophets, in the deſtruction of every antichriſtian power, and the univerſal prevalence of true religion; which would continue, with little interruption to the conſummation of all things, and ſo iſſue in the eternal

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven ſpake unto me again, and ſaid, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which ſtandeth upon the ſea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and ſaid unto him, Give me the little book. And he ſaid unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it ſhall make thy belly bitter, but it ſhall be in thy mouth ſweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth ſweet as honey; and as ſoon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he ſaid unto me, Thou muſt propheſy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

CHAP. XI.

Contains 1*ſt. The apoſtle directed to meaſure the temple, &c; but to leave the outer court to the Gentiles; with a prediction of their prevalence for forty two months,* 1, 2. 2*d. The power given, and the oppoſition made to, the two witneſſes, during that time, with their death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion, and divine judgments overtaking their enemies,* 3---14. 3*d. The ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet; a diſcovery of the glorious events that ſhall follow; and an introduction to the prophecies of the ſubſequent chapter,* 15---19.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel ſtood, ſaying, Riſe, and meaſure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worſhip therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and meaſure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

ſtate. But before thoſe events began to take place other preparatory tranſactions muſt occur; and this ſolemn declaration ſeems to have been intended, to teach chriſtians in the intervening ages, to wait with patience, and to expect an happy event of the calamities of the church, though the time of it ſeem long delayed. If we adhere to our tranſlation; the meaning muſt be, that all the ſubſequent events to the end of time would fall under the period of the ſeventh trumpet.

V. 8—11.] (Note, *Ezek.* c. iii. v. 1—3.) The apoſtle's eating the book was an emblem of his duly conſidering, and underſtanding it; and his making it his own, as it were, to the purpoſes, for which he received it. The knowledge of future events was at firſt very ſweet to him, as honey to the taſte; but when he had more fully underſtood them, they occaſioned him ſubſequent grief and anguiſh of heart. By publiſhing the contents of this little book, and the reſt of the predictions, that he was about to receive, he hath indeed propheſied before many people; &c, and doth ſo to this day.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Surety of the new covenant, who purchaſed the bleſſings of it by his blood, manages all things in heaven and earth, with uncontroulable authority. His power and his word are moſt terrible to his enemies; but the believer need not fear his unchangeable Friend, for he will communicate thoſe diſcoveries and conſolations to him, which are kept ſecret from all others. (*John*, c. xv. ver. 14, 15.) The final ſalvation of the righteous, and the final prevalence of true religion on earth, are engaged for by the ſame unfailing word of the Lord: and though "the time ſhall not be yet," we have ſolid ground to conclude, that the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet is at no very great diſtance; when glorious ſcenes will be exhibited. However, very ſoon to us, "time ſhall be no "longer:" but if we are believers, a happy eternity will follow; and we ſhall look down from heaven to behold and rejoice in the triumphs of Chriſt and his cauſe on earth. Let us then rely on the immutable word and oath of the Lord, for ſtrong conſolation amidſt all our trials; let us attend to, and obey the voice from heaven, which calls us from the attractions of things preſent, that we may conſider the things which ſhall be hereafter: let us ſeek our inſtructions from Chriſt, and obey his orders; daily meditating on, and digeſting his word, turning it into nouriſhment to our own ſouls, and declaring it to thoſe around us, according to the duties of our ſeveral ſtations. Indeed the ſweetneſs of ſuch contemplations will often be mingled, or followed with bitterneſs; whilſt we compare the ſcriptures with the ſtate of the world, and the church, or even with that of our own hearts. Yet, if we are intereſted in Chriſt's ſalvation, and are employed, in any meaſure, for the good of others; we ſhould not ſo much regard our preſent feelings, as the glory of God in our eternal happineſs, and that of thoſe, with whom we are connected.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1, 2] It hath before been ſuppoſed, that the former part of this chapter exhibits the contents of the little book, (Note, c. x. v. 1—4;) which related to the ſtate of the weſtern church, during the two preceding woe trumpets, and previous to the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, (v. 15,) which preciſely fixes the chronology of it. That diſcoveries of this little book are related under emblematical appearances, and actions, as before. The ſcene is the temple; and a reed, like a meaſuring rod, being given to the apoſtle, he was ordered to meaſure the temple, the altar, and the worſhipers in the inner court, (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. xl.—xlvi:) This denoted, that in the predicted period, there would be a ſmall number, whoſe doctrine, worſhip, and behaviour would bear meaſuring by the word of God; and

3 And I will give *power* unto my two witneſſes, and they ſhall propheſy a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days, clothed in ſackcloth.

4 Theſe are the two olive trees, and the two candleſticks ſtanding before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he muſt in this manner be killed.

6 Theſe have power to ſhut heaven; that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to ſmite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

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that theſe only would be acceptable interior worſhippers: whereas the outer court, being left unmeaſured, and given to the Gentiles, emphatically ſhewed, that the greateſt number of profeſſed chriſtians would be idolaters and wicked men; whilſt the holy city being trodden under foot by them, implied that the church at large, and its moſt lucrative and eminent places, would be filled with them, and that true chriſtians would be oppreſſed in a grievous manner. The duration of theſe evils was fixed to forty two months, or 1260 days, which by prophetical computation are ſo many years. (Notes, &c. *Dan.* c. vii. v. 25. c. viii. v. 9—14. c. xii. v. 7—12.) The whole of Daniel's prophecies ſhould be compared with the ſubſequent parts of this book; as the ſame events, and dates are intended in both, when they are properly explained; and this gives a kind of certainty to the interpretation. Daniel fixes theſe events to the remains of the fourth monarchy, after it was broken to pieces, (Notes, *Dan.* c. vii;) and this fixes the geography of them to the weſtern empire, which was properly the ſeat of that monarchy. So that both their time and place are unalterably determined, as to the grand outlines of them, by the prophets themſelves; nor can the accompliſhment of them be referred elſewhere, without doing the moſt manifeſt violence to both of them. Indeed the prophecies of Daniel, and thoſe of the apoſtle, when properly explained, and compared with each other, and their accompliſhment, conſtitute the fulleſt imaginable demonſtration of the truth of the ſcripture. But demonſtration cannot convince thoſe, that will not beſtow pains to examine it: and modern ſuperficial Sceptics, who anſwer every thing with ſneer and ridicule, or with flimzy objections, that have been repeatedly and ſolidly anſwered, will not give the ſubject ſuch an examination. However, we muſt fix the beginning of theſe 1260 years ſubſequent to the four firſt trumpets, or the ſubverſion of the weſtern empire; which was completed A. D. 566. This made way for the pope, in proceſs of time, to acquire a vaſt acceſſion of eccleſiaſtical dominion; this took place A. D. 606, when he became univerſal biſhop, and was fully eſtabliſhed as a temporal prince, A. D. 756. Did we know exactly whence to calculate this term of years, we might ſhew with certainty when they would terminate: but this would not conſiſt with that wiſe obſcurity which always reſts on prophecies, in ſome reſpects, before they are fulfilled. Till the event, therefore, ſhall explain this matter, it muſt be left undetermined: but, perhaps, the *beginning* of the riſe, and of the fall of this antichriſtian tyranny, and the *completion* of them, may both be at the diſtance of 1260 years from each other, as in more than one way the Babyloniſh captivity laſted ſeventy years. However, our buſineſs is not to indulge conjecture, but to ſhew how predictions have been verified by facts; and it ſuffices for this purpoſe to obſerve, that we cannot well begin theſe years ſooner than A. D. 606, or later than A. D. 756.

V. 3—6.] It would be tedious to mention the conjectural explications, which have been given of this prophecy, concerning the witneſſes; but they generally violate the apoſtle's rule, (2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 20, 21;) not proceeding upon a large and comprehenſive view of the ſubject, but confining the interpretation to private, and comparatively little events. A king in prophetical language commonly means a ſucceſſion of monarchs: a witneſs, therefore, muſt have a ſimilar explanation; and we ought not to underſtand the prophecy of individuals, but of a ſucceſſion of men, who during the period referred to, bare teſtimony to the truth. Two witneſſes were mentioned, becauſe one was inſufficient for the legal proof of any fact; and theſe witneſſes were as few as could ſuffice to atteſt the true goſpel, and to enter a public proteſt againſt antichriſtian perverſions of it: though perhaps Moſes and Aaron, Elijah and Eliſha, and the apoſtles and ſeventy diſciples, ſent forth two and two, might be alluded to. All real chriſtians, who boldly profeſſed their religion, may be conſidered, as uniting in this teſtimony: yet miniſters, and eſpecially bold and zealous men, who attempted reformation, were the witneſſes primarily intended. The angel before-mentioned, even the Lord Jeſus, declared, that he would give them power, or authority to propheſy, during the aſſigned time; yet this muſt be done in ſackcloth, as expreſſive of their afflicted perſecuted ſtate, and of their deep concern and ſorrow of heart, on account of the abominations, againſt which they proteſted. It hath been ſhewn by many writers, that during the darkeſt ages of popery, men were raiſed up, who bare a decided teſtimony againſt the prevailing corruptions of that church, and for the leading doctrines of the goſpel. It was indeed the intereſt, and the conſtant practice of their opponents, to ſtifle their teſtimony, to blacken their characters, or to deſtroy them as heretics: yet, after all their endeavours to ſuppreſs, miſrepreſent, and mutilate their writings; enough remains to ſhew, that Chriſt had a remnant of faithful witneſſes and diſciples, through all the ages here referred to. From the eighth to the eleventh century incluſive, we find accounts of individuals or collective bodies, who, under the brand of hereſy, and in the face of perſecution, evidently held and openly profeſſed the great doctrines of

7 And when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony, the beaſt that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs pit ſhall make war againſt them, and ſhall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *ſhall lie* in the ſtreet of the great city, which ſpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where alſo our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations ſhall ſee their dead bodies three days and an half, and ſhall not ſuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth ſhall rejoice over them, and make merry, and ſhall ſend gifts one to another; becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they ſtood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, ſaying unto them, Come up hither. And they aſcended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the ſame hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were ſlain of men ſeven thouſand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The ſecond woe is paſt; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the ſeventh angel ſounded: and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, The

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ſalvation by faith in Chriſt, and through his mediation merits and grace; and proteſted againſt the abuſes of popery: and theſe, who juſt prevented the total darkneſs of that gloomy period, could by no means be extirpated. On the contrary, they continued to increaſe in many places, eſpecially in the valleys of Piedmont vaſt multitudes were collected, and called *Waldenſes*, and *Albigenſes*, who were evidently moderate Calviniſts, (to ſpeak in modern language;) and their lives were generally exemplary, as ſome of the Papiſts have allowed. Theſe ſubſiſted during the twelfth, thirteenth, and following centuries; though they were perſecuted with ſuch unrelenting fury, and purſued with ſuch cruel and deſtructive wars, that in France alone, a million of them are computed to have been ſlain, for the ſole crime of proteſting againſt the tyranny of the Pope, and the corruptions of the church of Rome. However, they continued "to propheſy in ſack-cloth;" and when driven from Piedmont, they ſettled in other places, propagated their religion, and prepared the way for the reformation. Connected with them, and agreed in their leading doctrines, and oppoſition to the church of Rome, were the Lollards in England; and the Bohemians, from among whom aroſe John Huſs and Jerom of Prague, who were burnt in the 15th century by the council of Conſtance. Multitudes embraced the doctrines of the goſpel, in many places, during thoſe times, and profeſſed or preached it, at the hazard of their lives; and great numbers were burnt, or put to death in the moſt cruel manner for ſo doing. At length Luther aroſe, and the reformation took place; ſince which time, the ſame teſtimony for the truth of Chriſt, and againſt the errors of Antichriſt hath been maintained. Nor is the term yet expired, the witneſſes are not indeed at preſent expoſed to ſuch terrible ſufferings, as in former times: but thoſe ſcenes will probably be re-acted, before long; and they have abundant cauſe to propheſy in ſack-cloth, on account of the ſtate of religion even in the proteſtant churches. However, though men deſpiſed and hated the witneſſes, they were in reality, "the two olive trees," endued with ſpiritual gifts and grace, that through their inſtrumentality others alſo might receive the unction from the holy One; and "the "two candleſticks," to hold forth the light of divine truth in this benighted world; and they ſtood to miniſter with acceptance, "before the God of the earth," the Proprietor and Governor of all mankind; and were the champions, as it were, of his cauſe, and the heralds of his glory, in the countries where they lived. (Notes, *Zech.* c. iv.) Moreover, if any man, being enraged by their teſtimony, and emboldened by their apparent weakneſs, ſhould dare to injure them; "fire proceeding from their "mouths, to devour their enemies, would certainly ſlay "them:" that is, the Lord would certainly plead and avenge their cauſe, and reſent the injuries done to them, as done againſt himſelf; their warnings and inſtructions would tend to the condemnation of thoſe, who hated them on that account; the denunciations of divine vengeance uttered by them, would certainly be accompliſhed; and even their prayers would be anſwered in judgments on thoſe, who perſiſted in their enmity: for in this matter, they would have power, like Elijah, to ſhut heaven, and to reſtrain the rain from falling, during the three years and a half of their propheſying. (*Jam.* c. v. ver. 17:) or to prevent bleſſings coming from above on thoſe, who rejected their teſtimony, and perſecuted them for it: as well as to turn the waters into blood, or to inflict all other plagues, at their pleaſure; as Moſes did upon the Egyptians: that is, they would have as great an intereſt in heaven, as the moſt eminent of the prophets; and God would as ſurely puniſh thoſe nations, princes, or other perſons, who injured them, as he did thoſe that had oppreſſed his people, or murdered his meſſengers.

V. 7—14.] When theſe witneſſes "*ſhall have finiſh*-"*ed*," or "*ſhall be about to finiſh*," their teſtimony; the beaſt, that cometh out of the bottomleſs pit, (that is the antichriſtian perſecuting power, which will afterwards be more fully deſcribed,) ſhall fight againſt, conquer, and kill them. Many *private* interpretations have been given kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Chriſt; and he ſhall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which ſat before God on their ſeats, fell upon their faces, and worſhipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldeſt give reward unto thy ſervants the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall and great; and ſhouldeſt deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in

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of this paſſage, as if it related to the martyrdom of individuals, or partial perſecutions in paſt times; and ſome imagine, that it only denotes the conſtant perſecution of true chriſtians, through the whole period of 1260 years: but it ſeems plain, to me at leaſt, that it relates to events that are yet future; and that it will be fulfilled but a ſhort time before the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet. The great city, in the ſtreet of which the dead bodies of the witneſſes ſhall lie unburied, does not mean either Rome, or Jeruſalem *literally*; but Jeruſalem *myſtically*; that is the profeſſing church of God, as poſſeſſed by Gentiles, (v. 2;) and ſo become the rival of Sodom in lewdneſs, of Egypt in cruelty to the children of God, and of Jeruſalem, at the time when Chriſt was there crucified, in general enmity to Him and his cauſe. Yet the arrangement of the prophecy in other reſpects ſhews, that the countries, which belonged to the church of Rome, when at the height of its power, and moſt proſperous in it's rage "for crucifying our Lord" afreſh in his people, were principally, or wholly intended. But preſent appearances favour the opinion, that this general, and ſucceſsful war of the beaſt againſt the witneſſes of Chriſt, will be conducted under another form, and other pretences, and perhaps by other inſtruments, and means, than former aſſaults have been. Papal perſecutors were often concealed infidels; and infidels concealed under any other maſk, and ſo oppoſing vital chriſtianity, within the ſame diſtrict, may equally anſwer to the prediction: for the peculiar opinions of this antichriſtian power are not here ſpecified, and the apoſtle elſewhere ſpeaks of antichriſt as one, who oppoſes the doctrine, the authority, or glory of Chriſt, (1 *John*, c. ii. v. 18. 24. c. iv. ver. 3.) The prevalence of infidelity, in different forms, throughout Europe, and the zeal, with which principles of that tendency are every where propagated; when contraſted with the declining ſtate of Popiſh ſuperſtition, renders it probable that *the beaſt* may change his ground, and method of attack, before he thus prevails againſt the witneſſes; for that time approacheth. Moreover it is of importance, that they, who deſire to have underſtanding of the times, and the duties belonging to them, ſhould know from what quarter to expect the danger. And it appears from the prediction, that the temporary victory of this enemy over the truth will be ſo entire, throughout the extent of the weſtern church, that there will be ſcarce any open profeſſion or preaching of the true goſpel, or ſteady oppoſition to the prevailing antichriſtianity, in all that part of the world: ſo that the different nations of Europe, &c, will have nothing to do, but to contemplate and inſult over the dead bodies of the witneſſes, which they will not ſuffer to be buried: which may ſignify, that they will revile, and deride all thoſe, who before had profeſſed and preached the truth; and thus preſerve them from oblivion, by expoſing them to ignominy. At the ſame time, they will uſe the cuſtomary methods of mutual congratulation on an event, that they deem ſo joyful: ſuppoſing that they have at laſt finally extirpated a race of men, whoſe examples, doctrines, warnings, and reproofs, alarmed and diſquieted their minds, and prevented them from proceeding quietly in their ungodlineſs and iniquity. But the triumphing of theſe wicked men ſhall be ſhort; for after three days, and a half, prophetically computed, the witneſſes ſhall riſe again from the dead, to the great conſternation of their inſulting murderers: that is, the Lord will raiſe up a competent number of witneſſes, to ſtand up for his pure goſpel; to the terror of its oppoſers, who hoped it was finally done with. Nay, theſe witneſſes will be called by a voice from heaven, to aſcend thither, which accordingly they will do, in the ſight of their enemies: that is, the apparent extirpation of genuine chriſtianity in the weſtern church, (the bounds of which are conſidered in their largeſt dimenſions; for all true proteſtants are only witneſſes for the truth, within the dominions of the beaſt,) will make way for better times, when the miniſters and profeſſors of the goſpel ſhall be more zealous, honoured and proſpered than before; even as the aſcenſion of Chriſt to glory was ſubſequent to his death, and reſurrection. At the ſame time, there will be ſome terrible judgment befal a large part of this antichriſtian city, which will deſtroy a great number of perſons, and ſo alarm others, as to tend to their converſion, and to the glory of God in it. What theſe things mean, the event alone can determine. Thus the ſecond woe, or the ſixth trumpet, will terminate; and, behold, the third woe will ſpeedily approach. This exceeding low ſtate of real chriſtianity ſeems only to relate to the weſtern church: and perhaps in America, in Africa, in the Eaſt Indies, or other parts of Aſia; there may be very flouriſhing churches at the ſame time.

V. 15—18.] The little book hath been ſhewn to contain ſuch important predictions, as abundantly to account for the ſolemnity, with which it was delivered to the apoſtle; who next proceeds with his viſion, from the ninth chapter. When the ſeventh angel had ſounded his trumpet; there were great voices in heaven; all the bleſſed inhabitants rejoicing with admiring gratitude, be-heaven, and there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

CHAP. XII.

Contains 1ſt. A travailing woman, (the emblem of the church,) watched by a red dragon, (the emblem of Pagan emperors, &c,) that he might devour her offſpring; with her delivery of a ſon; his exaltation, and her fleeing into the wilderneſs, &c, 1---6. 2d. Michael, &c, overcoming, and caſting out ſatan, &c; joy in heaven on that occaſion; and woe denounced on the earth through ſatan's rage and malice, 7---12. 3d. The dragon perſecuting the woman; her flight into the wilderneſs, and preſervation from his unwearied and varied efforts, 13---17.

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cauſe "the kingdoms of this world," which had ſo long lain under the wicked one, were become willingly ſubject to Jehovah, and to his anointed King, who would reign over them for ever; as his kingdom on earth would continue to the end of time, and in heaven to eternity. Then the emblematical repreſentatives of the whole church, were ſeen, to proſtrate themſelves in adoring worſhip; praiſing, and rendering thanks to him, as the ſelf-exiſtent, omnipotent, and eternal Lord God; becauſe he had taken to him the power over the nations, which was his by right at all times, and had now eſtabliſhed his kingdom throughout the earth. If this be not addreſſed to Chriſt perſonally, as ſome think; it muſt be allowed to include him, as One with the Father, and the Holy Spirit in the Unity of the Godhead. What follows is explained by ſome perſons to relate to the execution of the wrath of God on the nations before the millennium, for the rage and enmity againſt his people, whom they had ſlain; but who were figuratively raiſed from the dead, in the revival and final prevalence of the goſpel, and rewarded in the exceeding proſperity of the church; whilſt the antichriſtians, who deſtroyed the earth, were exterminated: but others ſuppoſe it to refer to the temporary oppoſition raiſed againſt the goſpel, after the millennium, and juſt before the general reſurrection, and the final judgment. (c. xx. v. 7—15.) However, the account in this place is very brief; for it will be explained, and dilated on afterwards, in ſeveral chapters: and perhaps both events are compendiouſly hinted at. "Thus we are arrived at the conſummation of all things, through a ſeries of prophecies, extending from the apoſtle's days to the end of the world. This ſeries has been the clue to conduct us in our interpretation of theſe prophecies: and though ſome of them may be dark and obſcure, conſidered in themſelves; yet they receive light and illuſtration from others preceding and following. Altogether they are, as it were, a chain of prophecies, whereof one link depends on, and ſupports another. If any parts remain yet obſcure and unſatiſfactory, they may perhaps be cleared up by what the apoſtle has added by way of explanation." (Newton.)

V. 19. *And*, &c.] This verſe introduces a new ſubject, and ſhould have been placed at the beginning of the next chapter. (c. iv. ver. 1, 2. *Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 1—3.) The ſcene of the viſion was laid at the temple, which was ſo laid open, that the ark of the covenant became viſible: this denoted, that further diſcoveries were about to be made relating to the *interior* parts of religion: for moſt of what went before referred to the affairs of the empire, and the *external* concerns of the church. The lightnings, &c, were tokens of the divine preſence; and emblems of the terrible judgments, which were about to be revealed. We ſhall find, that the next chapter goes back to the primitive ages of the church, and we muſt paſs a ſecond time through many of the ſame ſucceeding periods as before; though principally with relation to the times of the three laſt woe trumpets.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord meaſures his profeſſed worſhippers by the rule of his word, and weighs them in his balance: his miniſters muſt alſo uſe the ſame ſtandard; and they, who would be approved inner court worſhippers, muſt prove themſelves by the ſame unerring touchſtone. For mere nominal profeſſors are accounted Gentiles before God; and yet the holy city hath frequently been trodden under foot, by ſuch enemies of the Lord, in the garb of worſhippers! Indeed, for many ages, a ſmall number of witneſſes, propheſying in ſackcloth, have appeared on the part of Chriſt, and the Truth; whilſt multitudes, in ſplendour and power have been ranked on the ſide of antichriſt, in one form or other. But it is a moſt honourable employment to belong to theſe witneſſes, how few, deſpiſed, or perſecuted ſoever they may be; and to enter a public proteſt, connected with a holy and exemplary conduct, againſt the prevailing corruptions of the age and place, in which we live. Such men are green olive-trees in the houſe of God, and ſhining lights in the dark places of the earth; but we cannot obtain this honour, without courage, ſelf-denial and patience. Chriſtians of this deſcription are harmleſs, and they appear to be helpleſs and friendleſs; but it is ſafer to meet a roaring lion, or to face a battery of cannon, than to injure them; for the Lord will plead their cauſe, and ſpoil the ſouls of thoſe that ſpoiled them; and their pious inſtructions, friendly warnings, and benevolent prayers will be as fire to conſume their inveterate enemies. And the wrath of God againſt perſecutors of his ſaints will either ſtop the current of his bounty, or turn their comforts into curſes, or bring the heavieſt plagues on offending nations.

Neither ſatan, nor any of his emiſſaries from the infernal pit can cut off the Lord's miniſters, till they have finiſhed their teſtimony, and be ripe for glory. Their cruelties, and outrages on the living, or the dead, as if they would carry their revenge into another world, cannot hinder the immediate felicity of their ſouls, the glorious reſurrection of their bodies, or their final admiſſion into heavenly manſions. But by ſuch impious barbarities Chriſt is crucified afreſh, and Jeruſalem is turned into Sodom and Egypt: and the external homage paid to Chriſt by men of

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars:

2 And ſhe being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having ſeven heads and ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the ſtars of heaven, and did caſt them to the earth: and the dragon ſtood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as ſoon as it was born.

5 And ſhe brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderneſs,

this ſtamp, (as the papiſts adore the crucifix,) ſeems even to crucify him again in effigy; after the example of thoſe who builded the ſepulchres of the prophets, and murdered the incarnate Son of God. Determined rebels againſt the light rejoice, as on ſome moſt happy event, when they can drive away or deſtroy the faithful ſervants of Chriſt, whoſe doctrine, and conduct are a torment to them: but their joy ſoon turns into terror, and anguiſh; for they will riſe again to be ſwift witneſſes againſt them; then they will behold thoſe aſcending to the glory of their Lord; whilſt more terrible vengeance awaits their enemies than earth-quakes, or death in its moſt terrific form can ſo much as ſhadow forth. Many woes await the impenitent in this world; but that moſt dreadful woe will, as it were, cauſe all the reſt to be forgotten; and it will arrive quickly. For the ſeventh angel ſhall ſound; and the inhabitants of heaven will rejoice, becauſe the kingdoms of the earth ſhall become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign for ever. At preſent, prayer for that moſt bleſſed revolution is the duty of all real chriſtians; but ſhortly they will be called to join in ſongs of loud thankſgiving, and humble adoration "to the "Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come," (c. i. v. 4. 8. 11.) O may the name of our heavenly Father be thus hallowed; may his kingdom thus come, and may his will be done in earth, as it is in heaven; for his is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever, Amen. The anger of the nations againſt his righteous authority will bring on the great day of his wrath: the time of the dead, when they ſhall be judged, will ſoon come: then ſhall his faithful ſervants and friends, both great and ſmall be moſt munificently rewarded; and they ſhall be deſtroyed, who have deſtroyed the earth. In the mean time, we, through the rended vail, may ſee the ark of the covenant, and our God upon a mercy-ſeat: and if we humbly approach him in this new and living way, the moſt tremendous threatenings of his word, and the moſt awful judgments of his hand, ſhall do us no harm, and ſhould cauſe us no conſternation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—6.] The prophecies of this book naturally divide themſelves into two parts; the ſecond of which begins with the laſt verſe of the preceding chapter. So that, we ſhall perceive as we proceed, that we are here brought back to the primitive ages of the church; though they are more briefly touched upon, than thoſe which followed. Inattention to this diviſion has created much confuſion in many attempts to explain theſe predictions: for if we do not keep hold of the clue of what hath properly been called the internal Geography and Chronology of the book: imagination will rove at large, and ſuppoſed alluſions to detached events, in different ages and places, will disjoint the interpretation, and render the whole ambiguous and ſuſpicious. The church, under the common emblem of a woman, the mother of individual believers, being from heaven, and deſtined thither, was beheld, by the apoſtle in viſion, in heaven; with ſuch attire, and circumſtances, as rendered the appearance very wonderful, and denoted, that is was ſignificant of ſome great events. She was clothed with the ſun, as an emblem of her being juſtified, ſanctified, and irradiated by virtue of union with Chriſt, the Sun of righteouſneſs; ſhe had the moon under her feet; to denote her ſuperiority to the reflected, and feebler light of the Moſaic diſpenſation, and to the love of all ſublunary objects: her crown with twelve ſtars repreſented her honourable maintenance of the doctrine of the twelve apoſtles: her pregnancy, and travailing pains, &c, were an emblem of the afflicted ſtate of the church in the three firſt centuries; during which time, amidſt many hardſhips, and perſecutions, with fervent prayers, and earneſt labours, ſhe ſought deliverance from her oppreſſion, and an increaſe of her family, and waited the appointed term, which was to bring a happy criſis to theſe her ſorrows. (*Gal.* c. iv. ver. 19.) At the ſame time another marvellous ſight was ſeen in heaven, even a great red dragon, &c. A dragon was a known emblem of ſatan. and of his principal agents, or vicegerents on earth, (*Pſ.* lxxiv. v. 13. *Iſ.* c. li. v. 9. *Ezek.* c. xxix. v. 3.) Purple or ſcarlet was the diſtinguiſhing colour of the Roman emperors, conſuls, and generals; even as it hath been ſince of the popes and cardinals. The ſeven heads of the dragon ſignify the ſeven hills, on which Rome was built; and the ſeven forms of government, which ſucceſſively prevailed there. (c. xvii. v. 9, 10;) the ten horns marked out the ten kingdoms, into which the weſtern empire was at length divided, (Notes, &c. *Dan.* c. ii. v. 31—48. c. vii. v. 23—27;) but *ſeven crowns being on the dragon's head, and not ten crowns on his horns,* ſhewed, that the whole power was yet veſted in the emperors, ſenate, &c, at Rome; and not as afterwards in the monarchs of the kingdoms. And this circumſtance, which many have not obſerved, preciſely fixes the date of the prophecy, and proves that it related to the pagan emperors, and not to the antichriſtian power afterwards mentioned, (c. xiii. v. 1:) and the tails of the dragon drawing a third part of the ſtars, &c, repreſented where ſhe hath a place prepared of God, that they ſhould feed her there a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought againſt the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was caſt out, that old ſerpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was caſt out into the earth, and his angels were caſt out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice ſaying in heaven, Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt: for the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down, which accuſed them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the ſea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time.

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the power of the Romans, which had caſt down the princes of one third part of the earth, and reduced their countries to ſubjection. This monſter appeared to watch the woman, being prepared to devour her offspring, as ſoon as it was born: as Pharaoh deſtroyed the male children of Iſrael, or as Herod ſought the life of Chriſt. Thus the Roman emperors and magiſtrates, jealouſly watched the progreſs of chriſtianity from the firſt; and harraſſed the church with conſtant perſecutions. But, at length ſhe was delivered of a male child. During the time of the perſecuting emperors the church was greatly increaſed; at length one ſprang from her, who mounted the imperial throne, being appointed to be Chriſt's vicegerent, in ruling the nations, and cruſhing the enemies of the goſpel, as with a rod of iron. (Notes, &c. c. ii. v. 26, 27. c. vi. v. 12—17. c. vii. *Pſ.* ii. v. 9.) Thus the offspring of the church, even chriſtians in general, and Conſtantine in particular, eſcaped the rage of the red dragon; and the latter was exalted to very great honour and authority, under the immediate protection, and by the ſpecial favour of God. However, new trials awaited the church, which at length drave her into the wilderneſs, or rendered her deſolate, and diſtreſſed. For the termination of Pagan perſecution made way for thoſe events, which at length iſſued in the antichriſtian power, whoſe continuance was fixed to 1260 years. (Notes, &c, c. xi. v. 1—14.) But God had provided a place where he would ſuſtain her, when the time arrived: and her flight into the wilderneſs is here mentioned by way of anticipation.

V. 7—12.] The events here foretold, preceded and made way for the church's flight into the wilderneſs. The ſtrenuous efforts of the Pagans againſt the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, and the deſtruction of their idolatrous worſhip, was repreſented by the dragon and his angels maintaining war in heaven againſt Michael and his angels; perhaps with ſome reference to the expulſion of ſatan and his adherents from heaven, on their original apoſtacy. Michael may repreſent Chriſt, and the devil, or ſatan, the old ſlanderer adverſary and murderer of mankind, was the inviſible commander of the oppoſite army. The former employed as his inſtruments chriſtian magiſtrates, faithful miniſters, and believers, as well as angels; the latter fought by perſecuting emperors, idolatrous prieſts, and heathen philoſophers. The conflict was long and ſharp; but it ended in the total defeat of ſatan's army, in the depoſing of idolaters from all rule and authority, and in their being reduced to the moſt abject condition. This was repreſented by the devil's being caſt out of heaven; for by the power of idolatrous emperors, &c, he had maintained that falſe religion, by which he had deceived all the world, and ſeduced them to be his ſubjects and worſhippers; but, by the ſubverſion of that authority, and the ſubſequent demolition of idolatry, he was caſt down from his dignity, as god and prince of this world, (for a time, and in a meaſure;) (*Luke*, c. x. v. 18:) and when the Pagan emperors were dethroned, ſatan's angels were caſt out with him; for both the inſtruments and miniſters of idolatry were caſhiered; and even their very idols were thrown aſide or deſtroyed with contempt and execration. It is remarkable, that Conſtantine himſelf, and others of his time deſcribe theſe events under the ſame image of the dethroning of the dragon, &c. "Moreover a picture of Conſtantine, was ſet up over the palace gate, with a croſs over his head, and under his feet the great enemy of mankind, (who perſecuted the church by means of impious tyrants,) in the form of a dragon, transfixed with a dart through the midſt of its body, and falling headlong into the depth of the ſea." (Newton.) This ſhews how chriſtians then underſtood the prophecy; and no doubt they rightly interpreted it. Upon this great victory, the apoſtle heard ſongs of praiſe in heaven: becauſe ſalvation and ſtrength were come; the church was delivered from perſecution, and its friends advanced to authority; the kingdom of God was openly eſtabliſhed, and the power of his anointed Son moſt gloriouſly diſplayed: for the accuſer of the brethren was caſt out of his dominion, and deprived of his influence; ſo that he could no longer lay grievous crimes to the charge of the chriſtians, for which to put them to death; as ſatan had accuſed Job before God himſelf, and was ready to accuſe others, continually night and day. (Notes, *Job.* c. i. v. 6—12. c. ii. v. 1—6. *Zeck.* c. iii. v. 1—3. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 33, 34.) But this victory was not aſcribed to the ſword of war, which was only a ſubordinate means, 13 And when the dragon ſaw that he was caſt unto the earth, he perſecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that ſhe might fly into the wilderneſs, into her place, where ſhe is nouriſhed for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the ſerpent.

15 And the ſerpent caſt out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cauſe her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed up the flood which the dragon caſt out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her ſeed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.

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when matters were brought to a criſis: for it was acquired, through the merit and efficacy of the atoning ſacrifice of Chriſt, by faith in his blood, and a bold and holy profeſſion of his goſpel; together with "the word of their "teſtimony," who went forth every where preaching the doctrine of ſalvation; and "who loved not their lives "unto the death," but readily ſealed their teſtimony with their blood, when called to it. Theſe were the warriors and the weapons, by which chriſtianity undermined and ſubverted the power of the idolatrous empire, and acquired an entire aſcendency over their Pagan enemies: and if chriſtians had continued to fight with theſe weapons or ſuch as theſe; their victories would have been more numerous and glorious, and the effects of them more durable. The heavens were, therefore, called upon to rejoice, with all the inhabitants of them; or all, who were on the Lord's ſide in this conteſt: yet, at the ſame time, a woe was denounced upon the inhabitants of the earth and the ſea, or the nations in general; becauſe the devil, and his dethroned agents would not reſt in their diſgraced condition: though idolatry was ſuppreſſed, yet it was not deſtroyed; and its partizans would ſurely excite freſh commotions; nay the devil would be the more furious in his oppoſition to the goſpel, to the ruin of numbers of ſouls, and to the great diſtraction of the empire; as he would know that his time was ſhort, that Pagan idolatry would ſoon be totally cruſhed, and that the ſeed of the woman would at length bruize his head: and, therefore, he would take his opportunity of doing all poſſible miſchief to mankind, whilſt he had it in his power.

V. 13—17.] Whilſt the idolatrous party, who were the agents of the devil, were conſtrained to ſubmit to the power of chriſtian rulers; they ſtill perſiſted in their perſecuting enmity to the church, and tried various methods of re-eſtabliſhing their ancient worſhip. Several attempts were made of this kind, during the reign of Conſtantine: Julian the apoſtate left no method untried, by which he hoped to effect it: he endeavoured to hinder the liberal education of the chriſtians, that their ignorance might expoſe them to contempt, and render them incapable of defending, or propagating their religion; he employed writers of great learning, and ingenuity, to ridicule, revile, and reaſon againſt chriſtianity; he excited Arian princes to perſecute their orthodox ſubjects: and in many other ways he attempted to undermine the cauſe of Chriſt. At the ſame time, the devil and his agents prevailed to corrupt the church with manifold hereſies, to deform it with various ſcandals, and to rend it in pieces with fierce contentions; and theſe evils grew worſe and worſe, during the period of the firſt four trumpets, (Notes, &c. c. viii.) Thus the way was preparing for the erection of another idolatrous perſecuting power, which will be ſhortly conſidered. In the mean time, two wings, as of a great eagle, were given to the woman, that ſhe might be ready to flee to her place in the wilderneſs; when the time came. (*Exod.* c. xix. v. 4.) Theſe are ſuppoſed by ſome writers to refer to the eaſtern and weſtern empires, whoſe ſtandard was an eagle, and whoſe protection was the means of preſervation to the church, till the prefixed time of her obſcurity arrived. In the midſt of the preceding convulſions, and hereſies, the church was, as it were, preparing to flee away to her retreat, from the fury of her oppoſers; where ſhe was at length to be nouriſhed, "for a time" &c, or for three years and an half, forty two months, or 1260 days: but her flight was not completed, till the eſtabliſhment of the antichriſtian power ſpoken of in the next chapter. (Note, c. xi. v. 1, 2.) To prevent her eſcape, the dragon caſt out of his mouth a flood of water to carry her away, &c. this is explained with great propriety of the inundation of the Huns, Goths, and other barbarous nations, by which the weſtern empire was overwhelmed: for it is known, that the ſtrenuous adherents to paganiſm encouraged theſe irruptions, in hopes of ſubverting chriſtianity by their means; and no doubt ſatan hoped to overwhelm the church, when idolaters over-turned the empire. But the event was quite contrary to all ſuch expectations: "the earth helped the woman, and ſwallowed up "the flood;" the victorious barbarians united themſelves to, and formed one people with the vanquiſhed, in the ſeveral provinces of the empire; they even embraced, in form at leaſt, the chriſtian religion: ungodly men of various deſcriptions, from regard to their ſecular intereſts, protected the church amidſt theſe convulſions; and the ſubverſion, and diſmembering of the weſtern empire did not at all help the cauſe of idolatry; nay, it rather tended to the propagation of chriſtianity. But the dragon, being diſappointed in this attempt, was the more enraged, and took another method of making war againſt true chriſtians, as the ſeed of the church, which were but a remnant; for ſuperſtitions and hereſies of various kinds had long before this increaſed exceedingly; which afforded the enemy his opportunity for the aſſault, and ſucceſs predicted in the next chapter.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

True chriſtians, being of heavenly birth, and expect-

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1ſt. The apoſtle having a viſion of a beaſt riſing out of the ſea, which he deſcribed; with an account of its power, rage, and ſucceſs againſt the church: this ſignified the antichriſtian temporal power exerciſed by the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided, 1---10. *2d. Beholding a ſecond beaſt, riſing out of the earth, exerciſing the power of the former beaſt, and making an image of it, &c; theſe were emblems of the eccleſiaſtical tyranny of the church of Rome; and of the Pope, which the clergy create, and then ſet up for an object of worſhip,* 11---17. *3d. The number of the beaſt,* 18.

AND I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea, and ſaw a beaſt riſe up out of the ſea, having ſeven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blaſphemy.

2 And the beaſt which I ſaw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his ſeat, and great authority.

3 And I ſaw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beaſt.

4 And they worſhipped the dragon which gave power unto the beaſt: and they worſhipped the beaſt, ſaying, Who *is* like unto the beaſt? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth ſpeaking great things and blaſphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

ing a heavenly felicity, have put on Chriſt, are clothed in his righteouſneſs, irradiated by his light, beautified by his image, and taught to put earthly things beneath their feet; and they deem it their honour to hold, profeſs, adorn, and recommend the doctrine of the holy apoſtles. All who are thus minded, ſhould pray fervently, and labour diligently in their ſeveral places, (enduring affliction patiently,) for the increaſe, proſperity, peace and purity of the church: and miniſters ſhould eſpecially abound in theſe things. For the devil and his inſtruments are vigilant, united, bold, and unwearied in their efforts to deſtroy the religion of Chriſt; and commonly the kingdoms of the world have been ſeduced into that ſervice: ſurely then the ſervants of God ought not to be timid, heartleſs or negligent in oppoſing their deſigns! It is a ſtriking proof of the wretched ſtate of this apoſtate world; that ſo large a proportion of its inhabitants have generally been ſubjected to men, eminent only for tyranny and cruelty: and it is a great myſtery in God's providence, that they are left to attempt ſo many things againſt his church. However, they cannot prevent the converſion of ſinners, or the ſalvation of believers; nor can they withſtand Him, who is exalted to the throne of God, to rule over all nations with a rod of iron; or overcome thoſe, who are inveſted with authority, and armed with power by Him, for the benefit of His church, and to cruſh thoſe, who perſecute it. The Lord does not indeed generally work by the arm of the magiſtrate; but when he is pleaſed to raiſe up rulers, to protect his people, and by ſcriptural means to promote his cauſe; we ſhould be thankful for, and avail ourſelves of their countenance and aſſiſtance: though the church has her place prepared, and her ſuſtenance given her, more frequently in a wilderneſs, than in an imperial palace. Whilſt Michael our prince, his angels, and his ſervants fight againſt the dragon and his angels; we need not fear the final prevalence of any enemy, either againſt the church, or any true believer: the great dragon, even the old ſerpent called the devil and ſatan, whilſt he deceiveth, and ruleth over all the reſt of the world; will as ſurely be prevented from hurting the true church, as he and his angels were caſt out of heaven at firſt. For ſalvation and ſtrength, the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt, will renewedly come, from time to time, till the dominion of every enemy be deſtroyed, and the mouth of every accuſer of the brethren be ſtopped. But victory in this holy war can only be obtained, "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word "of the teſtimony of his ſervants." Faith, prayer, a holy life, patient continuance in well-doing, and a willingneſs to venture, or ſuffer even unto death, have been the weapons, by which the ſaints have always conquered; and we muſt go forth with the ſame armour, and fight in the ſame manner, if we would ſhare their triumphs. Over ſuch victories all heaven rejoices, and all that love the kingdom of Chriſt. But ſatan, and his agents, however degraded, and baffled, will proceed to bring woes on the inhabitants of the earth; they rage the more, when their plots are defeated, and multitudes are thus deceived and deſtroyed. But the church ſtill maintains it's ground on earth, and believers continually enter heaven: when dangers ſeem to overtake them, they are furniſhed with eagle's wings, to flee away and be at reſt; when hereſies, infidelity, or tribulation ſeem ready to overwhelm them the earth opens, and ſwallows up the flood. Even worldly men give aſſiſtance to the church, when the Lord is pleaſed to make uſe of them; and ſhe will be preſerved for ever with all the remnant of her ſeed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—10.] The apoſtle, ſtanding on the ſhore, ſaw a wild or ſavage beaſt riſe out of the ſea: or a tyrannical idolatrous and perſecuting power ſpringing up out of the commotions that took place in the world. (Notes, *Dan.* c. vii.) All interpreters are

6 And he opened his mouth in blaſphemy againſt God, to blaſpheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the ſaints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth ſhall worſhip him, whoſe names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity ſhall go into captivity: he that killeth with the ſword muſt be killed with the ſword. Here is the patience and the faith of the ſaints.

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agreed, that the Roman empire, in ſome form or other, was here intended: and Papiſts muſt contend, though againſt moſt evident proof that Pagan Rome was meant; unleſs they turn Proteſtants. But John, in the Spirit of prophecy, *ſaw the riſe* of this beaſt; but the Pagan Roman empire aroſe long before his time; and power was given it for 1260 years; but the Pagan empire did not laſt 400 years after the writing of this prophecy. The dragon had ſeven crowns on his heads: but this beaſt hath ten crowns on his horns; which plainly ſhewed, that a revolution would take place, before the time referred to; that the dominion would be removed from the imperial city, and divided among ten kingdoms. The ſeven heads had indeed loſt their crowns; but they had acquired a name, or names of blaſphemy. Imperial Rome was often called the eternal city, the goddeſs of the earth, &c; and altars, temples and ſacrifices were aſſigned to it, as a deity: and it will appear in the ſequel how antichriſtian Rome, after the loſs of the royal dignity obtained names of blaſphemy. This beaſt was itſelf without a name, like the fourth in Daniel's prophecy. (Notes, &c. *Dan.* c. vii:) but it reſembled in divers reſpects the other three beaſts, which the prophet ſaw; and thus united in one power, the fierceneſs, cruelty, and terror of all the reſt. It was indeed the ſame with Daniel's fourth beaſt; the ſame empire, but in one ſpecial form: for the dragon had now given his power, throne, and great authority to the beaſt: the dragon does not here mean the devil; but the devil's vice-gerent, the idolatrous Roman empire: and when another idolatrous perſecuting power had ſucceeded to that of the heathen emperors; then the dragon had transferred his dominion to the beaſt: and all the world knows that this accords to the hiſtory of the Roman empire, Pagan and Papal. The project of re-eſtabliſhing the old idolatry failing, a new ſpecies was invented; ſaints and angels ſucceeded to gods and demigods; and perſecution was the means employed for ſupporting it. The head of the beaſt, which was wounded to death, repreſented the entire ſubverſion of the imperial authority, in the time of Auguſtulus, or when Rome became a dukedom to the Exarchate of Ravenna. (Note, c. viii. v. 12.) Five of the heads of the beaſt, or the dragon (for in this reſpect they are the ſame,) were ſuperſeded, before the apoſtle's time, (c. xvii. v. 10:) namely, kings, conſuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes, but at the time above-mentioned, the ſixth received a deadly wound. However it was afterwards healed, by the revival of the imperial name and dignity, in the perſon of Charles the Great, who was proclaimed Auguſtus A. D. 800: and this head hath ſubſiſted ever ſince in the emperors of Germany, or of the holy Roman empire. After this the temporal and eccleſiaſtical rulers mutually ſtrengthening each other; the Roman power became again formidable, and all the world was aſtoniſhed to behold that empire revived, which ſeemed to be totally extinct; ſo that a ſuperſtitious and idolatrous obedience was rendered to this temporal authority, as engaged to ſupport the eccleſiaſtical tyranny of the Romiſh church. Thus they virtually worſhipped the dragon, who gave his power to the beaſt; by ſubmitting without reſerve to the ſame idolatrous perſecuting power as before; only in another form: and they worſhipped the beaſt as one, that never had his equal on earth; and that would ſurely cruſh all that preſumed to oppoſe him. So that the old idolatry was fully re-eſtabliſhed with new names: and the worſhip of idols, or creatures is in effect worſhipping the devil. To this monſtrous beaſt "was "given a mouth ſpeaking great things and blaſphemies." We ſhall ſoon find, that the eccleſiaſtical power of Rome was the agent, and the Pope the *ſpeaking image*, of the beaſt, (c. xiv. xv:) and every one knows what blaſphemous, and enormous claims of, "his holineſs, in-"fallibility, ſovereign of kings and kingdoms, Chriſt's "vice-gerent on earth; yea, God upon earth," have been ſpoken by this mouth of the beaſt. Power alſo was given him to *continue*, or rather to *practiſe*, or to proſper in his undertakings for forty two months, or 1260 years. He would, during this period, "open his "mouth in blaſphemies againſt God," claiming the power of diſpenſing with the divine law, demanding obedience to his authority even above that of God, and in many things entrenching upon his peculiar honours and prerogatives; "he would blaſpheme the name of God," by giving the worſhip to creatures, which belonged to him only, "and his tabernacle," or true chriſtians, by ſtigmatizing and anathemizing them as heretics, &c. "and them that dwell in heaven;" by ſcandalizing angels, and departed ſaints, as if they ſacrilegiouſly ſought, and were pleaſed with the worſhip paid to them; and by aſcribing to the latter a variety of fooliſh, and ridiculous actions, which they never did. It was alſo given "to the beaſt to wage war againſt and overcome "the ſaints, &c:" and no computation can reach the numbers that have been put to death indifferent ways, on account of their maintaining the profeſſion of the goſpel, and oppoſing the corruptions of the church of Rome. A million of the poor Waldenſes, &c, periſhed in France; 900,000 orthodox chriſtians were ſlain in leſs than thirty years after the inſtitution of the Jeſuits:

11 And I beheld another beaſt coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he ſpake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciſeth all the power of the firſt beaſt before him, and cauſeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worſhip the firſt beaſt, whoſe deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, ſo that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the ſight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by *the means of* thoſe miracles which he had power to do in the ſight of the beaſt; ſaying to them that dwell on the earth, that they ſhould make an image to the beaſt, which had the wound by a ſword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beaſt, that the image of the beaſt ſhould both ſpeak, and cauſe that as many as would not worſhip the image of the beaſt, ſhould be killed.

16 And he cauſeth all, both ſmall and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or ſell, ſave

the duke of Alva boaſted of having put 36,000 to death in the Netherlands, by the hands of the common executioner, during the ſpace of a few years. The inquiſition deſtroyed by various tortures, 150,000 chriſtians, within 30 years. Theſe are a few ſpecimens, and but a few of thoſe, that hiſtory hath recorded: but the total amount will never be known, till "the earth ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and ſhall no more cover her ſlain." Theſe were put to death by the ſecular arm; by that power, of which the empire was the head, and which ſubſiſted in ten kingdoms. And by ſuch means the antichriſtian beaſt maintained the dominion over all the inhabitants of the weſtern world; who all worſhipped him, by the moſt abject ſubmiſſion of body, ſoul and conſcience, except "the remnant according to the election of grace, whoſe names were written in the book of life, belonging to the Lamb, that had been ſlain, from the foundation of the world." It is not very clear, whether Chriſt be here ſaid to "have been ſlain from the foundation of the world," in the purpoſe of God, and the efficacy of his blood to the ſalvation of all believers; or whether their names were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, as the elect of God: but both amount to the ſame thing. This prophecy was of that importance to the encouragement and direction of believers, during the reign of antichriſt, as well as for the due underſtanding of the greateſt part of this book, that the attention of every one was eſpecially called to it. For though the perſecutors would aſſuredly be deſtroyed in the ſame manner as they had deſtroyed others: yet here would be the trial of the faith and patience of the ſaints; to bear up under, and perſevere in obedience to Chriſt, amidſt ſuch complicated dangers and ſufferings, and of ſo long continuance, beyond the example of all former times.

V. 11—17.] This ſecond beaſt came not up out of the ſea, or from wars and tumults as the firſt did; but out of the earth, ſilently, and gradually, as plants ſpring up; (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 1:) and it had two horns like a lamb; denoting that it was ſpiritual dominion, pretended to be derived from Chriſt, and to be exerciſed in a gentle manner. This beaſt was, therefore, the emblem of the Roman hierarchy; and his two horns of the regular, and ſecular clergy of that church; as the other beaſt was of the temporal authority exerciſed in the ten kingdoms of the empire, in ſupport of that ſpiritual tyranny. The ſecond beaſt is elſewhere called "the falſe prophet," (c. xvi. v. 13. c. xix. v. 20;) which abundantly confirms this interpretation. But though he had horns as a lamb, yet he ſpake as a dragon, or with all the tyranny, and cruelty of the perſecuting Roman emperors: and the high claims of authority, and peremptory commands, menaces, and deciſions of the Roman hierarchy are well known. Moreover the ſecond beaſt is the prime miniſter, adviſer, or agent of the firſt beaſt, and "exerciſeth all his power before him:" accordingly the different orders of monks, as well as the ſecular clergy of Rome, have always poſſeſſed immenſe influence in the affairs of the kings, and nations, belonging to that communion: the magiſtrate has been engaged to uſe his ſword to enforce their decrees, or execute their ſentences againſt heretics, &c; and many bloody wars have been waged in ſupport of their antichriſtian dominion. In return for theſe ſervices, they "cauſe the earth, &c, to worſhip the firſt beaſt;" they have always been the ſworn enemies of civil liberty, and the ſupporters of tyranny, and even of the *unlawful* commands of thoſe princes, who ſupported their authority; which is a kind of idolatry, as it exalts the will of man above that of God. So that tyranny upholds them, and they uphold tyranny; they enſlave men's conſciences, and help kings to enſlave their perſons: and the eccleſiaſtical power "is the common centre and cement, which unites all the diſtinct kingdoms of the Roman empire; and by joining with them procures them a blind obedience from their ſubjects; and ſo it is the occaſion of the preſervation of the old Roman empire in ſome kind of unity and name and ſtrength." (Whiſton.) The ſecond beaſt maintains his power by "doing great wonders, &c," (Notes, 2 *Theſſ.* c. ii. v. 1—9.) Theſe, whether they be human, or ſatanical impoſtures, he doeth in the ſight of men, to deceive them, and in the ſight of the firſt beaſt to ſerve him; but they are neither wrought by the power, nor for the glory of God. Thus the miracles, which the advocates for popery boaſt of, as certain marks of a true church, are here ſhewn to be the diſtinguiſhing ſtigma of antichriſt: that is, ſuch ambiguous and ſuſpicious miracles, or indeed any miracles, if wrought in ſupport of idolatry, oppoſihe that had the mark, or the name of the beaſt, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wiſdom. Let him that hath underſtanding count the number of the beaſt: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* ſix hundred threeſcore *and* ſix.

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tion to the doctrines of ſcripture, and perſecution of thoſe, who profeſs them. (Notes, &c. *Deut.* c. xiii.) By theſe means the two horned beaſt, or the regular and ſecular clergy, deceived the inhabitants of the earth, to make an image of the firſt beaſt, or the temporal authority of the empire, as it formerly ſubſiſted in the reigning emperor, at Rome. This image hath been variouſly interpreted; and ſome perſons ſeem exceedingly at a loſs about it. But is not the pope as a temporal prince the very image of the ancient emperors? And is he not as the pretended infallible head of the church, the great idol of all zealous papiſts? And is he not in both reſpects the repreſentative of the whole antichriſtian tyranny? Can we then doubt who this image is? Or can we help being amazed at this ſo exact and circumſtantial a prediction of ſuch improbable events, ſo many hundred years before they took place? The two horned beaſt, or the Roman clergy, as repreſented by the conſiſtory, which aſſembles at the death of a pope, make the image, when they elect a private perſon to that exalted ſtation; and by putting him in poſſeſſion of the ſupreme authority, they give life to him as the image of the ten horned beaſt, and enable him to ſpeak, by uttering his bulls, and mandates, as well as to uſe the names of blaſphemy before mentioned. But before this, they robe and crown the image, which they have made; they place him on an altar, and kiſs his feet, and they call this ceremony *adoration*! Like other idolaters they make their idol, and then worſhip him: and an ancient medal, ſtruck on that occaſion, has this motto "*quem creant, adorant,*" "*whom they create, they adore!*" Then they uſe all their power and influence to ſupport his authority, through all the nations of their communion; and concur in perſecuting even unto death all thoſe, who will not join in the ſame idolatrous obſervance of it. "The pope is the principle of unity to the ten kingdoms of the beaſt; and he cauſeth, as far as he is able, all, who will not acknowledge his ſupremacy to be put to death. In ſhort he is the moſt perfect reſemblance of the ancient Roman emperors; is as great a tyrant in the chriſtian, as they were in the heathen world, preſides in the ſame city, uſurps the ſame powers, affects the ſame titles, and requires the ſame homage and adoration. So that the prophecy deſcends more and more into particulars, from the Roman ſtate or the ten kingdoms in general, to the Roman clergy in particular; and then to the pope, the head of the ſtate as well as of the church, the king of kings, as well as the biſhop of biſhops," (Newton.) Moreover the ſecond beaſt performeth other offices to the firſt beaſt; by excommunicating all thoſe, who refuſe ſubjection to its uſurped dominion, and conformity to the eſtabliſhed worſhip; and thus expoſing them to various temporal incapacities and puniſhments, as outlawed perſons: ſo that, of whatever rank they are, they muſt either be marked in their right hands and their fore-heads with the mark, name, and number of the beaſt, as ſlaves and cattle are branded and numbered; that is they muſt openly profeſs the religion of the church of Rome, and conform to its idolatries and ſuperſtitions, as the bond ſlaves of the beaſt and his image, in body, ſoul and conſcience, (and ſo be marked with the name of the beaſt, that is, *Latin*, or *Roman*, as we ſhall ſee the number of the beaſt ſignifies;) or they muſt be inhibited from all commercial dealings, and even excluded from the moſt needful intercourſe with mankind. Many inſtances of this ſort are recorded in hiſtory. Thus the falſe prophet ſpake like a dragon!

V. 18. *Herein*, &c.] Mention having been made of the number of the beaſt, or that *of his name*, the apoſtle next *enigmatically* propoſed to men's conſideration the number itſelf; declaring, that "therein was wiſdom," or that the diſcovery of the *name of the beaſt from the number*, would be a proof of a man's diſcernment: and therefore, let ſuch as had underſtanding count the number of the beaſt: (who then ſhould cenſure or ridicule thoſe, that attempt to do it?) For it was the number of a man; either ſuch a number as men uſe, or a number implying in it the name, title, or diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of a man. Now the Greek word *Lateinos* ſignifies the *Latin man*; or *the man of Latium*, from which place the Romans derived their original, and their language; and this word, according to the genuine orthography, contains in numeral letters, exactly the number 666. The church of Rome is properly the Latin church, and they uſe the Latin language in every thing: and ſo the beaſt; or the authority exerciſed through the ten kingdoms in ſupport of that church, of which the pope is the living image, &c, as the ſucceſſor of the heathen emperors, may well be called *Lateinos*. But though the apoſtle wrote in Greek, he yet uſed ſome Hebrew names in this book; ſo we may perhaps think he alluded to a name in that language: and it is moſt aſtoniſhing that the word *Romiith* in Hebrew, which anſwers to *Lateinos*, or ſignifies the *Roman man*, contains in numeral letters exactly 666. Nor can any other two words be produced from two different languages, which exactly coincide together in meaning, and exactly ſtand for the ſame number in numeral letters: ſo that the coincidence is really moſt ſurpriſing! And as John could only refer to the Greek or the Hebrew language in this matter; and as the number of *the name* of the *Latin man*, or *the Roman man*, in both languages is exactly the number of the beaſt; ſo I ſee no occaſion to doubt any more either about the beaſt, or his number, eſpecially as Ireneus in the ſecond century put the ſame conſtruction on it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enemies of the church carry on their deſigns, under a variety of odious, and terrifying forms; and they often unite, or divide amongſt them the fierceneſs, and cruelty, of ſavage beaſts, with the ſubtlety, and poiſon of ſerpents: and if it will anſwer their purpoſe better, they will appear as gentle lambs, in order that, when they have opportunity, they may ſpeak as dragons, and lord it over God's heritage with cruel tyranny. They have common-

Contains 1ſt. A prophetic view of the remnant of true believers, during the reign of the beaſt, 1---5. 2d. The progreſs of the reformation; the dreadful puniſhment of obſtinate antichriſtians, and the immediate felicity of thoſe, who die in the Lord, 6---13. 3d. A figurative prediction of future terrible judgements, upon the antichriſtian kingdom and its ſubjects, 14---20.

CHAP. XIV.

AND I looked, and, lo, a Lamb ſtood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thouſand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they ſung as it were a new ſong before the throne, and before the four beaſts, and the elders; and no man could learn that ſong but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 Theſe are they which are not defiled with women; for they are virgins. Theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he

ly poſſeſſed great power; and when any of the heads of this Leviathan have ſeemed to be broken in pieces, they have been again healed; and in another form they ſtill return to the combat. Indeed, they have much encouragement from the world for ſo doing: for men are far more diſpoſed to wonder after, and to celebrate the praiſes of ſuch monſters of iniquity, (as if none were like them, or could ſtand before them;) than to hear God's word from his faithful witneſſes, or even to adore and ſubmit to the Son of God himſelf! But even thoſe mouths, which are opened in blaſphemy, were given by that God, whom they thus affront; and that power is derived from, and belongs to him which men uſe in making war againſt, and overcoming his ſaints: nor can ſuch men reign over the nations, or practiſe againſt the church, any further than he ſees good to permit. Yet all will, in one way or other be deceived, whoſe names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, that was ſlain, according to the eternal purpoſe, which He hath purpoſed in Himſelf. The vengeance that is written will ſurely be executed on all perſecutors, and wicked oppreſſors; but the ſaints need much faith and patience, when their lot is caſt in ſuch evil times; and they ſhould cry unto God for them continually, that they may be faithful unto death, and ſo receive the crown of life. Ungodly prieſts, and tyrannical rulers ſupport each others uſurpations, iniquities, exactions, and oppreſſions: whilſt the one by war, or cruel executions deſtroy all oppoſers, and the other deceive or terrify men by lying miracles, falſe doctrines, horrid anathemas, and church cenſures. But all theſe evils ſhould be conſidered as illuſtrative, of the deceitfulneſs and deſperate wickedneſs of the human heart; and as endearing to us the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus. The review ought alſo to make us thankful for our civil and religious liberties: we are expoſed to no interdicts, no priſons, no cruel tortures or death, for not worſhipping after the manner, or at the dictate of either prince or prieſt; nor are we tempted by ſuch circumſtances of danger to profeſs and ſubſcribe to what we do not believe, or to conform to what we do not approve: though numbers chooſe to do it "for filthy lucre's ſake!" We ſhall therefore be doubly inexcuſable, if we do not ſeek, embrace, and profeſs the truth of Chriſt, and worſhip the Father, according to his appointed ordinances: or if we do not pray for the peace of thoſe, under whoſe mild government we enjoy ſo many privileges; obſerving the rule of the *wiſe* man, to "fear God and the king, "and not to meddle with thoſe that are given to change." But he, that hath wiſdom and underſtanding in theſe things, will ſee that all the enemies of God, are numbered and marked out to deſtruction; that the term of their power will ſoon expire, and that all nations ſhall at length ſubmit to our King of righteouſneſs and peace.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1—5] The apoſtle, having been ſhewn the foregoing particulars concerning Papal Rome, and it's tyranny, &c; had next a viſion of the true church in the wilderneſs, during the ſame period: but theſe verſes ſeem eſpecially to relate to the darkeſt times, previous to the dawning of the reformation. He looked, and behold a Lamb, the emblem of Chriſt, ſtood on Mount Zion, where the temple was built, which was a type of the true church, and of heaven itſelf: and with Him were 144,000 perſons, (Notes, &c. c. vii. v. 1—8.) This ſeems a myſtical number, the twelve patriarchs multiplied by the twelve apoſtles, and both multiplied by 1000; as if they were leaders of that number, ſo that there was a conſiderable number of true Iſraelites, and of thoſe who held the apoſtle's doctrine, and marched under their banner, in the moſt degenerate times. As the worſhippers of the beaſt, were marked with his name, &c; ſo theſe diſciples of Chriſt had the name of his Father written in legible characters on their foreheads: they were his worſhippers, they bare his image, and evidently ſhewed that they belonged to him. (c. xiii. v. 8.) It is evident from hiſtory, that there were ſuch perſons, in the darkeſt times, who ventured, or laid down their lives for the truth and worſhip of the goſpel: for theſe were the ſame as the two witneſſes during the times, in which they lived. This multitude were ſinging a new ſong before the throne, with a voice loud as that of mighty ruſhing waters, or that of thunder; yet melodious and accompanied with the muſick of harpers, &c. No doubt this ſong was the ſame for ſubſtance with that, which we have already conſidered, (c. v. ver. 9—14. c. vii. v. 9—12:) this was ſung in the preſence of the emblematic repreſentatives of the church and its miniſters; and none could learn it, but the redeemed, &c, for as it related immediately to redemption, the proud, the impenitent, the unbelieving, and the carnal could not underſtand the nature of the glory of this ſubject: nor could angels join in it, not being redeemed to God by the blood goeth. Theſe were redeemed from among men, *being* the firſt fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I ſaw another angel fly in the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting goſpel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worſhip him that made heaven, and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, becauſe ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, ſay-

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of the Lamb; though they unite in worſhipping Him, as worthy to receive all honour and bleſſing. The antichriſtian church ſoon forbad to marry, enjoined celibacy on prieſts, immured numbers of both ſexes in convents, extolled virginity as almoſt eſſential to piety and purity, and ranked its virgins with the ſaints and martyrs of the primitive times. (1 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 1—3.) But theſe unnatural reſtrictions, and attempts to introduce a kind of life on earth, that only ſuits the inhabitants of heaven, (*Luke*, c. xx. v. 33—36,) made way, not only for exorbitant ſpiritual pride, but alſo for the moſt unnatural, and deteſtable licentiouſneſs, and for crimes too horrid to be ſpecified: and at the ſame time the church was polluted with the moſt manifeſt idolatry, or ſpiritual fornication. Now, ſays the apoſtle, by the Spirit of prophecy, theſe true chriſtians are they, who are not defiled with women: marriage being honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, the clauſe may be underſtood even in the literal ſenſe, for ſays he, "they are virgins," even ſuch as the ſcripture commends, who are eſpouſed to, and love Chriſt, who are faithful and obedient to him, and deeming themſelves his alone and wholly, wait for the completion of their ſacred union with him; and in the mean time prefer ſuffering and death to the ſpiritual fornication and adultery, to which all others are given up. (Note, 2 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 1—3.) They, therefore, followed him, whitherſoever he went, through perſecutions and tribulations, into obſcurity, or into priſons, with ſelf-denial, obedient faith and patient hope; taking up their croſs, and copying his example of meekneſs, purity and love. Theſe were the perſons, who had been redeemed from among men, being actually intereſted in the atonement of Chriſt; and they were conſecrated to God as firſt-fruits, (for whoſe ſake he ſpared others,) and to the Lamb, "as purified unto him, "to be his peculiar people, zealous of good works." They were not hypocrites, or falſe profeſſors; but upright in their repentance, faith and love; and they held, profeſſed, and preached the true doctrine of Chriſt; ſo that they were accepted and ſanctified perſons, againſt whom no charge could be alledged before the throne of God.

V. 6, 7.] It is generally admitted by the beſt interpreters, that the three angels, in theſe and the following verſes, were emblematical heralds of the progreſſive reformation from popery. So that, after the extent and prevalence of the power of the beaſt, when at its full height, was predicted in the foregoing chapter; the diminution and weakning of it, as introductory to the deſtruction, is intimated in this. Some explain the proclamation of the firſt angel, of the ninth, tenth, or eleventh centuries: and no doubt there were then, both princes, biſhops, and councils, who ſtruggled againſt the worſhip of images, and other abominations of the church of Rome. Yet they generally concurred in ſupporting the dominion of the beaſt, though they wanted to have it exerciſed in a different manner, as to ſome particulars. However, ſuch as were real chriſtians, and entered a proper proteſt againſt the prevailing corruptions of the church, whether in the imperial palace; or in the conclave, (if that was ever done,) may properly be ranked in the number mentioned in the former verſes: for theſe ſeem to relate to a more public and general proteſtation. But others ſeem to fix the time of their accompliſhment too late; and ſo leave a large gap in the ſeries of predicted events; and then crowd too many into the remaining periods. We may therefore, I apprehend, interpret this firſt angel, or herald, of thoſe, who firſt publicly erected the ſtandard of reformation, and who oppoſed the everlaſting goſpel of Chriſt to all the innovations, and uſurpations of the beaſt, his image, and the falſe prophet. This honour ſeems to belong to the Waldenſes and Albigenſes, who had the true goſpel among them, avowed its everlaſting obligation and excellency, oppoſed it to the authority, of popes, councils, and perſecuting princes, declared the pope to be antichriſt, propagated their doctrines with zeal and ſucceſs, and multiplied into a vaſt number of churches: and after immenſe ſlaughter had been made of them by perſecutions, and bloody wars, they ſtill retained their tenets; and being diſperſed into other countries, they rapidly carried the everlaſting goſpel with them, (as an angel, a meſſenger of peace to men, flying through the midſt of heaven;) ſo that the Lollards in England, and the Bohemians, and many others in different places, ſeem to have principally learned the goſpel from them; and the reformation to have ſprung from the ſeed which they ſowed, and watered with rivers of their blood. So exact was the prophecy, that they had the everlaſting goſpel, to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, &c. and that they loudly called on men to fear and glorify God, as the hour of his judgment was at hand: and to worſhip the Creator of all things, as revealed in the goſpel, by refuſing to join the worſhip of idols, and that of the beaſt and his image.

V. 8. *And*, &c.] If we explain the firſt angel, as the herald of the dawning of the reformation in the twelfth, ing with a loud voice, If any man worſhip the beaſt and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb:

11 And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no reſt day nor night, who worſhip the beaſt and his image, and whoſoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the ſaints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jeſus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.

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thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries; we may properly explain this of the Bohemians and others in the fifteenth, who were their genuine offspring and ſucceſſors. Some of theſe perſons, with ſtill greater confidence and vehemence, than the Albigenſes, declared Rome to be myſtical Babylon, and the pope and church there, to be antichriſt, and they endured ſevere perſecutions for theſe proteſtations, and for their profeſſion of the goſpel. John Huſs and Jerom of Prague, eſpecially, were perfidiouſly and cruelly burned by the council of Conſtance; which was in fact the united power of the whole antichriſtian beaſt. Theſe heralds announced the fall of myſtical Babylon, as the ancient prophets had done that of literal Babylon, long before the event. (*Iſ.* c. xxi. v. 9. *Jer.* c. li. v. 7:) nor was this doom more certain, than it would be juſt, as ſhe had corrupted, and intoxicated the nations, not only with her love potions, as a ſeducing harlot, but by the wine of the *wrath* of her fornications, terrifying men into idolatry by fierce perſecutions. As Rome was mentioned under the name and emblem of a *Gentile* city; ſo her idolatry was called fornication rather than adultery, which it was generally ſaid to be when committed by God's profeſſing people. (c xvii. v. 2.)

V. 9—11.] This third angel and his proclamation may be explained of Luther, and his loud, rough, and vehement proteſtation againſt the idolatries, &c, of the church and biſhop of Rome, and that whole antichriſtian fabric; yet we muſt alſo take in the effects of it, in the reformation to this day, and even beyond it. His voice and that of thoſe, who were raiſed up in divers countries to join him, or to follow up the aſſault, was very loud. They attacked the beaſt with more vehemence, than any that went before had done; they not only declared him to be antichriſt; but they carried their reſearches into the idolatries, iniquities, and impoſtures of the whole ſyſtem, and ſhewed that it was utterly incompatible with the religion of the ſcriptures, and founded in ignorance, uſurpation, avarice, and hypocriſy: and they inſiſted on the neceſſity of ſeparating from ſo corrupt a church, boldly retorting the charge of hereſy and ſchiſm, and fully proving it. Thus they induced whole nations to caſt off all regard to the church of Rome, and engaged vaſt multitudes to proteſt againſt popery as a damnable religion; which was exactly the purport of this third angel's proclamation. They loudly inſiſted upon it, that all, who adhered with a blind and devoted attachment to the beaſt and his image, profeſſing their abominable doctrines, conforming to their idolatries, concurring in their cruelties, and reducing their principles to practice; (being intoxicated with the wine of "*the wrath* of her fornications;) would drink of the unmingled wine of God's wrath, from the cup of his indignation; yea, that they would be tormented with fire and brimſtone, or be caſt into hell, to be tormented in that flame; that this would be in the preſence of the holy angels, who would applaud the juſtice of their puniſhment; and in the preſence of the Lamb, who would pronounce and execute the ſentence upon them, for their oppoſition to his goſpel, and giving his mediatorial glory to ſaints and angels: and "that the ſmoke of "their torment would aſcend up for ever and ever," which are the ſtrongeſt words to ſignify eternity, that are found in the whole compaſs of the Greek language; and that they would have no reſpite or reſt day or night, who, in the midſt of ſo many opportunities of conviction adhered to that antichriſtian ſyſtem. The language here uſed evidently predicts the clear and ſtrong manner, in which Luther and the reformers proteſted and argued againſt the notion of purgatory, and inſiſted upon it: that the wicked would be tormented in hell for ever; and a ſubſequent verſe evidently oppoſes the ſame doctrine, by ſhewing the immediate happineſs of believers, after death, (v. 13.) Every one that is at all converſant with the writings of the reformers, and their ſucceſſors, knows that they generally declared without heſitation, that popery was a damnable religion. Mr. Hooker in Queen Elizabeth's time brought himſelf into ſuſpicion, and was engaged in a diſpute becauſe he aſſerted with caution, and many diſtinctions, that papiſts might be ſaved: and whatever contempt may be caſt on their bigotry in this day of candour, liberality, and diſregard to the ſcriptures; it is worthy of ſerious conſideration, whether this paſſage does not warrant the moſt of what they advanced on that ſubject, though they might ſometimes expreſs themſelves in too general a manner; and not properly diſtinguiſh between thoſe, who hated the light, and thoſe whoſe eyes were too weak to endure its effulgence, when it brake in upon them all at once.

V. 12—13.] When theſe doctrines began to be openly propagated, terrible perſecutions were raiſed: it was therefore added, that there would be "the patience "of the ſaints," who would have abundant need to exerciſe that grace, in obeying God and holding the true doctrine of Chriſt, amidſt the race of inquiſitors, and bloody perſecutors, who could really kindle fires on

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* ſat, like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a ſharp ſickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that ſat on the cloud, Thruſt in thy ſickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harveſt of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that ſat on the cloud thruſt in his ſickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he alſo having a ſharp ſickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the ſharp ſickle, ſaying, Thruſt in thy ſharp ſickle, and gather the cluſters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thruſt in his ſickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and caſt *it* into the great wine-preſs of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepreſs was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepreſs, even unto the horſe-bridles, by the ſpace of a thouſand *and* ſix hundred furlongs.

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earth to torture and burn them, (c. xiii. v. 13;) and who by ſuch cruelties, together with wars and maſſacres, deſtroyed incredible multitudes in oppoſing the progreſs of the reformation. To encourage the ſaints to exerciſe this patience, in ſuffering for the truth even unto death, the apoſtle ſhewed, that he heard a voice from heaven, ordering him to write, that "bleſſed are the dead which "die in the Lord," or in the true faith and hope of the goſpel, even "from henceforth," &c. This verſe hath much perplexed commentators, in reſpect of its prophetical meaning and connection: but upon the plan we are purſuing nothing can be more obvious. The doctrine of purgatory, with indulgences, human merits to be ſold by the church, maſſes and prayers for the dead, &c, was one principal ſource of wealth, influence, and authority to the clergy of the church of Rome. This alſo firſt ſtirred up the ſpirit of Luther, who began his attack by proteſting againſt theſe abuſes: and by examining the ſcriptures, he and his followers eſtabliſhed it as a certain truth, in the judgment of vaſt multitudes, that there was no ſuch place as purgatory; but as the wicked when they die go directly to hell, (v. 10, 11;) ſo believers immediately enter heaven. Now what words could more aptly predict this change in men's ſentiments, than theſe do? It is moſt evident, from the internal chronology of the book, and from the ſeries of predicted events, that the reformation was here intended; and the apoſtle was ordered to write, juſt in this place, (probably he knew not wherefore,) that *thenceforth* "bleſſed were the dead, &c;" that is thenceforth believers would generally underſtand that encouraging truth; and not have to encounter the fears of purgatory, or to apprehend a delay of their felicity, when ſeized with the agonies of death, or called to ſuffer martyrdom for Chriſt's ſake. And in fact the expectation of immediate happineſs was the joy and ſupport of thoſe numbers, who were burned alive, or otherwiſe cruelly martyred during thoſe times. This voice from heaven was atteſted by an internal impulſe of the Holy Spirit, who aſſured the apoſtle, that believers reſted after death from all their labours, and ſufferings, and had no purgatory to fear; and that their works followed them, to prove the ſincerity of their faith, and to enſure a gracious reward.

V. 14—20.] Hitherto we have generally proceeded by the guidance of paſt events, and have thus obtained ſome ſatisfaction in explaining theſe prophecies: but here, I apprehend, that direction almoſt wholly fails us. This ſuppoſition is confirmed by the evident inability of expoſitors to make any regular and conſiſtent application of the ſubſequent chapters, except as coincident with what hath been already conſidered. (c. xiv.) Under this perſuaſion, of which further reaſons will be afterwards aſſigned, I ſhall not obtrude mere conjectures on the reader, nor attempt to pry into things not ſeen as yet. Hitherto, in general, the ground hath ſeemed good, and the road plain; and I have felt ſome confidence, as well as uſed caution, in the progreſs: but caution muſt be almoſt my only companion and monitor in what now remains; for the country is unknown, and no guide to be found, who underſtands any thing of the road. We have ſeen the exact and ſurprizing fulfilment of many, intricate, and complicated predictions, through the courſe of 1700 years; which is a real demonſtration of the truth of the ſcriptures: but we muſt bequeath to our poſterity the ſatisfaction of underſtanding, and being filled with adoring wonder at witneſſing the accompliſhment, of the reſt. The ſecond part of the prophecy hath been evidently traced down to the reformation; and this may include all, that ſhall intervene, till the ſlaying of the witneſſes, and their reſurrection, &c; (c. xi. v. 7—14.) But whether the events here predicted precede, or follow the ſounding of the ſeventh, or third woe trumpet, I cannot abſolutely determine: but they ſeem evidently to relate to the fall of antichriſt; and perhaps give a ſuccinct intimation of what is more fully predicted in the next and following chapters. The preceding events not having produced a voluntary and effectual reformation in the kingdom of the beaſt; the iniquity of thoſe nations will be filled up and they will become ripe for judgments; which are emblematically deſcribed as an harveſt and a vintage; and as the latter ſucceeds to the former in the courſe of nature, ſo it is ſubſequent to it in the prophecy, and will be far more terrible. Chriſt appeared to the apoſtle in viſion, like to the Son of Man, in human nature, upon a white cloud, the emblem of his holy, righteous, and myſ-

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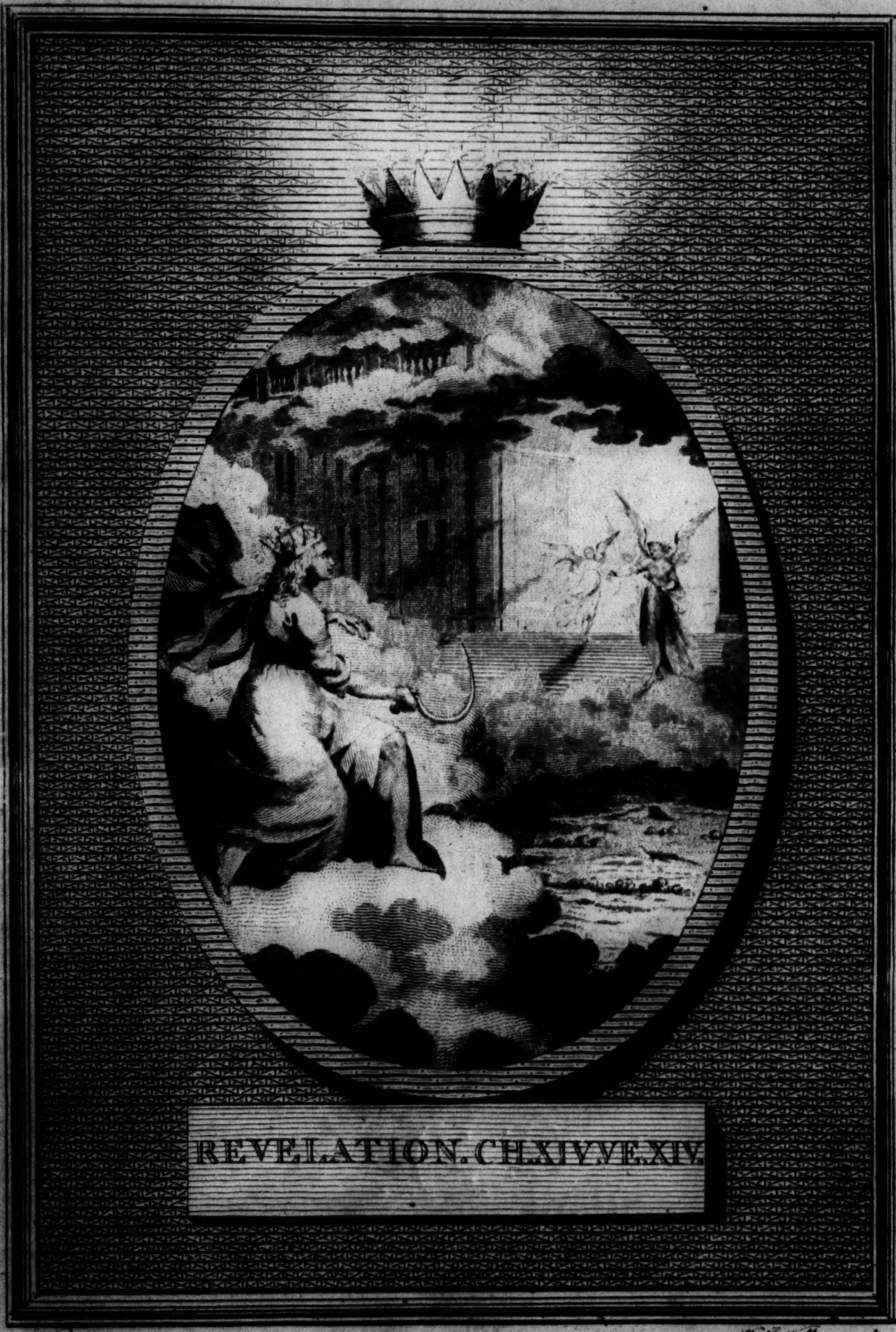

REVELATION. CH.XIV.VE.XIV.

Wm. Walker del. Wm. & J. Walker sculp.

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BRITISH
29 AP 92
MUSEUM

CHAP. XV.

Contains 1ſt. A viſion of ſeven angels, prepared to execute judgments; with the triumphant ſong of the church on that occaſion, 1---4. *2d. Seven vials given to the angels for that purpoſe, and the temple filled with ſmoke,* 5---8.

AND I ſaw another ſign in heaven, great and marvellous, ſeven angels having the ſeven laſt plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I ſaw as it were a ſea of glaſs mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beaſt, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, ſtand on the ſea of glaſs, having the harps of God.

3 And they ſing the ſong of Moſes the ſervant of God, and the ſong of the Lamb, ſaying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true *are* thy ways, thou King of ſaints.

4 Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations ſhall come and worſhip before thee; for thy judgments are made manifeſt.

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terious diſpenſations; his golden crown ſignified his ſuper-eminent authority, and his ſharp ſickle, his terrible vengeance on his enemies. The angel out of the temple may ſignify the miniſters of the goſpel as employed to announce the approach of theſe judgments: and the ſecond angel coming out of the temple, to reap the vintage, may repreſent ſome executioner, or ſucceſſion of executioners, of the wrath of Chriſt on the oppoſers of his authority: whilſt the third angel from the altar, who had power over fire, &c, giving orders to the ſecond angel to reap the vintage, &c, implies, that theſe judgments would render thoſe a ſacrifice to divine juſtice, and conſume them as with fire, who had deſpiſed, or abuſed the atoning ſacrifice of Chriſt. The caſting of the vintage into the wine-preſs of God's wrath, and the treading of it *without* the city, (as being no part of the true church, &c,) can only be explained by the event. But the 1600 furlongs, or 200 miles, is exactly the length of the papal dominions in Italy; which will doubtleſs be deluged with blood, in a moſt awful manner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord reſerves a remnant to himſelf in the worſt of times, who diſſent from the prevailing idolatries and abominations; who profeſs his truth and bear his image; who ſing the praiſes of redeeming grace, in ſtrains, which none elſe can learn; who cordially love, and devotedly cleave to him; (*Sol. Song*. c. i. v. 3:) who follow the Lamb, whitherſoever he goeth, being the firſt-fruits of the earth; who are Iſraelites indeed, in whoſe mouth is found no guile, and who are without fault, being fully accepted, and really ſanctified, before the throne of God. May it be our prayer, our endeavour, yea our ambition, to be found in this honourable company! If we have a good hope, that we are thus diſtinguiſhed; we ought to *do* every thing in our power, as well as to beſeech the Lord continually, that faithful miniſters, like beneficent angels, flying through the midſt of heaven, may carry the everlaſting goſpel, and preach it to all people, nations, and languages: that ſo ſinners may fear and glorify God; and turn from all their idols and iniquities, to worſhip the great Creator, and to wait for his Son from heaven, who ſhall ſpeedily come to be our Judge. Theſe events faith anticipates, as if they were already accompliſhed. Ere long crafty deceivers, and thoſe, who were betrayed into their deluſions by pride, unbelief, a carnal mind, love of ſin, and fear of man, will together drink of the wine of God's wrath, from the cup of his indignation: however, men may flatter or excuſe themſelves in conforming to corrupt, and ſinful cuſtoms or impoſitions, they will find at laſt that the Lord abhors ſuch prevarication. Let, therefore, ſuch as fear the reproach or the wrath of men, and are thus tempted to diſobey God, remember that awful torment, the ſmoke of which aſcendeth up *for ever and ever*. For, the modern *quietus* of a purgatory after the day of judgment, is as deſtitute of ſcriptural foundation, as that of papiſts before that time; and they who die in their ſins, will too late find, that the puniſhment of hell will endure for ever and ever. Here then is the patience of the ſaints, to venture or ſuffer any thing, in obeying God's commandments, and profeſſing the faith of Jeſus: may God beſtow this patience upon us; that we may be ready, ſhould times of perſecution overtake us! We have the beſt reaſons in the world for this conduct; as a voice from heaven, atteſted by the Holy Ghoſt, aſſures us, that "bleſſed are the "dead which die in the Lord; that they immediately reſt "from their labours, and that their works follow them," to aſcertain their title to, and the degree of their unſpeakable felicity: whilſt their perſecutors, and all wicked men are ripening for the harveſt and vintage of divine vengeance; and will ſoon be caſt into the wine preſs of the wrath of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—4.] This chapter introduceth the ſeven vials, which ſeem to fall under the ſeventh trumpet, as the ſeven trumpets were included under the ſeventh ſeal; for as they contain the ſeven laſt plagues, in which the wrath of God is filled up, or accompliſhed on the antichriſtian empire, &c; ſo they muſt of courſe fall under the laſt woe trumpet. We have already traced the ſecond part of this prophecy to the reformation, nay to the preſent era: and to go back into former ages, to find out events, that may anſwer to the ſubſequent predictions, deranges the whole plan of the book, and reduces things to ambiguity, and uncertainty. Our key has hitherto opened the moſt intricate wards of theſe predictions, without violence; that is, as far as the concluſion of the ſixth trumpet: but no body has ſucceeded in what follows; for *that* is the preciſe time, in which we live, as is evi-

5 And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the teſtimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the ſeven angels came out of the temple, having the ſeven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breaſts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beaſts gave unto the ſeven angels ſeven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with ſmoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the ſeven plagues of the ſeven angels were fulfilled.

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dent from a due conſideration of the 1260 years of the reign of the beaſt. This will end about the concluſion of the ſixth trumpet, which none, I think, date ſooner than A. D. 2000. But whether ſooner or later; it is evidently not yet come; and therefore, I apprehend the vials are not yet begun to be poured out: for nothing can be more confuſing, than to ſuppoſe them coincident with the trumpets. The apoſtle had mentioned great woes, that would come under the three laſt trumpets, (c. viii. v. 13 c. x. v. 7. c. xiv. v. 19:) yet when the ſeventh trumpet was ſounded, he mentioned the happy effects of it, to the end of time, without ſpeaking particularly about the woes: but he here reſumes that ſubject, and ſhews what woes followed that trumpet; that is prophetically; and we may underſtand as much of them, as the primitive chriſtians could of the preceding trumpets, and no more, if indeed they are yet unfulfilled. Nothing ſeems more important, in explaining prophecies, than to determine, as far as we can, what events are paſt, and what to come: under this conviction, I muſt proceed to conſider what follows, in general, as yet in futurity, and ſhall therefore, not detail any of the interpretations, or conjectures, that have been made of them, *with relation to paſt events*; as I never could myſelf find any ſatisfaction from them. The great and marvellous ſign, which the apoſtle ſaw in heaven, the ſcene of his viſions, implied that very intereſting and extraordinary events were about to be revealed: for ſeven angels appeared, who had it in charge to inflict the ſeven laſt plagues, &c. But before he ſaw the effects of their proceedings, he had an introductory viſion, repreſenting the joy, and triumph, which the church would expreſs on that occaſion. The ſea of glaſs, mingled with fire, (c. iv. ver. 6,) is very differently explained: but as the perſons referred to *ſtood upon it*, ſo we cannot well underſtand it of the fountain, in which they had waſhed away their ſins: perhaps it was emblematic of the tempeſtuous times, during which believers then lived, the ſlippery and fragile nature of their ſtanding conſidered in itſelf; and the fiery trials that they endured. However, they, who were conquerors over the beaſt, &c, (c. vii. v. 9—17;) who had cleaved to the truth, and will of God, and had refuſed ſubjection to the ſpiritual tyranny of antichriſt, or to be branded as his ſlaves; ſtood on this brittle, ſlippery ſea of glaſs mingled with fire; unhurt and undiſmayed; as the children of Iſrael, paſſed through the red ſea, or ſtanding on its ſhore, ſaw their enemies dead before them. Feeling therefore a holy aſſurance of their own ſafety, and a triumphant joy, in the proſpect of the deſtruction of their perſecutors; they ſang the ſong of Moſes, the ſervant of God; they praiſed the Lord for their deliverance, as Iſrael by orders from Moſes had done; and they ſang the ſong of the Lamb, the new ſong before mentioned, (c. v.) Thus they celebrated the great and marvellous works of God, the Almighty Lord of all; and his juſtice, and faithfulneſs, as in Chriſt Jeſus, the King of ſaints, the Protector, Comforter, Ruler, and Portion, of all his redeemed people. In this view, they enquired, who would not fear, adore, and glorify the name of Jehovah? Seeing he only was holy; and neither the worſhip of idols, or the names of blaſphemy uſed by the beaſt and his image were to be endured: for the time was arrived, in which all ſhould come and worſhip before him; as his judgments were then about to be made manifeſt, (*Pſ.* lxxxvi. v. 9. *Jer.* c. x. v. 7.)

V. 5—8.] (c. xi. v. 19.) The appearance of glory above the mercy-ſeat in the moſt holy place, the tabernacle of God in the temple, was an emblem of his appearance in heaven as reconciled to ſinners, through Jeſus Chriſt: the ſeven angels coming forth from thence ſhewed, that theſe judgments would be executed on the enemies of the church in mercy to God's people: their white clothing, and golden girdles, repreſented their holineſs, and the righteouſneſs and excellency of theſe awful diſpenſations. The living creature, an emblem of the goſpel miniſtry, giving the vials to the angels implied, that the preaching of the truth would be inſtrumental in bringing the judgments, that were written, upon antichriſtian oppoſers, and the temple being filled with ſmoke, &c, (*Exod.* c. xl. v. 35. 1 *King.* c. viii. v. 10, 11,) ſhewed the darkneſs of theſe diſpenſations, and the horror, which would envelope the enemies of God, whilſt theſe plagues were executing.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The many plagues, which the wrath of God inflicts on the wicked, contain things great and marvellous: but none can fully underſtand them, till they have paſt through the waves and fiery trials of this evil world, and are made victors over all their adverſaries. Yet, whilſt we ſtand upon "the ſea of glaſs mingled with fire," we ſhould anticipate the triumphs, that await our final deliverance; and attempt the ſong of Moſes, and of the Lamb: and new mercies continually demand new hymns of praiſe. The fuller knowledge we acquire, concerning the wonderful works of God; the more we ſhall celebrate his infinite greatneſs and excellency, as the Lord God Almighty, the Creator and Ruler of all worlds: but his title of Emmanuel, the King of ſaints, will peculiarly endear him to us. Who, that conſiders the power of his wrath, the value of his favour, or the glory of his holineſs, would refuſe to fear, and honour

CHAP. XVI.

Contains the pouring out of the ſeven vials, the judgments that followed them, the impenitence and blaſphemy of the ſufferers; and a warning to chriſtians to watch, &c. 1---21.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple ſaying to the ſeven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the firſt went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noiſome and grievous ſore upon the men which had the mark of the beaſt, and *upon* them which worſhipped his image.

3 And the ſecond angel poured out his vial upon the ſea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living ſoul died in the ſea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters ſay, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and waſt, and ſhalt be, becauſe thou haſt judged thus.

6 For they have ſhed the blood of ſaints and prophets, and thou haſt given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar ſay, Even ſo, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the ſun; and power was given unto him to ſcorch men with fire.

9 And men were ſcorched with great heat, and blaſphemed the name of God, which hath power over theſe plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the ſeat of the beaſt; and his kingdom was full of darkneſs; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blaſphemed the God of heaven becauſe of their pains and their ſores, and repented not of their deeds.

12 And the ſixth angel poured out his vial

Him alone? For his praiſe is above heaven and earth. May all nations, therefore come and worſhip before him, and accept of his ſalvation! This prayer will be anſwered, when his tabernacle ſhall be opened, the inſtruments of his vengeance on obſtinate rebels commiſſioned, and the ſeven vials poured out. In the mean time let us adore his juſtice and truth; and not dare to object to his deep deſigns: for when we ſhall ſee the whole completed; we ſhall ſee him glorious both in mercy and in judgment.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1, 2.] The angels were ordered by a voice from the temple to pour out the vials, cenſers, or cups, which they had received, which were emblems of the wrath of God to be poured out on the antichriſtian empire, and all that adhered to it. As the four firſt trumpets were ſo many ſtages in the deſtruction of the weſtern empire, and the fifth and ſixth ſhewed the extinction of the eaſtern empire: ſo theſe vials marked the gradual deſolation of the Roman church, &c: and this occaſions a ſimilarity of ſome of the vials to the trumpets. Some reſemblance alſo is found between theſe vials, and ſeveral of the plagues of Egypt, to which Rome may be compared for tyranny, cruelty, &c. (c. xi. v. 8.) Whether the ſores produced by the pouring out of the firſt vial are to be underſtood literally, or with reſpect to terrible peſtilences, or in a figurative meaning, the event muſt determine. But they will be peculiar to the avowed and devoted adherents of the beaſt and his image; which ſeems to be intended of the others, though not expreſſed. (c. viii. v. 7. *Exod.* c. ix. v. 10.)

V. 3—7.] (c. viii. v. 8—10.) Seas and rivers turned into congealed blood, &c, are proper emblems of vaſt ſlaughter and devaſtation. Yet the angel of the waters, that was appointed to preſide over them, or to be a miniſtering ſpirit in theſe diſpenſations, celebrated the juſtice of the eternal Lord, who had determined to puniſh with ſuch calamities, the blood-thirſty murderers of ſaints and prophets; and in appointing them, as it were blood to drink! And another angel, from under the altar, (c. vi. v. 9,) as ſpeaking in the name of the Holy Martyrs, concurred in theſe praiſes; and alſo declared the truth of the Lord God Almighty, in thus fulfilling his ancient predictions, and his promiſes to his church.

V. 8, 9.] (c. viii. v. 12.) Whether burning ſeaſons producing drought and famine, or ſome other judgment thus figuratively deſcribed, be intended, the event muſt ſhew. But the extreme diſtreſs of the ſufferers, inſtead of inducing them to glorify God, by confeſſing, repenting of, and forſaking their ſins, will irritate them to blaſpheme the name of God, and ſo tend to the increaſe of their guilt and final condemnation. (*Iſ.* c. viii. v. 21.)

V. 10, 11.] (*Exod.* c. x. v. 21.) This predicts ſome great calamity to Rome itſelf, which will darken the whole antichriſtian empire; but will only excite the ſufferers to horrid blaſphemies, and more deſperate defiance of God.

V. 12—16.] If the river Euphrates is here to be underſtood literally; ſome eaſtern nation may be expected to invade Europe, as the executioner of the Lord's vengeance on the kingdom of the beaſt. But as Rome upon the great river Euphrates: and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the eaſt might be prepared.

13 And I ſaw three unclean ſpirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beaſt, and out of the mouth of the falſe prophet.

14 For they are the ſpirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Bleſſed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

17 And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial into the air: and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, ſaying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake, *and* ſo great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath.

20 And every iſland fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every ſtone* about the weight of a talent: and men blaſphemed God becauſe of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

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is myſtical Babylon, which ſtood on the river Euphrates, and was both enriched and protected by it: perhaps we may underſtand by the drying up of the Euphrates, ſuch deductions from the power, and reſources of Rome, as ſhall embolden and excite other nations to attack her. However, theſe events will threaten the deſtruction of that whole intereſt: ſo that three unclean ſpirits, like frogs, will come out of the mouth of the dragon, the delegate of ſatan, who gave his power to the beaſt; out of the mouth of the beaſt, or antichriſtian empire; and out of that of the falſe prophet, or the antichriſtian church and clergy: that is, emiſſaries commiſſioned by them, and inſtigated by unclean ſpirits, being loathſome, croaking, or loquacious, and intruding themſelves into every place, to the miſchief of all, (*Exod.* c. viii. v. 1—3,) will go forth to promote idolatry, pretending to work miracles in ſupport of their doctrine; and to collect the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, all in every place, that favour that deſign; that they may make one united effort againſt the cauſe of God; and thus they will be gathered for battle, againſt the great day, in which the Almighty God intends to deſtroy them. Some have imagined theſe three myſtical frogs, to be the Dominicans, Franciſcans, and Jeſuits; and the character, &c, would agree well enough with that of thoſe Janizaries of the church of Rome; but the predicted events muſt fall much later than the founding of thoſe orders; and ſatan will no doubt be able to excite men of the ſame ſtamp to ſimilar ſervices with thoſe performed by them in former times. Theſe will be times of great temptation; and, therefore, Chriſt by his apoſtle, called on his profeſſed ſervants, to expect his ſudden coming, and to watch, that they might retain and be found in the garments of ſalvation, and not appear naked and ſo be put to ſhame, as apoſtates or hypocrites: for the bleſſing would belong only to the watchful. This parentheſis interrupts the prediction: but it proceeds to ſhew, that *He*, even the Lord gathered together the kings of the earth, in his righteous providence, to a place called Armageddon, or the mountain of deſtruction, with reference to Megiddo; (*Judg.* c. v. ver. 19. 2 *Kings*, c. xxiii. v. 29, 30.)

V. 17—21.] Satan is called the prince of the power of the air, and this laſt vial will be poured into the ſeat of his empire; for after it, his cauſe in every place, as well as within the dominions of the beaſt will be ruined. A proclamation was therefore made, that it was *done*, or *finiſhed*; as under the ſeventh trumpet the myſtery of God was to be finiſhed. (c. x. v. 7.) Terrible calamities, awful diſplays of the divine preſence; inteſtine diſtractions, the revolt or deſtruction of cities and nations, &c, will make way for great Babylon to drink of the wine of the fierceneſs of God's wrath: and the concurrent judgments are deſcribed in the ſtrongeſt language; eſpecially by hail-ſtones of above an hundred pounds weight each; which muſt daſh in pieces all perſons and things whatſoever, they fall upon. But how this is to be underſtood, the event muſt ſhew.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How infatuated muſt men be to rebel againſt, and ſet at defiance the power of God, who can fight againſt them in ſuch varied means, and with ſuch irreſiſtible weapons; eſpecially as he continues to beſeech his enemies to be reconciled to him, and ſhare his omnipotent and everlaſting favour! No wonder that angels, who witneſs or execute his vengeance on ſuch implacable haters of God, of Chriſt, and of holineſs, loudly celebrate the praiſes of his juſtice and truth; and adore his awful diſpenſations, when he brings upon bloody perſecutors, the tortures which they inflicted on his ſaints and prophets. But the heart of man

CHAP. XVII.

Contains an angel 1ſt. Shewing John the antichriſtian power, that was to be deſtroyed under the emblem of an infamous but ſplendid harlot, riding on a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt, with a golden cup in her hand, and her name inſcribed on her forehead, &c, 1---6. 2d. Explaining the viſion to him, 7---18.

AND there came one of the ſeven angels which had the ſeven vials, and talked with me, ſaying unto me, Come hither; I will ſhew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that ſitteth upon many waters:

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the ſpirit into the wilderneſs: and I ſaw a woman ſit upon a ſcarlet coloured beaſt, full of names of blaſphemy, having ſeven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious ſtones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthineſs of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I ſaw the woman drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus: and when I ſaw her, I wondered with great admiration.

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is ſo deſperately wicked, that the moſt complicated miſeries alone, will never induce them to repentance; nay, if they are left to themſelves, they will blaſpheme the name of God, even in the intervals of their gnawing their tongues with pain! It is vain therefore to expect that purgatory, or hell-fire will ever bring men to glorify God in true repentance, or in any ſenſe purge away their ſins. Even hell is filled with blaſphemies, determined, and horrid, in proportion to the degree of its torments: and they are as ignorant of the hiſtory of human nature, as of the Bible and of their own hearts, who do not know, that the more men ſuffer, and ſee of the hand of God in their ſufferings, the more furiouſly they often rage againſt him. Let then ſinners ſeek repentance *now* from Chriſt, and the grace of the holy Spirit; or they will hereafter have the anguiſh and horror of an unhumbled, impenitent, and deſperate heart, burning with enmity againſt God, as well as tortured by the fire of his indignation: and thus augmenting guilt and miſery to all eternity. Whilſt ſatan, and wicked men, by every artifice, and with all their power, excite numbers to combine againſt the cauſe of God; they are in fact gathered by him, that he may execute judgment upon them. But many of thoſe, who are profeſſedly the friends of God will have their portion with avowed unbelievers; and being found deſtitute of the robe of ſalvation, will be put to ſhame and periſh. May we then remember that Chriſt cometh ſuddenly; that we may watch, and give diligence to be found of him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1—6.] This chapter digreſſes from the ſubject, to ſhew more preciſely what was meant by great Babylon, &c. One of the angels, who had poured out the vials, converſed in viſion with John; and bade him come to him, and he would ſhew him the judgment of that corrupt church, which might be emphatically called, "the great whore;" becauſe it had exceeded all other churches, or ſocieties, in ſeducing men to commit idolatry, and other abominations. The many waters, on which this dignified harlot, who was illuſtrious in her infamy, ſat enthroned as a queen, are afterwards explained, (v. 15,) "with her the kings of the earth "had been inveigled to commit fornication, &c. No one can doubt, but Rome is meant in this chapter; nay the moſt zealous papiſts allow it: and indeed, it would not have been made ſo undeniable by being expreſſly named, as it is by this deſcription; for in that caſe we might have ſuppoſed that the name was to be underſtood myſtically, as Babylon muſt be. The only queſtion then is, whether Rome Pagan, or Rome Papal is to be underſtood by it? But Pagan Rome never ſeduced the kings of the earth to join in her idolatries: ſhe never intoxicated the inhabitants with the wine of her fornication: for ſhe ſubdued and ruled them with an iron rod, and not by artifices and blandiſhments: ſhe left them in general to their ancient uſages, and worſhip; nay ſhe even imported the idols and vices of the conquered nations, and thus became fatally corrupted: and when the Roman emperors perſecuted the chriſtians, they did it rather from a deſire of cruſhing innovations, which threatened, as they ſuppoſed, the peace of the ſtate, than from zeal for any particular form of idolatry. On the other hand, it is well known, by what ſubtle inſinuations, and politic management, "with "all the deceivableneſs, of unrighteouſneſs," Rome Papal, without any adequate temporal force, hath obtained and preſerved an aſcendency over kings and nations; attaching them to her uſurped dominion, in blind ſubmiſſion, and inducing them to conform to her idolatries, and corruptions of chriſtianity. So that the authority of kings, and the forces of the nations, have repeatedly been employed in defence of her tyranny: and multitudes have been intoxicated and infuriated by their zeal for that church, to murder their unoffending neighbours by tens of thouſands, and to enſlave, weaken and impoveriſh themſelves! The angel then carried John, "*in the Spi-* "*rit;*" (that is, being under the influence of the prophetic ſpirit, he ſeemed to be conveyed,) into the wilderneſs; for the antichriſtian tyranny, and ſeductions had

7 And the angel ſaid unto me, Wherefore didſt thou marvel? I will tell thee the myſtery of the woman, and of the beaſt that carrieth her, which hath the ſeven heads and ten horns.

8 The beaſt that thou ſaweſt was, and is not; and ſhall aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth ſhall wonder, whoſe names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beaſt that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here *is* the mind which hath wiſdom. The ſeven heads are ſeven mountains on which the woman ſitteth.

10 And there are ſeven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he muſt continue a ſhort ſpace.

11 And the beaſt that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the ſeven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beaſt.

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reduced the church into a moſt deſolate ſtate and made it like a deſert: and he there ſaw a woman ſeated on a ſcarlet coloured beaſt. (c. xii. v. 3.) This woman was the emblem of the church of Rome, and the beaſt of the temporal power, by which it hath been ſupported; and the latter was full of names of blaſphemy, which we have had repeated occaſions to mention. The ſeven heads and ten horns are afterwards explained. The woman alſo was arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour: for theſe have always been the diſtinguiſhing colours of popes and cardinals, as well as of the Roman emperors and ſenators: nay, by a kind of infatuation, the mules and horſes on which they rode, have been covered with ſcarlet cloth; as if they were determined to anſwer this deſcription, and even literally to ride on a ſcarlet coloured beaſt! The woman was alſo moſt ſuperbly decorated with gold and jewels: and who can ſufficiently deſcribe the pride, grandeur, and magnificence of the church of Rome, in her veſtments and ornaments of every kind? Even papiſts have gloried in the ſuperiority of their church in theſe matters, to ancient Rome when at the height of her proſperity. This appears in all things relating to their public worſhip, and in the Papal court, even beyond what can be conceived: and external pomp attaches carnal men to a religion, that intereſts and gratifies them, whilſt they deſpiſe the ſimplicity of ſpiritual worſhip. Moreover, in the woman's hand "was a golden cup full "of abominations, &c;" this alludes to the practice of harlots in inflaming their paramours, with love potions; and repreſents the various faſcinating allurements, the impoſtures, deluſions, promiſes of impunity, indulgences, abſolutions, hopes of wordly intereſt preferment, &c. by which that church hath obtained, and preſerved her influence, and ſeduced men to join in her ſpiritual fornication, the other abominations of her corrupt worſhip, the unholineſs connected with it. (*Jer.* c. li. v. 7.) To diſtinguiſh this notorious harlot from all others, her name was inſcribed on her forehead; (as proſtitutes of old ſometimes made themſelves known, by a label on their foreheads, with their names upon it.) This was "*Myſtery,* "*Babylon the Great.*" Her religion was a myſtery of iniquity, (2 *Theſſ.* c. ii. v. 7.) and ſhe herſelf was myſtically Babylon. But there was nothing in Pagan Rome, to which this title was more proper, than to any other city; nor would it have been any thing myſterious to have ſubſtituted one Pagan city for another: but it was indeed a great myſtery, that the profeſſed metropolis of the chriſtian church ſhould be mother Babylon in idolatry, iniquity, and cruelty to the people of God: and therefore her title of "the Roman Catholic, or univerſal "church," entitles her to the name of "*Myſtery, Baby-* "*lon the Great.*" She effects indeed the character of our holy mother the church, but ſhe is in fact "*the mo-* "*ther of harlots,* or rather, *of fornication,*" "*and abo-* "*minations of the earth;*" the inventreſs, ſource, promoter, and *principal* example of idolatries, and all kind of abominable abuſes, and perverſions of chriſtianity, with which the nations of the earth have been corrupted. It is aſſerted by writers of good authority, that before the reformation, the word *myſtery* was written in letters of gold, upon the front of the Pope's mitre; but the fact has been controverted, and therefore, we cannot be abſolutely certain of it. The woman was alſo as notorious for cruelty and perſecution as for idolatry and profligacy; and the apoſtle ſaw her intoxicated with the blood of the ſaints, and martyrs of Jeſus. In this reſpect Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal were both criminal; but the latter has probably ſlain more thouſands, than the former did individuals: and the apoſtle would not have been ſo greatly aſtoniſhed to have ſeen a heathen city perſecuting chriſtians, (having witneſſed and experienced ſuch perſecutions, previous to this viſion:) but that a city profeſſedly chriſtian ſhould thus wanton and riot in the blood of the ſaints, might well excite his amazement! All this is very plain, but papiſts "wonder "by what figure of ſpeech heretics are called ſaints, and "rebels againſt the Pope, martyrs of Jeſus." (Hurd.)

V. 7—14.] We might have been well ſatisfied of the meaning of theſe emblems, if we had received no further information: but leſt we ſhould miſtake or heſitate, the angel became the interpreter of the viſion. As the apoſtle had ſeen and heard ſo much on the ſame ſubject before, the angel enquired into the reaſon of his exceſſive amazement. And he then ſhewed to him the myſtery of the woman, &c. A beaſt is the emblem of an idolatrous and oppreſſive empire: the Roman empire *was* the beaſt under the Pagan emperors: it ceaſed to be ſo, when it became chriſtian, with reference to which the angel ſays by way

13 Theſe have one mind, and ſhall give their power and ſtrength unto the beaſt.

14 Theſe ſhall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb ſhall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and choſen, and faithful.

15 And he ſaith unto me, The waters which thou ſaweſt, where the whore ſitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt upon the beaſt, theſe ſhall hate the whore, and ſhall make her deſolate, and naked, and ſhall eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to ful-

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of anticipation “ It is not;” yet it ſhould afterwards “ aſcend out of the abyſs;” that is, when the antichriſtian empire became idolatrous and perſecuting, and the dragon gave his power to the beaſt: as to its outward cauſe, it aroſe out of the ſea, the tempeſtuous eſtate of the nations; but it was in fact from hell, being ſatan's grand ſcheme for oppoſing the goſpel, (Notes, &c. c. ix. v. 1—3. c. xiii. v. 1, 2;) and therefore after a time it would go into perdition, and be deſtroyed finally and for ever. Yet, in the mean while it would deceive, into a ſtupid admiration, and blind ſubmiſſion, all the inhabitants of the earth, within the ſphere of its influence, except the remnant of the elect, &c. (c. xiii. v. 8.) Here then was a proper trial and exerciſe of a man's wiſdom to diſcover what was meant by the beaſt, that had been, was not, and yet was, being the ſame in a different form. To aſſiſt the enquirer in this matter, the angel obſerved, that the ſeven heads of this ſymbolical beaſt, repreſented ſeven mountains, on which the woman was enthroned; being eſpecially the ſeat of that ſpiritual authority, by which the power of the beaſt is ſupported. This is the known ſituation of Rome; and though Conſtantinople be alſo built on ſeven hills, they are comparatively obſcure, and no other beaſt anſwers to it: for the ſeven heads of the beaſt had another enigmatical meaning, and ſignified ſeven forms of government, or ſucceſſions of rulers, according to the uſual prophetic meaning of the word kings. *They* all indeed appeared in viſion, at once upon the beaſt; but in fact five of them were fallen, at that time; namely kings, conſuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes; one of them then ſubſiſted, even that of emperors; and another was not yet come, which when he came would endure only for a ſhort time. Some explain this of the chriſtian emperors; but this muſt either be included in the ſixth head, or it could not be a head of the beaſt at all, not being idolatrous: others explain it of the Exarch of Ravenna, who for ſome years ruled over Rome: and others, of the uſurpations of the pope, before he became a temporal prince, or the preſcribed 1260 years of the reign of the beaſt entered. However, in general it ſeems to relate to the intervening ſpace between the ſubverſion of the empire; and the eſtabliſhment of papal tyranny: during which time Rome was under the temporal juriſdiction of the Exarch of Ravenna, and the ſpiritual rule of the pope, who had already introduced the worſhip of ſaints and images, and many other groſs abuſes. If this be reckoned a diſtinct form of government, then the beaſt, as it ſubſiſted when the woman ſat on it, was the eighth; but if it is deemed too inconſiderable to be reckoned a diſtinct head, “ He was one of the ſeven;” but whether the ſeventh or the eighth, he would be the laſt form of government in that idolatrous empire; and would go into perdition. “ The beaſt, therefore, on which the “ woman rideth, is the Roman government in its laſt “ form; and this, all muſt acknowledge, is papal, not “ imperial.” (Newton.) For the laſt head was the only one, which was referred to, when the woman ſat on the beaſt; and was therefore ſpoken of as the beaſt itſelf. Moreover the ten horns, (which ſeem to have all grown on the laſt head,) were ten kings, or ſucceſſions of kings; who had received no kingdom, when John had this viſion: but they would receive power as kings, *one hour* with the beaſt, *at the ſame time*, or *for the ſame period.* This points out the diviſion of the Roman empire into ten diſtinct kingdoms, yet all united in one deſign to ſupport the idolatry, &c, of the church of Rome. They might be kings, but not horns of the beaſt; till they embraced that religion, and both ſtrengthened the hands of the pope and church of Rome, and were ſtrengthened by them, (Note, *Dan.* c. vii. v. 7, 8.) Theſe were cotemporary, not ſucceſſive princes; and therefore, they were of one mind, to give their power, &c, to the beaſt; implicitly ſubmitting to that idolatrous religion, defending its tyranny and uſurpations, enduring its exorbitant exactions, and obeying its mandates to make war, &c, in oppoſing the cauſe of Chriſt, and in order to extirpate his diſciples. But it was predicted, that they would all be finally defeated in that war, by the Lamb of God; as He, and not the pope, “ is Lord of lords, and King of kings;” and his followers effectually called to enliſt under his ſtandard, in conſequence of his ſpecial choice of them; and therefore they are true believers, faithful to his cauſe, and to their own engagements.

V. 15—18.] The angel next explained “ the many “ waters, on which the woman ſat” in regal dignity: ſo many words in the plural number aptly deſcribe the extenſive dominion of the church of Rome, not only over thoſe within the territories belonging to the papacy, but over all the kingdoms of that communion: nay the pope hath claimed the right over all nations, to diſpoſe of crowns, depoſe princes, &c, at his pleaſure! As if he were Lord of lords, and King of kings: and the very titles of univerſal biſhop, the Roman catholic church, &c, fully accord to this deſcription. However, this will not always be the caſe; for the ten horns, or kingdoms, that once exalted and ſupported the eccleſiaſtical tyranny, will at length hate, deſolate, ſtrip, devour, and deſtroy it: that is moſt of them will be the great inſtruments in the deſtruction of popery, and the ruin of Rome itſelf; though others will lament over theſe events. How far fill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beaſt, until the words of God ſhall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou ſaweſt is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains 1ſt. A mighty angel announcing the fall of Babylon, and its utter deſolation, becauſe of its abominations, 1---3. 2d. A voice from heaven calling God's people to come out of her, leſt they ſhould be involved in her deſtruction, 4---8. 3d. The kings and merchants connected with her, lamenting her fall; and the apoſtles, &c, called to rejoice over it, 9---20. 4th. Her final and total overthrow ſignified by a mill-ſtone caſt into the ſea; and then emphatically deſcribed, 21---24.

AND after theſe things I ſaw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a ſtrong voice, ſaying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and

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ſome late revolutions may lead to this criſis, we cannot tell: but preſent appearances render it probable, that the laſt victory of the beaſt over the witneſſes of Chriſt, will be obtained in ſome other way, than by papal deluſions, &c, (Note, c. xi. v. 1—9.) Indeed God hath ſo influenced their hearts, by his imperceptible power over them, and by the diſpenſations of his Providence; that they fulfil his will, or do thoſe things without intending it, which he hath purpoſed and predicted: ſo that theſe kings have agreed together, to give their power to the beaſt; to make him, as it were, their liege lord, and only to reign over others, to render them ſubſervient to him. But they will at length better underſtand their own intereſt, and their duty to God and their ſubjects, than thus any longer to proſtitute their power. To terminate the deſcription of the woman that ſat on this ſymbolical beaſt, ſhe was declared to be, or to repreſent, that city; which reigned over the kings of the earth, when John had this viſion: and every body muſt know Rome to be that city. Indeed this was the avowed object, aim and ambition of that city, from its foundation; and, in different ways, it hath accompliſhed its purpoſe, with little interruption, even to this preſent time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord takes pleaſure in ſatisfying his people concerning the reaſons, and equity of his judgments on his enemies; that they may not be intimidated by the ſeverity of them, or fail to adore and praiſe him on that account. Great proſperity, pomp and ſplendour commonly feed the pride and luſts of the human heart; and they can never form any ſecurity againſt the divine vengeance. They, who allure, or tempt others to ſin muſt expect more aggravated puniſhment, in proportion to the degree of the miſchief done by them. The worſt abominations, idolatries, filthineſs, cruelties, and blaſphemies have been perpetrated within the profeſſing church: and a magnificent religion, connected with purple, and decked with gold and jewels, is generally antichriſtian. Indeed every attempt to accommodate the truth or worſhip of God, to the taſte of carnal men, muſt mar its ſimplicity, and corrupt its purity. But the *golden* cup in the hand of Babylon and her daughters, will reconcile moſt men to the myſteries of iniquity connected with it; and make them willingly ſwallow down, the wine of their fornications; and even induce them to join in making themſelves drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and martyrs of Jeſus. Let all then beware of a ſplendid, a lucrative, or a faſhionable religion: let us avoid the myſteries of iniquity, and ſtudy diligently the great myſtery of godlineſs; that we may learn humility, ſimplicity, ſelf-denial, and gratitude, in the ſtable at Bethlehem, in the work-ſhop at Nazareth, by the ſide of the well at Sychar, in the garden, and on mount Calvary: for the more we reſemble Chriſt, the leſs ſhall we be liable to be deceived by antichriſt. We cannot but wonder at the oceans, as it were, of chriſtian blood, that have been ſhed by men called chriſtians: but our wonder will abate, when we conſider theſe prophecies, and the awful fact will turn to us for a teſtimony of the truth of the goſpel. Whatever enemies at any time make war againſt the Lamb of God, muſt ſurely be overcome by him: though hand join in hand ſuch wicked men ſhall not be unpuniſhed; even if all the kings and nations of the earth ſhould agree in oppoſing him: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and his called choſen and faithful followers, are on the ſtrongeſt ſide. May we approve ourſelves to be of that number! And then we ſhall be received to his glory; when wicked men will be deſtroyed in a moſt terrible manner; and when their concurrence together in ſin will be turned into the bittereſt, hatred and rage, and they will aſſiſt in tormenting each other. But the Lord's Portion is his people; his counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1—3.] (Note, c. xvi. v. 19.) After the apoſtle had been certified who Babylon the Great was, and what ſhe had done; he had the viſion of her deſtruction continued. Another angel, diſtinct from thoſe, who poured out the vials, came down from heaven, poſſeſſing great power, and illuminating the earth with his glory: this was either Chriſt himſelf, or an emblematic repreſentation of his coming to deſtroy his enemies, and to diffuſe the light of his goſpel through all nations; to which events the language naturally directs our thoughts. He, therefore, proclaimed in a loud voice, which all might hear, and which implied power, and authority; that "Babylon the Great was fallen, &c," totally, and finally; (*Iſaiah*. c. xxi. v. 9:) and that it was become not only deſolate, but a kind of hell upon earth. Some think, that the words may refer to the diſcoveries, which will then be made of the diabolical am-the hold of every foul ſpirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, ſaying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her ſins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as ſhe rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which ſhe hath filled, fill to her double.

7 How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give her: for ſhe ſaith in her heart, I ſit a queen, and am no widow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow.

8 Therefore ſhall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and ſhe ſhall be utterly burned with fire: for ſtrong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciouſly with her, ſhall bewail her, and lament for her,

bition, impoſture, lies, murder, horrible uncleanneſs, &c, with which the city is filled, under the maſk of religion; but the expreſſions are figurative and borrowed from the Old Teſtament; (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xiii. v. 19—22. c. xxxiv. *Jer.* c. l. v. 29.) No deſtruction of Rome has hitherto left it in this condition; unleſs any chooſe to ſay, that it "hath been the habitation of devils, and "the hold of every foul ſpirit, and a cage of every un-"clean and hateful bird;" ever ſince popes, cardinals, &c, &c; have made it their reſidence. To the reaſons before aſſigned for the ruin of this city, it is here added, that "the merchants of the earth are waxed rich, "through the abundance of her delicacies:" her outward magnificence, luxury, and exceſs have proved a ſource of wealth to vaſt multitudes; and the various arts, trades, manufactures, and ſpecies of commerce, which flouriſh by means of the pompous religion of that church, have always helped to ſupport it: for "by that "craft many have their wealth." But the ſpiritual merchandize, by which ſuch multitudes have wickedly lived in affluence, and enjoyed abundant delicacies, on the ſins and follies of mankind, may alſo be intended.

V. 4—8.] As Lot was called forth out of Sodom, before it was deſtroyed by fire and brimſtone, ſo God's people are directed by a voice from heaven, to come out of Babylon, before her fall. (*Iſaiah*, c. li. v. 11:) but this ſummons concerns all perſons in every age: they who believe in Chriſt, and worſhip God in the Spirit, ſhould ſeparate from ſo corrupt a church, and from all others, that copy her example of idolatry, perſecution, cruelty and tyranny; and avoid "being partakers of her "ſins;" even if they have renounced her communion; or elſe they will be in danger of being involved in her plagues. As her crimes, her daring, preſumptuous and atrocious wickedneſs, reſembled mountains reaching to heaven, ſo God had remembered her iniquities, though his forbearance had been miſtaken for diſregard. And therefore, the perſons, or nations, who had been perſecuted by her, were to retaliate upon her, as a condemned criminal; and to give her a double meaſure of the wine of his wrath, from the cup of his indignation; according to the atrociouſneſs of her ſins, and the cruel treatment, which they had received at her hands: that torture and anguiſh might be rendered to her proportionable to her former oſtentation, honour, ſplendour, and luxury; and to the pride and preſumption, with which ſhe had ſet theſe predictions at defiance, declaring that "ſhe ſat as "a queen, was no bereaved deſtitute widow, and ſhould "ſee no ſorrow," whatever the word of God had threatened. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. xlvii.) Therefore all the plagues that had been denounced againſt her, would ſurely come on her in one day, ſuddenly and unexpectedly; death in every dreadful form would fill the city with mourning, and famine would attend the other deſolations; till ſhe ſhould *utterly* be burned with fire; and then ſhe would know that the Lord, who had judged and condemned her, was ſtrong, and fully able to execute the tremendous ſentence.

V. 9, 10.] Some of the kings who have previouſly ſupported the church of Rome, will adhere to her, even when the reſt of them will unite in deſtroying her, (c. xvii. v. 16:) and they will lament her fall, having been bigotted to her idolatries, and lived in more abundant luxury and magnificence, through their alliance with her. They will, therefore, bewail at a diſtance the ſmoke of her burning, and torment, without being able to quench the one, or relieve the other: ſo that they muſt either renounce her at laſt, or ſhare her doom. In this ſituation, they will ſay, alas, alas! Or *woe*, *woe*: for this will be the third woe before mentioned, (c. xi. v. 14:) not that the fall of Rome will terminate that woe, (though it will end with the ſeventh vial,) (c. xvi. v. 17;) for the events predicted in the following chapter &c, will form a conſiderable part of it. Nor is there any proof, though it hath generally been ſuppoſed, that the ſecond woe trumpet will end in the deſtruction of the Othman empire. (c. ix. v. 13—21.) On the contrary, it ſeems probable, that it will ſubſiſt in an enfeebled ſtate, till after the fall of the weſtern antichriſt: this may perhaps be the grand means of the converſion of the Jews; and their reſtoration to their own land may produce the ſubverſion of the Othman empire, the deſtruction of the Mahometan deluſion, and the calling of the other Gentiles. (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. xxxviii. xxxix. *Dan.* c, xi. v. 40—45.) We ſhould not indeed be very confident in ſuch matters; yet the arrangement when they ſhall ſee the ſmoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth ſhall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandiſe any more:

12 The merchandiſe of gold, and ſilver, and precious ſtones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and ſilk, and ſcarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner veſſels of ivory, and all manner veſſels of moſt precious wood, and of braſs, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincenſe, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beaſts and ſheep, and horſes, and chariots, and ſlaves, and ſouls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy ſoul luſted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly, are departed from thee, and thou ſhalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of theſe things, which were made rich by her, ſhall ſtand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

16 And ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and ſcarlet, and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour ſo great riches is come to nought. And every ſhipmaſter, and all the company in ſhips, and ſailors, and as many as trade by ſea, ſtood afar off,

18 And cried when they ſaw the ſmoke of her burning, ſaying, What *city is* like unto this great city!

19 And they caſt duſt on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ſhips in the ſea, by reaſon of her coſtlineſs! for in one hour is ſhe made deſolate.

20 Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apoſtles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty angel took up a ſtone like

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of this and the two following chapters ſeems to favour the ſuppoſition: as the deſtruction of all Chriſt's implacable enemies, the converſion of the nations, and the binding of ſatan, &c, are predicted in order after the fall of Rome.

V. 11—20.] (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. xxvi. xxvii.) The lamentation of theſe merchants coincides with that of the merchants over Tyre The various articles of commerce here enumerated, do not require a particular conſideration: the whole tends to give us a proper impreſſion of the ſplendour, luxury, exceſs, and ſelf-indulgence of all kinds, which fills that antichriſtian, licentious city; and which have always enriched vaſt multitudes in different ways, by impoveriſhing the nations belonging to her communion. Neither need we accommodate the various particulars, to the ſeveral kinds of ſpiritual merchandize, by which the Popes, cardinals, biſhops, abbots, prieſts, &c, &c; have been enriched, at the expence of the people. Theſe are indeed evidently alluded to; when not only ſlaves, but the *ſouls of men* are mentioned as articles of commerce; which is the moſt infamous of all trades, that ever the demon of avarice deviſed. The ſale of indulgences, diſpenſations, abſolutions, maſſes, bulls, &c, hath greatly enriched the clergy, and their dependents; to the deceiving and deſtroying of the ſouls perhaps of millions; and thus "by feigned words, they made merchandize of them:" nor has the management of church preferments, and many other things, been any better than trafficking in ſouls; but it would be well, if this merchandiſe had been peculiar to the Roman antichriſt. In general, however, all this will at length come to nothing, and no man will buy of Rome's merchandize any more; but all who ſhared the gains of her commerce temporal, or ſpiritual, will ſtand afar off, for fear of her torment, and behold, the ſmoke of her burning, as that of Sodom was ſeen at a diſtance, (*Gen.* c. xix. v. 28:) for probably the deſtruction of Rome will be finiſhed by ſome immediate judgment of God; and the nature of the ſoil in the vicinity, the frequent eruptions of ſubterraneous fires, and the terrible earthquakes which have occurred, ſeem to point out the method: the combuſtibles are provided, and the train is already laid, and there only wants the breath of the Almighty to kindle it. But whilſt others, whoſe hopes of further gains will be gone, ſhall lament the fall of Rome; the inhabitants of heaven, and eſpecially the holy apoſtles and prophets, are called on to rejoice over it: as God had revenged them on that idolatrous perſecuting city, as well as made way for the preaching of his goſpel to all the nations. It is obſervable, that the apoſtles, who are idolatrouſly honoured at Rome, ſhould be ſpecially mentioned as rejoicing in her fall; as if it avenged them on her for the diſhonour caſt on their characters, as well as vindicated the glory of God.

V. 21—24.] (Note, *Jer.* c. li. v. 63, 64.) As a ſtone was tied to a book, and caſt into the Euphrates by Seraiah, in token of literal Babylon's fall; ſo a mighty angel here caſt a mill-ſtone in the ſea, to repreſent the violence of myſtical Babylon's fall, and to ſhew, that ſhe would never more be raiſed up again. This event is further illuſtrated by expreſſions taken from the prophets, (*Iſaiah*, c. xxiv. v. 8. *Jer.* c. vii. v. 34. c. xvi. v. 9. c. xxv. v. 10. *Ezek.* c. xxvi. v. 13.) "But Rome is ſtill a great millſtone, and caſt *it* into the ſea, ſaying, Thus with violence ſhall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and muſicians and of pipers, and trumpeters, ſhall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftſman, of whatſoever craft *he be*, ſhall be found any more in thee; and the ſound of a millſtone ſhall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle ſhall ſhine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride ſhall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy ſorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of ſaints, and of all that were ſlain upon the earth.

“ ſtanding, and flouriſhing, and is honoured by many nations as the metropolis of the chriſtian world; ſhe ſtill reſounds with *ſingers and muſicians*; ſhe ſtill excels in *arts*, which ſerve to pomp and luxury: ſhe ſtill abounds with *candles* and *lamps* and *torches*, burning even by day as well as by night; and conſequently this prophecy hath not been, but remains yet to be fulfilled,” (Newton.) Her merchants being ſaid to be “ the great men of the earth,” in connexion with “ all nations being deceived by her *ſorceries*,” plainly refers to the infamous traffic before mentioned; by which the Pope, and cardinals, &c, are aggrandized.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When collective bodies are ripe for vengeance, their ſins will be puniſhed in this world; but individuals are reſerved unto the wrath to come, of which all temporal calamities are only the earneſts. Impunity and proſperity in wickedneſs, conſtitute the moſt fatal incentive to further crimes: and, as the day of puniſhment will come, they may be deemed the moſt dire calamities. When the Lord ſhall come in his great power, to lighten the earth with his glory; he will caſt down the proudeſt cities, that are filled with iniquity, and oppoſe his cauſe. The magnificence of wicked kings, or the riches of ungodly merchants, will avail nothing, when the hour of the Lord's judgment ſhall arrive; except to augment, and render more intolerable the vengeance to be inflicted: for ſurely the contempt and torment of hell will be more dreadful to thoſe, who have glorified themſelves and lived deliciouſly, than to other ſinners! No allies, or helpers can deliver, or defend thoſe, againſt whom the Lord God, as a ſtrong Judge and Avenger, is pleaſed to contend: and they can only lament the victims of his indignation, and tremble for themſelves. The proſperous merchants and traders in great commercial cities ſhould learn from ſuch ſubjects “ to buy the truth,” “ to get wiſdom, and with all their getting to get ſpiritual underſtanding,” “ to ſell all, in order to purchaſe the pearl of great price, and to enſure the unſearchable riches of Chriſt;” and to be faithful ſtewards in the unrighteous mammon: otherwiſe, even in this life, they may lament, that “ no man buyeth their merchandize any more;” and, that “ all the fruits that their ſouls luſted after, are departed from them.” However death will ſoon terminate their commerce, and in that one hour all their riches will come to nought, and all their purple, and fine linen, &c, will not only be exchanged for the coffin and the worm, but for the fire that never ſhall be quenched, (Notes, &c, *Luke*, c. xvi.) Too often injuſtice, oppreſſion, fraud, avarice, or exceſſive indulgence, connect with extenſive commerce: and to number *the perſons of men*, with beaſts, ſheep and horſes, as the ſtock of a farm, or with bales of goods, as the cargo of a ſhip, is no doubt an *antichriſtian* practice, fit only for Babylon the Great. Yet this is not the worſt traffic, which is carried on even in our land: for the ſouls of men are traded for by thoſe, who take the cure of them, for the ſake of the emolument, and the abundance of the delicacies obtained thereby; and then leave them to periſh in ignorance, or poiſon them by hereſy, or lead them on the road to hell by a profligate example. When Chriſt ſhall drive the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, he will have much to do in other places beſides Rome: many of theſe ſpiritual wickedneſſes, and this merchandize of ſouls, by feigned words, equivocating ſubſcriptions and declarations, nay worſhipping God in expreſſions, that are deemed falſe by thoſe that uſe them; and all this for filthy lucre's ſake, will be found, under different forms, even in the proteſtant churches: and perhaps no denomination is quite free from the guilt of rendering religious profeſſion, and ſacred functions *ſubſervient* to worldly intereſt, credit, eaſe, and indulgence. Theſe are the remains of the antichriſtianity derived from Rome, which moſt need proteſting againſt, and removing; in theſe things we ought to come out and ſeparate from Babylon, if we would not partake of her plagues: compared with ſuch evils a poſture, a garb, or a ceremony, though perhaps inconvenient in itſelf, and derived from Rome, are ſcarce worth noticing: yet bigotry works much the other way; and the externals are decried with great warmth, whilſt the ſpiritual pride, avarice, worldly indulgence, and intolerance of Rome are not ſo diſreliſhing! But the vengeance of heaven is not coming upon Rome, for mere geſtures, garbs and ceremonies, though multiplied, ridiculous, and of bad conſequence in themſelves; but for idolatry, ambition, oppreſſion, cruelty to God's people, impoſture, avarice, licentiouſneſs, and ſpiritual tyranny. Theſe are the ſins, which have reached to the heavens; the iniquities, that God remembers; and the evils, for which we muſt ſtand aloof from her communion, and that of all others, who reſemble her; or we ſhall be involved in their deſtruction. But we muſt needs go out of the world, and the church too, if we renounce every religious ſect, becauſe ſome of the members or leaders of it are criminal in ſuch matters. When the world re-

CHAP. XIX.

Contains 1ſt. The church, and all the ſervants of God, praiſing him with loud acclamations; with an intimation of the vaſt ſucceſs of the goſpel, under the emblem of the marriage of the Lamb, 1---8. *2d. An angel declaring the bleſſedneſs of thoſe, who were called to the marriage ſupper; and John about to worſhip him, but reproved,* 9, 10. *3d. Chriſt and his followers on white horſes, obtaining great victories and utterly deſtroying all oppoſers, &c.* 11---21.

AND after theſe things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, ſaying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand.

3 And again they ſaid, Alleluia. And her ſmoke roſe up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four beaſts fell down and worſhipped God that ſat on the throne, ſaying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, ſaying, Praiſe our God, all ye his ſervants, and ye that fear him, both ſmall and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, ſaying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready.

8 And to her was granted that ſhe ſhould be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteouſneſs of ſaints.

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joices; Chriſt's diſciples often mourn: but they are called to rejoice, when the world is filled with lamentation. No matter what becomes of all the riches, magnificence, and coſtlineſs of the earth, if Chriſt's kingdom be but promoted; and his enemies either converted or deprived of the power to do miſchief: apoſtles and prophets rejoice in heaven on ſuch occaſions, and we ought to rejoice on earth; even though they be connected with the fall of mighty cities and empires, to riſe no more for ever. But let ſinners take warning by the judgments executed on others, to tremble and flee from the wrath to come: and let us all take occaſion from the view given us of the changeable nature of earthly things, to ſet our affections on things above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1—8.] After the apoſtle had witneſſed the deſtruction of myſtical Babylon, he heard the voice of much people in heaven, ſinging the praiſes of God, and aſcribing to him their own ſalvation, and that of his church, with glory, honour and power, &c. For his truth and juſtice had been alike conſpicuous in the judgments that had been executed on that corrupt and perſecuting church and city: and again they cried Allelujah, or praiſe the Lord; whilſt the ſmoke of the city aroſe up perpetually, and was an emblem of the final and eternal miſery of the inhabitants, who had been cut off in their ſins. (c. xiv. v. 10, 11.) In theſe praiſes the emblematical repreſentatives of the church, and her miniſters moſt cordially united: and a voice from the throne of God, or from ſome One, that was very near to it, called all the ſervants of the Lord in heaven and earth, great and ſmall, even all his worſhippers without diſtinction, to praiſe Him; which was followed by the acclamations of a multitude, like the ruſhing of a cataract, or the roaring of the ſea, who joined in praiſing the Lord, becauſe by his omnipotence he had taken the throne, and would reign in and by his co equal Son all over the earth. The repeated uſe of the word Allelujah, which is Hebrew, is ſuppoſed by ſome perſons to be an intimation that the Jews will be converted about the time of the deſtruction of Rome: and, whatever may be thought of this, it is exceeding probable that the accompliſhment of the New Teſtament prophecies, in this reſpect, will be one principal means of effecting that happy change. The whole company, before-mentioned, next call on each other to rejoice, and give glory to the Lord; becauſe the marriage of the Lamb was come, &c. He is the Bridegroom of his ranſomed church: this ſacred union will be fully completed in heaven; but the beginning of the glorious millennium may be conſidered as a moſt remarkable celebration of his eſpouſals on earth: all that hath hitherto been done ſeems to be merely an introduction to that happy Era; when innumerable multitudes will be converted, and the ſtate of the church on earth will greatly reſemble heaven itſelf. Then the marriage of the Lamb will come, and his eſpouſed church, being purified from hereſies, diviſions, and antichriſtian abuſes, will be made ready, and meet to be publicly owned by him, as his delight, and his beloved. Then to her it will be granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteouſneſs of the ſaints. The word is plural; and ſome would render it, *the righteous acts*, &c; but it may be queried whether theſe can properly be called the raiment of the ſaints; which ſeem generally, if not always to mean, either the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to them, or the image of Chriſt renewed in them by the ſanctification of the Spirit; of which their righteous acts are effects and evidences: and both theſe ſenſes may be included in the word.

9 And he ſaith unto me, Write, Bleſſed *are* they which are called unto the marriage ſupper of the Lamb. And he ſaith unto me, Theſe are the true ſayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worſhip him. And he ſaid unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren that have the teſtimony of Jeſus: worſhip God: for the teſtimony of Jeſus is the Spirit of prophecy.

11 And I ſaw heaven opened, and behold a white horſe; and he that ſat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteouſneſs he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himſelf.

13 And he *was* clothed with a veſture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horſes, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that with it he ſhould ſmite the nations: and he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on *his* veſture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

V. 9, 10.] An angel, he from whom the voice is ſuppoſed to have come, (v. 5;) or rather He, who interpreted the foregoing viſion, (c. xvii. v. 7,) informed the apoſtle on this occaſion, that they would be peculiarly happy, who were invited to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb: this is true of chriſtians in every age and place; but it ſeems eſpecially to refer to the more abundant grace and conſolation, that they will receive in thoſe approaching happy days; which will render their lives on earth far more bleſſed, than our's are at preſent, and make them meet for a more exalted felicity in heaven. The church collectively is the ſpouſe of Chriſt: believers are often individually ſpoken of as invited gueſts to the marriage feaſt; which may relate both to their preſent joy in the Lord, and to the perfect happineſs of heaven: and the angel further aſſured him, that theſe were the true ſayings of God; thus atteſting the whole of the prophecies and promiſes. Upon which the glorious preſence of the angel, and the rapturous proſpect of ſuch glorious times threw the apoſtle's mind into ſuch anxiety, that he fell proſtrate before the angel to worſhip him: but the latter charged him by no means to do it; as he was not his Creator, or Lord, or in any reſpect an object of adoration, but a fellow ſervant to him, and to his brethren, who had been employed to bear teſtimony to the Lord Jeſus; and he ought to worſhip God, and not a creature, and a ſervant: for he, (the angel,) was only a prophet of ſuperior order, being inſpired by the Spirit to bear teſtimony to Jeſus, as the common Lord of men and angels: and indeed the teſtimony of Jeſus, was the great ſubject of the Spirit of prophecy, to whomſoever he was given; as all the revelations and predictions of ſcripture were intended to make Him known, in his perſonal and mediatorial glory; to make way for, and announce his coming; to lead the attention of men to him; or to prove the doctrines revealed concerning him. We never find Chriſt declined ſuch honour as John was forbidden to render to the angel; nay, he always ſhewed his approbation of it: but the angel was a ſervant, and no more; he is the King of Glory, and the Lord of all, God bleſſed for ever-more, (c. xxii. v. 8, 9.)

V. 11—16.] (c. vi. v. 1, 2.) Having noted the rejoicings of the *univerſal* church over the deſtruction of Rome, &c; the apoſtle ſaw heaven opened, as an indication of further viſions: and he beheld a *white* horſe, the emblem of juſtice and holineſs; and One ſat on it, who was "called faithful and true;" fulfilling his promiſes to his people, and executing threatened vengeance on his enemies: and, though he was about to judge, and to wage war againſt thoſe, that refuſed ſubmiſſion to him; yet he was unlike them, whoſe ambition, rapacity, or malignant paſſions had in every age made the earth a field of blood; for he conducted both his judicial proceedings, and his military expeditions by the moſt perfect rules of righteouſneſs. But none could deceive him, or elude his detection, for "his eyes were as a flame of fire." (c. i. v. 14.) The many crowns worn by him, denoted the extent of his authority, as Creator of the world, and Head over all things to his church; and the multitude of his victories. "He had a name written which no man "knew but he himſelf;" for as the eternal Son of God his perfections and nature are incomprehenſible, (*Matt.* c. xi. v. 27.) His veſture dipped in blood implied either the atonement of his own blood, as the ground of his mediatorial authority; or that he was come from the ſlaughter of his enemies, and had ſtained his garments with their blood, (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. lxiii. v. 1—6:) but, though none could fully comprehend his perfections: yet he was known, in his church by the name "of the "Word of God," as declaring God to fallen men, (*John*, c. i. v. 1—3.) Moreover he was followed by the armies of heaven, even his redeemed and converted people, who rode on white horſes, to denote their conformity to him, and their concurrence, and inſtrumentality in his victories; and they were clothed in fine linen, &c, (v. 8;) as accepted, and renewed in and by him: and to illuſtrate the nature of his conqueſts, out of his mouth went a ſharp ſword, &c," (c. i. v. 16;) implying that he powerfully executed the denunciations of his word; and ſmote the oppoſing nations, &c, (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* ii:) and thus he trode the wine-preſs of the wrath

17 And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun; and he cried with a loud voice, ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and gather yourſelves together unto the ſupper of the great God.

18 That ye may eat the fleſh of kings, and the fleſh of captains, and the fleſh of mighty men, and the fleſh of horſes, and of them that ſit on them, and the fleſh of all *men, both* free and bond, both ſmall and great.

19 And I ſaw the beaſt, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war againſt him that ſat on the horſe, and againſt his army.

20 And the beaſt was taken, and with him the falſe prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhipped his image. Theſe both were caſt alive into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone.

21 And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe, which *ſword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their fleſh.

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of God, (c. xiv. v. 14—20;) cruſhing all other obſtinate enemies, as he had done the myſtical Babylon. He had alſo inſcribed on his veſture, and on his thigh, (the part of his garments, where the ſword is worn,) another name or title, implying his univerſal, and abſolute dominion, as "King of kings, and Lord of lords," (c. xvii. v. 14;) which carried in it a warning to the moſt powerful princes to ſubmit to him, or they muſt fall before him. Theſe verſes and the context ſeem to predict the progreſs of the goſpel ſubſequent to the fall of Rome, in the deſtruction of the remains of the antichriſtian empire, the purifying of the viſible church, the converſion of the Jews, the termination of Mahometiſm, and the bringing in of the fulneſs of the Gentiles.

V. 17—21.] The angel ſtanding in the ſun emblematically denoted, that the predicted judgments would be conſpicuous to all the earth; and his proclamation ſhewed the immenſe ſlaughter to be made of the enemies of God. To this place may be referred Ezekiel's prophecy of Gog and Magog, as the ſubſequent viſions ſeem to relate to the millennium; (Notes, &c. *Ezek.* c. xxxvii—xlviii:) for the total ruin of the eaſtern antichriſt, or of all the opposers of the goſpel, in Aſia, &c, ſeems to be intimately connected with the fall of the weſtern antichriſt. Though Rome was deſtroyed; yet the beaſt, &c, is ſuppoſed ſtill to ſubſiſt: the ſpirit of antichriſt will ſurvive that antichriſtian city; and probably the adherents of the party will unite with other enemies of the goſpel, in different parts of the world. However, the beaſt, or the idolatrous perſecuting power, whoſe chief ſeat had been at Rome, will form a confederacy with the kings of the earth, that with combined forces, they may fight againſt Chriſt and his ſervants: but in the event, the antichriſtian tyranny, and the corrupt clergy, &c, who deceived men by lying miracles to ſupport it, will be ſeized on, and dreadfully deſtroyed; by being caſt into the lake of fire, &c: and then all the remnant of their adherents will be cut off, according to the words of Chriſt: ſo that all oppoſition to his pure religion will then ceaſe, till after the millennium.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All heaven reſounds with the high praiſes of God, when he executes his true and righteous judgments on thoſe, who corrupt the earth with pernicious principles, and ungodly practices, and when he avenges the blood of his ſervants upon their perſecutors: even though the ſmoke of their torment ariſe up for ever and ever; the whole company of redeemed ſinners, and all the ſervants and worſhippers of God in heaven and earth, concur in theſe acclamations, and ſay, Amen, Hallelujah: who then are they, that mutter inſinuations, about cruelty, and tyranny, &c; but rebels, who blaſphemouſly take part with God's enemies, and plead againſt his dealings towards them? Let all beware of every approach to ſuch impiety, and preſumption; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. As juſtice and judgment are the baſis of his throne, the earth hath cauſe to tremble; but as it is eſtabliſhed in mercy alſo, the penitent may rejoice in hope. Thouſands of thouſands, who once were rebels, are now ſinging ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God: let us then be glad in, and give honour to him; and whilſt we view "the Lamb that "was ſlain," eſpouſing redeemed ſinners unto himſelf; let us remember that we are invited to ſhare the bleſſedneſs of the marriage ſupper; that the wedding garment is given to all, who properly apply for it; that now is the time to be made ready for thoſe ſacred joys; and that all the felicity, which the world can boaſt, is not worthy to be compared with this unfading crown of glory and happineſs: theſe are the true ſayings of God: let none then ſay, "I pray thee have me excuſed." If even created angels are ſo glorious, as to ſurpriſe the apoſtle into a purpoſed adoration; how glorious muſt the Lord of angels be! And if the higheſt of holy creatures *ſo fear undue honour*, how humbly ſhould we ſinful worms of the earth behave ourſelves! And yet, we may and ought to aſpire at being made equal to angels, and the children of God, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus! We ſhould then beware of a voluntary humility; nor ought we to degrade ourſelves, or diſhonour our head, by worſhipping angels, or any mere creature, by calling men maſter upon earth, or by the grovelling purſuit of worldly things. The bleſſed Jeſus, is the Lord of all; but angels, apoſtles, and other chriſtians are fellow ſervants; he is God over all, and therefore to be worſhipped, as one with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and all Revelation is the teſtimony of the Father, by the Spirit, to His perſonal and mediatorial glory; the whole centres in him, and his ſalvation

CHAP. XX.

Contains 1ſt. Satan bound, and impriſoned for 1000 *years; and the glorious ſtate of the church during that period,* 1--6. *2d. Satan looſed again, deceiving the nations, and exciting terrible war againſt the church; the aſſailants deſtroyed by fire, and ſatan caſt into hell,* 7--10. *3d. The appearance of Chriſt to raiſe the dead, and to judge the world; with the condemnation, and puniſhment in the lake of fire, of all, who were not written in the book of life,* 11--15.

AND I ſaw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomleſs pit, and a great chain in his hand:

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old ſerpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thouſand years.

3 And caſt him into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut him up, and ſet a ſeal upon him, that he ſhould deceive the nations no more, till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled: and after that he muſt be looſed a little ſeaſon.

4 And I ſaw thrones, and they ſat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I ſaw* the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God, and which had not worſhipped the beaſt, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years.

5 But the reſt of the dead lived not again

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and kingdom. May He then go forth in faithfulneſs and righteouſneſs to extend his ſpiritual conqueſts; till all kings fall down before him, and all nations do him ſervice! May his armies be increaſed in number and made more like unto Him; being clothed in that fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteouſneſs of Saints! (*Pſ.* cxlix.) We cannot indeed know his whole glory, or his immeaſurable love; but let us endeavour to be more acquainted with Him, as "*The Word of God*;" and accepting of his Salvation, may we be glad in him, who is "*the King of kings, and Lord of lords!*" for he will ſurely ſmite his proudeſt and ſtouteſt enemies with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will he ſlay the wicked; till he hath cruſhed them all in the winepreſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God. It behoves us then to rejoice, and praiſe the Lord, when oppoſing tyrants are cruſhed, and falſe prophets are put to ſilence in darkneſs; and we ſhould not ſcruple to add, "ſo let all thine enemies periſh, O Lord." Nevertheleſs, it is our part to aim at more peaceful, and gentle victories; and by our prayers, example, and improvement of talents, to ſeek the converſion of ſinners, and the ſalvation of the ſouls even of our moſt cruel enemies and perſecutors; whilſt we conſtantly declare, that "unleſs they repent, they will all likewiſe periſh."

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1—3.] The foregoing chapter predicted the termination of all open oppoſition to the goſpel, and all antichriſtian corruptions of it: but, though the inſtruments of miſchief had been cut off, the great agent was ſtill at liberty; and he would ſurely excite freſh diſturbance, or produce new deluſions, if he were not prevented. The apoſtle had therefore a viſion, emblematical of his confinement: an angel from heaven, with the key of the abyſs, (c. ix. v. 1—3,) and a great chain; ſeized on, bound him, caſt him into the abyſs, and there ſhut him up, to prevent his deceiving the nations, as he had before done: and this impriſonment continued 1000 years. (c. xii. v. 7—9.) We have found, that in ſome places *the dragon* ſignified the perſecuting power of idolatrous emperors; who were vice-gerents of the devil, and bare his name and ſtyle: but here Satan himſelf is evidently meant; and it is implied that Chriſt, with omnipotence and abſolute authority, will reſtrain the devil, and all his legions of evil ſpirits, from deceiving mankind into idolatry, infidelity, impiety, hereſy, and wickedneſs, as he hath hitherto done: for though human nature is prone to all evil, and averſe to all good; yet the agency and influence of fallen angels has immenſe effect in counteracting the goſpel, in exciting men to atrocious crimes and cruel perſecutions, and in deviſing and propagating ingenious but fatal deluſions. When, therefore, this roaring lion, or ſubtle poiſonous old ſerpent, ſhall be completely reſtrained; the goſpel will be rendered effectual, to purify the church, and convert the nations, by the power of the Holy Spirit; the chriſtian religion in all its purity and glory, ſhall become univerſal; and the true "Iſrael ſhall bloſſom and bud, and fill "the face of the world with fruit." Then the firſt petitions of the Lord's prayer will be wonderfully anſwered; (Notes, *Matt.* c. vi. v. 9, 10;) and piety, peace, righteouſneſs, and purity, ſhall fill the earth; till ſatan ſhall again for a ſhort ſpace be looſed.

V. 4—6.] The apoſtle next ſaw thrones, and perſons ſitting on them; which repreſented the honourable and proſperous ſtate of believers, who appeared to reign as kings on the earth: "and judgment was given to them;" for they were Chriſt's aſſeſſors, as it were, in the judgement executed on the beaſt, the falſe prophet, and the devil, even as they will be, when he ſhall judge the world: and he ſaw the *ſouls* of the martyrs, confeſſors, and other eminent chriſtians of the preceding periods, living and reigning with Chriſt, &c. It hath been much diſputed whether we are to underſtand this literally or figuratively: and when prophecies are evidently unfulfilled, modeſty and caution are very requiſite. Yet it is neceſſary to give an opinion, with the reaſons of it. I am, therefore, induced to underſtand it figuratively, by the following conſiderations: 1ſt. The whole book is enigmatical, and full of emblems: ſo that a liteuntil the thouſand years were finiſhed. This *is* the firſt reſurrection.

6 Bleſſed and holy *is* he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power, but they ſhall be prieſts of God, and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years.

7 And when the thouſand years are expi-

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ral expoſition would often imply abſurdity, and the interpreter's buſineſs and ſkill, conſiſt principally in decyphering hieroglyphics. A ſucceſſion of kings, &c, are conſtantly ſpoken of, as if they were individually the ſame perſons; the two witneſſes that were ſlain, were *raiſed again*, &c, when others were ſent forth of the ſame ſpirit, and to bear the ſame teſtimony; Rome is called Egypt, Sodom, Jeruſalem, Babylon, &c; and in ſhort this is the ſtyle and manner of the whole prophecy, which no man could poſſibly explain upon any other principle. As therefore the Jews expected Elijah to come *perſonally*, and knew him not when he came *myſtically*, in John Baptiſt: ſo I apprehend, many chriſtians, and men of the utmoſt reſpectability for piety, learning, &c, have fallen into the ſame miſtake, in expecting a literal and perſonal reſurrection of the martyrs, &c, at the opening of the millennium; and they would not know them *at firſt*, when they aroſe, (as the witneſſes did,) in a numerous race of chriſtians, reſembling them as to all their eminent graces. 2d. It is unaccountable, that *the ſouls* of the perſons raiſed ſhould be excluſively mentioned; if the literal reſurrection of their *bodies* was meant: for this rather implies, according to the enigmatical ſtyle of the book, that their *ſouls* re-animated other *bodies*; that is, they appeared to live again, in chriſtians of the ſame ſpirit, (c. vi. v. 9.) 3d. Some have imagined, that the reſurrection of all the righteous will precede the millennium; becauſe the dead in Chriſt will riſe firſt: but what do they then ſuppoſe the ſtate of the earth will be during that period? Will none live on earth but the *riſen* ſaints? Or will all the reſt be wicked? Or, being righteous, will they not die? Or if they die, will there be three reſurrections? One of the righteous before the millennium, and another of the righteous after it, &c? Theſe are queſtions that are not eaſily reſolved on that hypotheſis. But the reſurrection of the dead is always ſpoken of, as one grand event, occurring nearly at the ſame time; except, that the righteous will be firſt raiſed, and ſo be prepared to ſit with Chriſt in judgment on the wicked; and it is implied in all thoſe declarations, that all the dead in Chriſt will riſe together, before the living ſhall be changed. 4th. We cannot conceive, that it could add to the felicity of thoſe, who being abſent from the body, are preſent with the Lord, to come again to dwell on earth; which muſt be in ſome degree a ſcene of pain, ſuffering, imperfection and death, till the preſent ſtate of things is fully ended; and this will not be till the general reſurrection; as ſufficiently appears, from the looſing of ſatan, and the effects of it after the millennium. 5th. This is the only place, in which any thing like ſuch a literal reſurrection, previous to the end of the world, is intimated; whereas there are numerous prophecies of an univerſal prevalence and triumph of true religion throughout the earth: but is it moſt reaſonable to interpret ſo many plain predictions by one expreſſion in ſo enigmatical a book; or to explain that one expreſſion by the many clear predictions, which give another view of it? Or why ſhould the literal ſenſe be here inſiſted on, when in ſo many places it muſt be departed from? But indeed, I cannot ſee, that the *reſurrection of ſouls* can *literally* mean *the reſurrection of bodies*. To theſe reaſons ſome arguments are oppoſed, which are deduced from what follows. If the reſurrection here ſpoken of be not a literal but a figurative reſurrection; the ſame reaſons lead us to conclude, that Chriſt will not come down from heaven *perſonally* to reign on earth; but that he will reign *ſpiritually* in the prevalence of his goſpel, and by his holy Spirit in the hearts of men in general. The ſcriptures conſtantly ſpeak of his ſitting on the right hand of God in heaven, till he ſhall come the ſecond time to judge the world: the expreſſions concerning his coming to deſtroy Jeruſalem, (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 27—30. *Mark*, c. xiii. v. 24—30;) and thoſe that relate to his preſence with, and *coming* to his people, are ſtronger than any here uſed; yet no good expoſitor interprets them of his *perſonal* preſence as man, in the primary meaning of them. (*John*, c. xiv. v. 18---23.) We now proceed with the ſubject: multitudes of believers will be raiſed up, as if animated by the ſouls of thoſe, who had been martyred by, or had proteſted againſt antichriſt; even as the witneſſes were raiſed again after three days and an half: theſe excellent perſons will live and reign on earth, in victory, honour, holineſs and joy; being happy in the gracious preſence of Chriſt with their ſouls, and in their aſſemblies; and without any enemies, or falſe teachers to harraſs, corrupt, or divide them: but the reſt of the dead will not live till the thouſand years be ended: "There is mention made in this prophecy of two "ſorts of dead perſons; thoſe, who were ſlain for the "witneſs of Jeſus, and thoſe, who were ſlain, by the "ſword of him that ſat on the horſe. The former were "raiſed to life, and lived and reigned with Chriſt a thou"ſand years: but the others lived not again, till the "thouſand years were finiſhed; they had no ſucceſſors "of the ſame wicked and perſecuting ſpirit, till the "devil was let looſe after the millennium," (Guiſe.) This interpretation ſuits the ſtyle of the book, and is to me ſatisfactory: but if it be not approved; we may properly ſay, that the expreſſion intimated, that a figurative reſurrection was intended, and therefore it was carefully diſtinguiſhed from the literal reſurrection of the dead. (*John*, c. v. ver. 25—29.) It is more-over an inſtance of that wiſe, and proper obſcurity, which we always find in prophecies, previous to their accompliſhments. This is the firſt reſurrection, a ſpiritual and myſtical reſurrection: and they who ſhall partake of it, living in thoſe happy times, will be holy and bleſſed, (c. xix v. 9,) even more than chriſtians in other ages. When it is added, that the *ſecond* death ſhall have no power over them, it ſeems implied, that they muſt enter heaven, by paſſing through the *firſt* death: nor is there any thing different in what follows from the language uſed concerning believers of other times, (c. i. v. 6. c. v. ver. 10. 1 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 5. 9;) ſave, that they

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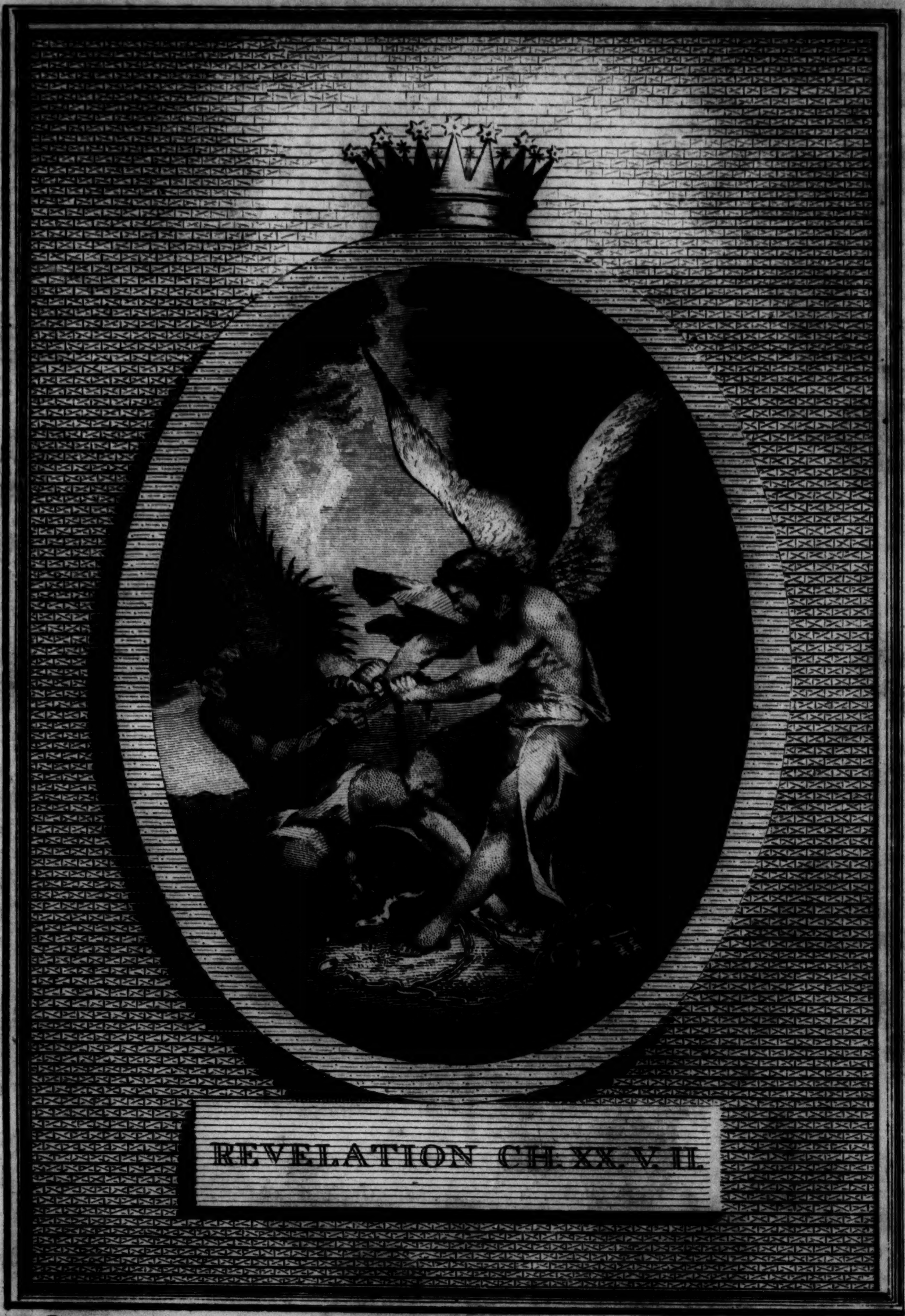

REVELATION CH. XX. V. II.

W. Walker del.

W. & J. Walker sc.

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red, Satan ſhall be looſed out of his priſon,

8 And ſhall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the ſand of the ſea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compaſſed the camp of the ſaints

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ſhall reign with Chriſt *a thouſand years*; which naturally ſignifies, that a ſucceſſion of ſuch triumphant chriſtians, made honourable and happy by the Lord's ſpecial preſence with them, ſhall continue through the millennium; even as the two witneſſes propheſied in ſack-cloth, through the whole term of the reign of Antichriſt. But ſome would compute the thouſand years, after the ſame manner, as the three years and an half, or 1260 days, have been reckoned, each day of the whole to ſignify a year; which would extend this happy period, to 360,000 years at leaſt: this, however, ſeems ſo much beyond all proportion, and ſo different from all the views elſewhere given us of the ſpeedy approach of the day of judgment, that it is not generally regarded: ſo that, upon the whole, we may expect, that a thouſand years will follow the final deſtruction of all the antichriſtian powers, during which pure chriſtianity, in doctrine, worſhip, and univerſal holineſs, will be diffuſed all over the earth; and that all idolatry, infidelity, impiety, ſuperſtition, hereſy, falſe religion, injuſtice, fraud, oppreſſion, cruelty, war, murder, intemperance, licentiouſneſs, with all other evils, which now harraſs, plague and deſolate the earth, will be reſtrained by the omnipotent operation of the Holy Spirit; and that godlineſs, righteouſneſs, peace, truth, purity and love ſhall render the earth in ſome meaſure like heaven itſelf. Hitherto the depravity of human nature, and the malignant agency of apoſtate angels have been illuſtrated, and diſplayed, in the ſtate of the world: and the inefficacy of all human inventions, and even of the word of truth, without the new creating Spirit of truth, to remedy theſe evils, hath been demonſtrated, in oppoſition to man's proud reaſonings; and the event of the trial hath ſhewn, that nothing but the power of God himſelf can prevent men from liſtening to the temptations of fallen angels; or from deſpiſing, hating, oppoſing, neglecting, corrupting, or abuſing, even the goſpel of ſalvation itſelf. But at length the Lord himſelf will ariſe; by the Almighty power of his providence, he will confine fallen angels; and by the operation of his Spirit he will new create fallen men, generally all over the earth: and then repentance, faith, and holineſs will as certainly prevail, as impenitence, unbelief, and unholineſs now do: yet ſtill chriſtianity will be the religion of ſinners, and there will be defects and ſins in believers, and doubtleſs ſome unconverted perſons, for a ſhort part of their lives at leaſt; for men will be made holy by regeneration, not born holy at firſt: and therefore they will ſtill continue liable to many natural evils, and to death: yet that meaſure of righteouſneſs, which ſuch a prevalence of true chriſtianity muſt produce, will immenſely leſſen the quantity of natural evil. We may eaſily perceive what a variety of dreadful pains, diſeaſes, and other grievous calamities, muſt ceaſe, were men all true chriſtians: all the evils of public and private contention would be terminated: domeſtic, relative, and ſocial felicity muſt be exceedingly enhanced. Induſtry in uſeful things, with frugality and temperance, would prevent that pinching poverty and diſtreſs, which now make multitudes wretched: and a greater fertility of the earth, may reaſonably be expected; according to the former fruitfulneſs of Canaan, contraſted with its preſent ſterility. Every man will then try to alleviate, inſtead of adding to, the unavoidable ſorrows of all around him; nor ſhall they hurt or deſtroy in all the holy mountain of God. The hope of glory, the proſpects of a happy meeting in heaven, and the abundant conſolations of the Holy Spirit, will render ſickneſs, death, and the loſs of beloved friends far more eaſy than at preſent: whilſt communion with God, and the communion of the ſaints, all being of one heart in the worſhip and ſervice of God, will render religion a conſtant feaſt to their ſouls; and only inferior to heavenly felicity, becauſe it will not be abſolutely perfect. And as every man muſt perceive how immenſely the human ſpecies would be increaſed, if wars, deſtructive employments, intemperance, &c, were put an end to; and God's ordinance of marriage were generally ſubſtituted, inſtead of that compound of licentiouſneſs, and ſelfiſhneſs, which conſtitute a vicious celibacy, at leaſt till the prime of life is paſt; or that forced and prudential celibacy, which comparative, or real poverty, united with diſtruſt of providence, often occaſions; things that exceedingly tend to corrupt the morals of the human ſpecies; and to deſtroy the lives of both ſexes in youth, almoſt as much as war itſelf: ſo we may readily allow, that the number of perſons, who ſhall live on earth, during the millennium, may be immenſely greater, than the whole multitude of all the preceding ages; and conſequently that far more of the human race may be ſaved than ſhall periſh; even though we do not agree to the computations that have been made about it. Though the ſtrange wild notions, and extravagant practices grafted on the belief of a millennium; have rendered the name of it contemptible or hateful to numbers; yet we have as juſt grounds to expect ſuch a happy event, as the Jews had to look for a Meſſiah; but they, who ſuppoſe it will be a carnal millennium, are as much miſtaken, as they were in waiting for a temporal Deliverer. Our duty is to pray for the promiſed glorious days, and to do every thing, in our private, and public ſituations, that can be inſtrumental in preparing the way for them; even as David made abundant proviſion for the temple, which Solomon was to build. Whether the general opinion, that this thouſand years, will be the ſeventh thouſand from the creation, or the ſabbatical millenary, the event muſt determine: however, it is evident, that the dawn of this glorious day cannot be very diſtant.

V. 7—10.] At the end of the millennium, God will remove ſatan's reſtraint, for reaſons which we are not competent to underſtand; perhaps among others, to ſhew that the long continued happy eſtate of the world was not the effect of human nature being meliorated, as about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them, was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt, and the falſe prophet *are*, and ſhall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.

11 And I ſaw a great white throne, and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the ſea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire. This is the ſecond death.

15 And whoſoever was not found written in the book of life, was caſt into the lake of fire.

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to itſelf; but of an immediate divine influence on men's minds, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. Being looſed out of priſon, this great deceiver will go to work as before, to corrupt chriſtianity, and ſeduce men into apoſtacy, idolatry, hereſy, infidelity, or vice: and thus, in a little time, the old generations of believers dying off, the ſucceeding race through many nations in the *four quarters* of the earth, will be deceived by him: and having themſelves departed from the faith, they will be inſtigated to hate and perſecute ſuch as adhere to it; and thus the ſpirit of antichriſt will riſe again after the thouſand years are expired. Then religious wars will be undertaken, and at length the whole multitude of the apoſtate nations, even Gog and Magog riſen again, (*Ezek.* c.xxxviii.xxxix,) will confederate againſt the church, and come to fight againſt her, with armies innumerable as the ſand of the ſea. It is vain to enquire, who Gog and Magog will be, or whence they will come? For this alſo muſt be underſtood figuratively, to denote enemies fierce and numerous as Gog and Magog had been before the millennium: and it is expreſſly ſaid, that they were the nations *in the four quarters of the earth*. When ſatan and his angels ſhall be looſed, a few years will ſuffice, for the ſeducing of men into idolatry, or infidelity; and then perſecutions, and maſſacres of chriſtians will be as natural as ever; and it will probably appear to the pious remnant, as if the cauſe of Chriſt was about to be altogether ruined. But whilſt they ſhall collect from all parts of the world, to compaſs the camp, or garriſon of the ſaints, and to beſiege the beloved city; (for the images are borrowed from the affairs of Iſrael, in the wilderneſs, and in Canaan;) they will be deſtroyed by fire from heaven. Then the Lord, having once more made manifeſt the depravity of human nature, and the malice and ſubtlety of the devil; will caſt him finally into the lake of fire, &c, never more to have liberty, or power to do miſchief, but to be for ever puniſhed with perſecuting tyrants, idolatrous prieſts, and falſe teachers; who were his prime miniſters, during his uſurpation as god and prince of this world.

V. 11---15.] After theſe events, the end will ſpeedily come, and we have no prophetical intimations of any thing, that ſhall intervene, before the appearing of Chriſt to raiſe the dead, and to judge the world. For the apoſtle next ſaw "a great white throne," as emblematical of the majeſty, dominion, power, and righteouſneſs, with which Chriſt will then be manifeſted. "On this ſat "One, from whoſe preſence the earth and heavens fled, "&c;" which denoted the effulgency of his glory; and the entire diſſolution of the viſible creation, and the preſent ſtate of the world, by his power, and at his coming. He then beheld the dead, as raiſed again, "ſtand before "God;" we know that Chriſt ſhall be ſeated on the throne of his glory, to judge the world; and he muſt, therefore, be here meant (*Matt.* c. xxv. v. 31---46. *Tit.* c. ii. v. 13;) and before him all nations, and every perſon of all ranks, characters and deſcriptions ſhall be gathered: "and the books were opened;" this figuratively repreſents the diſcoveries, that will be made of all men's thoughts, words, actions, motives, intentions, diſpoſitions, obligations, advantages, talents, &c, by the divine omniſcience; the compariſon of the whole with the holy law of God; and the recollection and conſciouſneſs, which every man will have of all his paſt actions; though he had long forgotten many of them, till thus brought to light, and to remembrance: that ſo an exact eſtimate may be made of every perſon's character; of the evidence and degree of his grace, and of his fruitfulneſs in good works; or of the aggravations, or alleviations of his ſins, &c. Thus the final award will be made in perfect juſtice, and impartiality, connected with truth and mercy. For another book ſhall be opened, even the book of life: otherwiſe all muſt be condemned: this is the emblem of the Lord's knowledge of his people; and his declaration of their repentance, faith, love, and good works, as evidential of their election, redemption, regeneration, and intereſt in his righteouſneſs, and the bleſſings of the new covenant. So that the dead ſhall be judged, according to the contents of theſe regiſters concerning them; and according to their works, whether they evidence them to be true believers, or the contrary. Nor will any be exempted from this impartial ſcrutiny: for the ſea ſhall give up the dead bodies, that have been caſt into it; and the grave and ſeparate ſtate ſhall give up the bodies and ſouls contained in them: ſo that the whole multitude, that ſhall have lived upon earth, through all generations, from

CHAP. XXI.

Contains 1ſt. A general repreſentation of the heavenly ſtate; connected with invitations, encouragements, and warnings, 1---8. *2d. A more particular deſcription of it, under the emblem of a moſt glorious city; in which the redeemed dwell in the preſence, light, and glory of God, and the Lamb,* 9---27.

the creation to the conſummation of all things, will then appear before the throne; all that ever had died, ſhall experience a re-union of their ſouls with their bodies; and they, who then live on earth, ſhall be changed, (Notes, &c. 1*Cor.* c. xv. 1 *Theſs.* c. iv. v. 13—18.) Then death and hell, the grave, and the ſeparate ſtate, (repreſented as two perſons,) will be caſt into the lake of fire: that is, they ſhall ſubſiſt no longer, to receive the bodies and ſouls of men; there ſhall be no death in heaven, and all the wicked will be caſt into the place of torment, in which death and the ſeparate ſtate will be ſwallowed up; for "this is the ſecond death," the final ſeparation of ſinners, from God, without hopes of being reſtored to his favour, or being delivered from his wrath: and into this place of baniſhment and torment, all will be caſt, who ſhall not be found written in the book of life, as true believers: according to the general doctrine of the holy ſcriptures.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We muſt be very incompetent judges concerning the divine diſpenſations, till we ſhall ſee the whole plan completed. Hitherto ſatan, and his party have been permitted to proſper to an amazing degree; and whole nations, yea almoſt all nations, have been deceived by the old ſerpent and his agents: but if partial reſtraints had not been impoſed on them, and unmerited mercy had not been exerciſed; this earth would have been a counterpart of hell. Ere long, however, the Lord will make bare his holy arm, to bind up the deceiver of the nations, and to give effectual ſucceſs to his goſpel, and the earth ſhall ſoon be filled with his glory, as the waters cover the ſea. We ſhall not indeed live on earth to witneſs thoſe happy days: but we may look forward with encouragement, amidſt our conflicts and trials, that the cauſe, in which we are engaged, will at length be decidedly triumphant. But though great grace will be on all the millions of chriſtians, that ſhall then inhabit the earth, and the Lord will manifeſt himſelf to them in a degree, of which we now have no adequate conception; ſo that they will be holy and bleſſed beyond all former generations; yet we ſhall not wiſh to leave our heavenly manſions, to come and dwell among them: *they* will indeed be out of the reach of the ſecond death: but *we* ſhall have got over the pain of the *firſt* death: *our* ſpiritual and royal prieſthood will be more advantageouſly exerciſed in heaven, than *their*'s can be on earth; ſatan and ſin can never more annoy us; but they will never be *finally* baniſhed from the world, till it be burnt up with all its works: and we ſhall look down, as it were, from heaven, and enjoy the felicity and triumph of our brethren on earth, as much as if we lived among them; whilſt, being abſent from the body, we ſhall be preſent with the Lord, in a ſtill more bleſſed way, than they can be, who walk by faith, not by ſight. But may not theſe reflections on the bleſſed change, which the ſucceſs of the goſpel will make in the ſtate of the world, ſupply us with an unanſwerable argument of its divine original, and authority, even previous to the fulfilment of thoſe prophecies, which relate to it? Can that doctrine come from any other, than God, which wants but to be univerſally received with obedient faith, to remedy all the evils, which fill the earth; and to render men as much like holy and happy angels, as moſt of them at preſent are like deceitful, malignant, ambitious, and apoſtate ſpirits? The need, that the world ſtands in of ſuch remedy; the ſuitableneſs of it; its evident tendency; and its efficacy as far as men actually make uſe of it, proclaim its divinity, in the moſt deciſive manner, even apart from miracles, fulfilments of prophecy, and all other external arguments whatſoever; yea in language diſtinct from, (though connected with,) that "witneſs in himſelf," which is the principal ſource of aſſurance to the experienced believer's heart.

When-ever the Lord takes off the reſtraint from ſatan; he is both active and able to deceive the nations, and to propagate lies, and miſchief among men: and then perſecution again lifts up its horrid front, and ſtalks abroad to revel upon the blood of the ſaints; we even learn profitable leſſons from the devil and his angels: for if the ſervants and miniſters of Chriſt were as united, active, vigilant, and perſevering in doing good, as theſe enemies are in doing miſchief; we might hope for better times, nor ſhall we do amiſs in taking the hint from them, not to think the leaſt opportunity of good beneath our notice; whilſt we aſpire and aim at the moſt extenſive, and important uſefulneſs; for our enemies, when forming horrid plans to deſtroy, if it were poſſible, the whole church at once, do not neglect to deceive one ſoul; or even to defile, miſlead, or harraſs the meaneſt of thoſe, whom they cannot deſtroy. But no weapons formed againſt the church can proſper; and all that fight againſt her ſhall periſh, with the devil, the beaſt, and the falſe prophet, and be tormented day and night for ever and ever. May we then firmly believe, that Chriſt ſhall come to be our judge, and daily prepare to ſtand before his awful tribunal, when heaven and earth ſhall flee from his face, and no place ſhall be found for them. Let us frequently reflect on the opening of the book, the bringing to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and the diſcovery of all characters, and actions in their proper colours, which will take place when the Judge ſhall render to every one according to his works. Then all the dead ſhall be raiſed; all diſtinctions ſwallowed up, except that between the righteous and the wicked; and all will be caſt into the lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, except the believing and obedient followers of Chriſt, whoſe names are written in the book of life. Let no man, therefore, deceive himſelf with vain words; for the wrath of God will come on all the children of diſobedience, how many ſoever they be! Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father: and death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory. "He that hath an ear, let him "hear what the Spirit ſaith to the churches."

AND I ſaw a new heaven and a new earth: for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed way; and there was no more ſea.

2 And I John ſaw the holy city, new Jeruſalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven ſaying, Behold the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, *and be* their God.

4 And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the former things are paſſed away.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—4.] Some interpreters, (eſpecially among thoſe, who hold a literal reſurrection before, and the perſonal reign of Chriſt, on earth, during the millennium,) underſtand theſe chapters principally of the ſtate of the church on earth during that period. But they come in order after the account of the general judgment; and we can never attain to a ſatisfactory underſtanding of prophecy, if imagination or conjecture be allowed to carry us backward, or forward, without rule, or reaſon. The method, we ſhould take of clearing up the evidence of the divine authority of ſcripture, from the accompliſhment of prophecy; (which is no doubt one principal weapon, with which to defend chriſtianity againſt all kinds of infidels;) muſt be, by ſhewing, that there is order, and arrangement in the predictions, and a coincidence between them, and known facts; and that a regular ſeries of events is foretold, ſome of which are already fulfilled, and the reſt cannot be ſo, as the order of the prophecy ſhews them to be yet future. But then we muſt carefully adhere to this arrangement in our interpretations, not deviating even from the appearance of it, without evident reaſon. For example, there was a neceſſity of returning at the beginning of the twelfth chapter, to the primitive times of chriſtianity; becauſe another regular ſeries of predictions is there evidently begun, after the other had been completed. This creates a proper degree of prophetical obſcurity; but when the key is found, it adds to the conſiſtency, energy, and beauty of the whole. But having now traced both parts of the book, to the end of the world; it muſt introduce confuſion, and occaſion an appearance of uncertainty and ambiguity; to return back, without any neceſſity, to the preceding millennium. Moreover, as the church was appointed to ſo many ages of perſecution, and tribulation; and as this book was in good meaſure written for the ſupport and encouragement of believers, during thoſe afflicting ſcenes; ſo we might naturally expect to hear at the concluſion of it, ſome account of their happy ſtate in heaven, as well as of the proſperous times of the church on earth: whereas, if theſe chapters do not relate to that ſubject; we hear indeed of the puniſhment of the wicked, but not of the felicity of the righteous. Many of the expreſſions alſo are ſuch, as cannot properly apply to any ſtate, where the leaſt remains of ſin, or ſorrow are to be found, or any return of them to be expected: and ſuch, as ſeem otherwiſe, are emblematical, according to the ſtyle of the whole book; which differs from all others in the New Teſtament, though it reſembles many of the prophecies of Iſaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. Theſe reaſons induce me to explain what follows of the heavenly ſtate *only*; except as our thoughts are naturally called off, in ſome places to other ſubjects. The emblem of a new heaven, &c, hath ſeveral times occurred to us, in different ſenſes, (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. lxv. v. 17. c. lxvi. v. 22. 2 *Pet*. c. iii. v. 10—14.) Some think that Peter wrote after the book of Revelation was publiſhed, and alluded to it, in the paſſage referred to; and indeed, this is one of the moſt plauſible arguments, that have been adduced, for the earlier date of this prophecy; though the Holy Spirit might lead both the ſacred penmen to the ſame views and images: however, it is obvious, that Peter ſpake of the heavenly ſtate; and this is an additional argument to prove that John did the ſame; and indeed this muſt be ſo; for the "firſt heaven and earth were paſſed away;" (c. xx. v. 11.) In this new world, "there was no ſea," which aptly repreſents an entire freedom from polluting, and conflicting paſſions, diſtreſſing temptations, tempeſtuous troubles, changes, and alarms; and from whatever can divide or interrupt the communion of ſaints with each other: ſome think that it implies alſo, that there is abundance of room in that bleſſed world; as a large proportion of the earth is covered with the ſea. The apoſtle alſo ſaw the holy city coming down from heaven; the whole church triumphant was ſhewn to him under this emblem; that he might perceive, and report ſomething of its glory and felicity, according to man's capacity of apprehending heavenly things: and he thus learned, that its bleſſedneſs came wholly from God, and depended on him. It ſeems to have appeared in the air juſt before him, that he might contemplate, and examine it: and he perceived that it was prepared as a bride adorned for her nuptials, (c. xix. v. 7, 8:) which was another emblem denoting the mutual love between Chriſt, and his triumphant church, their union and communion, and delight in each other; and the glory and felicity thus beſtowed upon believers in heaven. Thus the two emblems, which apparently are not very compatible, concur in giving ſome inſtructive ideas of this intereſting, but inconceivable ſubject. He then heard a voice from heaven, proclaiming, with aſtoniſhment at ſuch condeſcenſion, that the tabernacle of God was fixed with men, and he would dwell among them, as their reconciled Father, notwithſtanding all their rebellions! (*Pſ*. lxviii. v. 18. *John*, c. i. v. 14:) They would, therefore, be his people devoted to his ſervice and glory, and He would be with them, as their all-ſufficient, and

5 And he that ſat upon the throne ſaid, Behold, I make all things new. And he ſaid unto me, write: for theſe words are true and faithful.

6 And he ſaid unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirſt of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my ſon.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all lyars, ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond death.

9 And there came unto me one of the ſeven angels, which had the ſeven vials full of the ſeven laſt plagues, and talked with me, ſaying, Come hither, I will ſhew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

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eternal Portion. (*Jer*. c. xxxii. v. 38—41. 2 *Cor*. c. vi v. 16.) This hath a partial accompliſhment, in the preſent conſolations of true believers; but it here muſt refer to the perfect enjoyment of God in the beatific viſion: for "He will then wipe away all tears from their "eyes," like a tender Father, who comforteth his mourning children, (c. vii. v. 17,) and they will never weep again, either for ſin or trouble; as death, and every cauſe of grief ſhall be no more; and the former things will be paſſed away. This can relate to nothing leſs than the heavenly ſtate.

V. 5—8.] "He, that ſat on the throne," generally in this book, denotes the Father perſonally, as diſtinguiſhed from, "the Lamb that was ſlain:" but as Chriſt will *appear* on the throne of judgment, (c. xx. v. 11:) ſo we may underſtand it of Him in this place; and the language employed moſt accords to Him, in his mediatorial character: The Lord Jeſus, therefore, declared in the apoſtle's hearing, that "He made all things new," (2 *Cor*. c. v. ver. 17:) he brings ſinners into a new ſtate, and creates them anew to holineſs; and he will make all things new, reſpecting their ſituation, and manner of living, when he hath brought them perfected both body and ſoul, to his glorious felicity. This John was to write for the encouragement of the church in all its afflictions, conflicts, and temptations; for theſe were true and faithful ſayings, on which the moſt entire dependance might be placed. He alſo added, "it is done:" the whole counſel of his love will be then completed, and the redemption, which he finiſhed on the croſs, will be perfectly applied. For being "Alpha and Omega, "&c," he would ſurely bring the work he had begun to a glorious concluſion. (Notes, &c. c. i, v. 8. 11. 18. c. ii. v. 8.) And, if any man in any age or place, were athirſt for the bleſſings of ſalvation, were ſo ſenſible of his periſhing need of them, and had ſuch a view of their preciouſneſs, as to be earneſt in uſing means for obtaining them, and would not be ſatisfied with any thing elſe, he would ſurely give him "of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Notes, &c. *Iſ*. c. xii. v. 3. c. lv. v. 1—3. *John*, c. iv. v. 9—15, c. vii. v. 37---39.) Man's ſin and folly conſiſt in forſaking the fountain of living waters, to hew "out broken "ciſterns, that can hold no water," his happineſs muſt begin with returning to this fountain, as opened to him, through the mediation of Chriſt: ſenſual and ſinful pleaſures are muddy and poiſoned waters; the beſt earthly comforts are like the ſcanty ſtagnating ſupplies of a ciſtern; when idolized, they become broken ciſterns, and yield only vanity, diſappointment, and vexation; and all our labour about them, is "hewing out broken ciſ"terns, that can hold no water:" but the joys of true religion are like the ſpringing waters from a fountain, pure, refreſhing, over-flowing, always ſatisfying, never ſatiating, abundant, and eternal. The ſanctifying conſolations of the Holy Spirit, being the preparation for, and antepaſt of heavenly felicity, are the ſtreams from this fountain, which flow for us in this wilderneſs; to thoſe, who thirſt for them, Chriſt will give of theſe waters, *freely*, without any price paid for them, and ſupplies adequate to their largeſt deſires; theſe ſhall be furniſhed from time to time, when they come and aſk for them, to be their ſolace in life, and at the approach of death; and then he will bring them to the fountain head, that they drink for ever full draughts of theſe holy and glorious joys. All this He gives *freely*; though He purchaſed them, by the ſhedding of his blood upon the croſs for their ſins. (c. xxii. v. 5. 17.) Indeed, they, who draw waters from theſe wells of ſalvation, have many enemies to encounter: but the Lord aſſures them, that every conqueror ſhould "inherit all things," for He would be his God, and he ſhould be his ſon, and thus be the heir of all things in him. (1 *Cor*. c. iii. v. 21—23.) But on the other hand "the fearful," who dared not profeſs, or who renounced the goſpel, from the dread of reproach, and ſuffering; the cowardly ſoldiers, who feared the enemy more than their captain, and ſo "turn"ed back in the day of battle:" and "infidels" or "un"believers" of all deſcriptions; not the weak in faith, but ſuch as had no faith; "the abominable," or thoſe, who were guilty of unnatural practices; murderers, of themſelves, or others, in duels, wars, perſecution, perverſion of juſtice, oppreſſion, &c; "fornicators," adulterers, and lewd perſons of every kind; "ſorcerers;" the devil's prophets, real or pretended, to which company *pretenders* to revelations, &c, belong; "idolaters," "and all liars," hypocrites, deceivers, falſe teachers, and all, who *lie* for gain, or from malice, who thus cheat or ſlander others; yea, all liars, though they only *divert* themſelves or others by breaking God's commandments; all theſe ſhall have their portion in the lake of fire, with the devil and his angels. (c. xx. v. 10—15.)

V. 9—27.] An angel having called John to accompany him, that he might ſhew him the bride, (c. xix. v. 7,) or the church triumphant, after the completion of the

10 And he carried me away in the ſpirit to a great and high mountain, and ſhewed me that great city, the holy Jeruſalem, deſcending out of heaven from God.

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a ſtone moſt precious, even like a jaſper ſtone, clear as cryſtal;

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Iſrael.

13 On the eaſt three gates; on the north three gates; on the ſouth three gates: and on the weſt three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apoſtles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to meaſure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth four ſquare, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he meaſured the city with the reed, twelve thouſand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he meaſured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the meaſure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was *of* jaſper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glaſs.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones. The firſt foundation *was* jaſper; the ſecond ſapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, ſardonyx; the ſixth, ſardius; the ſeventh, chryſolite; the eight, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryſopraſus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyſt.

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every ſeveral gate was of one pearl: and the ſtreet of the city *was* pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs.

22 And I ſaw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the ſun, neither of the moon, to ſhine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are

ſacred union between Chriſt and his purchaſed people, in the glory of heaven; he was, to his own apprehenſion, (being under the influence of the prophetic Spirit,) carried to an exceeding high mountain; and ſhewn a great city, deſcending from heaven, &c, (v. 2, 3:) this interchange of emblems from "the Bride the Lamb's wife," to "the holy Jeruſalem," ſhews us, that we are to take general ideas from them, but not to enter into minute particulars, in which there is ſeldom much agreement; and that our complex view of ſuch ſubjects muſt be deduced from the whole of them compared together. This city was illuminated, beautified, and rendered illuſtrious beyond expreſſion, by the glory of God, beaming as it were full upon it: which ſhews that the happineſs of heaven conſiſts in immediate communications from God, and in conformity to him. Thus the light, that ſhone on the city, was like the refulgency of the moſt valued jewels: the whole, as it appeared pendent in the air, ſhone with ſurpriſing luſtre and beauty, and was tranſparent as chryſtal: which may intimate, that our knowledge will there be intuitive, certain, and productive of the moſt ſatisfying delight. The great wall of jaſper of 144 cubits in height, or thickneſs, (according to the meaſure of a man, from his elbow to the end of his middle finger,) (v. 17;) being the number of the twelve tribes multiplied by that of the twelve apoſtles, may denote the entire ſecurity of that reſidence, which the Almighty God hath prepared for the whole increaſe of both the Old and the New Teſtament churches, when collected together in heaven: where no enemy can approach to annoy or alarm them for ever. Twelve gates guarded by twelve angels, and inſcribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael; implied, that this holy city was open on every ſide for the admiſſion of the true Iſrael of God, even all his covenant believing ſervants, and for none elſe: and that angels rejoiced in their ſecurity, and felicity in heaven, as well as readily miniſtered to them, during their progreſs thither. The twelve foundations, inſcribed with the names of the twelve apoſtles, and formed of twelve precious ſtones, (which John in viſion ſaw, in the ſame manner, as he did the reſt;) ſhewed that all, who belonged to that holy city, obtained their citizenſhip, by receiving and obeying the doctrine of the apoſtles, reſpecting Chriſt and his ſalvation, as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the world: the whole city reſts on that foundation primarily, and in a ſubordinate ſenſe on thoſe that publiſhed and atteſted that doctrine, who will be honoured there in a peculiar manner: nor will any perſon enter thither, who holds not that doctrine *ſubſtantially*; for thus it hath been believed by the church, ever ſince the firſt promiſe to fallen man. The precious ſtones denote, that all earthly ſplendour is mean and palſaved ſhall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day: for there ſhall be no night there.

26 And they ſhall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatſoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

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try, compared with that of heaven; and that all poſſible excellency and glory will there combine, abound, and centre for ever: but I cannot pretend to deſcribe theſe precious ſtones, or to point out any particular emblem in each of them, (*Iſaiah*, c. liv. v. 11, 12. *Eph.* c. ii. v. 19—22.) The vaſt dimenſions of the city, being an exact ſquare, 1500 miles on each ſide; were emblematical of magnificence, and room for any number of inhabitants, which ſhould ever enter into it. As it is inconceivable how a city could be 1500 miles high; ſo, when it is ſaid, that the length, breadth and height were equal; ſome conclude that no more is meant, than that the height was proportionable to the other dimenſions: however, as the whole is enigmatical, and as a cube ſeems a kind of perfect form; perhaps the language is to be underſtood according to its obvious meaning: and then we may conſider it as an intimation, that the reader is not to form any groſs conceptions of the city in his imagination, but to deduce inſtruction from it, as an emblem: and it may imply the ſtability, proportion, and uniformity of heavenly things: and the inconceivable nature, and glory of them, (*Eph.* c. iii. v. 18.) The city, and the ſtreet of it, being "of pure gold, like unto clear glaſs," may be an emblem of the union in heaven of thoſe excellencies, which ſeem here to be incompatible; "they will be ſplendid, and durable as the pureſt gold; clear and tranſparent as the fineſt glaſs. In that happy world, the beauties, and advantages, which here are divided and incompatible, will unite and agree. Our glaſs is clear but brittle, our gold is ſhining and ſolid, but it is opake, and diſcovers only a ſurface. And thus it is with our minds. The powers of the imagination are lively and extenſive, but tranſient and uncertain. The powers of the underſtanding are more ſolid and regular, but at the ſame time more ſlow and limited, and confined to the outſide properties of the few objects around us. But when we arrive within the vail, the perfections of the glaſs and gold will be combined, and the imperfections of each will entirely ceaſe. Then we ſhall *know* more than we can now *imagine. The glaſs will be all gold.* And then we ſhall apprehend truth in its relations and conſequences, not (as at preſent) by that tedious and fallible proceſs which we call reaſoning, but by a ſingle glance of thought, as the ſight pierces in an inſtant through the largeſt tranſparent body. *The gold will be all glaſs.*" (Cardiphonia.) The twelve gates made of ſo many vaſt pearls, denoted, that every thing will be ſuperlatively glorious, beyond all compariſon with any thing ſeen on earth. But though the temple was ſo eſſential to the literal Jeruſalem, as its great ornament and honour; and though it made ſo great a part in Ezekiel's viſion of the church, during the millennium, under the emblem of the holy city, (*Ezek.* c. xl. v. 48;) yet there was no temple in the myſtical city, which John ſaw; which is a plain proof, that the heavenly ſtate was excluſively meant. There will be no need of external ſymbols of the Lord's preſence; when he ſhall be fully manifeſted in his eſſential glory, as far as creatures can perceive, and know him; he ſhall be evidently amongſt them to communicate unalloyed felicity, and to receive their adorations; and the eternal Son, in human nature, as the Lamb that was ſlain, will be a temple, in which all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling bodily, will be made manifeſt to the glorified bodies of the ſaints, whilſt the perfections of the divine nature will be beheld with open face, by the exerciſe of their intellectual powers. Nor will this holy city need the ſun or moon to lighten, or any of the things, which outwardly contribute to our comfort, and are ſuited to our ſtate on earth; for the glory of God will lighten, yea the Lamb will be the light, and felicity of it. (Notes, &c. *Iſaiah*, c. lx. v. 19, 20.) What words can more fully expreſs the myſterious union and coequality of the Son with the Father, in the Godhead? The inhabitants of this city will not only be numerous, above thoſe of other cities; but even nations, many nations of thoſe, whom Jeſus hath ſaved, will dwell in it, and walk in the light of God and the Lamb, perpetually and eternally: and as if all the kings of the earth had concurred to bring the whole of their wealth, magnificence and glory, into one place, it could not have borne any compariſon with this holy city: ſo thoſe kings, who belonged to the church on earth, though they have left all their outward grandeur behind them, will yet bring all their real honour into it, and all other glory will be ſwallowed up in it. The gates not being ſhut by day, and there being no night there, emblematically ſhew the liberty, peace, ſecurity and uninterrupted enjoyment of that bleſſed ſtate: and as believers are the excellent of the earth, and enter thither from every nation; ſo it may literally be ſaid, that "they bring the glory, and honour of the nations into it;" as well as figuratively, in reſpect of its incomparable ſplendour, and excellency. Moreover, nothing ſinful or unclean can at all find admiſſion into it. All the inhabitants are abſolutely perfected in holineſs, and all rejoice in, enhance, and participate each others felicity, being all excellent, loving, and lovely, beyond expreſſion, or imagination.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There remaineth, therefore, a reſt for the people of God; and when the idolized objects of carnal men's affections and purſuits, ſhall paſs away, and be no more for ever; believers ſhall enter the new heaven, and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, and where no tumultuous paſſions, anxious cares, or changing diſpenſations, ſhall diſturb their repoſe to all eternity. But

CHAP. XXII.

Contains 1ſt. A further deſcription of the heavenly ſtate, 1---5. *2d. The angel atteſting theſe things, and again forbidding John to worſhip him,* 6---9. *3d. Jeſus ſhewing him, that the ſtate of men would ſoon be fixed, by his coming to judgment; declaring who would enter heaven, and who would be excluded; inviting all that were willing, to accept of his ſalvation; and denouncing plagues on all who added to, or took away from this prophecy,* 10---19. *4th. The apoſtle deſiring the ſpeedy advent of Chriſt; and concluding with a benediction on his readers,* 20, 21.

AND he ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

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will God indeed dwell with man, and receive man to dwell with him in heavenly felicity? What then ſhould for a moment divert us from ſeeking ſo vaſt a bleſſing? Or what words can ſuffice to expreſs our admiring gratitude? May we then ſeek the adorning and beauty of holineſs, and ſtill deſire to be found accepted in the righteouſneſs of the Redeemer; and then the heavenly Bridegroom will find us prepared, and rejoice over us to do us good for ever. (*Zeph.* c. iii. v. 17.) Tears may indeed now defile our cheeks, and anguiſh may ſometimes diſtract our hearts; becauſe of ſin within us, and around us, and all its diſtreſſing effects: but ſoon our God will wipe away all our tears; and we ſhall feel and ſee no more of death, of ſorrow, of crying, or of pain for ever. Let us then pray for patience; that having done the will of God, we may inherit the promiſe. If we are willing and deſirous, that the gracious Redeemer ſhould make all things new in our hearts and nature; by whatever means he ſees good; we need not fear, but he will make all things new, in reſpect of our ſituation, till he hath brought us to the enjoyment of complete felicity: for He is Alpha and Omega; his work is perfect; and when he begins to ſave, he will never leave or forſake the ſubjects of his grace, who are the objects alſo of his everlaſting love. If, in bringing us to thirſt for the waters of life, he cauſes us to paſs through humiliating diſpenſations, and experiences; we ought not to complain: for this thirſt is the preparation for all the bleſſings of time and eternity; as he will give to every man that thirſteth of the full fountain of the water of life freely: and did we come to him for this bleſſing more frequently, and pray for it more earneſtly, we ſhould be enabled in the ſharpeſt trials to realize the chriſtian paradox, "as ſorrowful, "yet always rejoicing:" but we are too apt to go to broken ciſterns, and no wonder that we go mourning all the day long! Let then thoſe, who are engaged in the combat, have recourſe to this never failing cordial; that by its exhilerating and invigorating efficacy, their ſtrength may be renewed, till they have won the victory, and be owned as children and heirs of God in Chriſt Jeſus, and poſſeſs all things in him. But ſurely the curſe is alſo ſet before us, in this ſcripture, as well as the bleſſing! And moſt loudly doth Chriſt ſay to all, that hear his word, "not to fear them, who can kill the body, but "after that have no more that they can do;" when ſuch cowards, as dare not own Chriſt on earth, are ranked with other abominable ſinners, as heirs of the lake of fire and brimſtone! If the Lord ſhould ſpeak in thunder from heaven, and proteſt to ſinners *by name*, that they were in the way to hell; it could not be more manifeſt than it is at preſent, if men would notice it: for whilſt they live in infidelity, impiety, or any of the ſins here or elſewhere enumerated; does not God ſay expreſſly to them, "except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh?" But, bleſſed be his name, he ſays alſo to the worſt of them, "repent and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted "out," believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.

The angels, who pour out vials of wrath, and inflict plagues on ungodly men, take pleaſure in helping the joy of believers: and the myſtical eſpouſals of Chriſt and his church excites their attention, admiration, and rejoicing praiſes. But the way in which the Lord teaches us the nature of heavenly glories, implies that we are poor ignorant children, too apt to be pleaſed with trifles and externals, who muſt be ſpoken to in our own language; not being capable of knowing things as they are, or of fully reliſhing the pure and ſpiritual felicity of the celeſtial world. But if any thing draw off our affections from earthly objects, to ſeek a treaſure in heaven, and a permanent manſion in that bleſſed world, it will be well. Glorious things are indeed here ſpoken of the city of God; and the whole is well ſuited to raiſe our expectations, and enlarge our conceptions, of its ſecurity, peace, ſplendour, purity and felicity: but in proportion to our ſpirituality, we ſhall be more and more led to contemplate heaven, as filled with the glory of God; and enlightened by the preſence of the Lord Jeſus, the Sun of righteouſneſs, and the Redeemer of loſt ſinners: knowing that in his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures at his right hand for evermore. As nothing unclean can enter thither, let us be ſtirred up by theſe glimpſes of heavenly things, to give diligence to cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh, and Spirit, and to perfect holineſs, in the fear of God: that we may be approved as Iſraelites indeed, in whom there is no guile, and have a ſure evidence, that we are written in the Lamb's book of life.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1—5.] The angel next ſhewed the apoſtle the current and ſource of heavenly bleſſing. He ſaw "a pure river of water of life;" this implied the holy nature and tendency, of thoſe unalloyed pleaſures, that flow without interruption or end, for the full ſatiſfaction of all the ſaints in glory. (*Pſ.* xlvi. v. 4.) It was "alſo clear," or tranſparent, "as cryſtal;" which may intimate that the happineſs of heaven greatly conſiſts in a full, intimate and certain knowledge of God, and his glorious perfections and works, exciting all holy and delightful affections in the heart. It proceeded out of the throne of God, as from its fountain, (c. xxi. v. 6. *Pſ.* xxxvi. v. 8, 9. *Ezek.* c. xlvii. v. 1—10:) which

2 In the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and on either ſide of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

3 And there ſhall be no more curſe: but the throne of God and of the Lamb ſhall be on it; and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him:

4 And they ſhall ſee his face; and his name *ſhall be* in their foreheads.

5 And there ſhall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the ſun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they ſhall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he ſaid unto me, Theſe ſayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets ſent his angel to ſhew unto his ſervants the things which muſt ſhortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: bleſſed *is* he that keepeth the ſayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John ſaw theſe things, and heard

ſhewed, that all felicity comes from Him, as the all-ſufficient ſource of life, light, holineſs, and joy; and that it is communicated according to his wiſe and holy ſovereignty. But the ſame was the throne of the Lamb alſo, (c. iii. v. 21;) for the river flows to ſinful men, through the Perſon of Emmanuel, and his atonement and mediation. This eſpecially relates to the quickening, and ſanctifying influences and conſolations of the Holy Spirit, as given to ſinners through Chriſt, to be the Author of ſpiritual and eternal life to their ſouls. In the midſt of the ſtreet, or principal place of concourſe of the city, and on each ſide of the river, was the tree of life: (*Gen.* c. ii. v. 9. c. iii. v. 22;) this ſeems not to mean, a ſingle tree, but a ſpecies of trees, that grew in the places of public reſort, for the common benefit of all the inhabitants. On earth ſome fruits ripen at one ſeaſon, and ſome at another: but this tree bare twelve kinds of fruit, that every month in the year might be ſupplied; and abundance united with perpetuity, and variety. This was an emblem of Chriſt, and all the bleſſings of his ſalvation, as communicated conſtantly and perfectly to all his redeemed people, in heaven, by his own preſence with and love to them. The leaves of the tree, being appointed for the healing of the nations, implied, that the favour and preſence of Chriſt would remove and prevent all evil, as well as communicate all good, to the inhabitants of that bleſſed world. So that no "more curſe "would be there," no ſickneſs, pain, ſorrow, wrath, or death: for Adam ſinned in the garden of Eden, and ſo fell with his poſterity, under the curſe: but this will never befal the redeemed, as the ſame ſovereignty, and omnipotence, which have ſaved them, will confirm them for ever. For the throne of God, and of the Lamb being fixed there; *his* ſervants ſhall ſerve, and worſhip him for ever, which is their great deſire, and delight; "and "they ſhall ſee his face;" behold his glory, be aſſured of his love, and enjoy the fulneſs of felicity in his preſence: "and his name ſhall be in their foreheads;" that is, all ſhall know that they belong to him, and perceive that they bear his holy image. It is remarkable that "God and the Lamb," are here ſpoken of, *as One*, in ſuch a manner, that we cannot determine to which of them the ſingular perſonal pronoun belongs. In that world of light and glory, there will be no night, no affliction, dejection, or intermiſſion of ſervice and enjoyment: they will need no candle, &c; no diverſions or pleaſures of man's deviſing, will there be at all wanted; and even the outward comforts, which God hath provided, ſuited to our ſtate in this world, will be no longer requiſite. (c. xxi. v. 23, 24.) This is very different from a Mahometan, or Swedenburgian heaven, which could only pleaſe groſs, ſenſual and carnal men, if they were realities: but they are all the devil's artifices, who by means of new revelations ſuited to men's corrupt nature, draws them off from the Bible; that ſo by following the *ignis fatuus* of new lights, they may fall into the blackneſs of eternal darkneſs!

V. 6—9.] (c. xxi. v. 5.) The angel's declaration, that the Lord God had ſent him, compared with what follows, (v. 16,) hath been adduced with great energy, in proof of Chriſt's Deity; but we meet with this doctrine, in one form or other, continually: ſo that it is no wonder, that they who hate it, not being able to get rid of the ſcriptures all together, endeavour to diſcard them by piece-meal; firſt objecting to the authority of the epiſtles, then rejecting ſome part of the goſpels: and to cloſe all, reſerving to themſelves the privilege of determining when the ſacred penmen were miſtaken, and when they argued inconcluſively; when they meant what they ſaid, and when they retailed Jewiſh legends, or platonic reveries! Thus the Sadducees did before them; and had the Socinians, &c, ſooner found out this method of oppoſing the goſpel, (ſo admirably ſuited to the pride of the writer, and the indolence of the ſuperficial reader,) an immenſity of labour, ingenuity and *paper* might have been ſaved, that have been waſted to no purpoſe. But we ſhall learn yet, before we cloſe, what we are to think of ſuch proceedings. The Lord Jeſus next ſpake by the angel, and declared that "he was coming quickly," to fulfil theſe prophecies, to puniſh his enemies, to deliver his ſervants, and to take their ſouls to heaven; but eſpecially in perſon to raiſe the dead and judge the world: and he added a bleſſing on all, who obſerved, underſtood, remembered, believed and obeyed the ſayings contained in this prophecy, (c. i. v. 4:) as they could not fail, to increaſe their faith, hope, patience, ſtedfaſtneſs, and propriety of behaviour, in the church, and in the world. Whilſt we are ſurprized, that the apoſtle ſhould again fall into his former miſtake, and need repeatedly the ſame admonition: we may obſerve the great wiſdom of God in *them.* And when I had heard and ſeen, I fell down to worſhip before the feet of the angel which ſhewed me theſe things.

9 Then ſaith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the ſayings of this book: Worſhip God.

10 And he ſaith unto me, Seal not the ſayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill: and he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work ſhall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt.

14 Bleſſed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without *are* dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jeſus have ſent mine angel to teſtify unto you theſe things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning ſtar.

17 And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt come. And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

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leaving him to do ſo! The idolatrous worſhip of ſaints and angels was one great abomination of that antichriſtian ſyſtem, againſt which this prophecy is principally levelled: and here all their palliations of that enormity are anſwered at once: for the moſt exalted and beneficent creature, when viſibly preſent, would not allow the leaſt appearance of adoration to be rendered to him: whereas *the papiſts* worſhip creatures, when not viſibly preſent, and thus aſcribe omnipreſence and omniſcience to them, as well as other divine honours! Moreover it alſo ſhews the weakneſs of the Socinian way of accounting for Stephen's adoration of Chriſt; becauſe, ſay they, he was viſibly preſent: but if he had not been alſo truly God, the martyr would nevertheleſs have been an idolater: yet Chriſt neither reproved him, nor any other perſon, for ſhewing him this kind of honour, or any other; but the contrary.

V. 10—12.] Chriſt is undoubtedly the Speaker in theſe verſes; but ſome think, that he ſpake by the angel, as his ambaſſador: yet this does not ſeem ſatisfactory. (v. 16.) He directed the apoſtle not to ſeal, the ſayings of this prophecy, but to publiſh them for the uſe of the church, (c. x. v. 4. *Dan.* c. xii. v. 4:) for the time was at hand, when they would begin to be accompliſhed, nay they would indeed ſoon be completed. As therefore, after all theſe revelations of the will of God, and the way of ſalvation, obſtinate ſinners would be left to their perverſe choice, without further means being uſed for their conviction; and believers ſhould be exhorted and encouraged to perſeverance in well-doing: ſo the time would ſoon arrive, when the unjuſt, and filthy, the unpardoned, and unregenerate, would be irreverſibly fixed in ſuch a ſtate, that he would be unjuſt and filthy ſtill, and for ever, without hope or remedy; and the juſtified and ſanctified believer, would be confirmed for ever in righteouſneſs, holineſs and felicity. And, behold, Chriſt was coming quickly, bringing his recompence with him, both for his enemies, and his people. (Note, c. xx. v. 12, 13.)

V. 13—15.] (Notes, &c. c. xxi. v. 6—8.) They, who do God's commandments, by repentance, faith in Chriſt, attendance on the means of grace, and renewed, unreſerved obedience from evangelical motives, are bleſſed; and they have a right, or privilege, derived from grace, to all the bleſſings of ſalvation by Chriſt, and to admiſſion into heaven; that they may there have fellowſhip with God, and his holy angels, &c, for ever. (*Matt.* c. xii. v. 50.) But without the city, even in the lake of fire, (for there is no middle place,) "are dogs," or ſelfiſh, greedy, fierce, ſenſual perſons, &c, apoſtates; with others of a hateful character; eſpecially, ſuch, as loved a carnal flattering lie, better than God's holy humbling truth, and who invented and propagated ſuch lies, for their own ſelfiſh purpoſes: all other liars may alſo be included.

V. 16, 17.] Jeſus here ſpake perſonally, (v. 6;) He was the Root, as God, from whom David ſprang, and his promiſed ſeed, as Man. "And the bright "and morning Star." "His riſing up in his incarna- "tion, introduced the goſpel day: his riſing in power "introduceth the millennial day; his riſing in the "ſaving influences of his Spirit, introduceth the ſpiritu- "al day of grace and comfort; and his appearance to "judge the world, will introduce the eternal day of "light, purity and joy." (Brown.) Some underſtand the former part of the next verſe, of the church's deſire for Chriſt's ſecond coming: but the context ſeems to direct us to another interpretation: "the Spirit" in the Word, and by his drawings in the ſinner's conſcience, ſays "come," to Chriſt for ſalvation: "the Bride," or the whole church militant and triumphant, ſays "come," and ſhare our felicity: therefore, it behoves every man, that hears the invitation, to call on others to "come;" and in fine, "let every man," throughout the earth, 18 For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

that "thirſts" for ſalvation come to Chriſt; nay, leſt any ſhould heſitate, as not able to determine, whether their thirſt were ſpiritual or not; "let whoſoever is willing come, and take of the waters of life freely," as he would take water from a well, that belonged in common to him and all his neighbours: nor ought he to think of paying for theſe bleſſings; except as he throws away his poiſon, to receive food, or his droſs to receive gold.

V. 18—21.] The Lord Jeſus concluded this addreſs, and indeed the whole of his word, by teſtifying, (as the Amen, the true and faithful witneſs,) to every one who heard that prophecy; that if any man added any thing to what was contained in it, as of divine authority, God ſhould add to, or heap on him, all the plagues, that were written in the book; and if on the other hand, any one ſhould preſume to take any thing away from it; God would take away from him his part of the bleſſings, which he appeared, or thought himſelf, to be entitled to, or which he otherwiſe might have obtained. This ſeems primarily meant of the book of Revelation itſelf; with which as much liberty hath been taken as with any part of ſcripture: but as the Lord doubtleſs intended this for the concluſion of the ſacred Canon: ſo it may be applied to the whole of the written word, (*Deut.* c. iv. ver. 2. c. xii. v. 32. *Matt.* c. xv. v. 9:) and it warns every man, in the moſt awful manner, to add nothing to, and take nothing from, what God hath revealed of doctrine, ordinance, or commandment; the ſtandard of truth, the way of acceptance, the evidence of converſion, or the rule of duty. Viſionaries, enthuſiaſts, pretenders to new revelations, bigotted ſectaries, and impoſing churchmen, on the one hand; infidels and ſpectics, who reject the whole, or part of ſcripture, or pretend that it is of no conſequence what men believe, (which takes away all doctrinal truth at once,) on the other; have cauſe to tremble at this warning. Critics, who are always propoſing conjectural alterations, or expunging from and adding to the text of ſcripture, are in no ſmall danger: and expoſitors have abundant cauſe to be cautious and humble; and indeed I am ready to tremble when I write upon this teſtimony of Chriſt, and think of the work which I have been engaged in: but He will no more condemn the honeſt *writer*, who deſires to help men to underſtand his word, and proceeds in ſimple humble dependance on divine teaching, when he undeſignedly miſtakes, than he will the honeſt *preacher:* and I truſt this effort to explain his holy ſcriptures, though feeble and defective, has been conducted from proper motives, and in this dependance on the Lord. I can appeal to my heart-ſearching Judge, that I have, as far as I know, writtten word for word, what I ſuppoſed he would have me write; without adding, altering, or keeping back the ſenſe of any paſſage, willingly, to ſerve any perſonal or party intereſt whatſoever. What miſtakes have been made, were involuntary, the effects of ignorance and not deſign. Chriſt having atteſted this, added, that aſſuredly he was coming quickly, and the apoſtle in his own name, and that of the church, added, "Amen, Even ſo come Lord Jeſus;" and ſo concluded with the uſual benediction on his readers in general, or on the ſeven churches of Aſia in particular, (*Mal.* c. iv. ver. 6.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

May the Lord ſhew to us the ſtreams of the pure river of the water of life, which proceed out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb; that receiving the precious gift of the life-giving Spirit, we may be made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light. All other ſtreams are polluted, or will ſoon dry up; but this will flow, clear as cryſtal, without alloy, or interruption for ever-more. They who drink of this water, and eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, ſhall hunger and thirſt no more: they will ſoon arrive where ſin and ſickneſs ſhall be known no more; for the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations: no curſe will there be found, but bleſſing only and eternally, from the throne of God and the Lamb, in the ſervice and preſence of their beloved Lord, and in bearing the image, and being filled with all the fulneſs of God. No more complaints will then be heard of darkneſs, deſertion, or temptation; and no need of worldly pleaſures, or amuſements; as the Lord God giveth them light, and they ſhall reign for ever and ever. Theſe are true and faithful ſayings; but they are ſo vaſt, that we need to pray continually "Lord increaſe our faith," or we ſhall not be able to receive them, however atteſted to us. We ſhould give due honour to the inſtruments of good to our ſouls; but we muſt worſhip God only: for angels, apoſtles, prophets, and all believers are fellow ſervants, or brethren; and Chriſt is the Lord of all. Soon will he come to determine our eternal ſtate: but how dreadful will it be to the impenitent and polluted ſinner, to be conſigned to eternal unrighteouſneſs and filthineſs; and to be left without, among dogs and ſorcerers, whoremongers, and murderers, idolaters, and all liars. Oh, may we be found righteous and holy, be confirmed in his holy favour, and ſervice, as our eternal and unchangeable felicity; when he ſhall come to render to every man as his work ſhall be! Never let us think, that a dead, or diſobedient faith will ſave us. When the Alpha and Omega, the Firſt and the Laſt, hath declared them bleſſed, who do his commandments, and thus prove their right to the Tree of life, and to enter in by the gates into the holy city. Theſe things he hath abundantly teſtified by his meſſengers to the churches; and in this manner, we may hope to have him dwell in our hearts, as the bright and morning Star, uſhering in the eternal day. But if ſinners are alarmed, and begin to deſire his ſalvation; let them remember, "that the

20 He which teſtifieth theſe things ſaith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* **with you all. Amen.**

“ Spirit and the bride ſay come;” and all that hear ſhould ſay to every one of their neighbour's come; and let every one, that thirſteth come; yea whoever “ will “ let him come and take of the water of life freely.” Ought not then the miniſters and profeſſors of the goſpel, to beware of *adding* any thing as a reſtriction on theſe large and open invitations, or of *deducting* any thing from them? Or of altering in any way, the terms of a ſinner's acceptance and ſalvation? God alone is the judge of men's motives and intentions; but we ſhould keep at the greateſt diſtance from the brink of that tremendous precipice, which is here pointed out to every man, that heareth the words of this prophecy; and down which multitudes, in every age, without doubt ruſh head-long into deſtruction. The Lord deliver us from this condemnation: and may the writer and all the readers of theſe obſervations, have a well grounded confidence in Chriſt, and be of that number, who love and long for his appearing, ſaying, “ Amen, even ſo come, Lord Jeſus.” The God of all mercy and grace, be pleaſed to pardon all that is erroneous and faulty in this publication! To his holy name be all the praiſe of whatever is true and profitable! Thanks be to God for having given the writer, health, ſtrength, and ability to bring it at length to a concluſion. May numbers have as much cauſe to be thankful for benefit derived from the peruſal of it, as he has for the advantage he hath found in writing it: that ſo glory may be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be, world without end. And may the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with us all, now, and for ever. Amen.

FINIS.

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